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*A wise and frugal government, which shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor and bread it has earned—  
this is the sum of good government.*

*Thomas Jefferson*

**New AP US History Standards Stimulates More Common Core Controversy**

A new storm connected to the Common Core Standards (CCS) is brewing over the recent release of the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) US History standards. Although history standards are not part of the CCS, critics of the new AP history standards point out a connection between the AP standards and the Common Core. College Board Curriculum Director Lawrence Charap [stated](#) that the new AP standards, while not officially coordinated with the Common Core, do use CCS methodologies. One of these methodologies emphasizes technical readings over literary works. At a recent [lecture](#) highlighting concerns with the Common Core, Dr. Sandra Stotsky mentioned that the Common Core's overemphasis on technical reading presents a tremendous challenge to historical studies. She points out that historical reading requires contextualization, corroboration, and sourcing—all of which occur “outside” the actual text being read. Conversely, technical reading is more “self-contained” with students drawing conclusions from “within” the text. Thus the Common Core's reading methodology when applied to the study of history leaves contextualization up to textbook publishers or teachers, even as primary sources are used and read by students. Supporters argue that this approach allows teachers and local school boards to select textbooks and detailed curriculums to fit the standards and conform to state-mandated history standards. However, critics counter that the standards themselves appear to direct the study of history in a manner described as a “history from below” and are written to favor historical narratives that give undue focus on gender, racial, and economic divisions and struggles. The sort of contextualization contained in the standards themselves imposes what some opponents characterize as Marxist ideals on high school students who have had little time to learn historical facts within a traditional American understanding and context. Some foresee the standards creating an open door for teachers and textbooks to provide radical explanations of American history. While the new AP standards appear here to stay, opponents are using this opportunity to highlight the dangers created by the centralization of academic standards which was accomplished through the early widespread acceptance of the Common Core by the educational establishment.

**State of Marriage—Court Hearings and Rulings**

Since the Supreme Court struck down part of the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013, over 70 cases have been filed in states that prohibit same-sex marriage. On Wednesday, the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati heard arguments for [cases](#) against the ban on same-sex marriage in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee. While it is unclear when a decision will be determined by the panel of judges, their questions during the arguments lead many to believe that they will decide in favor of the voter-approved amendments and laws which prohibit same-sex marriage. The 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last week that Virginia's state constitutional amendment that prohibits same-sex marriage violates the US Constitution. In response, Michelle McQuigg, a County Clerk from northern Virginia, [requested](#) a stay on the decision while the case is appealed to

the Supreme Court. Representing McQuigg, Senior Counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom Byron Babione [stated](#), “The Supreme Court declared that states have the authority to define marriage for their community. If the high court remains consistent with that principle, the states will ultimately be free to preserve man-woman marriage should they choose to do so. In the meantime, the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit should put a hold on its decision to ensure an orderly and dignified resolution of this important constitutional question.” The ruling affects all the states in the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit, including West Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas; attorney generals in these states are [divided](#) on how they will respond to the ruling. The 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (in Chicago) is scheduled to hear arguments on August 26, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (in San Francisco) hearing is set for September 8<sup>th</sup>. Many believe that the Supreme Court will eventually decide all these cases.

### **Ohio Debates Dropping the Common Core**

Despite [opposition](#) from the Republican chairman of the Education Committee and losses in two previous votes, Common Core Standard (CCS) opponents in Ohio are proposing a new repeal bill through a seldom used pathway in the House Rules Committee. The bill’s sponsor, [Andy Thompson](#) is determined to [replace the CCS with high quality standards](#) developed within the state. The challenge for opponents has been generating enough political will to pass a repeal bill because many in the political and educational establishment support the Common Core. Supporters of the Common Core include Republican Governor John Kasich; however, a recent surprising primary defeat of a Republican incumbent by a candidate who made the Common Core a key issue of his campaign may signal a shift in Ohio. Hearings to debate the bill begin on August 12.

### **White House Announces Revisions to the Contraceptive Accommodation**

In anticipation of the Supreme Court making permanent a temporary order permitting Wheaton College to opt out of providing contraception coverage without having to sign the so-called “permission slip,” the [White House announced](#) that it is working to find an “alternative way for objecting non-profit religious organizations to provide notification” of their intent to forgo contraception coverage for their employees. At issue is the government supplied “accommodation” that requires a religious non-profit to sign a slip informing its insurance provider of its religious objection to providing contraception coverage to its employees. Under this previous plan, once notified, insurance companies and third party administrators would provide the coverage directly to employees; however, costs for the coverage would still ultimately be paid by the objecting organizations. The White House is looking for ways to resurrect this plan with new rule making that avoids using the “permission slip” but still guarantees contraceptive coverage for employees at non-profit organizations receiving the religious exemption. Religious liberty groups believe that the only meaningful exemptions to the mandate must also protect organizations from having to pay for contraceptive coverage and must allow any individual or organization with religious objections to opt out.

### **In Case You Missed It:**

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

[How to Support Religious Liberty](#)

[Executive Order: Conform your theology, or stop helping people](#)

[ACLU: No need to protect baby girls from abortion](#)