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“What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.”

~ Thomas Paine

School Choice Highlighted in Washington, D.C.

Last week, students who have benefited from school choice programs shared their success stories at a luncheon on Capitol Hill hosted by the Congressional School Choice Caucus and the American Federation for Children’s Voices for Choice. Those sharing their testimonies are now either in college or in the workforce, making their stories more poignant and offering confirmation of the long-term benefits of school choice. The AACCS legislative office staff attended the luncheon, and Legislative Director Jamison Coppola had the opportunity to ask the students whether they would make school choice available to all students if they had the chance. The answer was a resounding “yes” from every student, demonstrating the positive power that school choice offers to students’ success. The roundtable luncheon was held in conjunction with a two-day School Choice Summit hosted by the American Federation for Children, an organization founded by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to promote school choice nationwide. Held annually for the last nine years, the purpose of [the summit](#) is to bring together businessmen, policy makers, and school choice advocates to discuss educational options that will create opportunities for all children across the country. During this year’s summit, the breakout sessions covered the topics of global opportunities of school choice, innovative opportunities for school choice, parental engagement in choice programs, education savings accounts as a model of school choice, and the 2018 elections and school choice. Keynote speakers included former Senator Joe Lieberman and former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, both of whom have proved to be staunch advocates for providing school choice to every student. During his time as Governor, Mitch Daniels was instrumental in implementing several school choice measures in Indiana. During his speech, he [stated](#), “I can’t think of a more crystalline example of social justice than enabling poor families to have the same rights, the same power, the same decision-making over their kids’ education as rich people. If that’s not just, what is?” Concerning the opposition to school choice, he further [noted](#), “If they bring up the system before they bring up the children and if they bring up money before they mention results, you know their priorities are not the children.”

President Trump Establishes New Faith and Community Initiative

On the National Day of Prayer last Thursday, President Trump signed an [executive order](#) creating a new federal faith and community initiative intended to protect the ability of religious organizations to serve the public without undue government discrimination and interference. The new Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives will be [similar in many ways](#) to the program initially started by President Bush (Faith-based and

Community Initiatives) and then renamed and redirected by President Obama (Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships). However, this new program will also enact certain changes in order to ensure religious liberty protections for faith-based organizations and also keep a “level playing field for grants, contracts, programs, and other Federal funding opportunities.” Changes include the organizational structure of the new office, a requirement that each agency have either an office or liaison for handling matters concerning religious organizations, and the elimination of a requirement that beneficiaries can be referred to the religion of their choice for services. Additionally, the executive order prioritizes religious liberty protections for religious organizations seeking to partner with the federal government in serving those in need. As stated in the executive order, the new program is based on the policy that “faith-based and community organizations have tremendous ability to serve individuals, families, and communities through means that are different from those of government and with capacity that often exceeds that of government.”

Iowa Governor Signs Strict Abortion Ban

Last Friday, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds [signed a bill](#) that would make it illegal to get an abortion once the heartbeat of a fetus has been detected, as early as six weeks into pregnancy. The “Heartbeat Bill,” as it is commonly called, is one of the most restrictive abortion bills in the country. Upon signing the bill, Governor Reynolds [stated](#), “For me, it is immoral to stop an innocent beating heart.” However, she along with other supporters recognized that the bill is likely to receive court challenges. Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Erin Davidson-Rippey [denounced](#) the bill as “intentionally unconstitutional” and declared that Iowa Republicans “do not care about the foundational values of our state, or Iowa’s future.” Six Iowa House Republicans opposed the bill, including Jane Bloomingdale, who stated that the law would invite court cases, and, therefore, would not be “the most productive way to protect life.” Other Iowa Republicans, including state Sen. Rick Bertrand, applauded the law as making “Iowa ground zero, now nationally, in the life movement.” On the same day that Gov. Reynolds signed the life-saving bill, the South Carolina legislature [effectively killed](#) a similar bill after Democrats filibustered the bill and six Republicans voted to send it back to committee. However, other states have recently tightened the reins on abortion rights, including [Mississippi](#) with its new 15-week abortion ban, and [Tennessee](#), whose governor signed legislation in April that would prohibit TennCare (Tennessee’s Medicaid program) from funding abortion providers for non-abortion services.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Victory: Outraged California Parents Block Radical Elementary Sex Ed](#)

[School Choice Legislation Signed Into Law in Georgia](#)

[Christian Group Cancels LA Conference Over Threatening Legislation Which Would Ban Biblical Teaching on Sexuality](#)

Jamison Coppola: Legislative Director

Maureen Van Den Berg: Policy Analyst

Hannah Dashiell: Legislative Assistant

Legislative Office, 119 C Street SE, Washington, DC 20003

Phone: 202.547.2991

Fax: 202.547.2992