



The Washington Flyer
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All growth depends upon activity. There is no development physically or intellectually without effort, and effort means work,
Calvin Coolidge

National Day of Prayer

Across the nation, the 61st annual National Day of Prayer was commemorated on May 3, 2012. In 1775, the Continental Congress made a proclamation that the country should observe a day of prayer and fasting during the Revolutionary War. President Lincoln revived the practice during the harrowing days of the Civil War. Congress established an annual day of prayer in 1952. During the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the first Thursday in May was set aside as the official day for the event. In recent years, atheist groups have challenged the constitutionality of the day's existence and observance. This year, the National Day of Prayer organizers selected Psalm 33:12 as the theme. Internationally acclaimed pastor David Jeremiah was selected to be this year's honorary chairman and spoke at the national observance service, which was held from 9 a.m. until 12 noon on Capitol Hill. The President's official proclamation stated that "I invite all citizens of our Nation, as their own faith directs them, to join me in giving thanks for the many blessings we enjoy, and I call upon individuals of all faiths to pray for guidance, grace, and protection for our great Nation as we address the challenges of our time."

HHS Preventive Services Mandate

In the wake of the Administration's refusal to offer employers a broader religious exemption to the mandated insurance coverage requirements, the Alliance Defense Fund has filed a lawsuit on the behalf of Denver-based manufacturer, Hercules Industries. The Catholic family who owns the HVAC firm has serious religious objections to providing employee insurance coverage for abortion-inducing drugs and contraception. The resolution of this [case](#) requires a court order within 90 days because of the start of the plaintiff's insurance plan year. To read more, [click here](#).

Texas Effort to Defund Planned Parenthood

A District Judge [ruled](#) that the state's decision to bar groups who perform abortions from participating in the Texas Women's Health Program (TWHP) was unconstitutional. TWHP is designed to provide low income women with preventive care screenings and medical assistance. Despite threats from the Administration to withhold Medicaid funding, the Texas legislature passed a law that would bar funding to abortion providers, such as Planned Parenthood. Eight Planned Parenthood affiliates filed a lawsuit against the state alleging that the statute was unconstitutional. The District Judge ruled in favor of Planned Parenthood, and the state of Texas immediately appealed the decision. Within a day, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals granted Texas a temporary [reprieve](#) against the unfavorable ruling. If forced to fund abortions, Texas has stated that it would shut down the program entirely.

Tennessee Legislature Confronts Vanderbilt Policy

In an encouraging move, the Tennessee legislature [sent](#) a bill to Governor Bill Haslem that would address the religious liberty issues at Vanderbilt University. The university has garnered significant press coverage for its anti-discrimination policy which prohibits religious student groups from requiring

their leaders to sign a doctrinal statement or share the beliefs of the group, while at the same time exempting fraternities and sororities from the policy. Approximately, fourteen religious groups, including the Christian Legal Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, are now forced to hold meetings off campus and in some cases change their names (i.e. Vandy Catholic). Although Vanderbilt is a private university, the school receives over 24 million dollars in state funding. The Tennessee [legislature](#) passed a bill that would require schools receiving state funding to protect religious liberty or craft an “all-comers” policy that would apply to all student groups. Vanderbilt responded to the legislation by stating that the proposal harms the working relationship of the state and the school. The statement also warned of potential service disruption of TennCare (a Medicaid program administered by Vanderbilt). To learn more, [click here](#).

California Teacher Forced to Remove Patriotic Banners

After several years of litigation in the California court system, Westview High School teacher Bradley Johnson has been forced to remove various posters containing patriotic phrases and the national motto from his classroom. Although the posters bearing inscriptions such as “God Bless America” and “In God We Trust” have been in his classroom since 1982, the posters became an issue in 2007. In 2010, a Federal District Court Judge ruled that Mr. Johnson’s posters were protected by the First Amendment. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the lower court ruling on the grounds that his employment by the school trumped his personal rights to display the messages. The Supreme Court recently declined to review the case, which led to the subsequent removal of the posters from his classroom.

IRS Leaks Pro-Marriage Group Information

The National Organization for Marriage is [demanding](#) that the Inspector General of the Internal Revenue Service launch a comprehensive investigation to ascertain who is responsible for handing over confidential donor information to NOM’s political adversaries. In April, NOM officials learned that sensitive donor information had been posted to the Huffington Post website. After further inquiry, the Huffington Post admitted that they received the documents from the Human Rights Campaign (a pro-homosexual lobbying group). Upon further document forensic analysis, it became clear that the documents were “unredacted” 990 tax forms that could only have been leaked by an IRS employee. Since the transmitting of this information is a felony, the National Organization for Marriage wrote letters to IRS officials, HRC, and the Huffington Post regarding their role in this abuse. The HRC stripped its website of all references to the material. Meanwhile, the Huffington Post has refused to remove the content. Brian Brown, NOM President, opined that “The American people are entitled to know how a confidential tax return containing private donor information filed exclusively with the Internal Revenue Service has been given to our political opponents.”

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Is Salvation a Panacea?](#)

[Bowling Strikes for Abortion Rights](#)

[HHS Secretary: No Legal Memo on Religious Freedom in Birth Control Mandate](#)

[Kid Cheats; Father Sues School District](#)