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Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.

Ronald Reagan

Senate Considers UN Treaty Endangering Parental Rights

Last week, with a vote of 12-6 the U.S. Foreign Relations Committee passed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a United Nations treaty which has the potential not only to undermine American sovereignty but also to threaten parental rights in the United States. The dangers the CRPD poses to American sovereignty were outlined in a compelling floor speech [delivered](#) by Senator Orrin Hatch in which he explained that ratification of the treaty would make the U.S. accountable to the United Nations in areas such as the education, health, and employment of persons with disabilities. He also gave strong evidence that ratification of the CRPD is unnecessary since the current law, Americans with Disabilities Act, already protects and supports the rights of disabled persons and is often the model for other countries seeking to do the same. Furthermore, many conservative groups express grave concern over the threat the CRPD presents to parental rights. In a recent [letter](#) to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, leaders of over 50 organizations noted, “the CRPD is especially worrisome because it does not define ‘disability,’ stating it is an ‘evolving concept.’ It replaces parental rights with ‘the best interests of the child’ standard, making government actors ultimately responsible for final decisions in the care of a child with a disability.” In addition, the treaty references the “reproductive health” rights of those with disabilities, leading many to believe the treaty will likely expand abortion. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee included several “Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations”(RUD’s) with the passage of the treaty in an effort to allay the aforementioned concerns. However, Mike Farris, founder of the Home School Legal Defense Association, [explains](#) that even strongly worded RUD’s would likely not fix the actual language of the treaty or improve the problems presented for parental rights. The CRPD now awaits a vote by the entire Senate. Conservative organizations are calling on concerned citizens to call their Senators and urge them to vote “no” on ratification of the CRPD.

Is the Common Core Debate Reaching a Tipping Point?

A recent Politico [story](#) reports that moms are winning the battle to defeat Common Core Standards (CCS) in spite of millions of dollars being spent by supporters attempting to salvage the nationalized standards. The backlash against the Common Core has surprised supporters who believed the educational coup was secure once 45 states had adopted the CCS. Now, five years later, supporters are considering it a major victory that only 5 states so far have dropped the standards. Observers on both sides of issue believe that moms have been the key to the obvious PR success the opposition has achieved. Supporters acknowledging the turning tide hope that a May grant of \$10.3 million from the Gates Foundation will breathe new life into the PR counter

fighting emotion with talking points, and it doesn't work. There's got to be a way to get more emotional with our arguments if we want to win this thing. That means we have a lot more work to do." Ginning up emotion in support of the standards however, may be a difficult task, and early [attempts](#) at rebranding the Common Core have not been nearly as compelling as [moms](#) and [students](#) have been in their opposition. Reports indicate supporters will attempt to re-message the CCS by showcasing emotional stories from teachers, students, and business leaders with claims that CCS is the solution to lagging academic achievement and student success. As supporters begin to wonder if too much damage has been done for reputation of the standards to be rehabilitated, opponents are not deterred, confident that the battle is being won as the standards are exposed.

House Bill Aims to End Discrimination Against Religious Adoption Agencies

On Wednesday, Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) and Representative Mike Kelly (R-PA) [announced](#) the introduction of the [Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act](#). The bill's purpose is to encourage states to maintain laws and policies that allow religiously organized and affiliated agencies to continue providing much needed child welfare services. The legislation would remove 15 percent of the federal funding for childcare services in states whose policies prohibit religiously organized child welfare and adoption agencies from operating. Currently, Massachusetts, California, Illinois, and Washington, DC, all have anti-discrimination policies specifically prohibiting discrimination on the basis of LGBT lifestyles that prohibit religious organizations from providing adoption and child welfare services. Homosexual activists have attacked the bill as a "license to discriminate," but Representative Kelly states, "This bill is about fairness and inclusion. It is about ensuring that everyone who wants to help provide foster or adoptive care to children is able to have a seat at the table." Supporters point out that faith-based organizations provide a historically significant and important role in the care of children and should not be shut out of serving children and families under the guise of tolerance. The bill would provide an incentive to states not to pass legislation hostile to child welfare agencies that operate according to religious principles.

Heritage Foundation Releases the First Issue of the Culture and Opportunity Report

"I learned early on, from personal experience, that these two notions [culture and opportunity] are intertwined," writes Heritage President Jim DeMint. In an effort to quantify these two ideas and to encourage reform in the areas of the American culture that are in decline, the Heritage Foundation has [announced](#) the release of its inaugural issue of the [2014 Index of Culture and Opportunity](#). "The *Index* presents an at-a-glance view of cultural trends in America such as marriage rate, religious participation, and community involvement...presented alongside data regarding poverty, dependence, workforce participation, and educational and employment opportunities," reads the Preface. The *Index* is a very helpful tool to explain the real connection between the values that shaped our history and the consequences that follow depending upon how well our culture continues to cultivate these values. While many of the trends show declining values and the resulting declining opportunity, some bright spots in the report show declining rates of violent crime and abortion and increasing school choice participation.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Congressmen Demand Answers About Planned Parenthood Abortion Quotas](#)

[Kansas Abortion Facility Accused of Abuse Shuts Down](#)

[Bill to Promote Religious Freedom in Middle East Heads to President's Desk](#)