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He therefore is the truest friend to the liberty of this country who tries most to promote its virtue, and who, so far as his power and influence extend, will not suffer a man to be chosen into any office of power and trust who is not a wise and virtuous man....The sum of all is, if we would most truly enjoy this gift of Heaven, let us become a virtuous people.

Samuel Adams

Election Victories for Social Issues: Life, Marriage, and School Choice

Tuesday's election is being called historic as it brings sweeping change to the U.S. Congress, as well as to state legislatures and executive offices all across America. With the election of seven new Republican Senators, control over the Senate now moves to Republicans, unifying Congress for ideological opposition to the President's agenda. On the state level, the elections [brought](#) the number of Republican legislatures to 65, with Democrats controlling only 23, marking the lowest number of Democrat-elected officials on the state level since the 1920s. Gubernatorial elections also saw large Republican wins—even in deep-blue states like Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Maine—growing the number of states with Republican governors to 31. Many pundits agree that the driving force in this election was dissatisfaction with the President's policies, specifically Obamacare. However, many of the victorious candidates bring with them to Congress core conservative principles on life, marriage, and school choice. On the federal level, each newly elected Senator claims a strong [pro-life](#) position, supporting legislation that would prohibit abortions past five months of pregnancy. The Republican-controlled House of Representatives has already passed several pieces of pro-life legislation that were stalled in the Democrat-controlled Senate, and conservatives are hopeful that the bills will now have a chance to pass both Houses of Congress and be sent to the President for his signature. On the issue of [marriage](#), Senators-elect Tom Cotton (AR) and Thom Tillis (NC) both received strong support and endorsements from the National Organization for Marriage (NOM) and soundly defeated the incumbents. NOM also joined Family Research Council and other conservative organizations in a bus tour that supported several other victorious candidates, pointing to the fact that support for traditional marriage is still strong among many voters. In the area of [education](#), the Senate changes will likely lead to movement for ESEA reauthorization (No Child Left Behind) and could possibly advance school choice legislation. Senator Lamar Alexander (TN) will become the new Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, and he has already drafted a version of ESEA reauthorization, and he has sponsored some school choice legislation in the past. In addition, Senators Rubio (FL), Paul (KY), and Scott (SC) have also sponsored school choice legislation. School choice supporters are hopeful that these efforts will rise to meet the work already accomplished by the House to affect positive educational change and move control over educational decisions away from the federal government. On the state level, school choice played a significant [role](#) in the governors' races in Florida, Wisconsin, and Illinois—all of which were highly contested races. The Common Core was also a key issue in at least three races for state superintendent (Arizona, Georgia, and South Carolina). In all three races the victorious candidates were outspoken in their opposition for the standards, making this a major part of their platform. Pundits believe that these victories likely pave the way for Arizona and Georgia to withdraw completely from the standards (South Carolina has already withdrawn).

Thousands Take a Stand for Religious Liberty

Thousands of Christians joined together last Sunday to stand for religious liberty in a special service held at Houston's Grace Community Church, home of Pastor Steve Riggle, one of the five pastors with recently subpoenaed sermons. The service, "I Stand Sunday," featured speakers who are on the frontlines of the battle for preserving religious liberty in our country, including pastors, attorneys, and even celebrities Phil Robertson and the Benham brothers. Speakers noted that even though Houston's mayor rescinded the subpoenas sent to the five pastors, religious liberty continues under attack as the people of Houston have still not been given the opportunity to vote on the controversial city ordinance. The audience was challenged and encouraged to stand firm for their biblical convictions, and the Family Research Council offered [resources](#) to help those engaged in the fight. Additionally, Alliance Defending Freedom announced the preparation of a special [guide](#), titled "Protecting Your Ministry From Sexual Orientation Lawsuits," to help pastors and Christians who find themselves in the crosshairs of the religious liberty battle. While the speakers recognized the grave threat to religious freedom in our country and the need for Christians to stand firm, a key theme was also the desperate need for revival in our country. As several speakers noted, true change in our nation will happen only as hearts are changed by the Lord. During the service, over 700 churches and 3,000 home groups tuned in to the web cast. To watch the archived video of the service, click [here](#).

Looking Towards Victory for Ministers in Idaho

City officials in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, are now claiming that the two pastors who own The Hitching Post will not be forced to officiate same-sex ceremonies because their business is actually a religious corporation rather than a for-profit business. While this comes as a relief to Donald and Evelyn Knapp, the ministers who were facing jail time and steep fines for their refusal to perform same-sex weddings, the battle is [not entirely over](#). Initially, the Knapps were told that because The Hitching Post was a for-profit business, they would be subject to the city ordinance; however, last week the city attorney sent a letter stating that the business is actually a religious corporation and therefore exempt from the statutes and penalties in the ordinance. Attorneys from Alliance Defending Freedom [noted](#) that in reality, nothing has changed regarding the standing and description of The Hitching Post; therefore, clarification is still needed from the city regarding what actually constitutes a religious corporation and if the city will indeed respect the First Amendment rights of all religious people and businesses that operate according to their faith and against the regulations in the non-discrimination ordinance. Many believe that the change in the city's stance is due in large part to the national attention and subsequent public outcry against the hard initial stance against the ministers and their faith.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Tennessee Voters Approve Amendment to Allow Laws to Stop Abortions](#)

[Judge Orders Same Sex Marriage Legal in Kansas](#)

[Education Savings Accounts Gaining Popularity in Delaware](#)

[Judge Rules Missouri Gay Marriage Ban is Unconstitutional](#)

Jamison Coppola: Legislative Director
Maureen Van Den Berg: Policy Analyst
Legislative Office, 119 C Street SE, Washington, DC 20003
Phone: 202.547.2991 Fax: 202.547.2992