



**The Washington Flyer**  
**February 20, 2026**

*“Education means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth, the light by which men can only be made free.”*  
**Frederick Douglas**

**Idaho Supreme Court Upholds State Tax Credit Program**

The Idaho Supreme Court unanimously [ruled](#) in favor of Idaho’s school choice program last week. The ruling comes after [several groups sued](#) the state over a new law that established the [Idaho Parental Choice Tax Credit](#). The tax credit allows parents to apply for a refundable tax credit or advance payment for qualifying educational expenses, such as private school tuition. The groups claimed the Idaho Constitution limited the state from establishing any additional educational system beyond public schools. However, the state and school choice advocates argued that the state constitution established a floor, not a ceiling, for what the state could provide. The court agreed and ruled that the legislature has the authority to establish other systems of education so long as it also maintains the public school system. In addition, the court ruled that the tax credit served a public interest of education, even if private entities incidentally benefited. School choice advocates celebrated the ruling that will cement the tax credit program in the state. “This ruling is a victory for Idaho families,” [said](#) Idaho Attorney General Raúl Labrador. “It affirms their freedom to choose the educational path that best fits their children’s needs and futures.” Idaho families have until March 15, 2026, to apply for the credit, and the state tax commission will notify parents of their status by April 15, 2026.

**Departments of Education and Treasury Publish Fact Sheet on School Choice Provision**

The Departments of Education and Treasury have published a joint [Fact Sheet](#) on the Education Freedom Tax Credit (EFTC). This historic tax provision was established through the Working Families Tax Cut Act (also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill) and is set to launch on January 1, 2027. The tax credit scholarship provision allows a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 for donations made to scholarship-granting organizations that then provide scholarships to families to use for educational purposes for their children, including private school tuition. While the program is a federal program, governors of each state must choose to opt in for families in their states to be able to participate. To date, 27 states have opted in to the program. “This program will help families afford key education services—like tutoring and scholarships—so they can tailor their child’s educational journey and access opportunities that meet their needs,” [stated](#) Secretary of Education Linda McMahon in a press release. “Every student learns differently, and this investment ensures more families—regardless of income—have real options to pursue education opportunities that help their children thrive.” Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent [noted](#) the importance of this tax provision in supporting families and improving educational opportunities: “Power belongs in the hands of parents—not Washington bureaucrats whose ill-targeted spending has driven down test scores and promoted woke ideology.” In a recent episode of the [AACCS Today podcast](#), Jamison Coppola and Matt Ticzkus discussed the potential impact of this school choice provision to provide new educational opportunities for families, and how the AACCS has established its own scholarship-granting organization for member schools. To listen to the podcast, [click here](#).

## **Oklahoma Rejects Application for Religious Charter School**

The Oklahoma Charter School Board has denied an application for a virtual religious charter school, citing court precedents. The board had previously approved a Catholic virtual charter school in 2023, but that approval was ultimately overturned by the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld that ruling in a tie decision last summer. Last fall, Ben Gamla, a Jewish charter school, applied to the state board to become a virtual religious charter school. Last week, the board denied Ben Gamla's application in an 8-0 decision. "I would say we are bound by the Oklahoma Supreme Court even if we disagree with that ruling," [said](#) board president Brian Shellem. "There are legal arguments that went to the U.S. Supreme Court, [and] a 4-4 tie punts it back to us." Groups like Americans United for Separation of Church and State [celebrated](#) the board's decision as "protecting . . . church-state separation." However, Ben Gamla, represented by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, intends to sue. School choice advocates hope that Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who had previously recused herself, would participate in a future religious charter school case and break the current tie. The U.S. Supreme Court may have multiple opportunities to decide on religious charter schools. [Another school](#), Wilberforce Academy of Knoxville, has applied to become a religious charter school in Tennessee. The school was denied by the Knox County Board of Education, prompting the school to file a lawsuit also. However, it could take years for either case to potentially make it to the highest court.

## **Resource for Teaching American History**

The White House Salute to America 250 Task Force has partnered with Hillsdale College to produce a series of [short instructional videos](#) that commemorate the story of the beginning of the United States of America. As described on the website, each video highlights a key part of the "remarkable story of American Independence," pointing to "stories of the crucial characters and events that resulted in a small rag-tag army defeating the mightiest empire in the world and establishing the greatest republic ever to exist." Topics include the Declaration of Independence, the formation of the Navy and the Marine Corps, crucial turning points in the Revolutionary War, such as the Battle of Bunker Hill and the crossing of the Delaware River, and key leaders such as George Washington and John Adams. The series also recognizes the role that the common man played in helping America achieve independence through stories such as the "Cupler Spy Ring" and "Forgotten Heroes of the Revolution." The videos run between seven and fifteen minutes and point to founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, encouraging the viewer to read these in correlation with watching the video. The stories are narrated by several different leaders and experts, including Vice President J.D. Vance, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Scott Turner, author Brian Kilmeade, and Hillsdale College President Larry Arnn. The videos provide a great resource, not just for teachers and students studying American history, but also for anyone interested in learning more about the founding of our great country.

## **In Case You Missed It:**

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

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

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

[Always Ready: Speaker Johnson Gives Biblical Defense of Borders](#)

[Has Gen Z's Relationship with Religion Really Shifted? A New Chapter in Belief](#)

[Education Resource: The Heritage Guide to Historic Sites](#)

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