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My friends, the momentous trials of the last century, and the unfolding events of this century, attest to the decisive role of the United States in advancing peace and defending freedom.

Benjamin Netanyahu

Department of Education Announces New Race to the Top for Early Ed

On Wednesday, the Department of Education held a press conference to outline [plans](#) for the 700 million dollars received as a result of the 2011 Continuing Resolution. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, along with several other experts, [announced](#) that 500 million dollars will be used to fund a Race to the Top (RTT) competitive grant program to benefit the [Early Childhood Learning Challenge fund](#), and the remaining 200 million dollars will be awarded to nine previous finalists of the second round of RTT. The previous two rounds of RTT were aimed at encouraging innovation and awarding grants to states for K-12 education, and ten winners divided the 4.35 billion to [implement](#) their ideas. For this new RTT competition announced Wednesday, Secretary Duncan proposed that greater investment in early childhood education will result in lower societal and remedial costs in the future. This round of funding will focus on awarding states whose applications demonstrate “courage, capacity, commitment and creativity” in the area of early education. The stated goals are to consolidate the current array of programs into one “comprehensive and coordinated system.” Other speakers at the press conference expressed their views on the necessity of early childhood education efforts. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius opined that ensuring access to quality early education would be a main focus of the DOE and HHS partnership. She also advocated further training for Head Start teachers and a “holistic” approach that would encompass providing for the emotional, social, and health needs of the young children. George Kaiser, Kaiser Family Foundation, stated that early childhood education is essential to level the playing field for those that are denied equal access as a result of being born into a lower socioeconomic class. Mr. Kaiser charged that refusal to expand early education was tantamount to denying children the right to achieve the American dream. Another proponent, retired military leader Clara Adams spoke about the link between low test scores and college dropouts to the nation’s future ability to maintain a strong national defense. According to Adams, the majority of today’s youth are ineligible for military service as a result of drug use, obesity, criminal records, dropout status or low achievement scores on entrance tests. Adams proposed that early education would solve these issues and prevent a national security crisis in the future. Philadelphia’s District Attorney, Seth Williams, credited his own adoption and subsequent exposure to early education as the reason for his success. Mr. Williams warned that a failure to invest in early education will result in higher crime rates and unsafe communities. Finally, Mr. Ralph Smith (Anne E. Casey Foundation) stated that the goal should be “healthy births, thriving at 3 and ready at 5.” Although all of these goals are laudable, [critics](#) offer cautionary tales and negative data which demonstrate that previous federal intervention, “one size fits all” solutions, untested programs, and large expenditures of money have not achieved the desired outcomes in the area of education.

AACS Lobbying Days

The American Association of Christian Schools would like to thank the AACS State and Regional Legislative Directors who made this year’s AACS Lobbying Days an overwhelming success. The purpose of the AACS Lobbying Days is to introduce AACS to new Members of Congress, establish relationships with Congressional offices, educate Congressional staffers, explain the mission and current legislative priorities of AACS, as well as reinforce the daily work and initiatives of the AACS Legislative Office in Washington, D.C. The State and Regional Legislative Directors include representatives from AACS ministries across the country, so their

meetings with the Congressional offices are especially effective as they are lobbying as constituents from the respective districts and states. The specific issues of focus for this year's Lobbying Days included promoting school choice, retaining protection for Christian schools during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and advocating more local control of early education programs. This year, Rev. Gary Click (BCSA), Dr. Montel Wilder (New England region), Mr. Steve Labins (GSACS and Southwest region), Mr. Dan Zacharias (ODACS and MACE), Mr. Gary Mosier (South Mid-Atlantic region), Mr. Paul Smith (South region), and Rev. Duane Motley (NY and PA) combined to make over 100 contacts on Capitol Hill. The AACS office would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to these men who made great sacrifices to coordinate these meetings and educate Members about our concerns.

The Battle to Stop Taxpayer Funding of Abortion

On April 14, the United States House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to deny taxpayer funding of abortion through grants to abortion providing entities, such as Planned Parenthood which received 363 million dollars last year alone. Polls show that a majority of Americans oppose the use of their money to pay for elective abortion procedures. Despite popular support, the measure is not expected to pass the [Senate](#) or be signed into law by the President. On the state level, Indiana's legislature recently passed a [measure](#) that will deny Planned Parenthood funding (2 million dollars). Although the law affects only 1% (9300 people) of Indiana's population who use Medicaid, the state has been receiving fierce opposition from the media, abortion providers and advocates, and the White House. Abortion proponents from 44 states and at least 2 foreign countries have flooded the state's abortion providers with private donations to close the funding gap. Planned Parenthood has appealed the law and been granted a June 6 hearing. The White House has expressed [disapproval](#) for the measure. The resolution of this conflict will have a major impact on the success of similar bills nationwide.

Senate Blocks Judicial Confirmation

Senate Republicans defeated the nomination of Goodwin Liu to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals by voting against cloture on the motion to proceed with his [confirmation](#). This was the first successful filibuster of a nominee this session. The previous nominees went largely unopposed despite [concerns](#) over controversial financial contributions and written statements and controversial positions on the nature of the Constitution. An earlier "gentlemen's agreement" allowed smooth confirmations in exchange for the Republican's opportunity to offer amendments on bills. Several Republicans believed that the Liu confirmation presented "extraordinary" circumstances. In their floor speeches, several Senate Democrats berated the Republicans for blocking the vote despite the fact that between 2003 and 2005 the Democrats [blocked](#) 10 of President Bush's judicial appointees. Liu's relatively young age, disparaging statements about the more conservative Supreme Court Justices, lack of any experience as a judge or trial lawyer, disturbing statements about the evolving nature of the [Constitution](#), and the fact that many believed he would be a future Supreme Court nominee led to this historic defeat. As many critical issues ranging from healthcare and freedom of speech to the very definition of marriage are being decided in courtrooms across the country, it is imperative to appoint competent judges who will uphold the Constitution to lifetime federal judgeships.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[The Candy – Cane Cops: Religious Liberty Stifled by School District](#)

[Christian Adoption Agencies Burdened by State Sponsored Intolerance](#)

[Minnesota House Approves Marriage Referendum](#)

