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There is no maxim, in my opinion, which is more liable to be misapplied, and which therefore, more needs elucidation, than the current one, that the interest of the majority is the political standard of right and wrong.

James Madison, 4th President of the United States

National School Choice Week

A coalition of school choice advocates have designated January 23-29, 2011, as [National School Choice Week](#). Their primary goals are informing the public about the wide array of educational options available and the failure of the public school system to address its inefficiencies adequately. Advocates propose the use of tools such as vouchers and tuition tax credits to encourage parents to find alternatives for their children. Forums for sharing charter school success stories and growth ideas are being held around the country. Screenings for documentaries such as [The Cartel](#) and [Waiting for Superman](#) are also being shown to audiences to demonstrate the need for less expensive and more effective educational alternatives.

House of Representatives Rules Change

In an effort to be more transparent and accountable to the American people, the new Congress has passed several [significant procedural rule changes](#) that will alter the way that Congress conducts business. Speaker of the House John Boehner has stated that he wants the bulk of bill writing to be done in the committees. Congressmen and their staffers will be given more time to consider and read proposed legislation. In the past, bills that totaled several thousand pages in length were voted on within a day or two after they were made public which led to unwelcome surprises that were discovered later much to the chagrin of some previous supporters. Now information such as legislation markups, committee voting records, actual bill text, committee member meeting attendance and even hearings will all be posted and available online within predetermined time limits. Efforts to limit the contact between legislators and lobbyists have been made with rules that prohibit former Congressman who have become registered lobbyists from using the House gymnasium as they were previously allowed to do. Also, the bill funding tool known as “pay go” has been dropped in favor of a “cut as you go” approach. This will force bill writers to cut spending in one area in order to justify raising it in another area. Probably the most significant rule change is the requirement that a “Constitutional Authority Statement” be submitted with each piece of legislation introduced to prove the Constitutionality of the bill.

March for Life Rally

Since January 22, 1974, the [March for Life Rally](#) has been held in the nation’s capitol to commemorate the infamous Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* and the subsequent millions of abortions. The leaders of the march have deliberately kept the movement “nonprofit, nonpartisan and nonsectarian” since its inception. Attendance has risen from 20,000 in 1974 to 200,000 over the past few years. Although events like 9/11 and weather related issues have caused lower attendance in a few instances, marchers’ attendance and resolve has remained strong. This year, Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, mother of five and foster mother to 23 children, will deliver the keynote address at the Rose Dinner which is the last event in the three-day pro-life rally. For more information on the times of the march and the events of the three days, [click here](#).

New Congress by the Numbers

There are many [new faces](#) among the 535 members of the 112th Congress. Of the 435 House of Representative members, 242 members are Republicans and 193 are Democrats. The 100-member Senate is comprised of 51 Democrats, 47 Republicans, and 2 Independents who usually vote with the Democrats. There are 94 freshmen total: 85 Republicans and 9 Democrats.

Excerpts from Speaker of the House John Boehner's [Speech](#) - Opening Session of the 112th Congress

“We gather here today at a time of great challenges. Nearly one in ten of our neighbors are looking for work. Health care costs are still rising for families and small businesses. Our spending has caught up with us, and our debt will soon eclipse the size of our entire economy. Hard work and tough decisions will be required of the 112th Congress. No longer can we fall short. No longer can we kick the can down the road. The people voted to end business as usual, and today we begin carrying out their instructions.”

“Our aim will be to give government back to the people. In seeking this goal, we will part with some of the rituals that have come to characterize this institution under majorities Republican and Democratic alike. We will dispense with the conventional wisdom that bigger bills are always better; that fast legislating is good legislating; that allowing additional amendments and open debate makes the legislative process ‘less efficient’ than our forefathers intended. These misconceptions have been the basis for the rituals of modern Washington. The American people have not been well served by them.”

“We will not always get it right. We will not always agree on what is right. A great deal of scar tissue has built up on both sides of the aisle. We cannot ignore that, nor should we. My belief has always been, we can disagree without being disagreeable to each other. That’s why it is critical this institution operate in a manner that permits a free exchange of ideas, and resolves our honest differences through a fair debate and a fair vote. We may have different—sometimes, very different—ideas for how to go about achieving the common good, but it is our shared goal. It is why we serve.”

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Judges Rule Cross at California Park Unconstitutional](#)

[The Unborn Paradox](#)



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

