**The Washington Flyer**
**December 2, 2016**

*"Children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom."*
***John Adams***

**New Education Secretary Supports School Choice**

President-elect Trump has named a strong supporter of school choice to be his Secretary of Education. Betsy DeVos has spent much of her life advocating for and supporting education reform through school choice programs. She graduated from Holland Christian School in Michigan and received her bachelor of arts from Calvin College in Grand Rapids. She currently serves on the boards of several organizations which actively promote school choice, educational reform, and/or philanthropic opportunities. Most notably for private education, she chairs the American Federation for Children and the Alliance for School Choice, both of which have as their main goal the advancement of school choice programs nationwide. In a 2013 interview with *Philanthropy* magazine, she described a visit that she and her husband made to Potter's House Christian School, a Grand Rapids school which serves many low-income families, as an incident that motivated her to become a champion for school choice. When asked what educational reform strategies, in addition to choice, she sees as promising, she replied: "I'm most focused on educational choice. But, thinking more broadly, what we are trying to do is tear down the mindset that assigns students to a school based solely on the zip code of their family's home. We advocate instead for as much freedom as possible." Her commitment to school choice is in step with Trump's priority of decreasing the scope of the Department of Education and also providing educational options for parents. DeVos has worked to advance mostly vouchers and tax credit programs, but she also recognizes the value in other programs such as education savings accounts. When her nomination for education secretary was first announced, some questioned her stance on the Common Core Standards, claiming that she differed from Donald Trump who has strongly criticized the standards. However, she quickly put the charges to rest with a clear-cut statement: "I am not a supporter—period." She furthered explained, "I do support high standards, strong accountability, and local control. When governors such as John Engler, Mike Huckabee, and Mike Pence were driving the conversation on voluntary high standards driven by local voices, it all made sense. Have organizations that I have been a part of supported Common Core? Of course. But that's not my position. Sometimes it's not just students who need to do their homework. However, along the way, it got turned into a federalized boondoggle." She has stated that the best success for her efforts would be to see "that all parents, regardless of their zip code, have had the opportunity to choose the best educational setting for their children. And that all students have had the opportunity to fulfill their God-given potential."

**Court Blocks Overtime Rule**

A federal judge has granted an injunction against the new overtime rules being imposed by the Obama administration, blocking the rules from taking effect anywhere in the country. The rules were set to take effect December 1. The ruling, issued by U.S. District Judge Amos L. Mazzant, was in response to a lawsuit filed by 21 states and over 50 businesses which charged that the new rules would cause an unfair increase to employment costs and, for state governments, would give the federal government too much control over state employees' wages. The rules were issued after President Obama directed the Secretary of Labor to update the

overtime regulations from the 1938 Fair Labor and Standards Act. The main focus of the new regulations was to ensure that certain workers earning less than $913 per week ($47,476/year) would be eligible for overtime pay if they worked more than 40 hours per week. This salary cap was an increase from $455 per week ($23,660). These regulations sparked controversy, not just with businesses and state governments, but also with nonprofit organizations. The AACS Legislative Director Jamison Coppola worked with conservative groups in Washington for several months to mitigate the impact of the proposed rule on Christian schools and other nonprofits. In his decision, Judge Mazzant found that the administration likely overstepped its authority when creating the rules. It is possible that an appeals court will overturn the injunction, but it is also likely that the rule will be dropped or significantly amended by the incoming Trump administration.

**Pro-life Surgeon for New HHS Secretary**

Rep. Tom Price, a pro-life orthopedic surgeon from the Atlanta area, has been named by President-elect Trump to be the new Secretary for the Department of Health and Human Services. By choosing Rep. Price, Trump is confirming his commitment to make good on his campaign promise to repeal and replace Obamacare as Rep. Price has been one of the leading Congressional voices opposing Obamacare and a key player in drafting plans to replace the controversial law. Conservatives are applauding the choice, recognizing that Rep. Price's strong conservative values and leadership will not only bring change to health care but will also protect the value of life and religious liberty in policies and procedures. While in Congress, Rep. Price supported several conservative measures which, if they had passed, would have advanced conservative values, protected life, and diminished the federal role in early education. Specifically, he supported the Select Investigative Panel which investigated the illegal sale of fetal body parts, he voted to defund Planned Parenthood, and he introduced an amendment which would have given some states control of the federally funded Head Start program. Currently, the Head Start Program and the Preschool Development Block Grants are funded through HHS, which will give Rep. Price the opportunity to slow, or even stop, the efforts to expand federally funded early education. Not surprisingly, his nomination is receiving criticism from leaders of liberal groups such as Planned Parenthood who warn that with Rep. Price as HHS Secretary, their progressive efforts from the last eight years could be undone and even defunded.

**In Case You Missed It:**

Weekly Market Update provided by Jeff Beach of the AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch

Update on Social and Emotional Learning Standards

Plan to Join the March for Life - January 27, 2017

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