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“That the opinions of man are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty.”

Thomas Jefferson

AACS Hosts Youth Legislative Training Conference

Last week, the AACCS hosted forty students from nineteen different states at its Youth Legislative Training Conference (YLTC). This annual, week-long conference is designed to provide high school students from AACCS member schools with a more in-depth understanding of the way our government works and to give them an unforgettable experience in our nation’s capital. Throughout the week, the students participated in a mock senate in which they role-played actual Senators, worked in committees and drafted bills, and then debated and voted on their legislation. In addition to the hands-on learning gained through the mock senate, the students also heard several great speakers throughout the week. This year’s speakers included AACCS Executive Director Jeff Walton, the Honorable William Wagner from Salt and Light Ministries, and Rachel Semmel (a Christian school graduate) from District Media Group and the Leadership Institute. Students also attended a congressional briefing at the Capitol where they heard from Tim Goeglein, Vice President of External Relations for Focus on the Family, and Representative Matt Gaetz (FL), who encouraged the students to use their youth to make a difference in the political arena. During an awards banquet, the students had the privilege of hearing from Army Major Mike Quigg, who challenged the students to commit their lives to serving the Lord in whatever capacity He chooses. A “Day on the Hill” gave students the opportunity to meet with Congressmen, Senators, and Capitol Hill staff members. The students also enjoyed several opportunities to tour historical sites in D.C. They watched a Marine Corps marching band in front of the Lincoln Memorial, toured the Holocaust Museum, and took an evening tour of the monuments. As a special treat, the students were able to walk on the Speaker’s Balcony and the floor of the House of Representatives during an after-hours tour of the Capitol, hosted by Congressman Barry Loudermilk (GA). The week ended with a visit to Arlington National Cemetery where four exceptional students had the privilege of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We are grateful that the Lord blessed us with a great week and a wonderful group of students and chaperones. We believe and pray that the students returned home with a better understanding of their government, a better knowledge of what it means to be a godly political influence, and lifelong memories and friends. To see pictures from the week, visit our Facebook page, [AACCS Legislative Office](#).

Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh on Education and Religious Liberty

The nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court brought immediate reactions from all sides with liberal organizations and most Democrats claiming that a Justice Kavanaugh would mean the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, while most [conservative](#) and Republican leaders praised the nomination, saying Kavanaugh’s record

shows him to be a Constitutionalist. Kavanaugh's [extensive record](#) of legal experience offers insight as to where he stands on key issues. Education experts have [noted](#) his support of school choice, as revealed through his service as co-chairman of the Federalist Society's School Choice Practice Group and also through various statements he has made which [show his belief](#) that religious schools should be able to participate in voucher programs. One analyst even [speculated](#) that his appointment could signal the end to Blaine amendments which hinder school choice expansion in several states. Regarding religious liberty, conservatives again [point to his record](#) which shows that he recognizes the importance of religious freedom as protected by the Constitution. In a 2010 case, Kavanaugh ruled against a challenge to the incorporation of prayer at Presidential inaugurations and the inclusion of the phrase "so help me God" in the oath of office. In 2015, he offered a dissent to the decision by the D.C. Circuit Court to reject a claim (from Priests for Life) that the HHS mandate violated religious liberty. His dissent stated that the HHS regulations "substantially burden the religious organizations' exercise of religion because the regulations require the organizations to take an action contrary to their sincere religious beliefs . . . or else pay significant monetary penalties."

School Safety Commission Holds Meeting Regarding Mental Health

[Last week](#), at the federal School Safety Commission, Secretaries DeVos, Azar, and Nielsen, and Attorney General Sessions discussed the role that mental health plays in mass shootings. The [commission discussed](#) the effect of psychotropic drugs on students' mental health, the increased rates of teen suicide, and the expansion of mental health services in schools, especially poor and rural schools. Sessions spoke of privacy laws and whether they hurt or help students struggling with mental health issues. One expert, John Verdi of the Future of Privacy Forum, showed concern that "mentally ill students can be disincentivized from seeking help if they fear that their privacy is not protected." Another expert, Sonja Trainor of the National School Boards Association, advocated for efforts "to remove a barrier to collaboration in schools . . . that would prevent a particular act of violence, such as a school shooting." One parent-advocate explained that parents should be made aware of their children's mental illnesses, since many do not learn of these issues until tragedy strikes. The school safety meeting came a day after a Florida commission found no correlation between Parkland's PROMISE program and the Parkland shooting. The PROMISE program is a result of Obama-era guidelines that encouraged schools to address suspensions and expulsions that disproportionately affect black students. The School Safety Commission is still considering whether it will rescind these guidelines or keep them in place. The commission has invited anyone who would like to offer solutions and suggestions to increase and strengthen school safety to email them to safety@ed.gov.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[California Bill Banning Book, Therapy to Help Unwanted Gay Attraction Stalls Amid Lawsuit Fear](#)

[Judge Rules Trump Administration Can Defund Planned Parenthood Abortion Biz](#)

[Tony Perkins: On Trump's Pick of Kavanaugh: Conservatives Should Trust But Verify](#)

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