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He who is void of virtuous attachments in private life is, or very soon will be, void of all regard for his country. There is seldom an instance of a man guilty of betraying his country, who had not before lost the feeling of moral obligations in his private connections.

Samuel Adams

Supreme Court Approves Arizona School Choice Program

After a protracted legal battle, the Supreme Court ruled favorably in the matter of *Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Kathleen M. Winn*. In a 5-4 [decision](#), the Court determined that an Arizona law awarding tax credits to individuals who contribute to private organizations that fund secular and religious private school scholarships was indeed constitutional. Dr. Keith Wiebe, AACS president, applauded the decision, stating, “This is a great victory for school choice as it opens the doors for more empowering programs to be enacted across the country. We look forward to the benefits from the decision that will be reaped by parents who are seeking the best educational options for their children.” Since the late 1990’s, Arizona’s tax credit program has served nearly 29,000 students and was the first tax credit program in the country. Its success has led to similar school choice programs being adopted in other states. The program allows individual taxpayers to receive up to \$500 in “dollar-for-dollar” tax credits if they choose to donate to a School Tuition Organization. Last year, however, a suit was brought before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) which argued that the program violated the Establishment Clause. However, the Supreme Court’s decision on Monday to dismiss the case cited the plaintiff’s lack of standing. The law was found to have a negligible effect on Arizona’s taxpayers since participation in the program is purely voluntary. Furthermore, the Justices found that the tax credit was not tantamount to a direct government expenditure that furthered the advancement of religion. In the majority opinion, Justice Kennedy wrote that “private bank accounts cannot be equated with the Arizona State Treasury.” The AACS joined Liberty Counsel in [submitting an amicus brief](#) which focused on the true purpose of the Establishment Clause. The brief sought to clarify the [Establishment Clause](#) standards which should be used to determine the constitutionality of a case, by pointing out that the standards employed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in their decision failed to meet these logical standards. Dr. Jeff Walton, Executive Director for [AACS](#), stated, “The American Association of Christian Schools supports tax credit programs as perhaps the only vehicle allowing a tax incentive for parents who choose Christian schools without entangling the government in those schools. . . . The Arizona tax credit program has been a wonderful vehicle for allowing parents who are not wealthy to exercise a choice in their children’s education that previously only those who were more prosperous could exercise.”

For more information on this historic case, [click here](#). To view House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline’s statement on the Arizona decision [click here](#).

Indiana House Passes Nation’s Largest Voucher Program

On March 30, 2011, the Indiana House of Representatives voted 56-41 to pass H.B. 1003. If enacted the [measure](#) would be the nation’s largest voucher program. The proposal includes several unique provisions such as a higher income threshold than similar programs and an unlimited applicant pool after its third year in existence. Also, the program does not base eligibility solely on parental income, special needs concerns, or the student’s enrollment in a failing school. The bill would also increase the existing tax credit allowances for

families. Governor Mitch Daniels, who spoke at a Foundation for Educational Choice rally after the bill's passage, promised to sign the bill into law.

South Carolina School Choice Bill Advances

Committees in [both](#) the houses of the South Carolina State Legislature are considering the [Education Opportunity Act](#) (H.B. 3407/S. 4141). [Proponents](#) of the bill discount the major [criticism](#) usually levied against school choice measures, saying that this plan will save the state money and not decrease per pupil funding to the public school system. Originally introduced in 2004, the current version has been refined over the years to address its detractors' concerns. Parents who are financially able to pay for private school education receive tax credits, while those in lower income brackets receive scholarships from school tuition organizations (STO's). Individuals who donate to the STO would receive tax credit as well. The financial and academic outcomes of the program will be evaluated annually by the Education Oversight Committee. To view the entire bill [click here](#).

H.R. 3 – “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act” Update

Next week, the House of Representatives will likely consider [H. R. 3](#) the “No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion Act” sponsored by Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Dan Lipinski (D-IL). The measure has garnered bipartisan support with 228 co-sponsors in the House. In January, Speaker of the House John Boehner stated that this measure was one of the highest legislative priorities of the leadership. The Speaker also affirmed that “a ban on taxpayer funding of abortion is the will of the people and ought to be the law of the land.”

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 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.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Christian Leaders Explain Implications of DOMA Repeal](#)

[Fact Check: D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program](#)

[Pro-Lifers Seek Justice After Abuse from City and State Officials](#)

[ACLJ Wins Lengthy Legal Battle to Protect Pharmacy Owners' Conscience Rights](#)



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