



The Washington Flyer
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“That as religion, or the duty which we owe to our Divine and Omnipotent Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be governed only by Reason and Conviction, not by Force or Violence; and therefore, that all men shou’d enjoy the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience, unpunished and unrestrained by the Magistrate.”

George Mason, Virginia Declaration of Rights, 1776

Today is the Final Day for a Discount to the AACCS National Legislative Conference

[Register TODAY, August 14](#), for the AACCS National Legislative Conference and receive the special conference rate of \$219 (plus tax) on your hotel room and the discounted registration fee. The National Legislative Conference will take place in Washington, D.C., from September 14 to 16, 2026. This conference provides pastors and school leaders with opportunities to learn more about issues affecting Christian schools and to engage in the important work of advocating for Christian education and protecting the religious liberty that allows our ministries to thrive. The schedule will include a legislative briefing by AACCS Washington staff and a Congressional briefing by Members of Congress. There will also be time to meet with your Representative and Senators and connect with other educators and leaders in K-12 and higher education.

While registration will continue to be open after today, the [discounted rate expires today](#)! The conference will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel (Crystal City), which is convenient to both Reagan National Airport and the metro. Registration includes the banquet on Tuesday and breakfast on Tuesday and Wednesday. For more information, please reach out to our [Washington staff](#) or visit our website [here](#).

Department of Justice Religious Liberty Guidance

The Department of Justice has released [new guidance](#) on religious liberty protections, outlining 21 principles to guide federal agencies in safeguarding religious freedoms. The memorandum updates guidance issued in 2017 with revisions that reflect U.S. Supreme Court decisions upholding religious liberty, such as [Mahmoud v. Taylor](#). The guidance also draws extensively on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the First Amendment, and other federal protections. The introduction emphasizes that “religious liberty is not merely a right to personal religious beliefs or even to worship in a particular place. It encompasses religious observance and practice as displayed in a person’s daily life.” The guidance highlights principles particularly relevant to Christian schools and religious organizations, affirming protections for religious institutions, their organizational autonomy, and their ability to make hiring decisions consistent with their religious beliefs and principles. It also emphasizes protection from discriminatory government enforcement, citing as an example the selective application of the [Johnson Amendment](#) to a church but not to a secular nonprofit organization. One principle specifically affirms parents’ rights to direct their children’s religious upbringing and education without undue government interference. While the guidance does not hold the force of law, it provides direction for federal agencies regarding the proper interpretation and application of existing federal protections for religious liberty.

Protect College Sports Act Stalls in Senate

A college sports bill that could have major implications for state laws protecting female sports has stalled in the Senate. The [Protect College Sports Act of 2026](#) this June, introduced by Sen. Ted Cruz (TX) in June, would address name, image, or likeness (NIL) agreements for college student athletes by preempting a patchwork of existing state laws that govern college sports eligibility. Several major conservative organizations have opposed the bill over concerns that it would also override state laws that prevent men from playing in female sports. The bill does not explicitly overturn state laws protecting females, but the language is broad enough that it could be interpreted that way. As a result, the bill may give men who identify as women legal standing to challenge state sports laws. “We are living in a moment where lawyers can’t even define what a woman is,” [said](#) Kristen Waggoner, CEO of Alliance Defending Freedom. “Let’s not undo the hard-fought gains or pass permanent legislation that could jeopardize these victories.” The Senate was set to vote on the bill last Friday and received support from the NCAA and President Donald Trump. However, opposition to the bill increased throughout the day. Sens. Jim Banks, Josh Hawley, and Tommy Tuberville proposed an [amendment](#) that would have explicitly protected state female sports laws. Eventually, the Senate gavelled out of session early Saturday morning without voting on the bill. The Senate is expected to reconsider the bill this September.

School Safety Campaign

The SchoolSafety.gov Back-to-School Campaign is encouraging communities to support K-12 school safety this year. The federal website is an initiative of the Departments of Homeland Security, Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services. The website equips school and community leaders, parents, educators, and students to cultivate safe school environments through a yearly August campaign. This year’s campaign highlights [two resources](#): a toolbox and a one-pager. The [toolbox](#) contains resources such as a [guide](#) to responding to anonymous threats and a [checklist](#) for a school emergency operations plan. Another resource includes a [lesson plan](#) on online privacy and safety. The [one-pager](#) provides safety actions for school leaders, educators, parents, students, and law enforcement. For instance, the one-pager recommends that school leaders convene K-12 community members to discuss how they can participate in school safety programs. The website also includes content that educators can use in a newsletter or social media post about the school safety campaign. The [initiative](#) hopes that community participation will create “a culture of preparedness and more comprehensive school safety programs.”

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](#)

[Register Now for the AACCS National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.—September 14-16, 2026](#)

[New Survey: When Choosing a School for Their Children, Majority of Parents Consider Artificial Intelligence Policies](#)

[Michigan Court Revives Parents’ Religious Liberty Challenge to School’s Gender Transition Policy](#)

[Supreme Court Schedules November Arguments in Major Religious Liberty Case](#)