



The Washington Flyer
November 11, 2016

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Abraham Lincoln

Election Analysis for Religious Liberty and School Choice

The results from this week’s election promise to bring a new direction for the course of this country. While analysts dissect the data and offer opinions, one notable statistic offers insight as to a reason for the Trump-Pence victory. According to statistics, President-elect Trump received [81% of the evangelical vote](#), a number larger than the support that either Mitt Romney or President Bush received from evangelicals. This strong support is attributed to the stark contrast between the positions of Republicans and Democrats on certain issues. Specifically, evangelicals strongly supported Trump’s pro-life position and his promise to appoint conservative, pro-life justices to the Supreme Court. With the death of Justice Antonin Scalia last spring, the open seat on the Supreme Court brought the issue to the front of the campaigns. Both parties recognized that in addition to the current open seat there will likely be one or two more seats opening during the next presidential term. Additionally, Carrie Severino of Judicial Crisis Network [pointed out](#) that “on Inauguration Day, nearly half of the seats on the U.S. Courts of Appeals will be either vacant or occupied by a judge eligible to take senior status.” This allows the next president the opportunity to set the course of the courts for the next generation. Also, when serving in the House of Representatives, Vice President-elect Mike Pence was an outspoken champion for the pro-life cause and was the key champion for legislation to defund Planned Parenthood—positions he still holds. The election presented the choice between either supporting pro-life initiatives and judicial appointments or supporting the expansion of federal funding of abortion and pro-choice judicial appointments. Religious liberty was also a key factor for evangelical voters. Trump spoke often of repealing the Johnson Amendment, the law responsible for keeping religious leaders from endorsing a particular candidate; and he also formed an evangelical advisory board. In the area of [education](#), Trump declared his disdain for the Common Core State Standards; his plan to create a school choice program; and his plan to reduce the size of the Department of Education, possibly eliminating the Office of Civil Rights, the office responsible for enforcing Title IX and the controversial transgender guidelines. His daughter Ivanka penned an op-ed in September which outlined Trump’s [plan](#) to help working and stay-at-home families through childcare tax deductions and dependent care savings accounts which could be used for school tuition as well as childcare. Regarding school choice on the state level, two states registered their opinions. Massachusetts voted against a proposal to add 12 new charter schools, but the state of Georgia overwhelmingly (75%) voted to “empower parents with the right to use tax dollars allocated for the education of their children, allowing them the freedom to choose among public, private, virtual, and home schools.”

Religious Liberty Victory for Iowa Church

Last Friday a federal district court [upheld a church's lawsuit](#) against a law that a state commission interpreted as giving them the power to regulate and censure local churches. The Iowa Civil Rights Commission earlier this year published two brochures that seemed to claim the Iowa Civil Rights Act applied to churches. The commission asserted that churches are places of “public accommodation” and, therefore, any public church event without a specific religious purpose is subject to the regulations under the law—including all regulations related to marriage and gender identity. Fort Des Moines Church of Christ, which filed the suit through the Alliance Defending Freedom, asserted that according to the brochure’s interpretation of the law, all churches would be subject to censorship of any comments by the pastor or congregation regarding biblical sexuality and marriage. “The government acts outside of its authority when it attempts to control churches. The commission nor any state law has the constitutional authority to dictate how any church uses its facility or what public statements a church can make concerning sexuality,” said ADF Senior Counsel Steve O’Ban. “As the court found, government bureaucrats don’t get to decide which church activities have a religious purpose; that’s for the church to decide.” The judge’s decision recognizes that the suit has merit, which conservatives are viewing as a victory in the battle to protect religious liberty.

Statistics for Private and Religious Schools

According to a [report](#) recently released by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 79% of private schools in America are religious in nature. The statistics in this recent report reflect the data from the last Private School Survey that was conducted during the 2013-14 school year. Participation in the survey is not required of private schools; however, participation in the survey ensures that a school is listed in many databases, including the one students use to apply for federal student aid for college. According to the survey, the average conservative Christian school has an enrollment of 144.2 students. The average enrollment for a Christian elementary school is 95.9, and 130.9 for a Christian high school. When elementary and secondary are combined at a Christian school, the average enrollment is 169.5 students. The data also revealed that private schools have above a 95% graduation rate, specifically a rate of 98.6% for conservative Christian schools. The survey also revealed other key points of information: the number of teachers employed in private schools (441,496 full time), teacher-student ratio, and general characteristics of schools based on location (urban or rural) and student body make-up. The information also provides a breakdown of the types of schools by religious affiliation, methodology, and association. Interestingly, in 2013, there were 33,619 private schools serving 4,576,410 students across the country.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Make Religious Freedom Great Again](#)

[Trump Win Shows the Hard Line Pro-abortion Position Is Not Resonating](#)

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