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There is no maxim, in my opinion, which is more liable to be misapplied, and which, therefore, more needs elucidation, than the current one, that the interest of the majority is the political standard of right and wrong.

James Madison

Opposition to the Common Core Continues to Build

In May, the [South Carolina](#) Senate and the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) both formalized their opposition to the Common Core educational standards for English and mathematics. The South Carolina Senate Education Committee voted to “review them, protect students’ personal information, delay any new testing for two years, and eliminate the high school exit exam from school district ratings” and to exit the Smarter Balance testing consortium which produces Common Core-aligned assessments. On May 7, the members of the Chicago Teachers Union debated and overwhelmingly approved a [resolution](#) denouncing the Common Core Standards. Months of discussion between union members precipitated this monumental decision, and veteran Chicago teacher Michelle Gunderson rejected the media charge that CTU members blindly followed their president, Karen Lewis. Gunderson writes that after careful consideration members concluded that while the goal of the CCS is “college and career readiness” CTU members believe that the overarching goal of public education is “educating a populace of critical thinkers who are capable of shaping a just and equitable society in order to lead good and purpose-filled lives.” She [noted](#) the majority of the membership wants a wholesale rejection of the standards as opposed to the one-year moratorium called for by national teachers union and parent organization the American Federation of Teachers. The final resolution states “RESOLVED that the Chicago Teachers Union opposes the Common Core State Standards (and the aligned tests) as a framework for teaching and learning.”

Early Education Bill Moves Forward

Last week, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee [passed](#) the Strong Start for America’s Children Act (S.1697). Currently, the bill has 133 House co-sponsors and 31 Senate co-sponsors. This [bill](#) is the legislative vehicle which would enact the President’s Preschool for All program. The purported goal is to establish “a bold, ... 10-year innovative federal-state partnership to expand and improve early learning opportunities for children across the birth-to-age-five continuum” at a cost of \$75 billion. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has traveled the country [calling](#) for the creation of a fund to establish universal preschool in every state. In the fall of 2013, the Secretary was joined by HELP Committee Chairman Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), House Education Committee Ranking Member George Miller (D-CA), Rep. Richard Hanna (R-NY), White House official Gene Sperling, and others to roll out the Strong Start legislation. Although subsequent attempts to include the bill in budget bills were blocked, the DOE marked \$250 million in early learning funding to start implementing the program. In 2014, the department established the Preschool Development Grant competition to award the money to states. The AACCS has offered written public comments,

given oral comments at the department, and submitted further [comments](#) on the recently released Executive Summary. The final notice will be released this summer, and all monies will be awarded by the end of the year. Last week's committee [vote](#) is seen largely as symbolic by education prognosticators. It appears unlikely that the legislation will receive consideration by the full Senate this session.

Senate Majority Leader Blocks Vote on Pro-life Bill

Last week, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) was joined by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) in a press conference after an unsuccessful attempt to force an up or down vote on the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H.R. 1797) in the upper chamber. May 13th [marked](#) one year since the conviction of serial abortionist Dr. Kermit Gosnell. After years of virtually no oversight, Dr. Gosnell was investigated on charges related to Medicaid fraud. Investigators uncovered human remains, filthy surgical equipment, and generally deplorable conditions in his Pennsylvania clinic. He was later convicted of three counts of murdering babies who were born alive and one count of involuntary manslaughter of a patient. Groups such as Susan B. Anthony List have maintained that Gosnell's "house of horrors" is not an anomaly and that greater regulation of clinics is needed. Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider, has brought suit against several states which have adopted similar legislation to increase regulation of abortion clinics. Polling conducted by Gallup shows that 64% of Americans believe that abortions should be banned during the second trimester and 80% oppose it in the third trimester. This bill is needed because scientific evidence shows that babies can feel pain at the 20 week mark, which is why standard medical practice calls for anesthesia to be used for in utero surgeries. According to the Charlotte Lozier Institute, America is **one** of only **seven** countries in the world that allow late term abortions. In June 2013, the House of Representatives passed the companion bill on a 228-196 vote. Thirteen states have already passed similar measures, and several more are considering bans. In related news, a filmmaker aiming to produce a documentary of the Gosnell case raised over \$2.2 million on a crowd funding website in record time. To view the project, [click here](#).

Senators Work to Save Sudanese Christian Facing Execution

On May 21, Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) wrote a follow-up [letter](#) to Secretary of State John Kerry and Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson urging them to grant asylum to Meriam Ibrahim. Mrs. Ibrahim, the wife of an American citizen, was imprisoned in Sudan along with her young son for refusing to recant her Christian faith. The expectant mother was then sentenced to receive 100 lashes and then hanging. Public outcry of her dismal plight caused the Sudanese government to announce that it may allow her to have her child before she is executed. Senators Blunt and Ayotte have worked to raise awareness at the State Department about this troubling case. The State Department has been [slow](#) to respond to the original letter from the Senators which detailed Mrs. Ibrahim's plight and requested that immediate aid be offered to her. At a press conference, the Senators also [highlighted](#) the continued imprisonment of Pastor Saeed Abedini, an American citizen who has been held by Iranian officials for months for his failure to turn from Christianity. In their most recent letter, the Senators stated that the Secretaries "must respond urgently to these grave human rights abuses. We continue to respectfully request that you, along with the Administration, utilize all resources available to secure freedom for Meriam and her son." To follow this story, [click here](#).

In Case You Missed It:

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

[CDC: Study Confirms Traditional Family Structure Best for Children](#)

[Three Education Innovations That Could Increase Economic Mobility](#)

[GOP Presidential Hopefuls Address the Common Core Standards](#)