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*“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity.”*  
**John Adams**

**Federal School Choice Provision Widely Popular**

The new federal school choice provision is proving to be very popular as people learn more about the educational and tax credit opportunities that the provision provides. Results from a [new poll](#) released by EdChoice show that the new federal school choice provision is strongly supported by a majority of parents and adults nationwide. The report, titled [The Public, Parents, and K-12 Education](#), reviewed the responses of participants on a variety of educational topics, such as parental satisfaction with educational policies, educational plans for their children, and their interest in educational options. One question asked participants their view of the newly established [Educational Freedom Tax Credit](#) (EFTC), and explained the EFTC as follows: “States may choose to opt in to participate in a new federal tax credit for education that allows individuals to donate to eligible K-12 scholarship-granting organizations in exchange for a federal tax credit of up to \$1,700. These organizations provide scholarships or education-related assistance to eligible K-12 students.” About 70% of parents and 60% of adults supported their state opting in to the program, with a very small percentage (9% of parents and 11% of adults) opposing participation. Approximately 38% of parents and 20% of adults indicated they were likely to contribute to a scholarship-granting organization (SGO) in exchange for a tax credit. If their states did not participate in the EFTC, percentages dropped slightly to 26% of parents and 13% of adults, indicating they would donate to an SGO out of state.

An [Illinois ballot measure](#) also showed that the EFTC is extremely popular among voters. A question regarding the state’s participation was on the ballot during the recent primary elections in all or part of the state’s 31 counties. In every locale, the measure received strong support. In total, 63% of voters favored the state opting in to the program. The question was worded as follows: “Should Illinois opt in to a federal program that would provide public K-12, private school, and homeschool students with privately donated funds for academic needs, such as tutoring and test preparation, educational therapies for students with disabilities, tuition, books, exam fees or for other specified academic needs?” Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker has not yet announced his plans regarding the EFTC, but the results of the ballot measure show that his constituents are overwhelmingly in favor of the state’s participation. To date, [29 other states](#) have opted in to the EFTC, which is set to begin on January 1, 2027. Michael Petrilli, president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, [noted](#) that Democratic governors face a “tough dilemma.” They either “bow to the demands of the teachers’ unions and bar the schoolhouse door” by refusing to opt in to the program, or they recognize the popularity of the program, especially among minorities, and decide to allow “families to accept scholarships that are funded by charitable donations from taxpayers nationwide.” He added that these are “scholarships that don’t cost their state a penny, and therefore can’t be said to be taking any money from their public schools.”

## **AACS Joins Amicus Brief in Religious Autonomy Case**

The AACS has joined an [amicus brief](#) in [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops v. O'Connell](#), a case with important implications for religious autonomy. The case started when a man accused the USCCB of misleading him about how the Catholic Church would use money for a particular offering. The USCCB moved to dismiss the case and argued that it has religious autonomy to decide how it uses its money. However, the federal court went ahead with the lawsuit, entangling itself in the church's internal decisions. The case made its way through the courts. Now the USCCB, represented by the Becket Fund, has asked the Supreme Court to hear the case. The crux of the case is whether institutions can use the [church autonomy doctrine](#) only as a defense or whether they can use it offensively to prevent government interference at every level of litigation. The amicus brief joined by the AACS has three main arguments. First, religious schools are the first ground in the battle for First Amendment protection. Second, the process of litigation has become the punishment. Finally, the First Amendment's Religion Clauses require the government to consider whether it will entangle itself in religious practice before getting involved. "If religious institutions must endure full-scale litigation before appellate review of church autonomy is available, the constitutional guarantee is hollow," the brief said. The AACS will continue to monitor the case and fight for the right of religious schools to maintain their autonomy without entangling government interference.

## **Religious Liberty Win for Moody Bible Institute**

Students studying elementary education at Moody Bible Institute can [now](#) participate in the Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) student-teaching program after a legal victory. As the AACS reported, CPS barred Moody students from the program unless Moody agreed to a "nondiscrimination" policy. If Moody had agreed to the policy, it could have been forced to hire those who oppose its doctrinal statements and beliefs on biblical sexuality. Instead, Moody, represented by Alliance Defending Freedom, sued in November 2025. ADF noted that CPS violated federal and state laws, specifically the First Amendment and the Illinois Religious Freedom Restoration Act. CPS also applied the nondiscrimination policy selectively: two other Christian universities retained their religious hiring rights while sending students to teach at CPS. The case caught the attention of lawmakers; and House Education and Workforce Chair Tim Walberg, a Moody alumnus, sent a [letter](#) to CPS last December requesting additional information. Now CPS has backed down and reached a settlement with Moody. Under the agreement, Moody students are free to student teach at CPS, and the institute retains its religious hiring rights. "Chicago desperately needs more teachers to fill hundreds of vacancies, and Moody's students will be well-equipped and qualified to help meet that need," [said](#) ADF Senior Counsel Jeremiah Galus. He hopes "other public officials will take note that they can't inject themselves illegally and unconstitutionally into a religious nonprofit's hiring practices."

## **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](#)

[American Heroes Student Art Contest—Deadline May 1](#)

[Bookmark Design Challenge: Celebrating America's 250<sup>th</sup>—Deadline March 31](#)

[Texas Parents Flood School Choice Program, Far Exceeding 90,000 Student Capacity](#)