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*Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side;
my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right.*

Abraham Lincoln

State Of Education

Education experts are watching to see if the President's [State of the Union](#) address next Tuesday will outline a renewed focus on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly referred to as ESEA. Since President Lyndon B. Johnson's authorization of ESEA in 1965, the government's role in education has increased exponentially. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been very vocal in his calls for a revision of the current version of ESEA better known as "No Child Left Behind." In light of the almost unattainable 2014 deadline for 100% proficiency in math and English, education proponents advocate a revision of the controversial standards. Senior White House staffers have publicly stated that education reform will be a priority in the 112th Congress, and lawmakers from both parties agree that a change is needed in the current law. But the [numerous intraparty differences](#) on how to address these issues threaten any real reform. Early in his administration, President Obama introduced an ESEA blueprint that linked teacher evaluations that warranted positive incentives to student test scores and that stressed college and career preparation over the ability to pass standardized tests. Teachers unions such as the influential National Education Association (3.2 million members) opposed teacher incentives based on student performance citing a host of mitigating factors that could result in low student scores and teachers being punished unfairly. Furthermore, the President's \$4 billion dollar "Race to the Top" program was criticized for tying federal funds to states' adoption of national standards. Pundits doubt whether any attempt at meaningful education reform can garner enough bipartisan support without the President's backing. Many are looking to the upcoming State of the Union to gauge the President's level of commitment to tackling this complex issue.

January is Life Month

Next week marks the 38th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. According to the [Alliance Defense Fund's statistics](#), there have been more than 3,000 abortions every day since that momentous decision resulting in over 49 million deaths (equal to the combined population of California, Oregon, Nevada and Arizona) since 1973. Every year, rallies such as the March for Life are held to bring public attention to this troubling issue. Pro-life watchdog groups are constantly monitoring legislative attempts to insert language into bills that mandates taxpayer funding of abortion or violate conscience protections for healthcare professionals who do not wish to perform abortion procedures. In the lame duck session, bill riders such as the [Burris Amendment](#) (which would have allowed taxpayer subsidized abortions for any reason on military bases in the U.S. and any of our military bases around the world) were removed from bills such as the National Defense Authorization Act. This pro-life victory occurred in no small part because over 180 members of Congress signed onto a letter urging the House and Senate leadership not to allow any further expansion of current abortion law such as would have occurred with the attachment of the amendment to the must-pass defense bill. On Thursday, the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus introduced the "[No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion Act](#)" (H.R. 3), a bipartisan effort to unilaterally limit taxpayer funding of abortion by combining several existing provisions into one piece of legislation. The newly elected Congress is said to have one of the most pro-life

memberships in history, which hopefully will result in the passage of more measures that protect the rights of the unborn child.

The **March for Life Rally** will take place on January 22, 2011, when thousands of pro-life marchers will gather in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the infamous Supreme Court decision *Roe v Wade* which legalized abortion. For more information click on this link, [March For Life Rally](#).

House Votes to Repeal Healthcare Law

On Wednesday night, the House of Representatives voted 245 – 189 (3 Democrats joined all 242 Republicans) to [repeal the controversial healthcare law](#) passed in December 2009. Polling data gauging the public's view on repealing the entire law or amending certain parts seems to be unclear. Democrats tout the plan's merits such as lower costs on prescription drugs, expanded Medicaid benefits for the poverty stricken, extended coverage for young people under their parents' plans, and mandatory coverage for those with pre-existing conditions. Republicans maintain that while some of the reforms are positive there are still two major concerns: the constitutionality of the individual mandate forcing people to buy healthcare or pay a fine and the exponentially increased financial burden this law will place on the federal government. Critics of the Republican effort to completely repeal the plan have suggested that this vote is largely symbolic and a futile attempt to follow through on empty campaign rhetoric. Republicans maintain that they are acting on the message they heard from the American people in the November elections and fulfilling their "Pledge to America." The healthcare repeal would require at least 60 votes in the Senate which seems unlikely since the Republicans have only 47 seats in that chamber. Also, it seems unlikely that the President would repeal what many view as his signature piece of legislation. Notwithstanding these significant obstacles, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor has issued a [direct challenge](#) to Senate Majority leader Harry Reid to bring the repeal up for a vote in the Senate.

National School Choice Week Kickoff

On Thursday, January 20, 2011, the inaugural emphasis on school choice will commence in Washington, D.C. In over [150 events](#) throughout the country during [National School Choice Week](#) (Jan. 23-29), school choice advocates will illustrate the systemic deficiencies of the current public school structure and highlight viable solutions to these persistent issues. [Speaker of the House John Boehner and other Congressional leaders](#) have posted videos and expressed support for school choice and its benefits. To learn more about events in your area [click here](#) for more information.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Frozen in Disbelief: TX Woman Leaves Planned Parenthood After Watching Abortion](#)

[The Future of Education Is Already Here](#)

[A Missional Approach to Education](#)

