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“It is necessary for every American, with becoming energy to endeavor to stop the dissemination of principles evidently destructive of the cause for which they have bled. It must be the combined virtue of the rulers and of the people to do this, and to rescue and save their civil and religious rights from the outstretched arm of tyranny, which may appear under any mode or form of government”

Mercy Warren, Author, 1805

Health Care Update: “Deem and Scheme”

The President has yet again postponed his trip to Indonesia as Democrats on Capitol Hill continue to express optimism over the approaching health care vote, yet pro-life and blue-dog Democrats are still standing strong in opposition to the bill. While House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has stated that they will have the votes needed to pass healthcare reform by this Sunday, she has not completely scratched the unpopular method known as the “Slaughter rule” from the table. This procedure would require no up-or-down vote on the Senate bill, but would rather “deem” the bill passed. This would allow weary Democrats from conservative districts not to go on record as voting for the bill that includes Senate deals and no pro-life language. Though the “Slaughter rule” has been used before by both parties, it has never been used on a major policy issue that will completely revamp 1/6th of the U.S. economy. It has also never been used on an issue that does not have a majority of support from Congressional Members as well as no bipartisan support.

In an attempt to “[block](#)” this “Slaughter Solution” House Republicans proposed a resolution which would have required an up-or-down vote on healthcare legislation. “The ‘Slaughter Solution’ is the ultimate in Washington power grabs, a legislative ploy that lets Democrats defy the will of the American people while attempting to eliminate any trace of actually doing so,” stated House Minority leader John Boehner. “It shows you just how controversial this government takeover of health care has become that it takes a controversial maneuver just to vote on it. By supporting this resolution, Democrats can demonstrate that they will not try to hide from their constituents.” On Thursday, 28 Democrats joined all the Republicans in supporting this resolution; however, the resolution still failed by a vote of 223-203, allowing the Democratic to continue on their path using the “Slaughter Solution” as a viable measure to further their health care agenda.

Despite media accounts and interviews, Pelosi remains [optimistic](#) that she can garner the votes stating, “When we have a bill, then we will let you know about the votes. But when we bring the bill to the floor, we will have the votes.” This week, Rep. Kucinich (OH), a staunch liberal who opposed the bill because it did not include a public option, switched his vote to a “yes” after the President made a special visit with him in his home district.

Only time can tell when a vote will be called or if a vote will even occur, but two things are for sure, deals will continue to be made in order to garner support and the current Administration and Democrat leadership will persist to turn a deaf ear to the majority of Americans who oppose this bill.

ACTION: Individuals are asked to contact their Representative as well as the Pro-Life Democrats and encourage them to stand strong on Pro-Life principles and OPPOSE the Senate Bill.

President Introduces Blueprint for Education Reform

President Obama released this week his [blueprint](#) for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), stating, “We must raise the expectations for our students, for our schools, and for ourselves – this must be a national priority. We must ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for college and a career. A world-class education is also a moral imperative – the key to securing a more equal, fair, and just society.” Formerly known as No Child Left Behind, ESEA is perhaps one of the President’s biggest undertakings in education reform. The blueprint outlines the four principle areas in which the President and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan are seeking reform. They are as follows:

- (1) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness to ensure that every classroom has a great teacher and every school has a great leader;
- (2) Providing information to families to help them evaluate and improve their children’s schools, and to educators to help them improve their students’ learning;
- (3) Implementing college- and career-ready standards and developing improved assessments aligned with those standards; and
- (4) Improving student learning and achievement in America’s lowest-performing schools by providing intensive support and effective interventions.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan [defended](#) the blueprint in a hearing on Capitol Hill saying he believes that the changes made during reauthorization will move to “increase local control” and “raise standards” in what is “an unprecedented opportunity to reform our nation's schools...preparing all of our students for success in college and careers.” He focused on encouraging initiatives that would establish common standards between states and improving assessment methods. The Secretary also mentioned a need to focus on early childhood education in order to secure high graduation rates and college-ready students. In closing his speech before the education committees, the Secretary stated his belief that the federal role would change significantly with the reauthorization of ESEA: “This will be one of the most dramatic changes in the law's history. It will fundamentally change the federal role in education. We will move from being a compliance monitor to being an engine for innovation.”

