



The Washington Flyer
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“The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.”
James Madison

AACS Hosts National Legislative Conference

Last week, the AACS hosted the annual National Legislative Conference (NLC) in Washington, D.C. The purpose of this conference is to provide AACS state leaders, school administrators, and pastors from across the country with a time of spiritual encouragement, legislative updates, and congressional visits. Pastor Dean Miller brought messages encouraging the attendees to depend on God fully and to remain steadfast in the ministry of educating and developing young people to have conviction before they face the crises of the world. Randy Melchert, director of [Accord Kids](#), spoke at a special briefing on the Education Freedom Tax Credit and how the provision will help more families provide their children with a Christian education. During a congressional briefing, attendees heard from several members of Congress. Rep. Mark Harris (NC) spoke on the importance of Christian education and highlighted several of his bills to return education to the states by ending bureaucracy in the Education Department. Rep. Mary Miller (IL) listed educational choice as her top priority and shared how her family has been blessed by Christian education. Rep. Bob Onder (MO) discussed the value of a Christian education beyond gaining workforce skills and his work protecting children from sex-rejecting procedures. At a special higher education briefing, Alliance Defending Freedom Attorney Greg Baylor discussed several regulations that affect Christian colleges and universities and how those institutions could be protected. The AACS also hosted a banquet and awarded Rep. Barry Loudermilk (GA) with the American Freedom Award. Loudermilk spoke about his journey to Congress and how God calls Christians to do hard things yet sustains them in the storms of life.

A key part of the conference is time set aside for attendees to meet with their congressmen and advocate for issues relevant to Christian education. A special legislative briefing hosted by AACS staff provided information to the participants to equip them to talk to members of Congress about three issues. The first issue addressed the [Education Freedom Tax Credit](#), a school choice tax credit provision passed in the 2025 Working Families Tax Cuts Act. Attendees urged their congressmen to advocate with their governors to opt their states into the program. Attendees also highlighted ways the tax credit could be improved in future legislation or in Treasury regulations. Second, AACS attendees discussed how Congress can protect the work of religious organizations through the [Fair Treatment of Religious Organizations Act of 2026](#). This bill would prevent the federal government from revoking an organization’s tax-exempt status because of its religious views on marriage, sexuality, or gender identity. Finally, the attendees urged members to advance the [Chloe Cole Act of 2026](#). This bill would protect children from sex-rejecting procedures by creating a federal private right of action to sue the medical professionals who harmed them. In between meetings with members, the AACS hosted an open house at the AACS Washington Office and also coordinated an opportunity for attendees to visit the Speaker’s Balcony inside the U.S. Capitol. The AACS is grateful for the many AACS members who participated in the conference and praises God for His blessings on the NLC and Christian education.

Case Appealed to SCOTUS Regarding Special Education Access for Private School Students

Two families have [asked](#) the Supreme Court to let them access equitable special educational services at their private religious schools. The Hellman and Harrison families both have children who attend Jewish day schools. Under Massachusetts law, the children are eligible for special education services. However, a state regulation requires them to access these services at a public school or a “neutral” location. This regulation undermines the law’s intent to provide children with these services in an accessible environment. As a result, the families, represented by the Institute for Justice and the Pioneer Public Interest Law Center, sued Massachusetts. They argued that parents have a fundamental right to direct their children’s education and that the government cannot deny them benefits for exercising this right. A district court and the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the families and found that they failed to prove the regulation infringed on their fundamental right. Now, the families have appealed to the Supreme Court. A broad [coalition](#) of 14 states and several organizations wrote amicus briefs in favor of the families. “Massachusetts is not merely declining to extend services, it is actively weaponizing a child’s guaranteed entitlement—again, supported by their family’s own tax dollars—as leverage to coerce the family back into public school,” said state attorneys general in their [amicus brief](#). Massachusetts has until November 10 to respond to the Supreme Court, which may hear the case in its upcoming term.

Liberty University Students Ask Supreme Court for Access to Scholarships for Religious Degrees

Three Liberty University students have petitioned the Supreme Court after Virginia denied them tuition grants to pursue religious degrees. The students are [challenging](#) Virginia’s Tuition Assistance Grant Program and the National Guard Tuition Assistance Grant Program, which fund some religious degrees but exclude others that are deemed to be too religious. The students are represented by [Alliance Defending Freedom](#) (ADF), which argues in its brief that Virginia’s selective grant approval “results in arbitrary exclusions, state religiosity standards, and the indignity of unequal treatment because of one’s faith.” A federal district court that initially ruled against the students relied on the Supreme Court case [Locke v. Davey](#) (2004), which upheld a Washington state law prohibiting state scholarships from going to students pursuing theology degrees. ADF is asking the Court to consider the First Amendment claim of the three Liberty students and overrule its earlier decision in *Locke*. The students’ case raises four arguments. First, Virginia’s programs “discriminate based on religious character, use, and activity.” Citing Supreme Court precedent in cases like [Trinity Lutheran v. Comer](#) (2017) and [Espinoza v. Montana Dept. of Revenue](#) (2020), ADF argues that Virginia put the students in the constitutionally untenable position of “moderat[ing] their beliefs and pursu[ing] less meaningful religious study” or foregoing grants. Second, Virginia’s programs are not “neutral or generally applicable.” Third, Virginia unconstitutionally favors some religious degrees over others by holding “a denominational preference” for programs that seem more secular. Fourth, the state’s attempt to parse out which programs are too religious for awards is an unconstitutional “entanglement with religion.” ADF is asking the Supreme Court to take the case because “time is of the essence. Petitioners pay thousands more for their education each year because of their religious exercise.” The Court will decide whether to take the case in the coming months.

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](#)

[Tension Over a Teacher](#)

[Virginia’s Abortion Proposal: Extreme in the Extreme](#)

[The Heritage Foundation Education Freedom Report Card](#)

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