



The Washington Flyer
January 23, 2026

"The values and freedoms we cherish as Americans rest on our fundamental commitment to the sanctity of human life."
Ronald Reagan

March for Life Today!

The [March for Life](#) takes place today, January 23, 2026! The march highlights the importance of protecting life at all stages. The event begins with a rally on the National Mall at 11:00 a.m., after which the crowd will march to the U.S. Capitol and Supreme Court. If you would like to watch the rally, please [click here](#) for more information. If you plan to attend, please reach out to our office if we can be a help to you during your visit.

Virginia Is the First State to Officially Opt In to the Federal School Choice, Other States Join

Five governors have officially [opted](#) their states into the federal school program. The tax credit scholarship program was established with the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act last summer and allows for a \$1,700 dollar-for-dollar tax credit for taxpayers who donate to a scholarship-granting organization (SGO). These SGOs bundle donations and provide scholarships to students for eligible expenses, such as private school tuition. However, scholarships may be distributed only in states where the governor opts in. In a bold move, former Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin became the [first governor to opt in](#) on the first day that governors could officially do so, just two weeks before he left office. He also officially [recognized](#) a list of scholarship-granting organizations, including the AACCS Children's Scholarship Fund. "The response to Virginia formally opting in to the Education Freedom Tax Credit has been extraordinary. Parents across the Commonwealth are eager to expand education freedom and opportunity for their students. We're putting families at the head of the table when it comes to their child's education," [stated](#) Youngkin. His successor, Gov. Abigail Spanberger, is not a proponent of school choice, and early indications are that the Democrat-led state legislature will look for ways to [undermine](#) private schools and school choice. The actions by former Governor Youngkin to support school choice and SGOs are a great help to school choice proponents as they continue the fight for educational freedom.

The governors of [Alabama](#), [Georgia](#), [Iowa](#), [Indiana](#), and [Mississippi](#) have also officially opted their states into the program. [Governors](#) of Colorado, Nebraska, Louisiana, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas have indicated they plan to opt in, while governors in New Mexico, Oregon, and Wisconsin have announced that they will not opt their states into the program. North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein vetoed a bill that would have opted his state into the program, but he says he does plan to join once the regulations for the program have been released. Because the program is a tax credit program, the Treasury Department is responsible for writing the regulations. The AACCS has been actively working to represent its schools by [participating](#) in the regulatory process. We will continue to share details as the provision is implemented.

Nominations for Teacher of the Year Due February 6

The Herzog Foundation is accepting applications through **Friday, February 6**, for its 2026 Excellence in Christian Education awards. Each year, the foundation honors teachers who embody excellence in education.

This year, nominations are open for [two types of teachers](#): innovative teachers and math teachers. Nominees for the innovative teacher award should use creative lesson planning, “innovative tools,” and “forward-thinking approaches” to encourage student engagement. Nominees for the math teacher award should have “outstanding instructional skill, strong content expertise, measurable impact on student learning, and a commitment to fostering mathematical understanding, confidence, and problem-solving skills in their students.” Several AACS teachers have previously won awards. In 2024, [Rachel Burrow](#) of Bob Jones Academy (Greenville, SC) received one of the awards for making history come alive. In 2025, [Jessica Valente](#) of Tabernacle Christian School (Hickory, NC) won an award for her work with students with special needs. [Diane Bales](#) of Greenville Classical Academy (Greenville, SC) also won an award in 2025 for her work educating students through role-playing and peer-to-peer teaching. Nominees for this year’s award must be current K-12 teachers in a Christian school and have served in K-12 Christian education for at least a year. In addition, nominees must plan to continue teaching after receiving the award. The teachers must demonstrate excellence, be highly respected, and align with the Herzog Foundation [mission](#). Award recipients will attend a special reception in their honor this fall at the Excellence in Christian Education Awards. Learn more and nominate a teacher by February 6 [here](#).

Federal Appeals Court Rules in Favor of Free Speech

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals [upheld](#) free speech in a 2-1 opinion last month when the judges granted a preliminary injunction to a Michigan Catholic Charities organization. The ministry had filed a lawsuit over a 2023 Michigan law that prevents licensed counselors from using talk therapy to help minors reconcile their sex with their perceived gender identity. The ministry argued that the law violated the First Amendment and that its counselors had a religious duty to help minors who sought their counsel. The state argued that the counselors were engaging in conduct, not speech, allowing the state to heavily regulate the talk therapy. The ministry appealed to the 6th Circuit after a district court denied its request for a preliminary injunction. The state of Michigan argued that the appeals court should wait to rule on the Michigan case until the Supreme Court rules on [Chiles v. Salazar](#), a similar case out of Colorado involving the free speech rights of a Christian counselor. However, the majority of the 6th Circuit determined that it had an obligation to rule on the case. The majority found that the Michigan law regulated speech, not conduct. Thus, the law is subject to the highest scrutiny and unlikely to pass First Amendment protections. “The Michigan law discriminates based on viewpoint—meaning the law permits speech on a particular topic only if the speech expresses a viewpoint that the government itself approves,” [wrote](#) the majority. Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has yet to announce whether the state will appeal the ruling.

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](#)

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

[Testimony from a Christian in Nigeria](#)

[Reaching Youth with Truth](#)

[Next Week: National School Choice Week](#)