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Children Rally and Congress Listens

A week ago, hundreds of students, parents, administrators, pastors and principles met to rally for the D.C. Scholarship Program. This program allows students of low-income families to apply for a scholarship that gives the parents the ability to send their child to the school of their choice. The scholarship allowed 1,716 students this year to attend the school of their choice for \$7,500 per child, a drastically smaller amount when compared to the \$15,511 spent per pupil that attends a public school in the district. Not only has the program showed successful results, it has saved the D.C. government thousands of dollars in education, and has also given parents a more active role in the education of their children.

In March, however, Congress voted to cut funding for the program, resulting in the extinction of the program after the 2009-2010 school year. It was not until after the rally that [President Obama decided to compromise](#) and allowed the program to continue for all students involved throughout their high-school years. Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, told reporters it did not make sense “to take kids out of a school where they’re happy and safe and satisfied and learning.” No new applicants will be accepted however and the program will die once all 1,716 have completed the program. While some are grateful for the approval to finish in the program, others are upset that more children will not be given the chance to succeed. According to Gregory M. Cork, president and chief executive of the scholarship fund, “We’re delighted for the children and their families, and we’re also delighted that the administration appreciates the value of this program. At the same time, we’d love to see others get a chance to have the opportunity.”

This week a hearing was held in the [Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs](#) on the fate of the D.C. Scholarship program. While Congressional members listened to the testimonies of student’s currently enrolled in the program, and evidence was brought forth which showed the overwhelming satisfaction the program has initiated with parents, Mayor Adrian Fenty and the National Education Association failed to show up. The hearing overall was a great opportunity for those directly affected by the program to tell their success stories and urge Congress to use taxpayer money wisely and fund opportunities that work.

Selecting the Next U.S. Supreme Court Justice

“Our Constitution was not written in the sands to be washed away by each wave of new judges blown in by each successive wind.”

~Hugo Black, Turner v. United States, 1970

On May 1, 2009, U.S. Supreme Court Justice David Souter announced his retirement plans to President Barack Obama. After 19 years of serving on the bench, Justice Souter plans to end his career at the end of June, leaving 6 months for President Obama to nominate a Judge, and be confirmed by the Senate. Justice Souter, though nominated by a Republican President, often found himself in company with the left side of the court. While President Obama has stated his desire to have the nominee confirmed and in place by October of this year, he has yet to declare a name. The President’s List of potential nominees suggests his favoring a far more extreme justice that the court has ever before seen.

Historically, the Senate has 60 days to review a nominee before the hearings are begun, allowing enough time for a Senator to fully critique the candidate before adequately fulfilling his responsibility to ‘advise and consent’

and further confirm the individual. In a [private meeting](#) President Obama held with the majority and minority leaders of the Senate, no individuals were named, but the process was clearly laid in terms that would make the transition smooth.

During the last administration, some Democrats set an unprecedented effort of filibustering Justice nominations in an unconstitutional, politicized strategy. According to Concerned Women for America, in an article written on the [filibuster of President Bush's judicial nominations](#), “The cause of delay is found in purely political matters. Senators have found it in *their* interest not to ‘advise and consent’ but rather to interrogate each prospect to determine if the nominee is not only qualified but serves in the best interests of their political agenda.”

As President Obama seeks a new Supreme Court Justice, and while conservatives may disagree with the political agenda or stance the individual takes, Senators must uphold their Constitutional duties and not use politicized strategies to condemn or attack the individual personally. However, their duties do encourage the Senator to fully critique the individual not only on his academia and experience, but also on his record to uphold the Constitution and those privileges afforded to all individuals by the Constitution.

A Justice should first and foremost uphold the Constitution and the right of Life, Liberty, and Justice afforded to all. A Justice should also be impartial to those they serve and not conform to the activist role of Judges, who consider “not just the law and facts, but also empathy for certain classes of people, including African-Americans, the poor, gays, and the disabled.” A Justice should be nominated and confirmed based on their qualified experience and dedication to the principles and role the Constitution affords, and not nominated and confirmed for mere political means, and arbitrary agendas. “It would be a shame,” according to the [Committee for Justice](#), “to chose a nominee based on their race, gender, or sexual identity, rather than focusing exclusively on the qualifications and judicial philosophy.”

As President Obama chooses his nomination, it is important that Americans pray for God’s direction. This nominee will be placed in the highest judicial position for perhaps decades. While this nomination may not be one who shares a similar worldview, it is necessary that the position be respected and this transition time to be one of education and fervent prayer.

Speak Out on Embryonic Stem Cell Research

When President Obama signed the Executive Order to overturn the restrictions placed on embryonic stem cell research (ESCR), He not only opened the floodgates for taxpayer monies to be spent in unethical terms, but also vaguely proposed new restrictions or guidelines placed on researchers when working with the embryos. It is not enough that we fund these researchers to perform unethical practices, but we use taxpayer monies to foot the bill.

The regulations set by the Bush Administration encouraged researchers to use federal funding on studies that worked and had proven success. Adult stem cell research has proven evidence of success and should be further developed, yet with this decision, taxpayers’ hard-working money will be put into a bank that goes against the moral beliefs of many concerned Americans, while still issuing unsuccessful results.

While it is clear that President Obama and his administration are overlooking evidence to promote an agenda that is not encouraged nor supported by the majority of Americans, we still have a voice. The National Institutes of Health is accepting comments on this issue up to May 26, 2009. This is a great opportunity to speak out and stand firm on the belief in the sanctity of all human life.

*Action: Please submit **comments to the National Institutes of Health** by May 26, 2009 to oppose the use of federal tax-payer monies to fund and support research on human embryonic stem cells.*

In Case You Missed It

[Reflections on Conservatism and Christianity](#)

[Pastor's Win Battle to Speak Out!](#)

[Medical Workers Deserve "Conscience Clause"](#)

[Governor Not Ready to Sign Gay Marriage Bill](#)



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