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“Sad will be the day when the American people forget their traditions and their history, and no longer remember that the country they love, the institutions they cherish, and the freedom they hope to preserve, were born from the throes of armed resistance to tyranny, and nursed in the rugged arms of fearless men.”

Roger Sherman

President’s Budget Proposal Strengthens School Choice and Decreases Federal Footprint in Education

This week, the White House released a full budget proposal, expanding on the preliminary budget proposal released in March. The budget for education strengthens choice programs while reducing overall funding for the Department of Education (DOE) by 13.5%, amounting to a \$9.2 billion cut from the \$68.2 billion 2017 budget. Lindsey Burke, director of the Heritage Foundation’s Center for Education Policy, [noted](#), “That type of reduction signals a serious commitment to reducing federal intervention in education—a necessary condition to make space for a restoration of state and local control.” This is the largest budget cut proposed for education since President Ronald Reagan’s proposed 35.7% decrease to DOE funding in 1983. Specifically, the budget proposal eliminates or reduces over 30 programs. The administration’s commitment to expanding school choice is evidenced in three areas where increases in funding are proposed. The education budget includes an increase of \$1 billion for Title I, specifying that the new funding would be earmarked as grants—the Furthering Opportunities to Unlock Success (FOCUS) grants—for districts that implement public school choice policies. Grants for charter schools would also see an increase of \$167 million, and the Education Innovation and Research program would see a \$250 million increase for competitive awards that would provide school choice scholarships for low-income families. While some have criticized the defunding of favored programs, the Department of Education explained that the changes reflect either a lack of strong evidence that these certain programs are actually achieving the desired outcomes or the need to streamline funding for programs that overlap. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos addressed the issue in a [statement](#) released after the budget was unveiled: “The budget . . . reflects a series of tough choices we have had to make when assessing the best use of taxpayer money. It ensures funding for programs with proven results for students while taking a hard look at programs that sound nice but simply haven’t yielded the desired outcomes. By refocusing the Department’s funding priorities on supporting students, we can usher in a new era of creativity and ingenuity and lay a new foundation for American greatness.” She also noted, “President Trump is committed to ensuring the Department focuses on returning decision-making power back to the States, where it belongs, and on giving parents more control over their child’s education.” The President’s budget serves as an indication of his policy priorities and is presented as a request to Congress as they consider appropriations for the various agencies, programs, and departments.

Betsy DeVos Outlines Principles for a Federal School Choice Plan

Earlier this week, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos [outlined](#) key principles for a federal school choice program while speaking to the National Policy Summit hosted by American Federal for Children. Many predicted she might use the occasion to roll out the President’s plan for a federal tax credit scholarship program; however, her speech instead focused on the criterion for a successful program. She emphasized the focus should

be on “individual students—funding, supporting and investing in them. Not in buildings; not in systems.” She further affirmed the need to empower parents, stating, “All parents instinctively know that their child should not follow the money—the money should follow their child.” She also addressed the federalist concern of some school choice advocates by stating, “We shouldn’t view this, however, as a chance to mandate a one-size-fits-all school choice proposal. We all fundamentally know one size doesn’t fit all . . . and that we won’t accomplish our goals by creating a new federal bureaucracy or by bribing states with their own taxpayers’ money. We should have zero interest in substituting the current big government approach for our own big government approach.” She declared the President’s plan will be the “most ambitious expansion of education choice in our nation’s history,” and warned that politicians who oppose or block the program would be “denying [parents’] fundamental right to choose what type of education is best for their child.”

Trump Expands Pro-Life Mexico City Policy

The Trump administration is acting to significantly expand the impact of the pro-life [Mexico City Policy](#) by increasing the various federal agencies and programs where the rule is applied. The expanded policy, entitled Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance, directs a total of \$8.8 billion in foreign aid given through the Departments of State, Health and Human Services, and Defense to come under the authority of the Mexico City Policy. Originally, only \$600 million in foreign aid that flowed through the Department of State fell under the restrictions of the policy. Pro-life leaders are praising the Trump administration for expanding the Mexico City Policy. “With the implementation of Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance, we have officially ceased exporting abortion to foreign nations,” [said Marjorie Dannenfelser](#), president of the Susan B. Anthony List. Rep. Chris Smith (NJ), chairman of the bi-partisan Pro-life Caucus in the House of Representatives, [stated](#), “This humane policy seeks to respect and protect the precious lives of unborn girls and boys from the violence of abortion.” The Mexico City Policy was first begun by Ronald Reagan but was later repealed by Bill Clinton. George W. Bush reinstated the policy only to have it rescinded once again by Barrack Obama. President Trump, however, not only reinstated the policy in January but also is going beyond what Bush achieved by significantly expanding the pro-life policy.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[New Poll: Do We Really Need More LGBT Laws?](#)

[Abortion Business Closures Outpace Openings by Four to One in 2017](#)

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