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“If it were not for my firm belief in an overruling Providence, it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications of affairs, to keep my reason on its seat. But I am confident that the Almighty has His plans, and will work them out; and, whether we see it or not, they will be the best for us.”

President Abraham Lincoln, Speaking to the Christian Commission during the Civil War

States Jump on Board with Federal Standards

Since the second phase of the Race to the Top (RTTT) funds are to be awarded next week, states continue to adopt the Common Core Standards as a way to increase their chances of winning a small portion of the \$4 billion set aside for the RTTT program. While supporters of the [Common Core Standards](#) have adamantly stated that the initiative has been “state-led” and is not a move toward a national or federal standard, many concerns about the Department of Education and the Administration’s “incentives” to sign on and adopt the standards remain. In order to be a highly considered candidate to receive RTTT funds, states must submit “[evidence of having adopted common standards](#).” And if that is not enough to entice these eager states, the Administration has “laid the groundwork in their blueprint for tying the \$14.5 billion in Title I funding for low-income districts to the adoption of national standards—a deal that states will likely be unable to turn down.”

As of this week nearly 30 states have adopted these standards, and estimates on the cost to apply and implement the standards are upwards \$3 billion for each state. This has many states concerned about the “cost-benefit” factor. Other states including Texas have stronger concerns about the overreaching element of the federal government. Incentivizing states to comply and adopt a “common standard” in order to receive federal monies can almost be seen as a bribe to gain greater federal control.

While the adoption of Common Core Standards is perhaps one of the [biggest transformations](#) in education at this time, little debate has occurred on the issue. In fact, many states are simply adopting these standards with minimal to no evidence on whether these standards will in reality help their students achieve greater success and with no clear plan on whether their state can afford to make the drastic changes that the Administration is urging.

The greatest threat of federal standards, however, is the lack of parental involvement. With greater federal control of education, parents will ultimately lose control. According to the [Heritage Foundation](#), “Parents will have to relinquish the most powerful tool they currently have when it comes to their children’s education: control over the content of state standards and tests. National standards will further diminish parental authority in education, and the federal government will gain more control as a result.”

To see which states have adopted these standards, please [Click Here](#).

ACTION: Please contact your state Board of Education and urge them to NOT adopt the Common Core Standards. If your state has already adopted the standards, urge them to reconsider.

Prayer Illegal on Supreme Court Grounds?

The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), a Christian legal alliance dedicated to preserving religious freedom, has sent the U.S. Supreme Court a letter on behalf of a Christian school teacher who was told she [could not pray](#) with her students on the grounds of the U.S. Supreme Court building. Mrs. Maureen Rigo, a teacher at Wickenburg Christian Academy in Arizona, was on a trip to the Nation's capitol with her junior high school history class when they visited the U.S. Supreme Court.

According to Mrs. Rigo's testimony, after taking a few pictures the group decided to meet at the bottom of the Court's steps off to the side and say a prayer for our nation and its leaders. However, while in the middle of prayer a court police officer abruptly intervened and ordered the group to stop praying immediately. Although the group was not obstructing traffic, nor causing a scene, the police officer ordered them to stop praying based on the statute, 40 U.S.C. §6135, which bars parades and processions on Supreme Court grounds. In the letter submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, [ADF explains](#), "Mrs. Rigo was not engaging in a parade, procession, or assembly. She was speaking in a conversational level to those around her with her head bowed. There is no reason to silence Mrs. Rigo's activities since these activities do not attract attention, create a crowd, or give the appearance of impartiality. The ban on public prayers cannot hope to survive First Amendment scrutiny."

Youth Legislative Training Conference a Great Success!

Last week, the AACCS hosted the annual Youth Legislative Training Conference (YLTC) in Washington, D.C., for high school juniors and seniors from Christian schools across the country. The goal of this conference is to challenge and empower tomorrow's leaders to make a difference in politics not only for conservative values, but also to advance the Word of God in our government. During the week the students participated in a mock senate where they each role played an actual Senator and drafted legislation on the issue of national security. This culminated with a final debate and vote on their bills at the end of the week. (These students have some great ideas on how to keep our country safe!) In addition to the mock Senate, the students also had the opportunity to tour historical sites such as the Pentagon, the monuments, and Arlington National Cemetery where the students were privileged to honor our Veterans by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

A unique feature of the conference was the "Day on the Hill" where the students attended a Congressional briefing in the Capitol building, met with their own Representatives and Senators in the afternoon, and enjoyed a private after-hours tour of the Capitol hosted by Rep. Jim Jordan (OH-4th) and led by his executive assistant, Melissa Evans, a Christian school graduate. During the Congressional briefing, students heard from five Representatives and one Senator: (1) Sen. Jim DeMint (SC), (2) Rep. Virginia Foxx (NC-5th), (3) Rep. Trent Franks (AZ-2nd), (4) Rep. Joe Pitts (PA-16th), (5) Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO-5th), and (6) Rep. Michele Bachmann (MN-6th). Each of these Members of Congress spoke to the students about their personal lives in politics and their knowledge of current national security issues. It was especially encouraging to hear each of them boldly declare their faith and how it comes first in both their personal and political lives.

In addition to meeting with their own Representatives and Senators, each student was able to represent numerous Christians and conservatives as they hand-delivered letters to the offices of every Senator on behalf of AACCS and the Judicial Crisis Network. Each organization's letter was slightly different but had the same message to the Senators: oppose the nomination of Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court. God's hand was evident in this situation, allowing the YLTC to fall only a couple weeks before the confirmation vote of Ms. Kagan to the Court. The students were able to have a first-hand impact on the debate and the controversy surrounding this important issue.

On the final evening of the conference, the students enjoyed the Sunset Parade at the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C. After an arduous yet motivating week, students parted ways, thanking God for His abundant provision to a profitable youth conference.

We are grateful to all of our generous donors that made this remarkable conference possible and allowed the students to attend this event on a full scholarship. A special thanks goes to our corporate sponsor, the [Worthwhile Company](#), for their generous support of the conference. If you would like to be a part of the conference and invest in the training of our future leaders through the Youth Legislative Training Conference, please [Click Here](#).

For the full report of the AACS Youth Legislative Conference, please [click here](#).

DC Circuit Court Upholds National Motto

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the National Motto and has once again affirmed that the words “In God We Trust,” which are etched on our nation’s currency, [do not violate](#) the First Amendment’s establishment clause. Self-pronounced atheist Carlos Kidd brought the lawsuit against President Obama and the Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, but the motto was upheld by the district court last October. Kidd then appealed the case to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, where the three judge panel stated in a [brief opinion](#) that the “Appellant has not demonstrated that appellees violated the First Amendment by printing the national motto, ‘In God We Trust,’ on United States currency.”

Congressman Randy Forbes (R-VA) has worked diligently to ensure that our nation’s religious heritage receives its due credit. He has sponsored a bill, H. Con. Res. 274, which would reaffirm “In God We Trust” as our national motto and would evidently end frivolous lawsuits that aim to do away with our motto. In hearing of the Court’s decision to uphold the national motto’s constitutionality, Congressman Forbes [stated the following](#):

The phrase “In God We Trust” has been an integral part of American society, and the very essence of those words is reflective of the principles upon which our country was founded. This Circuit Court of Appeals has rightfully recognized that our Constitution does not require the exclusion of references to God from the laws governing this nation, but rather gives us the freedom to affirm our national motto by its use on our currency. I applaud their decision.

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[GA Grad Student Told to Change Her "Christian Beliefs"](#)

[New Jersey Court Rejects Demand to Redefine Marriage](#)



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