



A Publication of the American Association of Christian Schools

The Washington Flyer
December 5, 2014

The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government—lest it come to dominate our lives and interests.
Patrick Henry

Obama Administration Lauding Expansion of State-Run Early Education

This week, the Department of Education (DOE) released a [report](#) summarizing the work of 14 states which were awarded funds during the first two rounds of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) competition. While 20 states have received funds through a total of three rounds of RTT-ELC, only 14 have reached the point where they are required to submit an Annual Performance Report which describes the progress, challenges, and successes made as a result of RTT-ELC funds. The report released by the DOE lauds the states for increasing the number of programs enrolled in Tiered Quality Rating Improvement Systems; investing in extensive data collection efforts on children, programs, and educators; improving professional development and teacher training courses; and establishing Kindergarten Entry Assessments in several states. The findings in the [report summary](#) reflect the fact that the President's early education agenda includes monitoring and providing for the health and social welfare of children (birth to age five) in addition to their educational needs. While President Obama has been unable to push his early education agenda through Congress, he has used discretionary funds to advance his plans to expand federal involvement in early education. Since 2012, three different RTT-ELC competitions, sponsored jointly by the DOE and the Department of Health and Human Services, have awarded just over \$1 billion to 20 states to enact reforms in their early education programs; and this year the Administration launched an additional \$250 million Preschool Development Grant competition which is intended to help states build, develop, and expand state-run early education programs. Thirty-five states and Puerto Rico have submitted applications for this latest competition, and the winners will be announced at a White House Summit on Early Education scheduled for December 10. According to a press [release](#) from the White House, the goal of the summit is to bring together a coalition of philanthropists, education stakeholders, and business leaders who are committed to the President's plan of providing "Preschool for All." In addition to the expansion already created through the four competitions, the President is using the summit to propose a new set of investments "extending and expanding evidence-based, voluntary home visiting, growing the supply of effective learning opportunities for young children through Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, and providing Preschool for All."

Common Core Standards Face Battle in Tennessee

Two state senators in Tennessee have [introduced](#) legislation which could result in the state rejecting the Common Core Standards. The proposed bill would require the creation of a nine-person committee, appointed jointly by the governor and the state legislators, to review the standards. While Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam has already called for a public review of the math and English standards, he admits that withdrawing from the standards would be a difficult process since the state must use approved college and career ready standards in order to receive federal funding. The two senators who introduced the bill have actually supported the CCS in the past, causing some to question whether the senators have truly flipped in their position regarding

the standards or whether they are just trying to control the opposition. Both senators cited the need for state control as a large part of their reason for introducing the bill. The concern over lack of state control has already caused three states (Indiana, Oklahoma, and South Carolina) to repeal the CCS. Three additional states (Louisiana, North Carolina, and Missouri) have efforts underway to repeal, and four states never signed on (Alabama, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia). A recent [report](#) also shows a rise in the number of children being homeschooled in Virginia, California, New York, and North Carolina, and some conservatives are attributing this to parents' concern that the CCS are evidence of national control over their children's school curricula.

Marriage Battle in Mississippi

A federal judge has ruled that the marriage law in Mississippi is unconstitutional, thus opening the door for legalized gay marriage in the state. In response to the ruling, the state appealed to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals and included a [request](#) to fast track the case so that the arguments could be heard along with cases from Texas and Louisiana. In the Texas case, a federal judge ruled that the Texas marriage law was unconstitutional; but in Louisiana, the state marriage law was upheld. The 5th Circuit is known to be a more conservative court, and conservative court watchers are hopeful that a ruling from this court will favor the laws and amendments that protect traditional marriage. Currently, the court plans to hear arguments for the Texas and Louisiana cases on January 5, 2015. Undoubtedly, regardless of the outcome of the 5th Circuit's decision, the ruling will be appealed to the Supreme Court. The High Court has already received appeals from the rulings of the 4th, 6th, 7th, and 10th Circuit Courts regarding marriage cases this year.

Abortion in Obamacare

The Charlotte Lozier Institute and the Family Research Council have launched a new [website](#), "Abortion in Obamacare," which offers information state by state regarding which health insurance plans cover abortions. Although the Administration has claimed that Obamacare would not fund abortions, the website reveals research which proves that this is not the case and many plans do indeed provide coverage for abortions. Even the non-partisan Government Accountability Office reported that 1,036 insurance plans from Obamacare covered abortion on demand in 2014. According to the Fact Sheet on the new website, "in 2015, it is likely that there are 9 states with 90% or more elective abortion coverage plans: California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington." Creators of the website noted that the information they have documented was difficult to get due to a lack of transparency from state agencies, so they will continue to update the site as they are able to obtain more information.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[DOJ Attacks School Choice in Wisconsin](#)

[16 North Carolina Judges Quit Following Legalization of Gay Marriage](#)

[Coming January 21-22, 2015: March for Life Conference and Expo](#)