



A Publication of the American Association of Christian Schools

**The Washington Flyer**  
**May 1, 2026**

*“The only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible.”*  
*Benjamin Rush*

**Rising Demand for School Choice Options Reflected in Surge of Applications in Several States**

Several states are reporting a rising interest in school choice programs as parents are learning more about the availability of educational options for their children. In [Arkansas](#), the number of applications for participation in the Arkansas Educational Freedom Account program is up 23% from last year at this time. The program was created in 2023, and next year will be the first year that it will be open to all K-12 students. Participating families will be able to receive up to \$7,208 per student for educational expenses. The state has allocated \$309.4 million for the program, and Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders has proposed that an additional \$70 million be set aside for the program next year. Reports from [West Virginia](#) also show a growing interest in the Hope Scholarship program, an education savings account program that allows participating families to use the funds for a variety of educational methods, including private school tuition, tutoring, and homeschooling expenses. The program began in 2022, and the 2026-27 school year will be the first year it will be open to all K-12 students. To date, the program has received 20,000 applications for next year, up from 15,000 that participated in the program this year. The state has allocated approximately \$300 million for the program, which amounts to about \$5,200 per participating student. Families in [Texas](#) are showing record interest in the new Texas Freedom Account program, set to launch next year, with about 274,000 applications submitted for the \$1 billion initiative signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott last May. Students with disabilities are eligible to receive up to \$30,000 per student, homeschool students are eligible for up to \$2,000, and students attending private schools can receive up to \$10,474. Scholarships will be [awarded through a tiered system](#)—first to students with disabilities from low- to middle-income families, then to low-income students. Because of the high volume of applications, funds are expected to run out before all second-tier applicants are served, according to Texas Comptroller Kelly Hancock. “Texas didn’t just meet expectations, we set the national record for year-one demand in a school choice program,” stated Hancock in a [press release](#). “Families across Texas made it clear they want a greater role in their child’s education, and they showed up in record numbers.” This level of interest underscores the strong and growing demand among parents for school choice options.

**Trump Administration Works to Protect Parental Rights from Harmful Gender Ideology Policies**

Recently, the Department of Health and Human Services sent letters to all 50 states upholding parental rights. The Department sent the letter after President [Trump highlighted Sage Blair](#) at the State of the Union. “In 2021, Sage was 14 when school officials in Virginia sought to socially transition her to a new gender—treating her as a boy and hiding it from her parents,” Trump said. “Before long, a confused Sage ran away from home. After she was found in a horrific situation in Maryland, a left-wing judge refused to return Sage to her parents, because they did not immediately state that their daughter was their son.” The letter prohibits states from separating children from their parents solely because the parents oppose sex-rejecting procedures. “A state child welfare agency should respect the sincerely held religious beliefs and moral convictions of the family,” [said](#) Assistant Secretary of Health Alex Adams. “No child should enter foster care because of differences in values

like that.” In addition to keeping families intact, Adams is also working to expand the number of families willing to foster. Previously, some families were prevented from fostering because they believed in a biblical view of human flourishing. For instance, [Vermont](#) recently changed its policy that had prohibited families from fostering unless they promoted LGBT ideology. Adams hopes that these changes will encourage more families of faith to foster. “If every house of worship in the country had just one family who committed to fostering,” he [said](#), “our ratio of homes to kids would be four to one.”

### **Department of Ed Publishes Info Sheet on Student Loan Changes in the OBBBA**

The Department of Education’s Federal Student Aid (FSA) office has released an [information sheet](#) on changes to the federal student loan system in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). The page is intended to help student borrowers understand and navigate their federal student loan options since the OBBBA’s passage. The OBBBA made several changes to federal student loans, including streamlining loan repayment options, setting new annual and aggregate borrowing limits, eliminating Graduate PLUS loans, allowing for a second opportunity to rehabilitate loans, and ending deferment based on economic hardship. Earlier this year, the Department held a negotiated rulemaking committee called [Reimagining and Improving Student Education](#) to craft regulations to implement the changes to federal student loans in the OBBBA. The Department has not yet released final regulations. FSA’s info sheet includes several scenarios and FAQs that borrowers might face, including information on the timeline of the student loan changes, the borrowing limits for certain students, and the repayment plans available to borrowers. The page has sections for Parent PLUS and Public Service Loan Forgiveness borrowers in addition to information for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The webpage serves as a quick reference for students and will be updated as needed.

### **Department of Ed Rescinds Past Title IX Agreements**

Earlier this month, the Department of Education [announced](#) it had rescinded six Title IX agreements that the Department now considers illegal. The Department noted that previous administrations had interpreted sex to mean gender identity. As a result, previous administrations “illegally saddled school districts with Title IX violations for actions such as ‘improper use of preferred pronouns’ or ‘asking questions about a student’s preferred ‘gender.’” Five of the illegal Title IX agreements were with public K-12 school districts, and one was with Taft College. Under the Biden administration, the Department’s Office for Civil Rights [found](#) that Taft violated Title IX when professors and staff used male pronouns for a male student who self-identified as female. Taft agreed to a [resolution agreement](#) that required it to submit updated Title IX policies and the student handbook for the OCR to approve. Taft also had to train certain faculty and staff about “how the refusal to use a person’s preferred name and pronouns or repeated misuse of them may constitute harassment based on sex.” In addition, Taft was subject to continual monitoring by the OCR. Now, the Department has stopped enforcing the resolution agreement. Shiwali Patel, senior director of education justice at the National Women’s Law Center, [called](#) the rescissions “unimaginably cruel.” However, Independent Women, a conservative-leaning group, [said](#) the rescissions marked “an important step toward restoring Title IX to its original intent—protecting education-based programs on the basis of biological sex.”

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

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

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

[Presidential Message Commemorating 250 Years of the Bible in America](#)

[Supreme Court Rules 9-0 for Pro-Life Pregnancy Center](#)

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