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“Above all, let us remember the mountain of strength that offers the greatest hope and inspiration for all. I believe with all my heart that standing up for America means standing up for the God who has so blessed our land. We need God’s help to guide our nation through stormy seas. But we can’t expect Him to protect America in a crisis if we just leave Him over on the shelf in our day-to-day living. There’s a lovely old hymn which says: ‘When morning lights the eastern skies, O Lord Thy mercy show, on Thee alone our hope relies, let us Thy kindness know.’”

President Ronald Reagan

Judge Rules Religious Schools Cannot Participate in Voucher Program

Last week, U.S. District Judge Marcia Krieger [ruled](#) that a Choice Scholarship Program created by the Douglas County School District in Colorado could not be expanded to include religious institutions. “It was an unfortunate outcome, but by no means the end of the road,” said Michael Bindas, lead attorney for the case. In 2011, the school board approved the program, under which up to 500 students could receive funds through the state to be directed by the parents towards tuition at any private or religious school. A lawsuit was immediately filed by the Taxpayers for Public Education, resulting in an order halting the program. This decision was overturned in 2013 by the state appeals court. Last year, however, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that allowing parents to use public funds for religious education was unconstitutional, and the state appeals court has filed an appeal to that decision with the U.S. Supreme Court. Adding to the contention, the school board decided in March of this year to amend the original choice program to exclude religious institutions. Three families subsequently sued for an injunction to be issued allowing religious schools to be included in the program until the Supreme Court takes up the case and decides on its constitutionality.

Research Shows Benefits of School Choice

A recent study offers evidence that school choice programs [garner positive outcomes](#) for the academic achievement of participating students. Conducted by the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas, the study analyzed 19 reports, which reviewed 11 different international voucher programs, and concluded that reading and math scores increased for those who participated in the school choice programs. These results were released the same month the Friedman Foundation [published its study](#) that found school choice programs offer benefits to society as a whole, not just the participating students.

Judge Dismisses Charge Against Pro-Life Activist

Earlier this week, Judge Diane Bull [dismissed the charge](#) against pro-life activist David Daleiden that he illegally engaged in the purchase of fetal body parts. The founder of Center for Medical Progress, Daleiden is responsible for the videos released last summer that exposed the practice of Planned Parenthood to sell aborted fetal body parts for profit. In many of the videos, Daleiden posed as an interested buyer and was able to procure several admissions from top Planned Parenthood officials that they were in the business of selling body parts of aborted babies. The indictment against Daleiden last January received criticism, even from some abortion advocates, for being politically motivated. Central to this criticism was the observation that the grand jury did

not vote on whether to also indict Planned Parenthood, the seller in the alleged purchase of the fetal body parts. Furthermore, since the indictment, evidence has come to light revealing several ties between Planned Parenthood and the prosecutor and the district attorney responsible for the charges against Daleiden. After the videos were released last summer, several states began investigations into the activities of Planned Parenthood, with fifteen states voting to either completely or partially defund the abortion giant. Additionally, a [Select Investigative Panel](#) was established by the House of Representatives to investigate the illegal practice of selling baby body parts.

Common Core Struggles to Meet Expectations

The ACT testing organization released results from a [study](#) that shows the Common Core Standards (CCS) may not be achieving the promised results of preparing students for college. According to the study, an increasing number of professors are charging that students are not ready for college-level work. Only 16% of college instructors felt their students' preparedness ranked in the top half of a four-point scale intended to measure college readiness, a percentage which is down from 26% in studies from 2009 and 2012. This year's study included feedback from employers and supervisors, who valued skills in technology, speaking, and listening more highly than the critical thinking skills valued by the educators who participated in the study.

AACS National Legislative Conference Registration

Each year the AACS hosts the National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., to give pastors, administrators, state leaders, and teachers an opportunity to learn firsthand about the top issues for Christian education and to communicate with their Congressional leaders. This year's conference will be held September 12–14. [Register](#) by August 15 to receive the special conference rate on your hotel room and the discounted registration fee. The [registration form](#) can also be found under the Legislative/Legal tab on the AACS.org website.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Counter Attacks Against Pro-Life Gains Are Intensifying](#)

[Taxpayer Summer School Is Not the Answer to the College Cost Problem](#)

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