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*"Freedom is not a gift bestowed upon us by other men,
but a right that belongs to us by the laws of God and nature."
Benjamin Franklin*

AACS Mourns the Death of Charlie Kirk

The AACS is grieved by the assassination of Charlie Kirk. His legacy will be his courage to speak the truth in love, his unwavering faith in Christ, and his devotion to his family and his country. He invited young people to reason with him, and his willingness to dialogue peacefully changed hearts and minds. His life pointed many to the hope and truth found in Christ, and his testimony will continue to inspire courage and love for God and country. We pray continually for his wife and family. However, we do not grieve without hope because we know Charlie Kirk is alive with his Savior.

AACS Hosts National Legislative Conference

Last week, the AACS was delighted to host the National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. This conference provided AACS state leaders, school administrators, and pastors from across the country a time of spiritual encouragement, legislative updates, and congressional visits. Attendees were privileged to hear messages from Pastor David Brock on mentoring ministry leaders and building genuine connections with other believers. The conference included a White House briefing where administration staff discussed school choice specifics and answered questions from the attendees. Brette Powell and Alex Flemister of the Office of Public Liaison, Eric Bledsoe of the Domestic Policy Council, Meghan Bauer of the Office of Scheduling and Advance, and Jenny Korn of the Faith Office all discussed how faith influences the work of the White House. During a congressional briefing inside the U.S. Capitol, attendees heard from Reps. Josh Brecheen (OK), Mark Harris (NC), and Sens. Ted Budd (NC) and James Lankford (OK). These members talked about how their faith informs their work in Congress and took questions from the audience. At a special higher education briefing, policy expert Max Eden discussed how the actions of the Trump administration are affecting Christian colleges and universities. The AACS was privileged to host the banquet at the Museum of the Bible. There, attendees rejoiced in what God has done for AACS and Christian education, and celebrated paying off the mortgage on the D.C. office. The next day, the AACS hosted an open house where attendees could see the office between their congressional visits.

During a special legislative briefing, AACS staff equipped participants to talk to members of Congress about two issues. The first issue addressed the federal school choice tax credit program passed in the One Big Beautiful Bill. While expressing gratitude for the support of the program, attendees urged congressmen to advocate for their governors to participate in the program. They also encouraged members to advocate with the Treasury Department for regulations that protect the religious liberty and autonomy of schools, students, and scholarship-granting organizations. Second, AACS attendees discussed how Congress can protect the work of charitable organizations through supporting the Safeguarding Charity Act, a bill that will ensure a non-profit organization will continue to enjoy tax-exempt status. The AACS is grateful for the many AACS members who participated in the conference, and we praise the Lord for his blessings on the NLC and Christian education.

Education Department Hosts National Private School Leadership Conference

Last week, the AACS Washington staff attended the National Private School Leadership Conference, hosted by the [Office of Non-Public Education \(ONPE\)](#) in the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The first segment of the conference included a presentation by Hannah Earl, Director of the Center for Faith in ED, in which she discussed the administration's work to protect religious liberty, including the [Religious Liberty Commission](#) meetings, two of which are specifically focused on religious liberty in education. Officials from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) presented information regarding the latest [NAEP results](#) for eighth-grade science and 12th-grade math and reading. Matthew Soldner, Acting Director for IES, explained the Trump administration's plan to redesign the IES after a significant downsizing earlier in the year. He emphasized the hope for more private schools to participate in the annual Private School Survey to help gain an accurate picture of the accomplishments of private schools. To that end, IES senior advisor Amber Northern took an informal survey of the private school leaders at the conference for feedback regarding what information they would like to see on private school surveys. Another session included a panel from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) that discussed the [resources](#) CISA has created to help reduce risks of cyberattacks in schools. Additional sessions included a presentation by Lindsey Burke, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Education Secretary, on the advancements for school choice and the administration's support for this issue, and also a panel discussion on the administration's priorities for IDEA and private schools. A final session celebrated the 100th anniversary of the landmark decision in [Pierce v. Society of Sisters](#) that ensured parents have the right to choose a private or religious education for their children.

DOJ Releases Report on Anti-Christian Bias

The Department of Justice's Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias has released the first of a series of three reports on the weaponization of the federal government against Christians. The task force was established by [executive order](#) and held its first hearing in April. The [48-page report](#) chronicles numerous examples of anti-Christian bias by federal agencies such as the Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Along with specific examples of anti-Christian bias, the task force listed actions the administration has taken and will take to combat this bias. The report listed two ways the Education Department was biased against Christians. First, the Department had weaponized policies to target Christian higher education, such as imposing "record-breaking fines on some of the nation's largest Christian universities, including Liberty University (\$14 million) and Grand Canyon University (\$37.7 million)." Second, the Biden administration investigated schools that removed inappropriate materials from libraries. The Department affirmed that it will "no longer target Christian colleges and universities" and that it will safeguard the rights of K-12 Christian schools. The Department specifically noted that it is determining how to protect Christian schools through statutory language if the Department closes and block grants are administered by the states. "By eradicating anti-Christian bias in the federal government, the Task Force is reaffirming a principle older than the Republic itself, that freedom of religion is not granted by government but guaranteed against it," the report concluded. "America must remain *One Nation Under God* if she is to remain *Indivisible, With Liberty and Justice for All*."

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[As Despair Among the Young Continues Signs Emerge of a Resurgence in Family Life, Church Attendance](#)

[Vermont Christian School No Longer Sidelined](#)

Jamison Coppola: Government Relations Director

Olivia Summers: Government Relations Assistant

Maureen Van Den Berg: Policy Analyst

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