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Hundreds of thousands of American servicemen and women are deployed across the world in the war on terror. By bringing hope to the oppressed, and delivering justice to the violent, they are making America more secure.

George W. Bush

School Choice Legislation Update

As the legislative session concludes in many states, it is evident that school choice initiatives are gaining momentum across the country. Several states have passed landmark school choice legislation this year. In April, [Indiana](#) Governor Mitch Daniels signed one of the nation's most comprehensive school choice bills into law. The Indiana model enacts a variety of reforms and allows applicants to be from low and middle income [families](#). Both houses in [Oklahoma](#) recently approved the Equal Opportunity Education Scholarship Act based on Pennsylvania's tax credit model. Oklahoma's tax credit program will potentially award approximately 3.5 million dollars in scholarships to eligible students. In [Florida](#), a series of bills providing for an increase of charter and virtual schools, voucher programs for the disabled, and transfer options for children in failing schools were enacted by the legislature. Florida's effort with these educational innovations was marked by a [visit](#) from the President and Secretary of Education in March. Parents of children in the District of Columbia, which is overseen by the federal government, welcomed the reauthorization and reopening of the successful [D.C. Opportunity Scholarship](#) program. Also in April, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the constitutionality of [Arizona's](#) school tuition organization structure which will allow that program to continue to provide the state's parents with additional options. Several [other state legislatures](#) are currently considering school choice bills.

National Day of Prayer

Across the nation, the 60th annual [National Day of Prayer](#) was commemorated on May 5, 2011. 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. In 1988, the first Thursday in May was set aside as the official day for the event during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. In recent years, atheist groups have challenged the constitutionality of the day's existence and observance. The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) mounted a temporarily successful challenge to the day's existence; but in 2010, the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals reaffirmed the constitutionality of the day on the basis of its voluntary involvement. The court also found that the FFRF had no legal standing to bring suit. This year, the National Day of Prayer organizers selected "A Mighty Fortress is our God" as the theme of the event. Well-known Christian, disability advocate [Joni Eareckson Tada](#) was selected to be this year's honorary chairman. The national observance was held from 9 a.m. until 12 noon on Capitol Hill. The President's official [proclamation](#) cited the "strength, inspiration and solidarity" that Americans have found in prayer throughout our nation's history. To view observances around the country [click here](#).

House Passes "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion" Act

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed [H.R. 3](#), the "[No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act](#)," by a vote of 251 - 175. The measure had 227 co-sponsors composed of 216 Republicans and 11 Democrats. This critical and comprehensive pro-life legislation, originally co-sponsored by Representatives [Chris Smith](#) (R) and [Dan Lipinski](#) (D), will bring the provisions of the [Hyde Amendment](#) up to date with current statutes. As a result

of H.R. 3, there will be a permanent government-wide prohibition on taxpayer-funded abortion, stronger conscience protections for healthcare service providers, and fewer loopholes in the tax code that have allowed abortion procedures to be covered by federal employee insurance plans. Pro-life advocates recognized that the Hyde Amendment covers only funds appropriated through the annual reauthorization of Labor, Health and Human Services bill; and while this does prohibit the majority of abortions being funded by taxpayers, legislation passed since the adoption of Hyde required additional bans in order to ensure that taxpayer money was not funding abortions through other means. H.R. 3 groups all the various funding bans that cover all federal programs and the District of Columbia into one all-inclusive mechanism. This will eliminate multiple battles to annually reapprove old bans or defund new laws, such as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) that provide for taxpayer-funded abortion procedures. Polls routinely demonstrate that the majority of Americans oppose taxpayer funding of elective abortion procedures. In April, CNN polling revealed that 61% of respondents were opposed to taxpayer funding of abortion. The Supreme Court affirmed that the Hyde Amendment was constitutional in the 1980 case *Harris v. McRae*. The Court's opinion stated that *Roe v. Wade* which legalized abortion did not constitute an entitlement to government funded procedures. If passed by the [Senate](#) and signed by the President, H.R. 3 will undoubtedly save the lives of many unborn children.

Pennsylvania School Choice Celebration

On May 3, the Road to Educational Achievement through Choice Foundation ([REACH](#)) hosted a commemorative celebration of Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program at the state capitol building. Hundreds of students from around the state celebrated the decade old program that gives participating companies tax credits for donations to private school scholarships and innovative educational approaches. The tax credit program's popularity results in all the available credits being claimed within days of the availability every year. Last year, over 40,000 children were able to attend the private school of their choice as a result of this program. Over 300,000 children have benefited from this plan over the last ten years. Many other children are also able to participate in and benefit from the creative approaches funded by the initiative. At the state capitol rally, Pennsylvania State Education Secretary Ronald Tomalis announced that the governor would support passage of [S.B. 1](#) to provide parents with even more school choice options.

Teacher Appreciation Week

The American Association of Christian Schools acknowledges the sacrifice, labor of love and dedication of our teachers this [Teacher Appreciation Week](#) (May 2-6). We encourage students and parents to let the staff and faculty of their schools know how much they appreciate their ministry.

AACS Schools Hit by Southern Storms

The thoughts and prayers of the entire AACS organization are with the families, schools, and churches affected by the recent series of tornados that have decimated parts of the South. Future *Flyer* newsletters and the AACS website will include information on ways AACS member schools can provide assistance to the victims of this terrible tragedy.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[In Honor of Teacher Appreciation Week: An Open Letter from Arne Duncan to America's Teachers](#)

[Supreme Court Ruling on Stem Cell Research](#)

[Winning Back Freedom, One Facility at a Time](#)

