



The Washington Flyer
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"If you do not choose to be involved, if you do not fight to protect your liberties, there will soon be no liberties to protect."

Pastor Peter Muhlenberg, January 1776

AACS Hosts National Competition

Last week, the AACS National Competition was held in Greenville, South Carolina. Over 1,800 students from 207 schools in 33 states participated in the AACS National Competition, having captured top honors in their state contests. The students competed in 76 categories in the five basic areas of Bible, music, speech, art, and academics. Throughout the week, Rand Hummel, director of The Wilds of New England, preached a series of messages challenging students to expand the reach of their lives to hurting people, to encourage others, and to share their faith. Bob Jones University faculty and staff graciously facilitated the student activities and accommodations. The three-day competition culminated at the Thursday night awards ceremony, which included a showcase highlighting some of the best entries by several individuals and schools. For the fifteenth consecutive year, Virginia (Old Dominion Association of Church Schools) won the AACS Cup of Excellence by accumulating the highest point total of any state. Florida, Illinois, Alabama, and New Jersey were also among the top states. The AACS offers our warmest congratulations to all the students who participated and made this year's National Competition a memorable event. To view the complete list of this year's winners click [here](#). To view pictures of the event, "like" the AACS Legislative Office Facebook [page](#) or follow us on Twitter at AACCS_DC.

Arizona Approves Comprehensive School Choice Expansion

The Arizona state legislature has approved a measure to [expand their current school choice](#) program to include all school children in the state. The legislation has strong [support](#) from Governor Doug Ducey, who [tweeted](#) after its passage, "When parents have more choices, kids win." Before this measure, the [Empowerment Scholarship Accounts](#) program was open only to those students who were in failing schools, living on Indian reservations, in foster care, or from military families. This new expansion creates a pathway that will allow all families to access education savings accounts by the year 2020–2021. Through the education savings account program, parents can access approximately 90% of the state funding allotted per student, which translates into approximately \$5,300 per student and around \$14,000 for a special-needs student. Parents can use the funds for a variety of education expenses including tuition at a public or private school, tutoring, and textbooks. Unused funds can be rolled over for future educational expenses. The program has already seen success in families that have participated since the program was first started in 2011. Only four other states have created education savings account programs (FL, MS, TN, and NV), and five other states are considering legislation this year to establish a program (AR, MO, NH, OK, and WY). Nevada is the only other state to create a universal program for all students in the state, but implementation has been delayed due to a funding dispute. Since Arizona's program has been established for several years and already upheld by the state's supreme court, this near-universal program is not likely to see any court challenges. The expansion received high praise from U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos who called it a "big win for students and parents in Arizona."

Court Rules Civil Rights Law Prohibits LGBT Discrimination

Last week, the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals became the first court to [rule](#) that employees fall under the sex discrimination protections listed in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, deciding that perceived gender identity and sexual orientation are equal to biological sex and deserve the same protections. This broad interpretation of the 53-year-old law by the court is in opposition to a ruling just three weeks ago by a three-judge panel in Atlanta which fell on the other side of the issue, concluding that employers are not required to treat gender identity the same as biological sex. This case was brought before the courts by Kimberly Hively, a lesbian Indiana teacher who claims she was denied a full-time position by the Ivy Tech Community College in South Bend because of her sexual orientation. The case is likely to be heard by the Supreme Court, the outcome of which would have dramatic effects on an employer's freedom to hire according to personal convictions on the LGBT lifestyle.

Senate Passes Pro-Life Resolution to Overturn Obama's Abortion Executive Order

The U.S. Senate recently [voted](#) to pass legislation that would once again allow individual states to defund Planned Parenthood, negating an Obama administration rule that prohibited states from doing so. The Obama administration had issued the rule through an executive order that went into effect with just two days remaining in his final term. The Senate narrowly passed this measure, splitting down the middle in a 50–50 tie, with two Republicans breaking ranks and voting against the bill—Senators Susan Collins (ME) and Lisa Murkowski (AK). Vice President Pence broke the tie, casting his vote in favor of the bill. Republican Senator Joni Ernst (IA) said the legislation revokes a rule that “attempted to empower federal bureaucrats in Washington and silence our states.” The House voted in February 230–188 to repeal this rule under the guidelines of the Congressional Review Act. The bill now awaits an expected signature by President Trump.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Education Secretary DeVos Highlights Parents Rights and School Choice in Recent Speech](#)

[Countdown Begins to Trinity Lutheran Playground Case at the Supreme Court](#)

[Five Crucial Cases Justice Gorsuch Will Help Decide](#)

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