



A Publication of the American Association of Christian Schools

**The Washington Flyer**  
**May 22, 2015**

*“Because we hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth, ‘that Religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.’ The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man: and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate.”*

*James Madison*

**AACS Sends Letter to Congress Urging Support for Religious Freedom Bill**

The American Association of Christian Schools sent a letter to Congress this week urging them to support the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act (MARFA), a bill that would protect all persons who hold to the belief that marriage is the union of a man and a woman from discrimination by the federal government. The need for such protection has made clear after United States Solicitor General Donald Verrilli [admitted](#) during oral arguments before the Supreme Court that legalizing same-sex marriage would jeopardize the tax-exempt status of religious institutions and schools that hold to the belief that marriage should be defined as between one man and one woman. As explained in the AACS letter, removal of a tax-exempt status for religious schools would marginalize religious institutions in society by devaluing the great service they provide to the community. The passage of MARFA would provide protection from actions by the government, such as removal of tax-exempt status, for those individuals and institutions which believe in natural marriage. Senator Mike Lee (UT) and Representative Raul Labrador (ID) are the lead sponsors for the bill, and many conservative groups are urging them to hasten their introduction of the important legislation. As AACS President Dr. Wiebe states in the letter, “If liberty means anything, it must mean that everyone has the right to think and believe freely and to live out those beliefs in the public square. Government must protect differing opinions in society—especially ones where so much is at stake. The best way to ensure the conversation about the nature of marriage is not silenced by government coercion is to move to protect the free speech and religious liberty rights.”

**President Obama Threatens to Veto Pro-Life Legislation**

As the Senate considers the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, President Obama has [threatened to veto](#) the bill should it reach his desk. The bill, which passed the House last week by a vote of 242-184, would restrict abortions in the United States after 20 weeks of pregnancy, the point at which it has been medically determined that unborn babies can feel pain. The United States is one of only seven countries in the world that allow late-term abortions, and an overwhelming [84% of Americans](#) support banning abortions after the first trimester. However, in a [Statement of Administrative Policy](#), the White House claims the bill would “restrict women’s health and reproductive rights and is an assault on a woman’s right to choose,” making no mention of the harm that is done to babies through the process of a late-term abortion. Should the bill become law, it would strike a significant blow to the abortion industry. In fact, even abortion supporters recognize that the bill clears the way for effectively overturning the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision.

## **Lawsuit Against Florida School Choice Program Dismissed**

On Monday, Florida Circuit Court Judge George Reynolds ruled in favor of school choice by [dismissing](#) a lawsuit filed in August by the statewide teachers union, the Florida School Boards Association, and several other groups against the Tax Credit Scholarship Program. This multimillion-dollar program, funded by corporations that receive tax credits by donating, helps over 70,000 low-income students each year attend private or faith-based schools. In the lawsuit, plaintiffs questioned the constitutionality of the program on the basis that it violated the state constitutional provision which prohibits state aid for religious institutions, and that it harms public schools by creating an equivalent system of publicly supported schools. Judge Reynolds wrote, “In this case, plaintiffs object to tax credits extended to third parties. Because plaintiffs do not challenge a program funded by legislative appropriations, plaintiffs do not have taxpayer standing to bring this action.” He added that any claims of harm done to the public school system through this program are purely “speculative.” The plaintiffs have 30 days to appeal the ruling.

### **In Case You Missed It:**

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

[Why Moms and Dads Both Matter in Marriage](#)

[Bobby Jindal Signs Executive Order Protecting Supporters of Traditional Marriage](#)

[What's Behind Opt Out Protests Against Common Core](#)

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