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“Every legislator, every doctor, and every citizen needs to recognize that the real issue is whether to affirm and protect the sanctity of all human life, or to embrace a social ethic where some human lives are valued and others are not. As a nation, we must choose between the sanctity of life ethic and the ‘quality of life’ ethic.”

Ronald Reagan

National School Choice Week Garners Wide Support

This week marked the 4th annual National School Choice Week (NSCW) in which thousands of parents, students, educators, and policy makers across the country celebrated the success of school choice programs. More than 11,000 independent events have taken place throughout the country, an incredible [increase](#) from the 150 events that took place in 2011, the event’s first year. In addition to the rallies, school events, forums, and even 5K runs, [proclamations](#) were issued by 110 mayors and 19 governors to show their support for providing educational options for parents and children. Organizations supporting school choice released reports and documents to highlight the benefits of choice for students and families. The American Federation for Children released a [poll](#) which shows that 70% of Americans support school choice, and the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice released their [ABC’s of School Choice](#), a guide to private school choice programs in each state. Heritage Foundation’s Lindsey Burke and Jason Bedrick of the Cato Institute jointly authored an [article](#) outlining the benefits of Education Savings Accounts (ESA), a program that allows parents to use funds for a myriad of options connected to educating their children. The ESA program is structured so that the money flows from the parents not the government. This method has been found to be constitutionally sound and a good way to protect autonomy and mission of private schools from government entanglements. Legislators also joined in the efforts to highlight the importance of providing educational options. Speaker of the House John Boehner (OH), a long-time champion for school choice, [challenged](#) charter school students at a rally on Wednesday to do their part to advance school choice programs. He encouraged, “If you share your story, you can change hearts and minds. And if you can change hearts and minds, you can change the laws. And if you can change the laws, you can change the face of education in this country. Education ought to be the civil right of the 21st century—and you have the power to make it happen.” Senator Tim Scott (SC) [introduced](#) the “Creating Hope and Opportunity for Individuals and Communities through Education Act” (CHOICE Act) which would expand school choice options for students with special needs, military dependents, and participants in the highly successful DC Opportunity Scholarship program. The American Association of Christian Schools was pleased to offer a letter of support for the CHOICE Act, stating, “We consider school choice programs to be one of the best ways to reform the failing educational system in America, because they focus on parental choice and tend to create a multitude of educational options that provide for the unique educational needs of students. . . . For decades, the AACCS has been a strong supporter of school choice and believes this act will give parents greater choice in their child’s education as well as offer more options to families for the education of their children.”

Thousands Stand For Life During the March for Life

The March for Life brought hundreds of thousands to Washington, D.C., last week to peacefully protest the infamous 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion. As in recent years, a large portion of the marching

crowd was made up of young people, many of them chanting, “We are the pro-life generation” as they marched. Prior to the march, the crowd gathered for a [rally](#) on the National Mall that featured Congressional speakers Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA) and Sen. Tim Scott (SC) who served as the co-chairs of the event. Organizers this year chose the [theme](#) “Every Life is a Gift” to highlight the special uniqueness of those born with disabilities like Down syndrome, and the importance of protecting the unborn babies who may be given a “poor prenatal diagnosis.” While there is still a powerful lobby supporting abortion, their numbers are dwindling as evidenced by the very small crowd that gathered in front of the Supreme Court to protest the March for Life. Pro-life supporters across America organized marches in several [other cities](#) to commemorate the lives lost to abortion and show solidarity with the pro-life cause. Even in [Paris](#), 45,000 pro-lifers gathered for a March for Life to protest the laws in France which allow abortions. On the day of the March, the House of Representatives passed by a vote of 242-179 the “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act” which prohibits federal funds from providing for or supporting abortions.

White House Reverses Plan to Eliminate College Savings Accounts

After receiving strong criticism from both Republicans and Democrats, President Obama has [reversed](#) his plan to cut the tax benefits for 529 savings accounts. The White House announced his proposal to end the program last week, claiming the cut would help middle class families because the savings accounts were generally used by the wealthy. However, Republicans argued that eliminating the tax break would actually hurt middle class families. Named for a section of the tax code, [529 plans](#) allow families to invest funds and then withdraw the money without a tax penalty as long as the money is used for college expenses. According to the College Savings Plan Network, about [7 million families](#) have invested in 529 plans, including President Obama who invested \$240,000 of the proceeds from his book *The Audacity of Hope* for his daughters’ college savings funds. Part of the Bush tax cuts in 2001, the plans became permanent in 2006, and were supported by then-Senator Obama. Top Democrats, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, also lobbied the President to keep 529s a tax-free option. On Tuesday, a White House official indicated the change of plans, [stating](#), “Given it has become such a distraction, we’re not going to ask Congress to pass the 529 provision so that they can instead focus on delivering a larger package of education tax relief that has bipartisan support, as well as the President’s broader package of tax relief for child care and working families.”

In Case You Missed It:

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

[New DC Bills Force Pro-Life Groups to Pay for Abortions and Religious Schools to Violate Beliefs](#)

[Obama Attorney General Nominee Supported Partial Birth Abortion](#)

[Obama Administration Forced to Pay \\$570,000 for Forcing Company to Pay for HHS Mandate](#)

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