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He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Jim Elliot

Education Secretary Addresses the National Press Club

In an October 2 [speech](#) entitled “Moving Forward with Focus,” Education Secretary Arne Duncan outlined both the reforms and future goals of the Department of Education. He stressed that the “pathway to the middle class runs through our classrooms.” The Secretary also emphasized the voluntary adoption of college-and-career-ready standards by 45 states and the District of Columbia, robust accountability systems, an increased number of Pell Grant recipients (10 million), greater college enrollment and completion rates, and better “labor management collaboration” between teachers and school systems. Secretary Duncan touted the effect of legislation such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the American Jobs Act on educational outcomes and teacher retention. He cautioned against proposed reductions in education funding. While the Secretary called for a bipartisan commitment to education, he denounced those who favored a balanced budget approach which includes education cuts and he reiterated the President’s call for increased investment. Finally, Secretary Duncan promised to “double down” on promising efforts such as simplifying student aid information, promoting teachers’ use of technology, recruiting more STEM teachers, lessening the skills gap for underemployed and unemployed adults, personalizing educational approaches, and enacting the DREAM Act. He also noted the Department’s desire to leave decision making at the local level and pass few federal mandates. While the AACCS shares that aim, many of the reforms touted by the DOE link funding to the adoption of favored reforms which essentially increase the federal footprint.

Private Schools Feel Common Core Pressure

Education Week, the American education news site of record, has been chronicling the [Common Core Standard](#) movement since its meteoric rise since 2009. This week, [analysts](#) published a comprehensive article which focuses on the effect of the CCS on private schools across the country. The CCS consists of uniform standards in math and English for K-12 curriculum. Since 47 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the standards, representatives from the major private schools associations cite “practical considerations” such as textbook offerings, teacher preparation, new assessments, college entrance examinations, and the credibility factor when considering how to adjust their curriculum. Among private school groups, Catholic schools have been the first to adopt the Common Core Standards on a widespread scale with over 100 Roman Catholic dioceses adopting the Common Core. Additionally, Catholic educational leaders have formed the Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative to ensure that the standards integration includes distinctive, doctrinal elements and supports church teachings. Others such as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have also signaled that they will be assimilating the standards into their curriculums. However, some groups are hesitant to join this movement; a spokesman for the National Association of Independent Schools stated that “decision-making through a national effort runs counter to our very being.” Dr. Jeff Walton, AACCS Executive Director, noted that while there is “no great track record for national reform efforts” some schools will

feel the need to align with the standards because of external pressures such as credit transfer, voucher program inclusion, and college admission.

Baptist Colleges Sue over HHS Mandate

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty reports that there are now 33 [cases](#) against the HHS preventive services mandate. The mandate, which stems from Obamacare, stipulates that employers must provide abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, and sterilization without cost to employees or face steep fines. At a February 10 press conference, President Obama proposed a hypothetical accommodation which failed to address the fundamental concerns of religious employers. Meanwhile, agency officials entered the mandate in the Federal Register with no change. [Polls](#) indicate that a majority of Americans believe that the government should not [force](#) employers to offer services that violate their conscience. This week, East Texas Baptist University (ETBU) and Houston Baptist University (HBU) filed the latest lawsuit against the mandate. Spokesmen for the schools estimate that noncompliance with the regulation would cost them 10 million dollars annually per school. Eric Rassbach, Deputy General Counsel for The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, stated that “Baptists in America, by virtue of their history, are particularly sensitive to coercive government actions that infringe on religious liberty.” On October 20, Stand Up for Religious Freedom rallies will be held across the country. To find out more about this effort, [click here](#).

Justice Department Promotes Taxpayer Funded Abortion in Arizona

Once again, the Administration is [attempting](#) to force a state to continue funding Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers. Previously, the Administration threatened to withhold millions in Medicaid funding for Indiana and [Texas](#). In New Hampshire, the Department of Health and Human Services circumvented the Executive Committee decision to withhold funding and directly funded abortion providers. Last week, Arizona was sued by the Department of Justice which alleged that the Whole Woman’s Health Funding Priority Act of Arizona (HB 2800) was unconstitutional. Lawyers for the Administration argued that the law violates federal directives prohibiting state’s Medicaid allocation decisions. Arizona’s Solicitor General argued that there is a precedent for establishing “meaningful provider qualifications” to receive funding. Furthermore, he argued that Planned Parenthood could stop performing abortions in order to qualify for the funding. The Susan B. Anthony List and the Alliance Defending Freedom have helped to craft the model legislation that many states are using to [defund](#) Planned Parenthood, the nation’s largest abortion provider.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[More Teachers Would Benefit Unions More Than Students](#)

[Texas School Punishes Students Who Refuse to Wear Tracking Device](#)

[New York City’s Oldest and Largest Abortion Clinic Stops Performing Abortions](#)

[Iran Imprisons Lawyer for Defending Christians](#)

