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“Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime and pure (and) which insures to the good eternal happiness, are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security for the duration of free governments.”

Charles Carroll, Signer of the Declaration of Independence

“Education Panacea or Prescription for Disaster? The Coming Universal Preschool Push”

President Obama’s Administration has made strong claims that providing education from the “cradle to career” for all children is the morally right thing for the government to do. Additionally, the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the Student Loan Forgiveness bill (H.R. 3221), which not only allows the Federal government to take over all student loans but also allocates [\\$8 billion](#) to early childhood education. However, despite the claims of many government officials that now is the time to provide universal pre-K, evidence showing benefits of federal involvement is unsubstantial and rather faulty.

At the annual AACCS Legislative Conference last week, Lindsey Burke, a Research Assistant in Domestic Policies at the Heritage Foundation, presented ten arguments against the push for federal involvement in early education in a lecture entitled, “Education Panacea or Prescription for Disaster? The Coming Universal Preschool Push.” Lindsey has conducted substantial research of early education programs across the country, including an [extensive study of the Georgia and Oklahoma universal pre-K programs](#).

Lindsey introduced her arguments by stating that 80% of 4-year-old children in America are already enrolled in a pre-K program. In fact, since 1964, pre-K enrollment has increased over 180% and continues to grow. Of the twenty percent of those children who are not currently enrolled in a pre-K program, many are either eligible for programs that already exist in states, such as HeadStart, and choose not to enroll, or they are simply unaware of the fact of their eligibility. This begs the question of a real and legitimate need for a federal takeover of preschool.

The first argument that Lindsey made is the threat of government-directed curricula that could be imposed on the 28% of early childcare that takes place through churches. Competing with a “free” government school could force many existing pre-schools to comply with a universal program which in turn would cause more regulations and infringements that could threaten the school’s autonomy and mission. For example, Lindsey noted that “in Georgia, a state which has had universal preschool since 1993, faith-based providers have had to comply with additional regulations, such as certification and continuous reporting to the state.” Lindsey continued, “Faith-based providers and church groups in Georgia must submit accreditation inspection reports to the Georgia Department of Education, and the Department may rescind accreditation if a center fails to comply with any of the state’s regulations.” Threatening the autonomy, mission, hiring rights, and religious content, of faith-based schools are just some of the problems many will be faced with if a universal program is put in place.

In addition, countless studies have shown strong evidence that quality parenting is by far the preeminent factor in a child’s future achievements. Supporters of universal pre-K will often point to the children from low-income families who have benefited from pre-K programs as the reason to provide universal pre-K. Yet, this does not give reason for a blanket program which targets all families, when evidence is clear that quality parenting

greatly impacts a child's reading, math, and vocabulary through 5th grade. While many are striving to decrease the student to teacher ratios, nothing will ever be found that could replace the one to one ratio of a parent and child.

Her next argument considered the negative behavioral effects for children who had been enrolled in pre-K, Lindsey pointed out that "preschoolers in state-funded programs are expelled at three times the rate of K- 12 students nationally, with those children enrolled in full-day programs being more likely to be expelled than children in half-day programs." She also cited studies conducted by Stanford University and the University of California, which revealed "negative socialization in the areas of externalizing behaviors, interpersonal skills, and self-control" for children who had been enrolled in preschool centers.

Lindsey also pointed out that [little academic achievement](#) can be evidenced by a child's early education. In states where government funded programs have been held as a "gold standard," little academic achievement has been evidenced in reading and performance, and in Oklahoma, the records show a decline. The theory that pre-school is also an investment for the future is faulted by the findings that as preschools increased by 180% since the 1960's, graduation rates remain relatively stagnant and at some points declining, making many question the logic behind pouring billions into early childhood education as an investment for the future.

Additional arguments Lindsey made against a federally funded early education program included the following:

- "Early education spending is already very high"
- "Federal early education programs have been a failure."
- Claims of the benefits of government-run early education programs are "based on inconclusive research."
- A Federal early education program would cause a "considerable expansion of the federal role in education."
- A Federal early education program would "create an unnecessary subsidy for middle- and upper-income families."

Perhaps the greatest concern and argument against the case for government preschool programs is the "crowding-out" of the private sector as the federal role and involvement in a child's education increases. Not only would increased regulation and certification greatly impact the private sector, but there is no competing with a "free" option. This would be a huge detriment to not only the tax-payers of America, but also to the parents' choice of education for their child. With the initialization of a "free" option in which parents would be paying through their tax-dollars, the private sector would unquestionably be crowded out as was the case when universal kindergarten was introduced in the 1960's and 1970's. According to Lindsey, "Government-funded universal preschool will disadvantage private providers and will ultimately limit choice for parents."

In talking with legislators on Capitol Hill and their staff, many are unaware of the [concerns](#) that universal pre-k poses. Many want to "help" the children and have not been directed to the research that shows federal and state involvement often harms the child and the role of parents. It is necessary that Congress and this Administration stop supporting and promoting plans and initiatives without consulting the data and research first.

Quotes and figures documented from a lecture given by Lindsey Burke during the annual AACCS Legislative Conference. To receive a transcript of the entire speech, please email sgriffith@aaccs.org.

ENDA Hearing

The GLBT community came out in full force to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act at the full committee hearing on Wednesday. The bill [in its present form](#) would essentially add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to be added to the list of "protected classes" under Title VII of the Civil Rights act of 1964, which currently prohibits discrimination by employers on the basis of an individual's race, color, religion, sex, disability, age, or national origin.

