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“Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.”
John Adams

Attorney General Highlights Battle for Religious Liberty in Education

U.S. Attorney General William Barr recently [delivered](#) a powerful speech on the importance of religious liberty at Notre Dame’s Law School and the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture. His remarks highlighted the efforts of secularists and progressives to use the law to dismantle religious liberty, [calling education](#) “ground zero for these attacks.” He began his speech with a recognition of the value that our Founding Fathers placed on religious liberty and the importance of protecting the freedom of people to live out their faith. He stated, “The imperative of protecting religious freedom was not just a nod in the direction of piety. It reflects the Framers’ belief that religion was indispensable to sustaining our free system of government.” The attorney general then offered a thorough explanation of the importance of religion to a free society, quoting [James Madison](#), who “described religious liberty as ‘a right towards men’ but ‘a duty towards the Creator,’ and a ‘duty . . . precedent both in order of time and degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society.’” In describing the recent attacks on religious liberty, he stated these were efforts to force people of faith to “subscribe to practices and policies that are antithetical to their faith.” Regarding the attacks in education, he [emphasized](#) that “this is the most serious challenge to religious liberty.” He further explained, “For anyone who has a religious faith, by far the most important part of exercising that faith is the teaching of that religion to our children. . . . There is no greater gift we can give our children and no greater expression of love.” He pointed out the attacks in education include the use of public school curriculum to teach philosophies and subjects that are “incompatible with traditional religious principles,” adding that this is often done “without any opt out for religious families.” Additionally, he pointed out the efforts in some states to create policies which attempt to “starve religious schools of generally available funds and encouraging students to choose secular options.” As an example, he specifically referenced the case currently before the U.S. Supreme Court, [Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue](#), where the state government denied participation of religious schools in the state’s tax credit scholarship program. Finally, he noted the “efforts to use state laws to force religious schools to adhere to secular orthodoxy” and abandon their religious convictions, referencing the potential use of accreditation to force schools to either conform to secular philosophy and practices or lose accreditation status. In his conclusion, he confirmed his commitment to protect education against these attacks and preserve religious liberty. He stated, “Education is not vocational training. It is leading our children to the recognition that there is truth and helping them develop the faculties to discern and love the truth and the discipline to live by it.”

Parental Rights Amendment Petition

Last week, ParentalRights.org launched a petition on the White House website to increase awareness and gather support for adding a Parental Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The petition has until November 23

to reach the 100,000 signature threshold that would guarantee a response from President Trump on the Parental Rights Amendment. If adopted, the Parental Rights Amendment would preserve parental rights by ensuring constitutional protection to the right of parents to raise, nurture, and educate their children. The amendment acknowledges the “liberty of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children” as a natural, fundamental right. The amendment would ensure that no state or federal government could infringe on the parental right “to direct education includ[ing] the right to choose, as an alternative to public education, private, religious, or home schools, and the right to make reasonable choices within public schools for one’s child.” The Parental Rights Amendment petition currently has over 14,700 of the 100,000 signatures needed to be addressed by the White House. To learn more about the amendment, visit parentalrights.org. To sign the petition, visit the White House website [here](#).

NCES Conference Offers Helpful Information

This week, AACCS staff joined representatives from private and religious educational associations in attending the annual National Center for Education Statistics’ (NCES) private school meeting which discussed the results of the [latest National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#) and other NCES studies. Through these studies, the NCES supplies valuable data to Congress and parents who are interested in private school options that excel in educating children. The meeting focused primarily on the latest NAEP survey which assessed students’ skills in math, reading, civics, and STEM areas in the 4th and 8th grades. Participation rates were too low in non-Catholic religious schools to allow NCES to report on those outcomes; however, for those private schools that could be reported on, the survey found higher test scores and higher civil engagement than their public-school peers. Some schools decline to participate because of a lack of time or resources (22.4%), no contact was made to the school (18.5%), or participation would sacrifice instructional time (11.9%). Private school associations see the value in the survey, while expressing concerns about maintaining the privacy and autonomy of their schools. Also discussed were possible ways to make the NAEP a more useful tool for private schools.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Jeremy Dys: Liberal Attack on Barr’s Religious Liberty Speech Shows He’s Right](#)

[DeVos Bemoans ‘Devastating’ NAEP Scores, Pushes for ‘Educational Freedom’](#)

[The Great Society and Opportunity Lost](#)