



**The Washington Flyer
July 31, 2015**

“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”
Daniel Webster

AACS Joins Webcast on The Court and the Classroom

The AACS Legislative Office recently participated in a [webcast](#) titled “The Court and the Classroom: How the Supreme Court’s Redefinition of Marriage Affects Religious Schools.” Hosted by the Family Research Council, the purpose of the webcast was to provide information and resources to religious educational institutions regarding the protection of religious liberty in light of the recent Supreme Court decision. Guest speakers included attorneys and educational leaders who shared insights and practical advice from their work on the issue. Greg Baylor, Senior Counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, explained how a religious school should respond to non-discrimination laws and outlined steps a school could take to ensure religious liberty protection. Kim Colby, Director for the Center for Law & Religious Freedom at the Christian Legal Society, spoke on the current laws on the federal and state levels that provide protection specifically for religious freedom, such as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and also offered practical steps that religious ministries could take to protect their ministries from lawsuits. Also included in the panel were representatives from faith-based higher educational institutions who shared how they believe the freedom to operate according to their respective missions is in danger as a result of the Supreme Court decision. Representing AACS, Legislative Director Jamison Coppola and Policy Analyst Maureen Van Den Berg explained their efforts to protect the religious liberty of Christian schools. Mr. Coppola stressed the work of AACS in supporting the First Amendment Defense Act (FADA) which would prohibit the government from discriminating against an institution that operates according to a belief in natural marriage. Senator Mike Lee (UT), the lead Senate sponsor of FADA, also appeared on the webcast, voicing his strong commitment to protecting religious freedom. To view the webcast, click [here](#).

Congressional Action Against Planned Parenthood

In response to recently released videos exposing Planned Parenthood’s harvesting of human tissue from aborted babies for profit, both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate are taking action against the organization. The House Energy and Commerce Committee has launched an investigation into the illegal practice of selling fetal body parts, and the House Judiciary Committee is investigating the inhumane acts described in the videos. In addition, the House Judiciary Committee sent a [letter](#) to the Department of Justice, asking them to investigate if Planned Parenthood has violated the Partial-Birth Abortion Act. Senator Joni Ernst (IA) and 49 other Senators wrote a [letter](#) to Secretary Sylvia Burwell of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), expressing their grave concern over the “legal, ethical, and policy issues raised by the footage” and requesting the HHS not only to cooperate with investigations but also to begin an internal review of Planned Parenthood’s compliance with all laws. Additionally, legislation has been introduced in the House that

would place a moratorium of one year on all federal funding to Planned Parenthood while investigations are ongoing. In the Senate, Senator Ernst introduced S1881 which would defund Planned Parenthood completely, and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said there will be a vote on the bill next week before the August recess. Congressmen in both Houses have delivered passionate speeches regarding the sanctity of life and the travesty that is occurring through the abortion industry. [Ten states](#) have also launched their own investigations into the practices and operations of Planned Parenthood.

School Choice Victory in North Carolina

The North Carolina Supreme Court [ruled](#) in favor of school choice last week with a decision to uphold the constitutionality of the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship Program. The program was enacted in 2013 to help provide private school options for children of low-income families, providing up to \$4,200 in scholarships. The Wake County Superior Court had ruled against the program earlier this year, but that decision has now been effectively reversed, resolving any doubts that the program is indeed constitutional. Institute for Justice Attorney Renée Flaherty, who represented the families in the case, stated, “The battle to save the Opportunity Scholarship Program was hard-fought for over a year. This fledgling program can now serve North Carolina citizens for years to come by ensuring that parents have the freedom to choose educational options that meet their needs.” North Carolina is one of more than 20 states with school choice programs.

Religious Liberty Victory in Houston

The Texas Supreme Court has [ruled](#) in favor of religious liberty by deciding that the City of Houston must either repeal the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance or allow for a citywide vote on the controversial policy this November. The non-discrimination law was enacted over a year ago and prohibits any discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Believing the ordinance violates the religious freedom of businesses and individuals, the Houston Area Pastors Council gathered over 50,000 signatures for a petition to place a referendum on last November’s ballot to overturn the ordinance—well over the required 17,000 number—but the mayor and city attorney denied the petition claiming irregularities in the signatures. The Harris County district judge agreed the petition lacked 584 signatures to be valid. However, the Texas Supreme Court ruled last week that since the city secretary had already certified the signatures on the petition, the mayor and city attorney overstepped their boundaries in rejecting the petition. The city council must decide by August 24 either to repeal the ordinance or allow the city to vote on it in November.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Register Now for AACCS National Legislative Conference September 14-16, 2015](#)

[NJ Senate Crafts Nonbinding Resolution for PARCC Opt Out Students](#)

[Conservative Action Project: We Must Act Now to Protect Religious Liberty in America](#)

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