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“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”
George Washington Carver

Florida Tax Credit Program Increases College Enrollment and Graduation

Students who participate in Florida’s Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC) program are more likely to attend and graduate from college than their public school peers, according to a [recent study](#) conducted by the Urban Institute. The study used data from the Florida Department of Education, Step Up for Students (the nonprofit which administers the tax credit program), and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) which provides data from most colleges across the country. A previous study had examined the enrollment of students only in public colleges in Florida and found only slight differences in percentages of students who enrolled in college and attained a degree. However, this study expanded the data to include public and private colleges out of state, including both 2-year and 4-year colleges. Notably, FTC participants showed a 64% college enrollment rate, compared to only 54% of their public-school counterparts. Regarding degree attainment, 12% of FTC participants earned a bachelor’s degree, compared to 10% of their public-school peers. The study also compared the success rates of students who joined the program in elementary and middle school with students who joined in high school, with comparisons in each category with their public-school counterparts. In every category, the percentage of students who attended college and then graduated was higher for those students who had the opportunity to benefit from the school choice program. The findings are consistent with the results of two other studies conducted by the Urban Institute regarding the success rates of the school choice programs in Milwaukee, WI, and Washington, D.C. The report’s authors, Matthew Chingos, Tomas Monarrez, and Daniel Kuehn, point out that “these positive impacts of FTC participation should be interpreted in the context of increased enrollment in the program, which has expanded to include students from lower-middle-income families and more schools where most students use a scholarship.” Florida’s new governor Ron DeSantis has [indicated](#) he would like to expand eligibility for participation in the tax credit scholarship program which currently has a wait list of approximately 13,000 for 2019. The school choice program currently provides scholarships to more than 100,000 low-income students and is the largest tax credit program in the country. The program [operates](#) by granting tax credits to individuals and businesses that contribute to a nonprofit scholarship organization, which in turn provides scholarships to the students to attend the school of their choice. The organization of the program ensures that government funds are not going directly to participating schools, and thus protects the autonomy and mission of the schools from government interference. The results of this study show that participation in the school choice program yields positive outcomes in regards to pursuing and obtaining a college education.

Congressional Democrats Block Bills to Stop Infanticide

In response to the shocking new abortion law in New York state and the proposed law in Virginia that would dramatically expand abortion up until the moment a child is born, legislators in the U.S. House and Senate have

been pushing a bill called the [Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act](#). Championed by Ben Sasse (NE) in the Senate and by Representatives Ann Wagner (MO) and Steve Scalise (LA) in the House, the Born Alive bill would ensure that a baby born after a failed abortion would receive the same medical treatment that any other baby of the same gestational development would normally receive. Congressional Democrats in both the House and Senate have attempted to block the legislation from getting a vote. Although Sen. Patty Murray (WA) [objected](#) to passing the bill by unanimous consent in the Senate, Sen. Sasse and Republican leadership are expected to advance a vote in the coming weeks. [Efforts in the House](#), however, have thus far proven unsuccessful, with House Democrats twice blocking requests to vote. In response, [Rep. Scalise](#) has argued that “every member of Congress, regardless of party, needs to go on record against infanticide.” House Republicans plan to [continue pushing the issue](#) for the next 30 days, seeking 218 signatures from House members on a discharge petition that would force a floor vote on this important legislation.

Supreme Court Blocks Louisiana’s Pro-Life Law

The Supreme Court has [blocked](#) a Louisiana pro-life law from taking effect by a 5-4 vote that included Chief Justice John Roberts [siding with the progressive wing](#) of the Court. Louisiana’s Unsafe Abortion Protection Act was passed in 2014 and requires doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the place where an abortion is performed. The Supreme Court struck down a similar Texas law in 2016, and challengers of the Louisiana law pointed to the ruling against the Texas law as precedent that such a law was unconstitutional. However, the 5th Circuit Court upheld the merits of the Louisiana law last September, prompting the challengers to appeal to the Supreme Court. The High Court’s decision puts enforcement of the law on hold until the court can further review the merits of the case and determine future action. Newly appointed Justice Kavanaugh joined with conservative Justices Thomas, Alito, and Gorsuch, but wrote his own dissent which indicated he believes the High Court was too hasty to make such a decision on this case, causing conservatives some concern as to where he actually stands on the life issue. Louisiana currently has only three abortion clinics; and should the law eventually take effect, two of the three would likely close because the doctors do not have the necessary admitting privileges. Many pro-life leaders have [expressed concern](#) that this decision does not represent a strong willingness to protect life by the members of the Court.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Pastor Ramin Parsa Arrested in the Mall of America](#)

[Live 4D Ultrasounds on Times Square Jumbo Screen: "No Way Someone Can Say That's Not a Baby"](#)

[Presidential Message on School Safety: Remembering the Parkland Tragedy](#)

[Mississippi Legislature Passes Bills Banning Abortion after Detectable Heartbeat](#)