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I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, and stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.

Abraham Lincoln, America's 16th President

Merry Christmas from AACCS

We would like to wish all of our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the peace and joy that comes from God be real to each of you as you celebrate the birth of Christ. Truly, our hope and salvation comes from Him alone, and He is all “Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

Congress Votes on Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

Last week, the Senate held hearings with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Admiral Mike Mullen, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to determine whether the repeal of the controversial “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy that prohibits homosexual troops from openly serving in the military would have a harmful affect on the United States military’s effectiveness, combat readiness, and unit cohesion. While Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen advocated repeal, [three of the four service chiefs expressed serious concern](#) about the wisdom of lifting the ban while the U.S. is involved in two major conflicts and various other peacekeeping missions around the globe. Senator John McCain called for further hearings on the controversial measure. The repeal was attached to the annual Department of Defense Authorization Bill which includes funding for equipment and pay raises for troops. This week, Congressmen Steny Hoyer and Patrick Murphy introduced a stand-alone repeal of the ban prior to passing the critical defense authorization measure. Proponents of the measure feel that the current policy is “discriminatory, harmful and compromises the integrity of the troops.” However, critics of the plan question why overturning the 17-year-old ban and experimenting with social policy is more important than passing the defense authorization legislation. Also, several officials, including the Commandant of the Marine Corps, have repeatedly expressed concern about the Congressional Working Group’s survey findings in which combat troops (44%) and Marines (67%) indicated they felt a repeal would negatively impact their unit cohesion and effectiveness. The House of Representatives passed the stand-alone repeal 250 – 175 on Wednesday. The measure will now be sent to the Senate for further consideration. The vote is expected to be close since previous votes to bring the measure to the floor were decided by as few as three votes.

Bullying Guidelines Update

Recent media coverage of bullying incidents with tragic consequences have resurrected the debate over how best to protect children from harassment, while not infringing on the First Amendment rights of their classmates or placing the liability for incidents entirely on teachers and schools. The Supreme Court’s ruling in *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* (1999) held that schools were only liable when they had “actual knowledge” of the bullying or failed to “remedy” the problem after sufficient notification. In a recently circulated [Department of Education letter](#) from the Office of Civil Rights, public schools were charged with the ambiguous job of “eliminating and preventing” bullying. This well-intended guideline would prove difficult, if not impossible, to enforce, and if made law would pave the way for a flurry of litigation against school boards

and teachers. While bullying is definitely a growing problem in our violent culture, a viable solution that protects children from harassment but does not violate constitutionally protected rights remains to be seen.

Virginia Judge Rules Against Government Mandated Healthcare Purchase

In what has been viewed as a major setback for the current Administration's agenda, United States District Judge Henry Hudson ruled in favor of [Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli's lawsuit](#) which maintained that the federal government could not use the commerce clause and related necessary and proper clause (Article 1, Section 8) of the Constitution as a basis to force citizens to buy healthcare insurance. These clauses give the Congress broad powers to pass legislation that is deemed to be both necessary and proper for governance or deal with any issue that affects commerce or business. Judge Hudson expressed concern that the mandates in the healthcare law were abuses of these powers since refusal to buy health insurance is not directly related to commerce. This ruling did not find all of the healthcare law unconstitutional or overturn it completely, but it does allow the case to continue to the Court of Appeals and does establish a legal precedent. Other provisions of the legislation, such as guidelines requiring insurance companies to cover children up to 26 years old on their parents' plans or allowing people with pre-existing conditions to be covered, have also been challenged because they will cost companies millions that will be passed on to consumers. Eventually, the constitutionality of the healthcare law is expected to be decided by the Supreme Court. Currently, a similar case filed on the [behalf of twenty states](#) is awaiting a final ruling in Florida.

Increased Persecution of Christians Worldwide

In a disturbing article, "[Christianity Arguably the Most Persecuted Religion in the World](#)," author Ron Csillag sheds light on the plight of the persecuted church around the globe. He recounts horrific tales of mass murder perpetrated by militant groups and even national governments determined to wipe out believers in their countries. In many areas, Christians face harassment or even punishment for "crimes" such as possessing religious literature and movies. Millions live in countries that practice discrimination against Christians in jobs, housing, and ability to conduct services. In countries that have accepted sharia law, widespread violence against Christians has resulted in vigilante killings by mobs. Christians in the West have difficulty understanding the plight of believers around the globe since they rarely encounter such harassment in their daily lives. Unfortunately, media reports rarely cover these all too common atrocities. Often many countries oppose Christianity because it is associated with colonization efforts or attempts to force Western culture and its many excesses on their societies.

*Above articles were written by Courtney Holloway, AACS Legislative Aide.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Elementary Students Have Right on Christmas Messages](#)

[Commission Urges U.S. to Step Up Protection for Iraqi Christians](#)

[A Christmas Tradition – Did You Know?](#)



