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It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion.

Abraham Lincoln

Lobbying Days Update

Each spring, AACCS State and Regional Legislative Directors travel to D.C. to meet with Members of Congress on behalf of our schools. The purpose of the AACCS Lobbying Days is to introduce our organization to new Members of Congress, establish relationships with congressional offices, educate congressional staffers, explain the mission and current legislative priorities of AACCS, and reinforce the daily work and initiatives of the AACCS Legislative Office. State and Regional Legislative Directors include representatives from AACCS ministries across the country in multiple congressional districts and states. As constituents, their meetings with the congressional offices are especially effective. The transitory nature of many staffers and politicians in D.C. makes this annual visit a crucial part of the outreach efforts of our office. This year's Lobbying Days included a focus on monitoring universal preschool proposals, supporting an anti-Common Core resolution, and protecting religious freedom particularly in the case of the Health and Human Services abortion pill mandate. Over a period of two months, Gary Click (BCSA), Bill Fennell (CSO), Joseph and Ethan Hansen (Midwest), Paul Smith (Citizen Impact and the South), Dan Zacharias (ODACS and MACS), Gary Moger and students (South Mid-Atlantic), Tim Schmig (MACS), and Montel Wilder (Northeast) made over 100 contacts on Capitol Hill. God gave them many profitable meetings. We have continued to receive positive feedback about their visits and are grateful to these men who have cheerfully given their valuable time and efforts to educate Members about our concerns.

American Federation for Children National Conference

Last week, the American Federation for Children, a leading voice in the school choice movement, conducted its fifth, two-day national policy summit. The meeting entitled #Ed Revolution: Breaking Down Barriers to Choice featured a bevy of distinguished speakers including Governor Bobby Jindal (R-LA), Governor Chris Christie (R-NJ), Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), American Enterprise Institute President Arthur Brooks, and WNBA superstar Lisa Leslie. Several scholarship beneficiaries spoke about the way that school choice changed their lives and enabled them to pursue higher education opportunities. To watch sessions and programs of each day on AFC's YouTube page, [click here](#).

Americans Petition Administration to Help Persecuted Sudanese Christian

For months, Dr. Meriam Ibrahim, the expectant wife of a naturalized American citizen, and her young son have been held captive by the Sudanese government. Mrs. Ibrahim was charged by her government to deny her Christian faith but has steadfastly refused to do so, even under great duress. The Sudanese court then sentenced her to receive 100 lashes and be executed by hanging. As international outcry continued to build, the Sudanese government announced that it would allow her to deliver her unborn child prior to her execution. Last week,

U.S. Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) called on Secretary of State John Kerry and Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson to intervene on behalf of the family and grant them asylum. The State Department has been slow to respond to this terrible human rights abuse. This week, Mrs. Ibrahim delivered a healthy baby girl in prison. Religious liberty advocates have stepped up the pressure on the U.S. government due to the jail's high infant mortality rate. The Sudanese government has now indicated that it may allow her to care for the child for two years before carrying out the death sentence. The Family Research Council has launched a White House petition on behalf of the family. To learn more about the petition, [click here](#).

Marriage Redefinition in Pennsylvania and Oregon

Judges in Oregon and Pennsylvania have issued rulings based on the seemingly prevailing opinion that marriage may be redefined by society. In each case, appeals of earlier rulings were denied, effectively making same-sex marriage legal in these states. Chris Plante, spokesman for the National Organization of Marriage, characterized the Pennsylvania ruling as “an end run around the democratic process.” He lamented the fact that one unelected person could [overrule](#) the votes of thousands of Pennsylvania citizens. Similar scenarios have occurred in thirteen other states. Many judges have relied on a broad interpretation of the Supreme Court's decision in the *Windsor* case last June—many using the line of reasoning in Justice Kennedy's majority opinion that laws against same-sex marriage are based only in animus toward homosexuals and are therefore unconstitutional. Matt Barber, a constitutional lawyer at Liberty Counsel Action, states these judges “have moved beyond judicial activism into judicial imperialism.” In many cases, state Attorney Generals have declined to defend their states' voter-approved constitutional marriage amendments. In other instances, homosexual activists have lambasted public figures like Utah governor Gary Herbert (R) and have demanded that he apologize for committing to defend the state's marriage amendment. In a meeting with reporters, Governor Herbert declared, “For elected officials, governors or attorneys general, to pick and choose what laws [they] will enforce, I think is a tragedy, and the next step is anarchy.” For an analysis by Heritage Foundation expert Ryan Anderson, [click here](#).

Texas Abortion Centers Continue to Close

In the wake of a court's decision to uphold Texas's new abortion clinic regulations issued last year, the 20th abortion provider has announced that it will be [closing](#) its doors. The Dallas-based abortion clinic had been in operation for thirty years. According to *Citizenlink*, Texas Values President Jonathan Saenz notes that these providers have chosen to shutdown rather than adopt commonsense [protections](#) for patients such as retaining doctors with admitting privileges at local hospitals and meeting surgical center health and safety regulations. Saenz maintains that abortion providers have decided, “If it's going to cost them more money or they're going to have to do it in a safer way, they decide not to do it at all.” Furthermore, he stated, “It really is not about what's best for women, it's what's best for their business.”

In Case You Missed It:

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

[The Federal Government Hasn't Improved Education After Trying for Fifty Years](#)

[Benham Brothers Vow to Stand Up to Intolerant Bullies](#)

[FRC Update: Houston Mayor Attempts to Ban Christians from City Council](#)

[Update: Sudanese Christian Still Facing Execution](#)