



**The Washington Flyer**  
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*Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good.*

**Calvin Coolidge**

**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.

**Wheaton College v. HHS Mandate Case**

On August 31, Wheaton College appealed the dismissal of their lawsuit against the Health and Human Services mandate. Since the case was dismissed because of a technicality, the central question remains unresolved: Should employers be required to provide contraception, abortion-inducing drugs, and sterilization for their employees or be forced to pay penalties for non-compliance. For the third time in seven months, Administration officials rewrote the so-called “safe harbor” provision, which temporarily shields qualifying employers from having to comply with the mandate for one year. The changes led to the dismissal of the lawsuit, but left Wheaton with potential fines of 1.4 million dollars a year, as well as the possibility of lawsuits leveled against them under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). Critics deride the implication that an additional year to comply will help employers overcome their strongly held religious beliefs or moral objections. This lawsuit highlights the concerns set forth in a [letter](#) from 149 Protestant and evangelical groups sent to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. In this letter, the signatories, including the American Association of Christian Schools, expressed concern about the two-tier approach to religious freedom created by the mandate. The unprecedented, narrowness of the religious exemption in the mandate only exempts churches and houses of worship in most cases. Religiously affiliated organizations and business owners do not meet the strict, four-part test required to gain an exemption and are, therefore, left with no recourse but legal action.

**Washington State Marriage Battle**

As the November elections near, the battle to redefine marriage is being waged in several states. Voters in the States of Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, and Washington will be given a chance to weigh in on this crucial issue. This week, [controversy](#) erupted in the State of Washington over the legal role that churches are allowed to play in support of ballot efforts. Catholic churches planned to take pew collections to support a “no” vote on R-74, the same-sex marriage ballot measure. The Associated Press and other news outlets published an article entitled “Catholic Churches Can’t Collect Donations to

Overturn Gay Marriage Law, Washington State Rules.” Lori Anderson, spokeswoman for the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission, insisted that the report was misleading and that the churches had not been banned from collecting money. The churches had been sent the standard notification letter outlining the proper procedure for collecting monies from parishioners. In the past, church collections have significantly helped traditional marriage campaigns. Currently, the same-sex marriage lobby has [out-raised](#) the traditional marriage advocates 12-1 by collecting over six million in donations.

### **Nearly 900 Districts Intend to Compete for Race to the Top-Districts**

The Department of Education announced that 893 school districts intend to apply for the latest Race to the Top competitive grant program. Approximately, fifteen to twenty winners will be awarded grants between 5 and 40 million dollars, totaling 400 million dollars. The intent to apply is non-binding but will allow the Department to plan for the upcoming applications. No districts in Wyoming and North Dakota indicated intent to apply. Many of the larger districts (Los Angeles, New York and Chicago) have applied with the notable exceptions of the Miami-Dade and Atlanta school districts. Education officials must demonstrate a coordinated effort to formulate personalized learning plans for each student. The applications must be received by October 30 and all funds must be disbursed by December 31, 2012.

### **ACT Results Hold Steady**

For the first time since the test’s inception, over half of the nation’s seniors took the ACT (American College Testing) exam. In August, the [results](#) for the class of 2012 were released to the public. The ACT exam covers English, math, reading, and science. The average score remained unchanged at 21.1 out of 36 possible points. There was a slight increase in science and math scores that indicate college readiness. Experts credit a renewed focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) subjects for the positive gains.

### **California Contemplates Controversial Measures**

Conservatives are urging California Governor Jerry Brown to veto several bills that have serious implications on both parental rights and the pro-life cause. Parental rights advocates contend that A.B. 1856, A.B. 2109, and S.B. 1476 will severely curtail the ability of parents to choose what is in the best interest of their child. The bills would force foster parents to positively support LGBT lifestyles and cross-dressing, mandate certain vaccinations for all children (public, private, and homeschooled) regardless of parental objection, and determine that children can have three or more legal parents. Pro-life advocates are monitoring S.B. 623 which would reauthorize nurse practitioners, physician’s assistants, and nurse midwives to perform abortions. They argue that this practice could lead to permanent injury and even the death of pregnant women who experience complications as a result of the procedure. To follow these measures, [click here](#).

### **In Case You Missed It:**

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

[DNC Reinstates God and Jerusalem in Party Platform](#)

[Fifth Circuit Issues Two Life-Saving Decisions in One Week](#)

[A Better Educated Public=A More Pro-Life Public](#)