

**AACS**American Association  
of Christian SchoolsA National Voice Helping You  
Educate for Eternity.

## **AACS Hosts National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.**

*The AACS National Legislative Conference was held September 12-14, 2011. The report below from the AACS Legislative Office highlights the events of the week.*

Last week, school administrators, pastors, teachers, and state leaders convened in Washington, D.C., for the AACS National Legislative Conference. This year's theme was "Pressing Forward" from Philippians 3:14 which states "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The conference provided the opportunity for the attendees to be challenged by God's Word and encouraged by Christian lawmakers, and to engage with their Congressmen and promote Christian education.

This year's keynote speaker was Dr. Michael Sproul, pastor of Tri-City Baptist Church. Pastor Sproul's informative presentation outlined the successful establishment, implementation, and retention of educational tax credits and scholarship tuition organizations in Arizona. Administrators, pastors, teachers, and state leaders were encouraged to work towards the enactment of similar tax credit programs in their respective states. Special music during the opening service was provided by the students from Fairfax Baptist Temple Academy in Fairfax Station, VA, through an uplifting choir selection led by Mr. Les Wall. Their ministry truly blessed and encouraged the hearts of the attendees.

The schedule for the conference also included a Congressional Briefing where attendees heard an update from Senator Roy Blunt (MO) and Representatives Paul Broun (GA), Allen West (FL), Louie Gohmert (TX), Jeff Duncan (SC), Tim Huelskamp (KS), Vicky Hartzler (MO) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA). All of the Members addressed the importance of maintaining America's exceptionalism by returning to the Biblical precepts that our nation was founded upon. All the speakers encouraged the attendees to remain faithful in their ministries in Christian education, and all emphasized the importance of the next election as a pivotal crossroads between diametrically opposed visions for our country.

The Annual Legislative Banquet provided the opportunity to honor Rep. Trent Franks (AZ) with the American Freedom Award for his tireless efforts to empower parents and promote educational choice. The American Freedom Award is presented annually to those who best exemplify the values of AACS by displaying devotion to the protection of family, religious liberty, and Christian education. Relaying a sobering quotation from Daniel Webster, Rep. Franks stated that "if the power of the Gospel be not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land,

darkness and corruption will reign.” In his remarks, he stressed the importance of inculcating the next generation with the truth of Scripture.

A talented instrumental ensemble from Bethel Christian Academy in Hampton, Virginia, provided a beautiful musical backdrop for the banquet. The group, led by Mrs. Lois Whitlock, also played several sacred selections before the special presentation.

Following the banquet, attendees traveled over to see the World War II Memorial. Just a few days following the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of September 11, attendees were able to view the memorial emblazoned with quotations from several members of the “greatest generation” that serve as a reminder of their ultimate sacrifice. The trip was concluded by singing “God Bless America” and a prayer for the troops in harm’s way and for our country.

An additional highlight of this year’s conference was a briefing at the [Heritage Foundation](#), hosted exclusively for the AACS National Legislative Conference. Attendees were privileged to hear from former Attorney General Edwin Meese, Ronald Reagan Chair in Public Policy at The Heritage Foundation. In his opening statement, Attorney General Meese cited the importance of AACS schools in imparting knowledge to our students that will make them better citizens. He outlined main areas of attack on religious liberty and the many examples of attempts to incrementally erode First Amendment freedoms. He also shared information about the strategic planning groups who are working to combat these assaults across the country. Attendees were admonished to take difficult stands in their churches and refuse to be intimidated by litigious liberal groups.

During the Heritage Briefing, the group was also honored to hear from Lindsey Burke, an education policy analyst at The Heritage Foundation. Mrs. Burke summarized the history of federal involvement in education and the resulting stagnant achievement rates. She also outlined the inherent problems in the latest reforms such as No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and the other top-down initiatives. The unprecedented expansion of school choice options around the country was presented as a viable alternative to the country’s failing educational model.

We thank God for a successful conference and the encouragement gained through it. We also thank you for your many prayers for the conference as well as for the AACS Legislative Office. It is during trying times that we are so encouraged and enlightened by God’s perfect timing and plan. Thank you to all who made this conference possible!

