



The Washington Flyer
January 16, 2026

"I have examined all religions, and the result is that the Bible is the best book in the world."
John Adams

March for Life to Take Place Next Week: January 23, 2026

The [March for Life](#) will take place on January 23, 2026, in Washington, D.C., to highlight the importance of protecting life at all stages. The march will begin with a rally on the National Mall at 11:00 a.m., which will then start the march to the U.S. Capitol and Supreme Court. For information on participating in this year's march, please [click here](#).

Supreme Court Hears Oral Arguments for Cases about Protecting Women's Sports

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court heard [oral arguments](#) for two cases involving male participation in women's sports. [Both cases](#) stem from males who claim a female identity and want to participate in female sports but are barred from doing so by state laws. In Idaho, Lindsay Hecox filed a lawsuit after being barred from Boise State's track and cross-country program under Idaho's Fairness in Women's Sports Act. In West Virginia, the mother of Becky Pepper-Jackson (B.P.J.) filed a lawsuit challenging the state's Save Women's Sports law that prohibited her son from participating in girls' middle school sports.

During the arguments, the justices focused on the differences between boys and girls, challenging the attorneys to define those differences and whether that should be a determination in their decision. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito addressed the [definition of "sex" in Title IX](#) during the arguments for *West Virginia v. B.P.J.* "Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. It's a statutory term. It must mean something," stated Alito. "You're arguing that, here, there's discrimination on the basis of sex. And how can we decide that question without knowing what sex means in Title IX?" Rather than answer the question, Joshua Block, representing B.P.J., tried to refocus the argument on the classification of a group: "We're not trying to police the accuracy of the terminology that's being used. All I'm saying is that what's being prohibited is using this classification to discriminate." Justice Brett Kavanaugh brought up how [girls are impacted](#) when a transgender-identifying male claims the right to participate in women's sports: "For the individual girl who does not make the team or doesn't get on the stand for the medal, or doesn't make all-league, there's a harm there, and I think we can't sweep that aside. The NCAA, the Olympic Committee, a lot of state governments, that's a lot of people who are concerned about women's sports." Justices Amy Coney Barrett and Clarence Thomas seemed to favor upholding the state's laws, while Justice Neil Gorsuch seemed to question whether barring transgender-identifying people from sports would create discrimination in other areas. Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson's questions indicated support for the plaintiffs, and they appear ready to vote for overruling the state's laws. The Court's ruling is expected in the summer. The decision will likely affect laws in approximately [30 states](#) that currently protect women's sports.

9th Circuit Court Upholds Religious Liberty of Yakima Union Gospel Mission

In a unanimous [decision](#), the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the fundamental right of a Christian ministry to hire based on its religious beliefs and practices. The case concerns the Yakima Union Gospel

Mission, [founded](#) to provide material and spiritual support to those in need. The mission serves everyone but [purposefully hires](#) co-religionists who agree with its statement of faith and live according to biblical principles regarding their moral purity. The mission filed a pre-enforcement [lawsuit](#) against the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), the state's "non-discrimination" law that [prohibits](#) employment decisions based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Initially, the law had a statutory religious exemption for religious ministries; however, in 2021, the Washington Supreme Court [ruled](#) that the religious exemption was unconstitutional and held that it applied only to certain ministers. Thus, the mission faced lawsuits for hiring only those who shared its beliefs. The AACS joined an [amicus brief](#) supporting the mission since the decision would have significant implications for religious educational institutions. The 9th Circuit ruled in favor of the mission, stating that "under the church autonomy doctrine, Union Gospel may decline to hire as non-ministerial employees those who do not share its religious beliefs about marriage and sexuality." The majority noted that the mission was protected by both the [ministerial exception](#) and the [church autonomy doctrine](#). The court wrote that "the First Amendment doesn't tolerate" the enforcement of a law like WLAD that could force religious institutions "to hire employees who openly flout and disagree with their religious principles." The ruling is a decisive win for the mission and will offer a robust layer of protection for religious institutions and their right to pursue their mission fully through hiring those who agree in both belief and practice.

House Committee Passes Pregnant Students' Rights Act

The House Education and Workforce Committee recently [passed](#) (21-15) the Pregnant Students' Rights Act, a bill that would require colleges to provide resources about the rights and accommodations available to pregnant students. Introduced by Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA), the [bill](#) amends the Higher Education Act to include new requirements for colleges that accept federal funding. Those institutions would have to provide information to prospective and enrolled students about resources and accommodations to help a pregnant student carry her baby to term while remaining enrolled at the institution. Colleges would also be required to provide information to students on how they can file a complaint with the Department of Education for alleged violations of Title IX and discrimination based on pregnancy. House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman Tim Walberg (MI) [praised](#) the bill, stating that while pregnant students are "entitled to reasonable accommodations, . . . too often students are given incorrect or incomplete information regarding their rights. The Pregnant Students' Rights Act would change this." Rep. Mary Miller (IL) also touted the bill, [noting](#) that nearly 20% of college students are parents, and 74% of those are mothers. "These students should never be dissuaded from continuing their education," she stated. The bill would apply to Christian colleges that accept federal funding, but colleges can claim Title IX's [religious exemption](#) if the law would violate the college's religious beliefs.

Just Around the Corner—National School Choice Week

[National School Choice Week](#) (NSCW) will be held January 25–31, 2026, giving school choice supporters across the country an opportunity to highlight the benefit of educational options. Many organizations, schools, parent groups, and students are preparing events to celebrate the opportunities they have had because of school choice programs. If you would like materials and ideas for an event at your school, please [click here](#).

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](#)

[Nominations Open for 2026 Teacher of the Year Awards—Due February 6, 2026](#)

[Presidential 1776 Award—Competition for High School Students](#)