



A Publication of the American Association of Christian Schools

The Washington Flyer
June 27, 2014

The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.
Winston Churchill

Florida Governor Signs Education Savings Account Bill

Last week, Florida Governor Rick Scott (R) signed SB 850 which expands the state's tuition tax credit program and establishes the nation's second education savings account (ESA) program for students with special needs. In 2011, Arizona, a leader in innovative school choice options, introduced the first ESA program. The savings accounts give eligible parents a restricted use debit card which they can use for a variety of purposes: tuition at private schools, supplemental educational services, online learning, textbooks, etc. One unique feature of the Arizona program is that any unused funds can be applied to college tuition bills which incentivizes parents to use the money wisely. The newly created Florida program, Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts (PLSA), will be available to the parents of children with special needs and can be used to pay for therapy options that address specific challenges the student may be facing. Florida leads the nation in school choice program participants and serves 60,000 children from eligible families. The bill also expands the current choice program by raising the scholarship amount, creating partial scholarships, and removing the requirement that stipulated students must attend a public school for a one year to be eligible. According to the [Alliance for School Choice](#), there are 308,650 students enrolled in 39 school choice programs across the country.

Executive Order Update

Last week the President announced that he plans to issue an executive order extending workplace protections to LGBT persons under the guise of civil rights. Even though by law the President's executive order typically can apply only to those doing contract business with the federal government, some reports indicate that this order will cover more than 16 million working Americans. The order would prohibit any federal contractor from having employment practices considered to be discriminatory toward any person based on the person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The order would make it difficult, if not impossible, for employers to have policies written according to traditional sexual and gender norms addressing sexual conduct, speech, and dress code. At the very least, it would prohibit many Americans from speaking and acting according to their moral and religious beliefs while in the workplace and would have a chilling effect on anyone opposed to LGBT behaviors. Since the executive order has not yet been signed, we are strongly encouraging everyone to make their voices heard in the White House. Our sources suggest that the reason for the announcements before the actual signing is so that the public's response can be measured for opposition. Now is the time for us to speak up and out to let the President know that the religious liberty rights of all Americans should not be removed in the workplace. No person should be required to give up his rights of conscience and be forced to be silent on the matters of morality. The protections of sexual behaviors and preferences of certain persons must not become the forced standard by which employment practices and decisions are made.

Action Item: We urge you to call the White House and to let your opposition to the President’s planned executive order be known. Let him know that he should protect the true rights of all Americans—including the rights of an employer to run a company according to the dictates of his own conscience. Remind the President that he should not deprive the fundamental religious liberty rights of one group under the banner of advancing the perceived rights of another. Contact the White House at [202-456-1111](tel:202-456-1111) or send an [email here](#).

March for Marriage Update

On June 19, the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), along with many other pro-marriage groups, conducted the second annual [March for Marriage](#) in Washington, DC. Thousands of marriage supporters gathered at the base of the United States Capitol, participated in the rally, and then marched to the Supreme Court. Speakers at the rally included the Archbishop of San Francisco, Representative Tim Huelskamp (R-KS), former Senator Rick Santorum, former Governor Mike Huckabee, and spokesmen from other pro-family organizations such as the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, and the Heritage Foundation. In a *Christian Post* interview, Governor Huckabee said, “I think it’s so important that people of faith, and frankly even people who believe that marriage is the foundation and cornerstone of society, are here....Not to express what we’re against, because this isn’t about being against something. This is about being for marriage. And that’s why we’re here.” That night supporters gathered for a reception and gala event highlighting the importance of marriage. Attendees heard from esteemed Professor Robert George, NOM President Brian Brown, and noted surgeon Dr. Benjamin Carson. To view photographs and read testimonials from the marchers, [click here](#).

Sudanese Christian Freed from Prison

On Monday, it was reported that Dr. Meriam Ibrahim, the Christian mother sentenced to death for apostasy in Sudan, would be released from her imprisonment. A few weeks ago, Dr. Ibrahim, who is married to a US citizen, gave birth to her second child while waiting for the Sudanese government to administer 100 lashes and execute her for allegedly committing adultery (marrying a non-Muslim) and apostasy (being an adherent of the Christian faith). Due to the high infant mortality rate in the prison and the multiple human rights abuses she endured, over 50,000 people signed a White House petition urging the Administration to act and over a million joined a similar effort led by Amnesty International. Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), who led the fight to free Mrs. Ibrahim and her two young children, stated that he was “very pleased” to hear of the court’s reversal and release of Mrs. Ibrahim and her young children and encouraged U.S. officials “to work quickly and use all resources available to immediately provide Meriam and her family with safe haven in the United States.” Late [Monday afternoon](#), reports confirmed that the family was barred from boarding a flight to America and temporarily detained by the Sudanese government purportedly due to paperwork issues. American officials are monitoring the situation and working to insure the family is not harmed further by government officials or family members who have pledged to kill them for professing Christianity. Please continue to pray for this family!

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Benham Brothers: Christians Can Speak Boldly But Must Be Willing to Lose It All](#)

[This Is Hurting Kids’ Futures](#)

[Higher Education: DOE Outlines New Campus Safety Regulations](#)

[DOE Releases Race to the Top Progress Reports](#)

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