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I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts.

Abraham Lincoln

AACS National Legislative Conference to Highlight Key Issues and Speakers

On September 10–12, the American Association of Christian Schools will be hosting the annual National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. During the week, AACS leaders from around the country will be briefed on important issues by the AACS Legislative Office staff and Members of Congress. On Monday, Dr. Ed Johnson will speak at the opening service. After the Congressional Briefing, attendees will meet with Members and their staffs to educate them about issues that affect Christian schools. Rep. Michele Bachmann, former Presidential candidate, will be the keynote speaker at our Tuesday evening banquet. Our conference will conclude with presentations made by policy experts at The Heritage Foundation. This year, for the first time, the conference includes a special student track for high school students who attend. To learn more about this event, [click here](#).

Members of Congress Oppose HHS Mandate

The American Center for Law and Justice has submitted amicus briefs (friend of the court briefs) in opposition to the Health and Human Services preventive services mandate on behalf of 79 [Members](#) of Congress. The twelve briefs were submitted in cases representing 40 Catholic organizations ranging from the University of Notre Dame to the Catholic Charities of Chicago. Although the Catholic Church has spearheaded efforts to rescind the so-called contraceptive mandate, Protestant [organizations](#) such as Wheaton College and Colorado Christian University have expressed opposition to the mandate's chilling effect on the future of religious liberty. Edward White, Senior Counsel of the ACLJ, stated that "the mandate devastates the religious freedom of all employers seeking to comply with their religious beliefs. This is not just an issue negatively impacting Catholics. This is an issue negatively impacting employers of all faiths."

15 States Support Defense of Marriage Act

In 1996, President Bill Clinton along with an overwhelming majority of Congress approved the Defense of Marriage Act which defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman for federal purposes. Last year, the Attorney General was directed by President Obama to halt defense of the law. The Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG), comprised of the House leadership, voted to assume defense of the law. The First Circuit Court of Appeals recently [ruled](#) against the federal definition of marriage in *Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group v. Gil*. The First Circuit also rejected the "procreative rationale" argument that is an integral part of the marriage laws in 42 states. Attorney Generals from [15 states](#) jointly filed an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to accept this important case for review. As their brief states, "It requires no great leap of logic to conclude that a judicial declaration that DOMA serves no legitimate government purpose erodes the constitutional support for similar state laws."

Minnesota Supreme Court Stops Executive Overreach

This week, the Minnesota Supreme Court rejected an attempt by the state's Attorney General and Secretary of State to amend the title of the marriage amendment on the November ballot. When the legislature passed the measure placing same-sex marriage on the ballot, the approved title was "Recognition of Marriage Solely Between One Man and One Woman." In July of this year, the Attorney General and Secretary of State, who have publicly stated their opposition to the measure, attempted to change the title to "Limiting the Status of Marriage to Opposite-Sex Couples." Traditional marriage advocates Alliance Defending Freedom and Minnesota for Marriage charged that the change was misleading and doomed the measure to failure. The high court's decision in the *Limner v. Richie* case agreed that the state officials had overreached and "exceeded their authority" by overturning the clearly stated will of the legislature. In November, Minnesota voters will be able to vote on the measure.

Atheist Group Challenges Religious Liberty Nationwide

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, a Wisconsin-based atheist group, has garnered significant media coverage in recent weeks for a string of assaults on religion. The group has publicly opposed the inclusion of the 9/11 cross (cross shaped beams from the World Trade Center ruins) in a public museum, school led prayers prior to public school football games in Mississippi, and the [feeding](#) of Georgia high school football players by area churches prior to games. They contend that the inclusion of the 9/11 cross constitutes an establishment of religion. In the Mississippi case, they preemptively sent 150 letters to public schools threatening litigation if prayers were offered before games. Finally, even though several of the team members attend the churches voluntarily providing the meals, FFRF maintains that feeding football players at churches is an "egregious violation." Christian legal experts familiar with the cases opine that the group's aim is really to push Christianity out of the public space, not merely preventing an establishment of religion by the government.

Fined for Their Faith

After a [protracted](#) legal battle, a Vermont family has decided to pay fines rather than continue to fight liberal activists with "unlimited resources." The American Civil Liberties Union and the Vermont Human Rights Commission have vigorously attacked Vermont-based inn owners who expressed religious objections about hosting a lesbian wedding reception. While the owners have a stated policy of disclosing their beliefs and serving everyone, an unscrupulous employee incorrectly informed the plaintiffs that their reception could not be hosted at the inn and then proceeded to steer the couple toward her own business. That unfortunate incident resulted in years of litigation for the business owners. This week, they settled with the aggrieved parties and agreed to pay \$30,000 dollars (\$10,000 to the commission and \$20,000 to the couple). Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Counsel Byron Babione opined that "It is unfortunate when a state agency teams up with the ACLU to harass and punish a private family business over its owners' constitutionally protected thoughts and beliefs."

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Christians in Egypt Endure Crucifixions](#)

[Baltimore Still Challenging Pro-Life Pregnancy Centers](#)

[Kansas Planned Parenthood Case Ended](#)