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Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.
Thomas Edison

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal Rejects Common Core

The controversy surrounding the Common Core Standards (CCS) for English and mathematics is continuing to grow. Last week, Bill Gates, billionaire philanthropist who invested \$200 million in promotion of the standards, [joined](#) groups such as the National Education Association, American Federation for Teachers, and others who have called for delays of the punitive measures tied to the CCS-aligned assessments. A letter states, “[The] Gates Foundation agrees with those who’ve decided that assessment results should not be taken into account in high-stakes decisions on teacher evaluation or student promotion for the next two years, during this transition [into Common Core].” Both the Gates Foundation and the teachers’ unions still support national standards but have significant concerns about the implementation and consequences of Common Core. On June 18, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal made headlines by announcing that the state “won’t let the federal government take over Louisiana’s education standards.” Furthermore, he maintained that he was “alarmed about choice and local control over curriculum being taken away from parents and educators.” Immediately after his press conference, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) said that it intends to move forward with the implementation of CCS for the upcoming school year for those students in third through eighth grade. The governor will now face off with the BESE, Superintendent of Education John White, and some in the business community who support the standards. If he prevails, Louisiana will join the states of Indiana, South Carolina, and Oklahoma that have already rejected the standards. In related news, citizens in Ohio are [urging](#) their leaders to withdraw from the standards as well. Governor John Kasich (R-OH) has said that he has no desire to withdraw from the standards, but lawmakers have moved to file a discharge petition that would move the bill out of committee and into consideration by the full legislature.

Pro-life Group Wins at Supreme Court

As the summer session draws to the end, the Supreme Court announced on Monday that it decided unanimously in favor of the Susan B. Anthony List, a prominent pro-life group. The group’s aim is “dedicated to pursuing policies and electing candidates who will reduce and ultimately end abortion.” In the case of *Susan B. Anthony v. Driehaus*, the group alleged that Ohio’s restrictive campaign laws infringed on its First Amendment free speech protections. The justices agreed that the group had the legal standing to bring suit against Ohio. An Ohio statute allows political appointees in a state agency to determine whether political speech is true or false and thereby limits what groups may say about a candidate and their record. In this particular case, former Rep. Steve Driehaus filed a complaint against SBA List’s attempt to erect a billboard informing voters of his affirmative vote for Obamacare. He disagreed with group’s belief that voting for the healthcare law was a vote for taxpayer funding of abortion. Subsequent regulations stemming from the healthcare law have shown the group’s charge to be true. Majorie Dannenfeler, president of SBA List, stated, “Today’s decision by the court is a step toward victory for the freedom of speech and the broad coalition of groups who have supported SBA List throughout

this case. The truth or falsity of political speech should be judged by voters, not government bureaucrats.” Spokesmen for the group maintained that the seizure of their property during the initial investigation and subsequent legal battle diverted resources from their primary mission to cultivate a culture of life. They expressed confidence that they will ultimately prevail in this case and continue to inform voters “without fear of prosecution.”

Court Defines Sin in HHS Abortion Pill Mandate Case

Although the majority of the non-profit groups challenging the Health and Human Services (HHS) abortion pill mandate have prevailed in court, the Michigan Catholic Conference recently [lost](#) its appeal at the Sixth Circuit level. The HHS mandate requires employers to provide the full range of FDA-approved contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs or pay penalties. Large employers, such as Hobby Lobby, an Oklahoma-based arts and craft supplier that faces fines of up to \$1.3 million per day for refusing to offer 4 of the 20 drugs included in the mandate, are one of the 300 plaintiffs represented by 100 lawsuits on the HHS mandate. After several promised changes to the mandate, the Administration offered an accommodation deemed by many to be an accounting gimmick that doesn’t absolve the employer from complicity in providing employees with coverage that violates the tenets of their faith. Employers with objections must self-certify that they are sufficiently religious to receive an exemption. This certification merely triggers a switch to a third party provider who then provides the abortion coverage. In this particular case, the organizations contend that serving as the conduit through which another person gains services they find objectionable substantially burdens their free exercise of religion under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The Sixth Circuit ruled that the plaintiff’s free exercise rights were not being violated and that they therefore must comply. Constitutional expert Eugene Volokh writes, “The question isn’t whether a judge or jury agrees with a person’s claim that a law [that] requires him to engage in behavior is sinful—it is whether the person sincerely believes that the behavior is sinful. Likewise, when the person believes that complicity itself is sinful, the question is not whether our secular legal system thinks that he has drawn the right line as to complicity; it is whether he sincerely believes that the complicity is sinful.” The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty maintains HHS Mandate Information Central for those who wish to find the status of all cases related to the mandate. To view the page, [click here](#).

President Announces Executive Order LGBT Rights

On Monday, President Barack Obama [announced](#) plans to unveil a new executive order that would expand the list of protected classes (race, national origin, etc.) to include sexual orientation and gender identity. In the press conference, he directed his staff to draft the memo, but sources say that a draft executive order has been in existence for some time. The announcement coincided with the anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, LGBT Pride month, and a fundraiser which led to characterizations of the move as a political one intended to ignite the base in an election year according to Politico and other news outlets. The text of the order is unknown but is seen by detractors as an end run around the failure of the House of Representatives to take up the Senate-passed version of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA).

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