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“We should begin by setting conscience free. When all men of all religions . . . shall enjoy liberty, property, and an equal chance for honors and power . . . we may expect that improvements will be made in the human character and the state of society.”

John Adams

Bipartisan Bill Prevents Navajo Families from Repaying Education Savings Accounts

After intervention from the American Federation for Children (AFC), the Arizona Legislature [approved](#) a bipartisan bill that will allow the Navajo students of Window Rock, Arizona, who are currently using an Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) voucher, to continue spending the money at an out-of-state private school until July 1, 2020. The Empowerment Scholarship Account is a state-funded account that allows qualified students to opt out of the public school system. Parents can then choose alternative schooling, such as private school or home school, within the state. For the past two years, Navajo families who qualified for the ESA have used the money to pay tuition at a private school, Hilltop Christian School, located just over the Arizona border but still inside the border of the Navajo reservation. Parents began receiving letters from the Arizona Department of Education claiming that the ESA money had been used incorrectly and demanding the repayment of thousands of dollars to the state within ten days. After repeated, unsuccessful attempts to contact the Arizona Department of Education, the families reached out to [AFC](#) for help. AFC documented the story in a recently published [video](#), detailing the families’ plight. Senate Bill 1545 allows the Navajo students of Window Rock currently using an ESA to continue spending money at an out-of-state school until July 1, 2020. The bill does not require the families to pay back the money to the state or to the school. Ten students have been allowed to attend Hilltop. Two of these students received approval in August 2017 and another eight received approval between April and August 2018. Three students were no longer attending Hilltop at the time the Department of Education realized the money was being spent out of state. At the end of the transition period, students will be required to attend a school in Arizona, per state law. However, over 90 percent of K-12 public school students in Window Rock are attending D and F rated state schools. Steve Smith, State Director for the American Federation for Children, issued a statement saying, “Now that the Superintendent has finally agreed to work on a more reasonable proposal (which includes no longer demanding a repayment from the families to pay for their children’s education), she is still only willing to give the families a one-year transition period and then the children face heading back into a failing public school. Make no mistake, the Navajo families do not back this proposal and are very disappointed and angry that they are still being trampled on after they pleaded with the state to fix this disparity through changing the state law to accommodate their needs.”

Supreme Court Affirms Dignity of Abortion Victims, Avoids Other Abortion Questions

In an interesting decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled to affirm the dignity of abortion victims while simultaneously avoiding further questions about the legitimacy to a right to abortion. In *Box v. Planned Parenthood*, two aspects of an [Indiana law](#) that was passed under then-Governor Mike Pence came under scrutiny. First, the law required that abortion victims be cremated or buried because they are “nothing less than

the remains of a partially gestated fetus and should be treated with the same dignity.” Second, the law prohibited selective abortions based on the baby’s sex, race, or disability. Planned Parenthood sued the state for its law, and the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals decided with the abortion industry giant that a “humane and dignified disposal of human remains” was not a valid state interest to suppress a woman’s so-called reproductive rights. However, the Supreme Court decided 7-2 that the Indiana law placed no undue burden on a woman’s right to an abortion. Many pro-life supporters were disappointed that the Supreme Court declined consideration of the Indiana law’s second provision outlawing selective or discriminative abortions, leaving the door open for future Supreme Court action on this issue. Justice Clarence Thomas wrote a [concurring opinion](#) addressing selective abortion, writing that the law “promote[s] a State’s compelling interest in preventing abortion from becoming a tool of modern-day eugenics,” and although the Court avoided selective abortion issues now, “we cannot avoid them forever.”

Child Safety Accounts Could Help D.C. Students Escape Unsafe Schools

Congressman Jim Banks (IN) recently proposed a new school choice initiative that could save Washington, D.C., students from being forced to attend unsafe public schools. The proposed [Child Safety Accounts](#) would provide students attending dangerous schools in D.C. funds to pay for private school tuition and fees, tutoring, textbooks, and transportation and therapy costs. Research shows that despite spending over \$27,000 per pupil, the highest in the country, D.C. schools are [woefully unsuitable](#) as a positive learning environment. Test scores are abysmal, with only 21% of students testing proficient in math and only 20% in reading. Additionally, a study by the National Center for Education revealed that nearly 10% of D.C. students were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, 30% of middle school students experienced physical bullying at school, and over 20% encountered drugs at school. While the Every Student Succeeds Act allows students to transfer out of unsafe schools, the law so narrowly defines a “persistently dangerous” school that only 50 out of almost 100,000 public schools qualify as dangerous enough to warrant transfer. And even though the popular D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program provides school choice for D.C. families, only 1,700 students are lucky enough to win the lottery to participate. Since Congress has direct authority over D.C. schools, the federal Child Safety Accounts could offer D.C. families who are desperate to escape a broken and dangerous school environment a means to procure better and safer education options.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Trump Administration Ends Contract Supplying Fetal Tissue for Research](#)

[Maine Bans “Conversion Therapy” for Minors](#)

[Facial Recognition is Coming to US Schools, Starting in New York](#)

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