



**The Washington Flyer**  
**April 6, 2012**

*“And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”*

**Matthew 28:5-6**

**Committee Alleges Pattern of Overreach by Education Secretary**

Last week, the House Education and the Workforce Committee posted a document [delineating](#) a series of policies that highlight a pattern of executive overreach by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. The document characterizes the Administration’s Race to the Top program as a “slush fund” and decries the proliferation of competitive grant programs linked to adopting favored reforms. Since 2009, the President has proposed over \$7.45 billion dollars to fund the controversial Race to the Top grant program. According to evaluations, winners (11 states and D.C.) of the first two phases of the RTT program have encountered significant obstacles to implementation. Programs like RTT have also come under fire for encouraging cash strapped states to commit to unproven reforms such as the Common Core Standards in exchange for federal money. The report states that the DOE has set forth as many as 110 reforms that must be adopted to qualify for additional revenue, and flexibility and grants are awarded based on “bias, chance, and coercion.” Furthermore, the nebulous “No Child Left Behind” conditional relief waiver program attempts to “undermine” Congressional authority. Finally, the report notes that groups have filed suit against the DOE for promulgating strict gainful employment regulations and for amending “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act” without consulting Congress.

**Faith-Based Community Service Victory**

The Alliance Defense Fund, a national coalition of lawyers who defend religious freedom *pro bono*, has won a [victory](#) for a public high school student who faced academic penalties as a result of choosing to complete community service hours at a faith-based organization. The academic standout attends one of the nation’s top public schools and is a member of the National Honor Society (NHS) which requires members to perform community service. Although the student performed 46 hours of community service at her church’s Kid’s Quest program, she was informed that despite serving more than the minimum amounts of hours (12 hours), only work that is “secular” in nature met school district standards. Over 200 schools in that school district operate under a strict Faith-Based Service Policy that specifically prohibits students from receiving credit for work at religious organizations. The local NHS chapter placed her on probation, informed her that she must work additional hours, and threatened her with expulsion from the group. Even though she and her parents received letters from the NHS headquarters which stated that they had no rules barring the counting of faith-based service toward meeting requirements, the school district and local affiliate refused to change their decision. On March 6, the Alliance Defense Fund notified the district that they would be filing a lawsuit on the student’s behalf. The district reversed their previous decision and announced that her community service time met the requirements. The quick and positive resolution to this case will help the ADF attorneys as they work to insure that other students in the district are not discriminated against as a result of the discriminatory policy.

**Pro-life Vigil Success**

The Forty Days for Life [campaign](#) has announced that the latest campaign has helped over 716 women choose not to have an abortion. The coordinated [vigil](#) and community outreach event was held at 258 abortion clinics around the country. Volunteers handed out informational pamphlets and counseled those seeking to get abortions as well as counseling clinic staff. As a result of the past campaigns, at least 69 abortion clinic workers have left the industry. After being made aware of the various resources available to expecting women and their families, thousands of women have decided to keep their baby since the first campaign in 2007. Over 14,000 churches have participated in these highly successful outreach opportunities. To learn more about how you can get involved [click here](#).

### **Pastor Youcef Update**

Despite false [reports](#) and pictures circulating on the internet, Pastor Youcef Nadarhani, who was sentenced to execution for his conversion to Christianity, is still alive in an Iranian prison. He has been imprisoned for 2 ½ years for protesting the mandatory teaching of Islam in schools and for his evangelistic activities. The 35-year-old pastor was able to celebrate the birthday of his youngest son with his family. In a statement, the American Center for Law and Justice said that "Not only does this mean that Pastor Youcef is still alive, but it is a precious reminder of what we are fighting for – freedom for a loving father, a devoted husband, a caring pastor, and a devout follower of Christ." To read the latest on the fate of this brave pastor, visit the [ACLJ](#) website for updates.

### **Autism Awareness Day**

On April 2, advocates marked the fifth annual Autism Awareness Day with events around the country. Recently, the Center for Disease Control released an alarming [report](#) which noted that approximately 1 in 88 will be born with some form of autism. At 1 in 54, the rate of autism in boys is significantly higher than that of girls (1-252). Over the past five years, the number has risen by as much as 78%. Better methods of detection and screening are credited with the sharp increase in cases. Autism Speaks, an autism advocacy organization, is one of the leading pioneers in the effort to raise money (173 million) and educate parents about this issue. [Chosen Families](#) is an organization dedicated to helping Christian families with children who have autism and other hidden disabilities.

### **AACS National Competition**

During April 12-14, the [American Association of Christian Schools](#) will host the annual National Competition at Bob Jones University in Greenville, S.C. Throughout the three-day event, approximately 2,000 state winners will participate in a myriad of content areas. Since the AACS staff will be coordinating the event, there will be no *Washington Flyer* newsletter next week. The newsletter will resume the following week. Please pray for the safety of all participants as they travel next week. To view pictures of the event "[like](#)" the AACS Legislative Office facebook page.

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

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

[Constitutional Rights of Public School Teachers and Students to Seasonal Religious Expression](#)

[Administration Drops Lawsuit Against Pro-life Activist](#)

[More Universities Cancel Religious Holidays](#)

[Why the Healthcare Fight is Also About Abortion](#)