Congressman Barney Frank and Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, both openly gay, testified before the committee along with six other witnesses who supported the bill, including Stuart J. Ishimaru, Acting Chairman of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission who stated in his opening remarks, "It is [a privilege](#) to represent the Obama Administration... to voice the Administration's strong support for legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This legislation will provide sorely needed

and long overdue federal protection for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals, who unfortunately still face widespread employment discrimination.”

While a religious exemption is recorded by the law, many conservative and faith-based institutions are concerned that adding “gender identity” to the list of protected classes is not only unlawful but detrimental to an employer’s conscience and rights. According to Craig Parshall, Senior Vice-President and General Counsel to the National Religious Broadcasters Association and the only witness called on who opposed ENDA, if the bill were to become law it “would impose a substantial and [crippling burden](#) on religious organizations, both those who are non-profit groups, as well as faith-based institutions and enterprises which operate commercially.” Craig Parshall went on to comment on how the religious exemption would subject “religious organizations to a crazy-quilt of inconsistent decisions that have been rendered by the courts in construing the exemption language of Title VII. This approach will stultify and confuse religious groups and lead to endless, expensive, and harassing litigation.” He added, “What has resulted is a sad pattern of inconsistent and complex decisions which render very scant religious freedom to faith groups but which have sent a chilling pall over their activities not to mention their budgets.”

Historically, the protected classes in Title VII include those peoples who have experienced pervasive discrimination resulting in economic and political disenfranchisement and who have an immutable characteristic. While many claim that an individual is “born” gay, evidence and research conducted to prove such claims have [failed to produce accurate and legitimate results](#). The fact that individuals have actually “converted” and walked away from the homosexual lifestyle casts doubt on the immutable characteristic argument. Furthermore, the GLBT community does not fit the description of a group that is “economically disenfranchised” and therefore in need of a “protected class” status. On the websites for many of the GLBT groups, they claim that gays are wealthier and better educated than most straight Americans. In fact, they often use this argument when promoting the issue of adoption for gay couples. Lastly, the group must prove its political powerlessness. As states battle continuously to defend traditional marriage and the current Administration has nominated several homosexual advocates to prominent positions, it is difficult to see the powerlessness this group exemplifies in the political arena. Though anecdotal stories may be told that demonstrate an individual’s struggles and that person’s legitimate claim to meet the above criteria, the arguments that characterize the entire GLBT community as in need of extra protections are not only faulty but illogical.

In addition, the concerns raised about the threats ENDA poses to religious liberty of individual employers and employees are legitimate and must be considered by those in power. [As noted by Dr. Frank Wright](#), president and CEO of National Religious Broadcasters, “It purports to address discrimination, all the while visiting a pernicious viewpoint discrimination against people of deep religious conviction.” He also noted, “In the final analysis, ENDA is an attempt to subjugate First Amendment freedoms while advancing the political orthodoxy of the liberal left.”

Though the hearing was met with overwhelming support for the bill, the fight continues as the committee begins to schedule a time for a mark-up of the bill. It will then be voted on by committee Members, and if passed will then proceed to the House floor for a vote.

To watch the full hearing or to read more of the witnesses’ testimonies please click [here](#).

Conservatives Vote Values

Last week, nearly [two thousand conservatives](#) and pro-family advocates flocked to the Nation’s Capitol as the Family Research Council (FRC) kicked off their 4th annual Values Voter Summit. The event was hosted by FRC and was Co-sponsored by pro-family and pro-life organizations including Dr. James Dobson’s Focus on the Family, Gary Bauer’s American Values, and Rev. Don Wildmon’s the American Family Association. The Heritage Foundation along with the National Organization for Marriage also partnered with the event. In a letter given to all attendees, Tony Perkins, President of FRC asserted, “Some political pundits say that ‘values’ are passé and should have no bearing on the political process. We’re to prove them wrong. Millions of Americans still believe in God, the sanctity of human life, marriage as the union of a man and woman, religious liberties

and the rule of law. And we will not be silent.” Distinguished speakers from various organizations and political offices articulated the necessity and urgency for a return of our nation to faith, family, and freedom. Governor Mike Huckabee, Governor Mitt Romney, House Minority Leader John Boehner, Bill O’Reilly, Senator Jim DeMint, Congressman Mike Pence, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell are just a few of the all-star line-up that focused on issues related to faith and family.

The conference consisted of sessions that discussed the topics of Healthcare, Embryonic Stem Cell Research, American Defense, and Family Values in a digital age. Break out sessions were also available for attendees and focused in on issues such as illegal immigration, adoption, marriage, religious persecution, and abortion. Panels were held on all these issues with experts in the related fields giving the attendees the facts, statistics, and solutions to many of the problems and threats posed on the American family and our freedoms.

Another highlight of the event was the straw poll that was conducted, an indicator for the next Presidential nominee within the conservative movement. Governor Mike Huckabee came out on top with Mitt Romney falling behind. Other “candidates” included Congressman Mike Pence and Governor Sarah Palin. One of the greatest moments of the event, was the honoring of Phyllis Schlafly, founder of Eagle Forum at the Faith, Family and Freedom Gala Dinner. Mrs. Schlafly has done tremendous work in the conservative movement for decades. She was the greatest influence in the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970’s and continues to fight for family, marriage, defense, and the unborn to this day. Her organization has had a prominent voice on Capitol Hill and with many Presidencies and her achievements were well recognized.

The Summit was a success as many left encouraged and ready to take a strong stand for the principles and values which the Nation was founded upon. Many were also encouraged to see the number of young people who attended and their interest and desire to be involved in promoting Biblical ideals and values.

In Case You Missed It:

[Bill Introduced Seeks to Repeal DOMA](#)

[Senator Baucus' Bill NOT a Compromise on Abortion](#)

[Kentucky Poll Shows Overwhelming Support for School Choice](#)



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