



THE WASHINGTON FLYER

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

The Washington Flyer
February 17, 2012

Success in life is founded upon attention to the small things rather than to the large things; to the everyday things nearest to us rather than to the things that are remote and uncommon.

Booker T. Washington

President's 2013 Budget Request

On Monday, President Obama unveiled his annual [budget](#). Although his budget proposal is not expected to be enacted, the funding requests included in the budget indicate the [priorities](#) and [commitments](#) of the President. The President's last budget proposal for 2012 was [voted](#) down 0-97. The Department of Education 2013 budget request was 69.8 billion, which is an [increase](#) of 3.5%. Notably [absent](#) from the President's request was any funding for the highly successful D.C. Opportunity Scholarship (DCOSP) program or for abstinence education. Last April, the DCOSP was reauthorized due to the tireless efforts of Speaker of the House John Boehner. Since Congress is charged with appropriating funds for the District, the program will still receive funding. Despite the documented success and significant cost savings (\$8,000 per OSP student versus \$18,000 per public school student), the program would be eliminated according to the President's budget. Participants in the DCOSP have a 91% graduation rate in comparison with their public school counterparts that have an abysmal 55% rate of attainment. According to the American Federation for Children [press release](#), the DCOSP program recently received over 500 new applications at the first signup event for this year. The Health and Human Services [budget](#) would also zero out funding for abstinence-based sexual education programs. The current funding ratio is 20:1 in favor of contraceptive-based programs.

The higher education portion of the President's [budget](#) would establish a one billion dollar Race to the Top to reward states that implement reforms that provide quality higher education programs while maintaining low costs for students, and a "First in the World" grant program to enable American universities to compete with their global counterparts. The budget also proposes a modest increase (\$85) to the Pell Grant which would increase the amount to \$5,635 in financial aid per qualifying student. According to the estimates, the national [debt](#) will increase by an additional trillion dollars by the end of 2012. The budget also called for an increase in [community](#) college funding. To view the budget proposal [click here](#).

NYC Churches Fight for Equal Access

The Alliance Defense Fund is continuing to fight for the right of churches to have equal access to public buildings. The New York Board of Education allows a variety of organizations to use school facilities after hours with the exception of churches. Approximately 68 [churches](#) have lost their meeting spaces as a result of this selective ruling. Congregants are allowed to pray and sing but not "worship" in services conducted in public facilities. The state senate has passed an amendment that would repeal this ban, but the measure has not yet been adopted by both chambers. The displaced churches await a resolution to this matter. To read more about this case [click here](#).

Washington State Marriage Update

Efforts are [underway](#) to overturn the recently signed SB 6239 which legalized same-sex marriage in Washington State on Monday. If the referendum effort is unsuccessful, the law will go into effect on June 7. Approximately 120,577 signatures must be gathered by June 6 in order to halt implementation of the law and place the measure on the November ballot

HHS Preventive Services Mandate Update

The uproar caused by the Health and Human Services preventive services mandate (a mandate originating from the 2010 healthcare law) has not died down after the Administration announced a so-called [“accommodation”](#) on Friday. Although the President stated that an accounting gimmick would allow insurance companies instead of employers to offer contraception, sterilization, and abortion inducing drugs to employees at “no cost,” the final rule published in the Federal Register on Friday remains unchanged. Throughout the debate, a variety of [misleading](#) figures have been offered by the proponents of the measure. The so-called “accommodation” raises a host of other questions such as cost transfer and the concerns of those groups who [self-insure](#) with programs such as Guidestone (insurance agency for over 200,000 Southern Baptists employees). Tony Perkins, Family Research Council president, issued a [statement](#) declaring that “this revised HHS mandate does nothing to change the fundamentally anti-religious, anti-conscience, and anti-life contraceptive mandate. It rather only creates some paperwork gimmicks that don't change the fact that religious employers who object to coverage of these services will now have to drop health insurance altogether to maintain their conscience and face severe penalties for doing so.” In a similar vein, [Jim Daly](#), Focus on the Family president, concluded that “there is a limit to what government can compel its citizens to do—and not do—particularly in matters of faith and freedom. It’s in the best interest of all Americans, of every ideological stripe, that it not be crossed.”

Minnesota School District Revises Bullying Guidelines

The Anoka-Hennepin school district, the largest school district in Minnesota, recently [voted](#) to amend the previous policy of teacher neutrality during the discussion of sexual orientation. After six students committed suicide within a two year period, the district adopted new bullying guidelines in 2010. The district is facing a barrage of litigation from former and current students who allege that the district did not do enough to protect them from harassment and mistreatment. Although the investigation concluded that bullying did not play a role in the suicides, plaintiffs seek an array of damages against the district. Teachers are now required to “foster a respectful learning environment for all students.” They are not required to adopt a particular viewpoint but facilitate positive discussions that affirm all students. The district spokesperson indicated that the student code of conduct may be revised to include harsher punishments for students who “go too far” during class discussions.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[The Truth about Planned Parenthood](#)

[Faith Life and Real Life](#)

[Mississippi Considers Controversial Corporal Punishment Bill](#)

[Planned Parenthood Bullies Catholic Food Pantry](#)