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“I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, and stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.”
Abraham Lincoln

School Choice Battle in the States

School choice continues to grow in popularity across the nation and gain support from parents, but opponents of choice are working hard to defeat some state level programs. A recent [survey in Oklahoma](#) shows that 65% of voters favor school choice, with only 22% of the respondents believing they were getting a good return for the taxpayer investment in public education. In fact, eight surveys conducted in Oklahoma since 2014 have shown strong support for school choice. These findings are consistent with [national poll numbers](#) that show that 68% of voters support school choice opportunities. However, in [Montana](#), the Department of Revenue is challenging a ruling that allows the state’s tax credit scholarship program to include religious schools. When the program was first created, the Department of Revenue decided that parents participating in the program could choose only public school options, based on the claim that religious schools are not “qualified education providers” and, therefore, could not be funded through appropriations. After parents challenged the rule, District Judge Heidi Ulbricht ruled that religious schools could indeed be a part of the tax credit program since no public funds were actually being given to the schools. The Department of Revenue has filed an appeal to the state’s Supreme Court. Interestingly, the legal substance of the charge has been defeated in four other court cases involving tax credit programs in different states—including one case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Rulings in these cases upheld the constitutionality of the tax credit programs. Another challenge to school choice is taking place in [Arizona](#) where school choice opponents have collected enough signatures to block the new universal education savings account (ESA) program from being implemented this fall. The new program builds on an existing ESA program, which previously had been open only to children with disabilities, low-income families, military families, children in failing public schools, and children on reservations. Earlier this year, Gov. Doug Ducey signed into law a bill that will expand this program incrementally to all students by the year 2022, with a cap of 30,000 students. Save Our Schools Arizona, an organization that opposes school choice, claimed the ESA program takes needed funds away from public schools and collected over 111,000 signatures to put the issue on the 2018 ballot for a vote by the people. Officials determined that enough signatures passed initial certification to put a stay on implementation of the program. School choice supporters are expected to challenge the validity of the signatures and the petition. As Arizona is a school choice leader, the struggle to protect the new universal choice program will undoubtedly be a significant battle in the efforts to expand school choice nationwide.

Trump Set to Rescind Obama Executive Order Requiring Employees to Pay for Abortions

The Trump administration is reportedly [intending to issue](#) an executive order that would roll back a mandate issued by the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) that requires all employers to provide health insurance coverage for contraceptives. The HHS mandate was implemented in 2011 under the Obama administration and has been the subject of much controversy and many lawsuits, including the two cases

involving the freedom of Hobby Lobby and Little Sisters of the Poor. The anticipated order by the President will allow pro-life employers with conscience objections to some or all forms of contraceptives the freedom to opt out of providing such coverage in their employees' health insurance plans. While several pro-abortion leaders have threatened to sue the administration if the order is signed, pro-life leaders are applauding the news of the potential order. Students for Life president Kristen Hawkins stated, "No person or group should be forced to pay for something that goes against their religious or moral beliefs by bureaucrats in Washington, especially drugs that have been proven to harm women and potentially end the life of an early human being."

Texas Bans Taxpayer Funding of Abortion

Last Tuesday, Texas Governor Greg Abbott [signed](#) into law a bill banning all taxpayer funding of abortion in the state. The bill, [H.B. 214](#), prohibits health insurers from covering abortions in their general plans—save for medically necessary abortions in which the life of the mother is in danger. Women who want abortion coverage outside of medical emergencies will now have to purchase a supplemental plan. The controversial bill was approved by the House by a vote of 95-51 and later passed by the Senate in a 20-10 vote. "As a firm believer in Texas values I am proud to sign legislation that ensures no Texan is ever required to pay for a procedure that ends the life of an unborn child," Gov. Abbott stated. "This bill prohibits insurance providers from forcing Texas policyholders to subsidize elective abortions. I am grateful to the Texas legislature for getting this bill to my desk, and working to protect innocent life this special session." The abortion rate in Texas has dropped dramatically over the past decade, at least in part because of other pro-life laws. Ten other states have similar laws prohibiting taxpayer funding of abortion (ID, IN, KS, KY, MI, MO, NE, ND, OK, and UT).

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Does School Choice Segregate?](#)

[Liberal Law Center Demonizes Christian Foes of LGBT Agenda as 'Hate Groups'](#)

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