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Because power corrupts, society's demands for moral authority and character increase as the importance of the position increases.

John Adams

Child Care Development Block Grant Bill Passes Senate

In a rare act of bipartisanship, the Senate passed S. 1086 which reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program last week. Originally passed in 1990, the popular [program](#) enables parents to use vouchers at public, private, and faith-based programs. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) spearheaded this successful reauthorization effort. The Council for American Private Education [supported](#) several amendments, some of which were included in the final bill. The revisions expand the types of programs that are allowed to participate such as Montessori and Waldorf programs. Specifically, one amendment, offered by Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA), states that nothing in the program “shall be construed in a manner (1) to favor or promote the use of grants and contracts for the receipt of child care services...over the use of child care certificates; or (2) to disfavor or discourage the use of such certificates for the purchase of child care services, including those services provided by private or nonprofit entities, such as faith-based providers.” In a statement, Senator Scott posited that the issue “boils down to parental choice and state flexibility—two issues the federal government should be thinking a lot harder about on a constant basis.” In contrast to the Senate bill, the Administration for Children and Families, housed within the Department of Health and Human Services, issued a proposed rule that would have decreased the use of certificates in favor of direct grants which would have disallowed faith-based providers from participating in the program. House Education and the Workforce Chairman John Kline [issued](#) a statement praising the inclusion of the amendments and announced a hearing will be held on March 25th. To read more about the CCDBG amendments, [click here](#).

Report Highlights Troubled Student Loan Rehabilitation Process

In 2012, members of the House Education and the Workforce Committee commissioned a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on the current student loan rehabilitation process which is overseen by the Department of Education (DOE). After receiving an avalanche of complaints from borrowers who charged that the DOE was slow in addressing issues and restoring good credit standing to those who completed the process, the committee issued a letter to the department. The committee reviewed the [report](#) entitled “Examining the Mismanagement of the Student Loan Rehabilitation Process” at a March 12 [hearing](#). Higher Education Subcommittee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx opined, “Default can have serious consequences for a borrower’s credit rating and future prosperity, making an effective and timely rehabilitation process critical to the well-being of the nation’s borrowers. The GAO report’s findings are extremely troubling, and contradict the department’s previous claims that the system was working as intended.” Furthermore, Rep. Foxx urged the department to “take immediate steps” and find “permanent solutions” instead of temporary fixes. Since the federal government took over the Direct Loan program, the department is responsible for the oversight and management of the program. The report revealed that the DOE did not restore borrowers’ credit in a timely

manner and failed to process rehabilitations for months which caused major financial issues for some participants. The committee will continue to monitor the situation.

Hobby Lobby Reaches the Supreme Court

On March 25, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on behalf of two religiously owned businesses, Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood Specialties, versus the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The passage of the Affordable Care Act granted the HHS Secretary broad authority to draft regulations determining services that must be included in federally approved health insurance plans. Over 20,000 pages of regulation have resulted from this authority. In the aforementioned legal cases, the HHS preventive services mandate is at issue. The mandate requires all employers to provide the full array of FDA-approved abortion-inducing drugs, contraceptives, and sterilization procedures or face steep fines. A narrow religious exemption was included but did not address for-profit business owners' concerns. Hobby Lobby, an Oklahoma-based arts and crafts retailer, already paid their employees above average wages, offered excellent health insurance benefits, and operated stores in a manner that allowed church attendance. When the Green family, the devout Christian family that owns Hobby Lobby, [objected](#) to offering four out of the twenty drugs because they end life, they were faced with fines of \$1.3 million per day. After winning an injunction at the lower level, the case is now before the high court. Since the Mennonite owners of the Pennsylvania-based Conestoga Wood Specialties have similar issues, the justices will hear the cases at the same time. The Beckett Fund for Religious Liberty has led the amicus brief effort and will be [defending](#) the Green family. The Family Research Council is working to coordinate a Stand with Hobby Lobby effort on March 29, 2014. To view additional information about this effort, [click here](#).

Kentucky Governor and Senate Defend Marriage Amendment

Although several state attorneys general have followed Attorney General Eric Holder's decision to cease defense of constitutional marriage amendments, Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear has decided to take up the [defense](#) of both the state's law passed in 1998 and the 2004 voter-approved amendment. In light of state Attorney General Jack Conway's abdication of his responsibility to defend the measures, the Senate passed a bill that would allow the governor to move forward with the defense. Governor Beshear then hired a private legal firm and appealed the case to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. He also requested that the attorney general keep the current hold in place until the court issues a decision. Last week, The Heritage Foundation's Ryan Anderson moderated a panel discussion between former Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli and legal experts Ed Whelan and Carrie Severino entitled "Dereliction of Duty: State Attorneys General Failing to Defend Marriage Laws in Court." To view the archived webcast, [click here](#).

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Catholic Benefits Association Sues Administration Over HHS Mandate](#)

[New Preschool Spending an Unnecessary Burden on American Taxpayers](#)

[Legal Group 'Outraged' After Air Force Academy Erases Bible Verse From Cadet's Whiteboard](#)

[HIGHER ED: Push for Student Databases Continues](#)

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