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We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.
Abraham Lincoln

AACS Submits Comments on Administration's Early Education Agenda

The AACS Legislative Office submitted both written and [verbal comments](#) in response to the Administration's announcement of a new Race to the Top early education competition. The Department of Education (DOE) has stated that this new competition will be distinctly different from the previous Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge competitions which have awarded over \$1 billion to 20 states to increase the number of children in their early education programs. In the January budget deal, the DOE received \$250 million for this new competition and launched the Preschool Development Grant competition to expand and enhance preschool programs in states for children from low- and middle-income families. While the DOE has released very little information about the competition, it invited public comments in two separate rounds through the [Homerroom Blog](#) and hosted a public meeting where stakeholders could present verbal comments. The comments submitted by the AACS stressed the importance of maintaining protection for the autonomy and mission of existing private, faith-based preschools in the competition guidelines. The AACS also emphasized the need to include parental choice options in any new initiatives as this will strengthen families and expand educational opportunities. Several other private school groups also spoke at the public meeting, emphasizing the importance of having a diversity of early educational options available in order to meet the individual needs of children and their families.

Education Subcommittee Addresses Child Care Development Block Grant Priorities

The House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing last week to discuss the Committee's priorities for reauthorizing the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), a popular [program](#) that enables parents to use vouchers at public, private, and faith-based child care programs. Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Todd Rokita (R-IN) [recognized](#) that the CCDBG is "invaluable to parents who are struggling to provide for their families" and that for parents, child care is a "decision about choosing a provider where you can trust trained professionals will care for your child in a safe environment." Witnesses at the hearing addressed the need to maintain high standards and flexibility so parents can choose from an array of child care options, the importance of ensuring health and safety standards are strong enough to protect children, and the necessity of a strong accountability system to prevent misuse of funds. The Senate recently [passed](#) a reauthorization of the CCDBG that included an amendment which allowed for the continuance of private and faith-based providers to be part of the options available for parents through the CCDBG program. Recognizing the positive steps in the Senate version, Rep. Rokita offered, "While many of [the] provisions [in the Senate bill] will help to improve the quality of child care, we must also take steps to ensure these new requirements will help—not hinder—states in meeting the needs of children and their families....If we are truly here to fight for people, and to empower people so they can build better lives for themselves and their families, access to quality child care is something we must address."

School Choice Caucus Hosts Inaugural Meeting

Rep. Luke Messer (R-IN) hosted the [inaugural meeting](#) of the School Choice Caucus last week, [stating](#) in his remarks, "I am a firm believer that this is the civil rights issue of this generation." He was joined by several parents whose children

participate in the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, and these parents testified that the choice opportunities had been “life-changing” for their children and families. Recognizing the success that the school choice movement has seen on the state level, Rep. Messer emphasized that now is the time for more work on the federal level to expand options for children. He stated, “We cannot rest as a nation until every child walks into a classroom...where he has a genuine chance of learning.” The [purpose](#) of the School Choice Caucus is “to expand educational freedom and promote policies that increase high-quality education options for all children” and to “highlight how applying market-based principles to education can enhance student achievement and lead to better results.”

Office of Civil Rights Issues New Report on Public Preschool Programs

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) recently [released](#) a report from its 2011–12 data collection which includes information on preschool access and suspension. According to the data, “About 40 percent of public school districts do not offer preschool, and where it is available, it is mostly part-day only.” The report further notes that “of the school districts that operate public preschool programs, barely half are available to all students within the district.” The report also offered information regarding suspensions and expulsions from preschool, noting that black students “represent 18 percent of preschool enrollment, 42 percent of preschool students suspended once, and 48 percent of the preschool students suspended more than once.” Formerly known as the Elementary and Secondary Survey and housed in the Department of Education (DOE), the CRDC exists to monitor equity in educational opportunities by collecting data from public schools across the nation. The 2011–12 data collection is the first time data has been collected by the DOE on preschool discipline.

UNC Professor Wins Religious Liberty Case

A jury found in favor of a [professor](#) who says the University of North Carolina at Wilmington retaliated against him for opinions he expressed in his nationally syndicated column. Criminology professor Mike Adams joined UNC as an assistant professor in 1993, and at the time was an atheist. However, after his conversion to Christianity in 2000, his views on political and social issues changed, and he was subsequently subjected to a campaign of academic persecution, according to the Alliance Defending Freedom that represented Adams in his lawsuit. Ultimately, he was denied a full professorship despite an award-winning record of teaching, research, and service. “We are grateful that the jury today reaffirmed the fundamental principle that universities are a marketplace of ideas, not a place where professors face retaliation for having a different view than university officials,” said Travis Barham, staff counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom. “As the jury decided, disagreeing with an accomplished professor’s religious and political views is no grounds for denying him a promotion.”

AACS National Competition—April 8–10

The [AACS](#) will host the annual National Bible, Fine Arts, and Academic Competition at Bob Jones University in Greenville, S.C., next week. During the event, more than 1700 state winners will participate in over [70 events](#). Since the AACS staff will be coordinating the event, there will be no *Washington Flyer* next week. Please pray for the safety of all participants.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Building the Machine - Common Core Documentary](#)

[Mississippi Poised to Ban Abortions after 20 weeks](#)

[Marriage Battle in Michigan](#)