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*“Had the people, during the Revolution, had a suspicion of any attempt to war against Christianity, that Revolution would have been strangled in its cradle.... In this age, there can be no substitute for Christianity.... That was the religion of the founders of the republic and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants.”*

United States Congress, House Judiciary Committee, 1854

### AACS Attends School Choice Conference

The Legislative office of the American Association of Christian Schools attended and participated this week in the [inaugural conference](#) on “School Choice and the American Family: A Moral and Civic Imperative,” hosted by the American Center for School Choice. The conference was held at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. and addressed issues regarding school choice: (1) its “moral and civic imperatives,” (2) the necessity for school choice, and (3) the “legal and political precedents” for the practical implementation of school choice. Speakers at the conference included both supporters and opponents of school choice, allowing all arguments to be heard.

The American Center for School Choice states its mission is “to expand public support for families to choose the schools they believe will best serve their children.” They believe that “parental responsibility is in itself a basic human good, and parental choice in education is a cherished freedom in the United States, widely available and widely practiced by those whose resources allow them to exercise it.” Maureen Wiebe, Legislative Director of AACS, stated, “The conference was a great opportunity to show how choice can change a child’s life. AACS is a strong supporter of choice and the right for parents to choose what is best in their child’s education.”

### A Pro-Life Victory Late in the Night

Late into the night this past Saturday, House members voted on and passed the health care reform bill after a battle was won to include pro-life language. Saturday was a busy day on the hill, as the President visited to bolster confidence and to overcome obstacles hindering the vote. After much deliberation, House Democrats allowed a vote on two amendments—a pro-life amendment which would prohibit federal funds from being used to fund abortions, and the Republican alternative health care reform bill.

While the Republican alternative bill was debated for an hour, it ultimately failed during the vote. The pro-life amendment, which was a bipartisan effort and included 40 pro-life Democrats, placed many conservative, pro-life members in a quandary. Though many members wished to vote for the pro-life amendment, they were concerned that if the amendment were to pass, then surely the entire health care bill would pass; yet if the amendment failed, then the entire bill could possibly fail. Pro-life members were unsure of their decision, and many considered voting “present” rather than actually voting in favor of the amendment in order to ultimately defeat the bill. However, when it came time to vote, all but one pro-life member voted in favor of the measure to ensure the health care bill would protect the unborn, giving way to the passage and [pro-life victory](#).

Republican leader John Boehner (R-OH), Republican Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA), and Republican Conference Chairman Mike Pence (R-IN) stated, “We believe in the sanctity of life, and the Stupak-Pitts Amendment addresses a moral issue of the utmost concern. It will limit abortion in the United States. Because of this, while we strongly and deeply oppose the underlying bill, we decided to stand with Life and support Stupak-Pitts.” The statement further elaborated stating, “The danger of this bill passing without critical pro-life language was too great a risk to do otherwise. Indeed, a number of Democrat supporters of Stupak-Pitts had privately indicated to many of our colleagues that all they needed for ‘cover’ was a vote, and they would support final passage even if the amendment failed. To be clear, the Stupak-Pitts Amendment’s passage is the right thing to do. We believe you just don’t play politics with life.”

All eyes now lie on the Senate, as they begin to work on their version of the health care bill. While no language has been made available, concerns are ever present regarding the life issue. Many are also worried that if the Senate passes their version without pro-life language, when the bill goes to conference with the House version, the pro-life language that currently exists will be stripped away. During the debate on the pro-life amendment, many members were concerned that once the bill was in conference pro-life language would be easily stripped away. Republican leaders also mentioned this in their statement, “When this bill is in conference with the Senate, the pro-life majority in the House of Representatives must ensure that this important amendment is in the final legislation. If it does not, this same strong majority must defeat the bill.”

While many liberal members have made statements opposing the inclusion any pro-life measures in the final bill, pro-life members are firm and committed to the very end. In fact, Rep. Stupak, a leader for the pro-life Democrats, stated [after the votes](#), “We won because [the Democrats] need us. If they are going to summarily dismiss us by taking the pen to that language, … if they double-cross us, there will be 40 people who won’t vote with them the next time they need us—and that could be the final version of this bill.”

### **White House Faith-Based Office Encourages Religious Identity**

Shortly after taking office, President Obama signed an executive order that modified the White House Faith-Based office but did not change the underlying policies. Just this past week, the “Reform of the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Taskforce” issued guidelines which included language from an executive order signed by former President George W. Bush which emphasized “the fact that religious organizations receiving direct federal aid may maintain their institutional religious identity.” It further stated, “They may use religious terms in their organizational names, select board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in mission statements and other organizational documents.”

This language was specifically designed to allow any religious organization receiving federal funds to discriminate in its hiring practices in order to maintain its mission statement and religious integrity. The taskforce urged the administration to adapt the same underlying principles and guidelines set forth by the previous administration in order to preserve a religious institution’s identity. Though the President has been a supporter of anti-discriminatory laws in regards to hiring (such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which is currently sitting in Congress), these guidelines if adopted and used would protect religious organizations and secure religious freedom. Those [opposing](#) these guidelines have stated their strong disapproval of the language and are continuing to pressure the President and his Administration to remove such guidelines.

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

[“You’re Teaching My Kid What?”](#)

[Abortion Clinic Director Resigns after Years of Prayer](#)

Editor: Maureen Wiebe  
Staff Writer: Sarah Griffith  
★ Legislative Office, 119 C Street SE, Washington, DC 20003  
Phone: 202.547.2991 • Fax: 202.547.2992 ★