Republicans used the hearing to reiterate the four principles they wish to see in the reauthorization of ESEA:

1. Restoring Local Control. Academic standards, testing systems, and curriculum should be set by states and local educators—without coercion from the federal government—to ensure those who know our children best are able to shape their education to excel in college and the workplace.
2. Empowering Parents. Parents should have a greater role in selecting and participating in the learning environment that best serves their children’s needs.
3. Letting Teachers Teach. Onerous federal requirements should be removed to ensure our teachers and local schools have the freedom to operate and innovate as they think best.
4. Protecting Taxpayers. Taxpayer dollars should be spent wisely, eliminating ineffective programs and making investments that help students achieve success on an increasingly competitive world stage.

Rep. Kline, Ranking Republican Member on the House Education and Labor Committee, released a [statement](#) agreeing that changes must be made to the current No Child Left Behind law; however, he also noted that the expansion of the federal involvement in academic standards and the lack of parental involvement and school choice options are “troubling.” “Tutoring and transfer options are the only immediate remedies for parents of children trapped in underperforming schools. Backing away from these critical parental options by making their availability elective rather than mandatory is a tremendous disappointment, and one that could leave more than half a million students without the educational lifelines they depend on,” stated Rep. Kline. “Equally troubling

is the use of tactics that have been called ‘coercive’ to press schools to adopt a particular set of academic targets. The slippery slope toward de facto national standards and assessments is very real.”

While the Administration and Congressional Leaders are optimistic that ESEA will be reauthorized this year, the American Association of Christian Schools is working to ensure protections will remain for private schools, and to ensure that the establishment of a national curriculum or national standard continues to be prohibited in any new law.

Victory in the 9th Circuit Courts

The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in two separate rulings upheld the constitutionality of the words “Under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance as well as the national motto and inscription “In God We Trust” on U.S. currency. Questioning the reference to God in the pledge and national motto, atheist Michael Newdow claimed that both the motto and pledge violated the establishment of religion clause of the Constitution. These high profile cases have been through [years](#) of differing opinions as well as Congressional legislation.

Judge Carlos Bea, appointed by Bush in 2003, wrote the majority [opinion](#) stating, “The Pledge of Allegiance serves to unite our vast nation through the proud recitation of some of the ideals upon which our Republic was founded.” In a separate decision the Court ruled in favor of the constitutionality of the words “In God We Trust,” citing a previous 9th Circuit decision that ruled “the phrase is ceremonial and patriotic and ‘has nothing whatsoever to do with the establishment of religion.’”

Liberty Counsel, an organization working to preserve religious freedom and expression, [filed](#) an amicus brief with the Court to protect the pledge and motto. Mathew Staver, Founder of Liberty Counsel, stated, “The words ‘In God We Trust’ are part of our American heritage.... America was founded upon religious principles and the belief in God. Mere expression of our heritage cannot establish a religion. A public acknowledgement of God is not an establishment of religion.”

Senate Denies School Choice for D.C. Students

In an effort to restore funding to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), [Sen. Lieberman](#) offered an amendment to the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Since last fall, the Senator along with co-sponsors including Sens. Feinstein, Collins, Voinovich, and Ensign, has demanded a vote on the issue. This week a vote was finally scheduled; and although there was little voiced [opposition](#) and passionate speeches from supporters, the amendment [failed](#) 55-42-3.

The OSP was a [competitive program](#) that allowed students of low-income families to compete for vouchers allowing them to go to the school of their choice. Although the program received strong support from the D.C. community, the D.C. Council and the Mayor, the President announced in his budget last year that the program would be zeroed-out. A majority of Democrats in Congress have supported the President’s decision and have since opposed the successful program.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Don't Mess with Texts in Texas!](#)

[Arizona Outlaws Home Bible Studies?](#)

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