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*“The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”*

*John Quincy Adams*

**School Choice for Military Families Introduced**

Last week, members in the House and Senate introduced legislation which would provide school choice for military families by creating an education savings account program. Specifically, the program would provide up to \$6,000 annually for military parents to use on educational services for their children, including private school tuition, online courses, tutoring, curriculum and textbooks, and special education services. At the end of each year, unused funds could be rolled over to the next year or rolled into a college savings account program. The bill mirrors legislation that was proposed last year but received opposition in large part because the funding was specified to come out of Impact Aid which is used to help offset expenses in school districts with a large military presence. The proposed legislation indicates that the Department of Education will direct the funds and administer the program and removes the language regarding the use of Impact Aid funding. Currently, approximately 80% of military children are enrolled in public schools, but only a third of military parents are satisfied that the public school is the best choice for their child. According to a [Military Times survey](#), roughly 35% of respondents indicated they considered leaving the military or declining career advancements because of a lack of good educational options for their children. Representative Jim Banks (IN), lead sponsor of the legislation in the House, [noted](#) that “the lack of education options for military families is making it increasingly difficult to recruit the best and brightest into the armed forces. . . . This [legislation] will ensure that every military family can access quality education options and not have to worry that a reassignment could jeopardize their children’s future.” Senator Ben Sasse (NE), who joined Senators Tom Cotton (AR) and Tim Scott (SC) in introducing the Senate version, [noted](#) the impact that military school choice could have in strengthening national security: “America fights to win. That takes top-notch talent. Recruitment and retainment are a real component to national security. If we’re going to face down global threats with the best and brightest, we need to make it easy for those moms and dads to take care of their families.” School choice for military families has strong support from the school choice community, even those who support state-level school choice but are wary of federal involvement in a school choice program because of the potential of burdensome regulations. The Heritage Foundation’s Lindsey Burke has [advocated](#) that providing school choice for military families would be one of the best ways to increase educational opportunities from the federal level without creating another federal educational program that would bring additional rules and regulations that hinder educational progress. The proposal also receives strong support from military families, with polling showing 72% of military personnel [support the idea](#) of creating a school choice program for military families.

**Department of Education Declares Restriction on Religious Organizations Is Unconstitutional**

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced last week that the Department of Education will no longer enforce a portion of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that prohibits the involvement of religious organizations as providers for certain educational services. The specific provision in ESSA requires districts to

ensure that low-income or special needs students in private schools have access to the same services their public school peers receive. To ensure this equitable participation, districts often contract with service providers to offer the educational services, but religious contractors have been prohibited from participating and receiving public funding. The Department of Education determined that this exclusion of faith-based providers is [unconstitutional](#) based on the 2017 Supreme Court decision in the *Trinity Lutheran v. Comer*. In this ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for the religious school to be disqualified from receiving a grant for playground resurfacing solely for the reason that the school was religious. Secretary DeVos [noted](#), “The Trinity Lutheran decision reaffirmed the long-understood intent of the First Amendment to not restrict the free exercise of religion. Those seeking to provide high-quality educational services to students and teachers should not be discriminated against simply based on the religious character of their organization.” While the decision may face a court challenge, conservatives are praising the Trump administration for this move to protect religious liberty.

### **Alive From New York Event Will Celebrate Life in Times Square**

Focus on the Family is hosting an event this spring to uplift life in a culture that seems bent on celebrating death. On May 4, Alive from New York will bring together thousands of pro-life supporters in New York City’s Times Square to press back boldly against radical new abortion laws that allow for abortion up until the very moment a child is delivered. Shortly after New York’s abominable new law, other states began considering similar abortion legislation, including Virginia, New Mexico, Vermont, and Illinois. However, pro-life supporters are proving that the pro-life movement will not be cowed by the radical agenda of a few states. [Senator Ben Sasse](#) (NE), who sponsored the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act to protect babies that survive abortions, pointed out that “the thing that we need to look to, to be encouraged and optimistic, is the American people have been repulsed by this.” The Alive from New York event is being [organized](#) to “celebrate the sanctity of human life, marvel at the wonder of human development in the womb, and encourage advocacy for women facing unplanned pregnancies and the preborn.” The event will feature a live 4D ultrasound of a woman and her unborn child, showing all who walk by Time Square’s iconic jumbotron the undeniable proof of human preborn life. In describing the event, Focus on the Family president Jim Daly [explained](#) the powerful message that will be conveyed through the ultrasound: “There is no way a person is going to be able to say, ‘That is not a child.’” More information can be found [here](#).

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

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

[Federal Appeals Court Upholds Ohio Ban on Planned Parenthood Funding](#)

[DeVos Scholarship Plan is Modeled on Proven Success](#)

[Colorado Drops Second Case Against Christian Baker](#)