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*“I hope the education of the common people will be attended to . . . on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty.”*  
*Thomas Jefferson*

**NC Legislature Overrides Governor’s Veto to Opt In to School Choice Provision**

North Carolina became the 31st state to opt into the Education Freedom Tax Cut provision after the Legislature [overrode](#) the governor's veto last week. Gov. Josh Stein [initially](#) vetoed the bill in August 2025. Republicans, who control both houses of the North Carolina Legislature, overturned the veto without a single Democratic vote. Stein [reiterated](#) his opposition, noting that his focus was on supporting public schools. After the vote, Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger [said](#), “The benefit for this is for students, and obviously, there’s a benefit to taxpayers . . . but there’s no hit to the state budget.” The debate in North Carolina is a microcosm of the [broader national debate](#) regarding the tax credit. Many states are currently considering opting into the EFTC, which was enacted by the Working Families Tax Cut Act and will take effect in 2027. Under the provision, individuals can receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for contributions up to \$1,700 to scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs). The SGOs, in turn, provide scholarships to students for educational purposes. By law, state leadership must decide whether to participate and allow families in their state to benefit from scholarships. Opponents contend that these tax credits decrease federal tax revenue, thereby reducing the funds public schools receive. However, proponents argue that increased school choice is beneficial for all families and communities, and especially helps disadvantaged children. Proponents have also noted that public schools can benefit from their own SGOs. Despite the partisan divide in North Carolina, both Republican and Democratic governors have decided to allow the EFTC in their states. *Written by AACCS intern Seth Walker*

**Court Rules in Favor of Religious Liberty**

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that the government cannot interfere with church matters in their decision for [The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod v. Concordia University Texas](#). Over 130 years ago, the founders of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod organized its governance structure into two entities, one to oversee spiritual matters (the “Synod”) and the other to handle secular and legal affairs (LCMS). The Concordia University of Texas was one of several institutions founded by the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod to advance its mission. However, in 2022, the university board voted to rewrite its charter and bylaws, essentially cutting ties with its governing church. The LCMS pursued multiple avenues to regain control of the university, and its efforts eventually led them to pursue legal action. A court then ruled that only the Synod, the spiritual arm of the organization, had the authority to file a lawsuit, rather than the LCMS, which handles legal matters. The decision was appealed to the 5th Circuit, which [ruled](#) that the government does not have the authority to interfere or make decisions regarding issues of church governance. The AACCS filed an [amicus brief](#) in the case, arguing that the lower court ruling violated the church autonomy doctrine and the First Amendment, threatening religious liberty by interfering with church governance, legal status, and access to federal courts. The Becket Fund represented LCMS in the case and praised the 5th Circuit decision: “In America, churches—not courts—get the final say in how they are structured and governed,” [stated](#) Daniel Blomberg, vice president

of the Becket Fund. “Uncle Sam can’t remake houses of worship into his own image. The Fifth Circuit reinforced that common-sense rule, which is a win for every faith community in the country.”

### **“Nation’s Report Card” Announces Expanding Testing Schedule**

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) has announced an [expansion of national testing](#) in an effort to provide state lawmakers with data that can help them improve education in their states. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the “Nation’s Report Card,” has been providing data for only fourth and eighth grades in math and reading. The [new testing schedule](#) will include testing for eighth- and 12th-grade civics, 12th-grade math and reading, and eighth-grade science. Starting in 2028, the new assessments will be introduced for eighth-grade civics and 12th-grade math and reading. The eighth-grade science assessment will follow in 2029, and 12th-grade civics in 2032. Participation in the testing will be optional for states and comes at no cost to states. The changes come after the downsizing and layoffs in the National Center for Education Statistics last year, and some optional NAEP testing was canceled. In addition to the new schedule, the NAGB also reinstated the assessments that were canceled last year and approved the start of updating the civics assessments for 2032. The expanded testing schedule has received [positive reviews](#) from several state leaders as they recognize the lower NAEP scores in recent years and are eager to improve the education for the students in their states.

### **Support for “Same-Sex Marriage” Sees Sharp Decline**

Fewer Americans today support same-sex relationships than in recent years, according to a [new Gallup poll](#). Gallup has measured American acceptance of LGBT issues since 1996. Support for same-sex relations rose steadily throughout the decades, hitting its high marks around 2022. However, those numbers have since dropped. For instance, in 1996, 27% of Americans believed that same-sex “marriages” should be valid. That percentage peaked in 2023, when 71% of Americans agreed. Now, support has dropped to 65%. Similarly, the percentage of Americans who believed that gay or lesbian relations are morally acceptable started at 40% in 2001, peaked at 71% in 2022, and dropped to 62% in 2026. Republican support has dramatically collapsed. In 2022, 56% of Republicans believed same-sex relationships were morally acceptable. That number has fallen to 35%. [Corporate promotion](#) of LGBT issues has also fallen, and pride parades and events across the country have lost their sponsors. “What once was [an] organizational asset has now become an organizational risk,” said E. Ciszek, an associate professor at The University of Texas at Austin. In contrast to pride promotion, many states are offering alternatives, such as proclaiming June [Fidelity Month](#). “We do not need to apologize for the fact that we believe the best environment for a child is to be in a home with a married mom and a dad,” [said](#) Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council. “The social sciences back that up. History backs it up. We know it to be true. Why not say it?”

### **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](#)

[Decoupling from the State: The Right to School Choice](#)

[“Presidential 1776 Award” Special to Be Broadcast Tuesday, June 30 on CBS](#)

[Liberty Echoes: Global Reverberations of the Declaration of Independence](#)

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