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“It is when people forget God that tyrants forge their chains.”
Patrick Henry

Effects of Regulations on Specialization in School Choice

Results from a [recent study](#) show that increased regulations can actually decrease the specialization of private schools in school choice programs, and thereby hinder the diversity of educational options for students that school choice programs inevitably create. The study conducted by Lindsey Burke of the Heritage Foundation and Corey DeAngelis of the Cato Institute examines voucher programs in Indiana, Ohio, Florida, Washington, D.C., and Louisiana and the level to which private schools adjust their programs in order to meet regulations for participating schools. In explaining the purpose for their study, the authors note that 20 studies have been done to determine the success of school choice programs related to student achievement and attainment, but no studies have looked at the effects of school choice programs on the participating schools. The study examined specifically the effects of program requirements on three categories of schools: regular, specialized (i.e. gifted and talented, science and math focused, etc.), or alternative (non-traditional). Of the five states, Louisiana’s program has the most requirements, including mandating an open admissions policy, financial reporting, and state testing requirements. The study found that the increased regulations in Louisiana led to more uniformity amongst the schools as a result of the changes they made in order to meet the participation requirements. In contrast, Ohio had the fewest requirements, and these schools were able to maintain their unique regular, specialized, or alternative status. The authors also examined the effects of increased regulations on racial integration and found that those states with the least requirements had the highest percentage of racial integration in participating schools. The authors conclude by noting that “additional regulations could reduce specialization in the supply of schooling, and, as a result, leave families with less meaningful educational options. If the diverse backgrounds and interests of children are not served by a broad set of available options, school choice programs could fail to improve student outcomes.” The authors further purport that policy makers would be wise to consider these findings and “carefully weigh the costs of regulating private school choice programs, as overregulation could reduce specialization and diversity of school supply in a given school choice program, limiting the options that are available to families.”

AACS to Host National Competition Next Week

Next week, over 2100 students and sponsors from over 200 Christian high schools in 30 states will participate in the AACCS National Competition, having captured top honors in their state contests. This annual event offers students the opportunity to compete in 76 categories within the divisions of Bible, music, speech, art, and academics. The size and scope of the competition requires “all hands” in order to staff the event. Our DC staff will be active hosting these student competitors, so the *Washington Flyer* will be on hiatus next week. The *Flyer* will resume the following week. We wish everyone the best in the competition and look forward to an exciting

week. For regular updates throughout the week, please follow us on twitter ([@aacs_dc](#)) like us on Facebook ([AACSEducat](#)) and use [#AACSNationals19](#) in your National Competition posts.

Alive from New York--Event to Celebrate Life

In response to recent state efforts to pass radical pro-abortion legislation, Focus on the Family is hosting Alive from New York to celebrate the sanctity of pre-born life. The event will feature a live 4D ultrasound of a third trimester baby in the womb. Come celebrate the wonder of life at Alive from New York [on Saturday, May 4](#) in Times Square, New York City. For more information and to register, please visit the event's website [here](#).

Mississippi Expands Education Savings Accounts

The Mississippi legislature [expanded](#) its school choice program through what some have called a [surprise move](#) with an appropriations bill that passed both Houses last week. The bill included \$27.3 million for 70 different projects, one of which was the expansion of the state's Education Savings Accounts program. The program was originally established in 2015 and has received \$3 million annually for the past four years, helping over 400 families receive educational help for their special needs children. However, more than 250 students remained on a waiting list. A bill to expand the program had passed the Senate earlier this year but [failed to pass](#) the House Education Committee. Unwilling to let the bill die, school choice advocates were successful in getting language inserted into the conference report for the appropriations bill that funds the state's Department of Finance and Administration. The strategic move allocated \$2 million for the program which will provide around 300 new scholarships for special needs students. Although legislators received a list of the projects that were funded through the bill, many did not read the full list and were, therefore, [surprised to find out](#) they had voted in favor of the school choice program. The move to expand the program has the full support of the governor and his team.

State Legislatures Pass Heartbeat Bills

Georgia and Mississippi are the latest in a growing trend of states to pass a heartbeat bill into state law. [The Georgia bill](#) prohibits abortion once a fetal heartbeat has been detected (around six weeks gestation) and allows for some exceptions in cases that would cause death to the mother, that involve a baby unable to live after birth, and that result from reported rape or incest. Gov. Brian Kemp is expected to sign the bill, thereby fulfilling a campaign promise to tighten abortion laws in the state. [In Mississippi](#), Gov. Phil Bryant has already signed the heartbeat bill into law. The Mississippi bill is [similar](#) to Georgia's, except that it does not make exceptions in cases of rape or incest. These states join others attempting to pass strict abortion laws, including Florida, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas. [Kentucky](#) recently passed a heartbeat bill, but a federal judge blocked it over concerns of the bill's constitutionality. However, some heartbeat bill supporters say this is exactly what they want: a chance to revisit *Roe v. Wade* and affirm the value of unborn life. As Mississippi Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves stated, "There have been threats of lawsuits, and I'm sure that's going to happen, and that's O.K. . . . I have absolutely no problem supporting strongly whatever it costs to defend this lawsuit because I care about unborn children."

In Case You Missed It:

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

[10 Critical Religious Liberty Cases in 2019](#)

[Trump Administration Expands the Scope of the Pro-life Mexico City Policy](#)

[May 4—Alive From New York—4D Ultrasound in Time Square](#)

[Trump Set to Sign Executive Order on Campus Free Speech](#)