



# THE WASHINGTON FLYER

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*Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good.*

**Calvin Coolidge**

## **Veterans Day Proclamation 2011**

“Today, our Nation comes together to honor our veterans and commemorate the legacy of profound service and sacrifice they have upheld in pursuit of a more perfect Union. Through their steadfast defense of America's ideals, our service members have ensured our country still stands strong, our founding principles still shine, and nations around the world know the blessings of freedom. As we offer our sincere appreciation and respect to our veterans, to their families, to those who are still in harm's way, and to those we have laid to rest, let us rededicate ourselves to serving them as well as they have served the United States of America.” To read the rest of the Presidential proclamation [click here](#).

## **Senate Hearing on ESEA Reauthorization**

Although the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee previously approved the Elementary and Secondary Act Reauthorization bill, a full committee [hearing](#), entitled “Beyond NCLB: Views on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act,” was held on November 8. In deference to Senator Rand Paul’s objections about the limited time given to review the 860-page bill, the committee invited ten education stakeholders to testify about the various implications of the proposed changes. Stakeholders included teachers, school administrators, an AEI scholar, and several representatives from education advocacy groups. Senator Michael Enzi, HELP Ranking Member, [stated](#) the bill provided a starting point for discussion and would require many changes to make it palatable to both sides. *Education Week* analysts [surmise](#) that a full legislative calendar and concerns from both the House Republicans and the Administration make it doubtful that the bill will be considered before the Christmas recess.

## **Montana Adopts Common Core Standards**

The Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI) is a movement “that seeks to bring diverse state curricula into alignment with each other by following the principles of standards-based education reform.” In 2010, states rushed to adopt the unfinished standards in order to win a portion of the 4.35 billion dollar Race to the Top competitive grant funding. Members of the initiative are committed to aligning a percentage of their state curriculum with the standards guidelines by 2015. A wide array of educational [analysts](#) have written extensively on the many troubling aspects of the standards. Critics question the [cost](#) of implementation, the proposed [content](#) guidelines, and the development of a national [curriculum](#) based on the standards. Earlier this school year, the *Washington Post* [reported](#) that states have been slow to implement the standards because of the aforementioned concerns. Montana has become the 46<sup>th</sup> state along with the District of Columbia to adopt the Common Core standards. The four remaining states that have chosen not to adopt the Common Core standards are Alaska, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia.

## **Bullying Policies Raise Serious Concerns**

A spike in suicides linked to pervasive bullying has led to the adoption of anti-bullying [initiatives](#) and legislation around the country. Several parents of teens who committed suicide after repeated harassment from classmates have called on lawmakers to pass legislation that mandates quicker intervention, investigation, and reporting of incidents by schools. They have also joined with advocacy groups to push for tougher penalties for students who bully others. New Jersey recently instituted a [policy](#) that is generally regarded as one of the toughest anti-bullying laws in the nation. Lawmakers in several states are grappling with crafting policies that balance appropriate intervention with students' First Amendment rights. School administrators contend that overreaching policies are a breeding ground for litigation because such policies extend a school's responsibility to include the prevention of off-campus and online bullying incidents. Furthermore, conservative groups argue that delineating special classes of students who deserve special protection is a part of the homosexual agenda to [normalize](#) alternative lifestyles. For example, West Virginia is currently accepting public comments on a 75-page student conduct and discipline guideline manual that specifically mentions gender identity and sexual orientation as reasons for bullying. These proposed [guidelines](#) also rate offenses in a tiered system corresponding to a range of punitive measures. Homosexual rights advocates for the guidelines argue that the inclusion of protective language (exemptions which allow students to express their religious beliefs without fear of recrimination) should not be allowed because it will encourage bullying. In Michigan, "Matt's Law" (SB 137) sponsored by state senator Rick Jones was denounced by his Democratic colleagues for the inclusion of a religious exemption. The exemption in the [bill](#) reads as follows: "This section does not prohibit a statement of a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction of a school employee, school volunteer, pupil, or a pupil and parent or guardian." State Senator Jones, who is the father of a mentally handicapped child, says that while he understands his colleagues' concern, "bullying should be defined by a person's actions, not the status of his victim."

## **New Jersey Hospital Forces Nurses to Violate Conscience**

Twelve nurses at the University Medical and Dental School in New Jersey have been threatened with termination if they do not assist doctors performing abortions at the hospital. This shocking case brings the battle to secure conscience protections for medical professionals to the forefront. State law clearly states that healthcare professionals cannot be forced to participate in abortions against their will. The hospital annually receives 60 million dollars in federal funds which should prohibit it from forcing employees to participate in abortion procedures. The nurses claim that the hospital administrators dismissed their objections and declared that they had "no regard for their religious beliefs." The Alliance Defense Fund, a national network of attorneys who defend religious liberty, [intervened](#) in the case and was able to secure a temporary restraining [order](#) against the hospital while the case is being litigated in the courts.

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

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

[Pro-Life Group First Amendment Case Moves Forward](#)

[November is National Adoption Month](#)

[Americans United for Life Celebrate Forty Years in Pro-Life Movement](#)

[Same-Sex Marriage Allowed in UK Churches](#)

