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“If men of wisdom and knowledge, of moderation and temperance, of patience, fortitude and perseverance, of sobriety and true republican simplicity of manners, of zeal for the honour of the Supreme Being and the welfare of the commonwealth; if men possessed of these other excellent qualities are chosen to fill the seats of government, we may expect that our affairs will rest on a solid and permanent foundation.”

Samuel Adams

Common Core Battle Continues on State Level

The battle over the Common Core Standards (CCS) continues to be waged on the state level, despite claims by CCS proponents that the standards are widely popular and successful. In [West Virginia](#), House Delegate Mike Folk has put forth tireless efforts to block the state’s participation in the standards as well as the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), one of two CCS-aligned and federally funded tests. After legislative efforts failed to pass, he filed a lawsuit against the state Board of Education, charging that it superseded the state’s sovereignty and authority when it decided to adopt the CCS and participate in the SBAC. The state’s Supreme Court ultimately dismissed the lawsuit, with no explanation as to the reason for its decision. However, Folk points out that there is bipartisan support to repeal the standards in the state. In [Louisiana](#), the controversy is stirring over the recent elections for the members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). State Representative Brett Geymann, a key leader in the fight against the CCS in Louisiana, has pointed out that 6 of the 8 open board seats were won by proponents of the CCS, and their victories were heavily funded by groups and individuals outside the state. According to one news report, \$3.5 million was spent on the BESE elections this year, compared to only \$250,000 in 2007. Rep. Geymann stated, “The recent elections show the tremendous influence of self-serving elitists. Millions of dollars were spent on state school board races that typically are ignored and have yielded only small contributions.” The state of [Arizona](#) has seen more success in stopping CCS implementation with a 6-2 vote by the Board of Education last week to reject the Common Core Standards (CCS). This move is part of an education reform plan proposed by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas. While the vote will not have an immediate effect on the curriculum, a committee has been formed to determine the best replacement standards to meet the educational needs of Arizona students. Ms. Douglas stated, “This will send a clear message to the citizens of Arizona and the nation that Arizonians are smart enough, engaged enough, and collaborative enough to control the education of our own children.”

Houston Voters Protect Religious Liberty

This Tuesday, Houston voters [rejected](#) by a vote of 61 percent to 39 percent a measure that would have established special nondiscrimination protections for LGBT individuals. The ordinance, entitled the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO), was rejected after an intense battle that lasted over a year and included a very public backing down of the Houston mayor in her attempt to subpoena the sermons of local pastors. HERO would have applied to every business in the city by expanding the definition of “public accommodation” as defined by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The broader definition would have included all businesses in Houston

regardless of size or industry rather than just entities such as hotels, restaurants, theaters, and gas stations. HERO also would also essentially eliminate the ability of businesses to maintain sex-segregated areas such as bathrooms. This would be accomplished by defining gender identity as “innate identification, appearance, expression, or behavior as either male or female.” This change would have allowed anyone who self-identified as male or female to use the bathroom of his/her choice regardless of biological gender. Violators would have been subject to thousands of dollars in fines for each offense. Conservatives and Christians were mobilized to defeat the bill after the actions of the mayor and [city council last year](#) severely threatened religious liberty by approving the ordinance.

White House Proposes a Cap on Testing

President Obama recently announced his plan to cap the amount of testing that takes place in schools. According to a report by the Council of the Great City Schools, students will take [an average](#) of 112 tests by the time they graduate. Specifically, eighth graders will spend 20-25 hours a year in testing, which is approximately 2.3 percent of classroom time. The Administration is proposing a plan which will limit the amount of time spent on testing to no more than 2% of classroom time. Under No Child Left Behind, students are required to take a standardized test in 3rd grade, 8th grade, and once in high school. Most states and localities require additional assessments, often to ensure their students are prepared for the tests required by the federal government. However, as [noted](#) by Heritage Foundation’s Lindsey Burke and Mary Clare Reim, the Administration’s announcement creates questions as to who determines which tests will be used in schools and who will monitor enforcement. Likely, federal intervention in testing will only result in more federal control and requirements over testing.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Attacks on Religious Liberty Mushroom in US](#)

[Sen. Lankford and Rep. Forbes: Let Coach Kennedy Remain Free to Pray, As We Are In Congress](#)

[White House Opposes School Choice Bill Passed by House](#)

[More Spending Adds Up to Underwhelming Math and Reading Scores](#)

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