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Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.

John Adams

Oklahoma Exits Common Core Standards

On Friday, Governor Mary Fallin (R-OK) signed HB 3399 which removes the state from the Common Core English and mathematics standards and restores local decision making in education. The bipartisan measure includes explicit language that prohibits the state from drafting standards that resemble the Common Core. In her statement, Governor Fallin noted that “federal overreach has tainted Common Core and President Obama and Washington bureaucrats have usurped Common Core in an attempt to influence state education standards” with predictable results. The state will resume using the Oklahoma Priority Student Skills (PASS) which were used from 2003 to 2010. The governor declared that the new standards will be superior to the Common Core Standards and will receive the proper vetting the CCS did not undergo. In a response on Monday, Education Secretary Arne Duncan pointed out that the governor previously made positive statements about the standards and that this latest move is simply reverting to the driving down of standards that occurred under No Child Left Behind. He cautioned that the department would be monitoring the newly created standards crafted by the state. In another blow to the Common Core, approximately 58% of K-12 students across the country will not be taking the Common Core-aligned assessments. Oklahoma is the third state to reject the Common Core. Several other states are contemplating similar measures. The controversial standards have faced a broad range of ideological opposition as major left-leaning teachers unions have also withdrawn their support.

Administration Advances Student Loan Proposals

On June 9, President Barack Obama [issued](#) an executive memorandum ordering the Secretary of Education to expand the Pay as You Earn program, which places “caps on monthly loan payments at 10 percent of the borrower’s discretionary income and forgives their remaining balance after 20 years.” Those working in public service or the federal government would have their student loan debts forgiven in ten years. Citing statistics that estimate 71 percent of students earning a bachelor’s degree accumulate an average of \$29,400 in student loan debt which leads them to postpone marriage and buying a house, the President signed the memo and encouraged Congress to work to address this growing issue. On Wednesday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) allowed a procedural vote on Senator Elizabeth Warren’s (D-MA) student loan refinancing proposal. Senator Warren has sought to be seen as a champion of the middle class and insisted that the proposal would level the playing field for all Americans. At the memo signing, the President stated that the Warren bill would save 25 million borrowers about \$2,000 each. Meanwhile, the Congressional Budget Office determined that the bill would add \$58 billion to the nation’s debt. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), ranking member on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, maintains that the cost would potentially be much higher to taxpayers depending on the student default rates and that the revenue loss would not be offset by the capped repayment plans. The Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act would have been paid for by

a tax hike, commonly known as the Buffet Tax, levied on millionaires. The bill failed to garner the needed procedural votes to be considered by the full Senate. It failed to clear the 60 vote threshold by a 56-38 vote. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), chairman of the HELP Committee, issued a scathing statement on the Senate's failure to pass the [student loan](#) proposal.

Wisconsin Judge Redefines Marriage

Once again a federal judge has [overturned](#) a voter-approved constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Last week, Judge Barbara Crabb, infamous for her previous rulings against the National Day of Prayer and clergy housing allowances, dismissed the many serious concerns presented by state officials. In her 88-page ruling, Judge Crabb wrote, "Civil marriage is a legal construct, not a biological rule of nature, so it can be and has been changed over the years; there is nothing 'impossible' about defining marriage to include same-sex couples, as has been demonstrated by the decisions of a number countries and states to do just that." Furthermore, she stated that those who oppose same-sex marriage are driven by a need to maintain the status quo, that neither children or the institution of marriage are harmed by legalization, that these couples have the same ability to procreate as other couples, and that the issue of states' rights is not enough to uphold the current law. County clerks offices are in a state of disarray as some have begun to issue marriage licenses instead of waiting for the appeal while others refuse until the ruling is formally declared at the June 16th hearing. Several state offices extended their hours and waived the standard five-day waiting period to issue hundreds of licenses to same-sex couples. Although state Attorney General J. B. Hollen requested an immediate stay of the ruling, Judge Crabb declined to issue an order to that effect and claimed that the clerks' actions were not in her jurisdiction. Attorney General Hollen has appealed the case to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

California Judge Rules Against Teacher Tenure Practices

On June 10, a Los Angeles Superior Court judge ruled in favor nine students in the case of [Vergara v. California](#). According to the original complaint filed in 2012, the students alleged that restrictive teacher tenure practices tied district officials' hands and resulted in incompetent teachers being reassigned to already failing schools located in primarily minority districts. A comprehensive three-year study of the matter proved the veracity of their claims. The five teacher tenure-related rules caused minority students to be two to three times as likely to have lower rated teachers as their White or Asian peers. The rules included policies that granted lifetime tenure for teachers who completed 18 months of service and made it almost impossible to fire them regardless of their repeated disciplinary infractions. Because of the first-in-last-out policy, a former Teacher of the Year lost his job to veteran teachers with lower ratings. The judge in the case ruled that these labor practices were unconstitutional and that the children should not be relegated to receiving substandard educations. Betsy DeVos, chairman of American Federation for Children, praised the decision and declared that the ruling "confirms that every child, no matter...socioeconomic background, has the right to a quality education and success in the classroom." The state teacher's union has pledged to [appeal](#) the decision.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[IRS Caught Colluding with DOJ and FBI](#)

[Justina Pelletier Case: Government is a Terrible Parent](#)

[Colorado Civil Rights Commission Votes Against Christian Baker](#)

[Assisted Suicide Update from Washington State](#)