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**The Washington Flyer**  
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*“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*  
**Isaiah 9:6**

**Fairness for All Introduced but Lacks Support**

Representative Chris Stewart (UT) has introduced a bill which attempts to provide special protections for LGBT groups while claiming to protect the religious liberty of institutions. The Fairness for All Act (FFA) would add sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) to the list of protected classes under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a move which would radically transform federal civil rights laws concerning employment, public accommodations, and education. The bill offers an exemption for churches and non-profit religious institutions that hold to a biblical view of marriage and human sexuality, but individuals and for-profit businesses with 15 or more employees would be forced to comply with the new requirements. The bill claims support from groups in both the LGBT and religious communities under the premise that it is necessary to resolve the growing tension between sexual liberty and religious liberty in our culture. However, Dr. Ryan Anderson of the Heritage Foundation [points out](#) that although the legislation may be the result of “well-intentioned” people seeking compromise, the bill would actually create problems because of the “harms it would cause to people’s privacy, safety, equality, and other forms of liberty—not just for religious people, but for anyone who disagrees with contemporary sexual and gender ideology.” David S. Crawford, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at The Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, further [expounds](#) on this problem, stating that “by framing the question as one of religious liberty, FFA suggests that, outside religious objections, the conceptual framework of the SOGI ideology is true to reality—and that the demand for religious liberty is really a demand for exceptions from legitimate social and legal norms.” Albert Mohler offered a [thorough analysis](#) of the dangers this would create, stating, “When the state adopts this kind of legislation, . . . it codifies and therefore begins the process of coercing the entire culture to adopt the same definitions and the same basic structural understanding.” AACCS Legislative Director Jamison Coppola agreed, [stating](#) that any efforts to codify SOGI into federal law “[uses] the government to force one side to act in ways inconsistent with their deeply held beliefs.” Interestingly, the bill also [lacks support](#) from groups supporting the SOGI agenda because they do not support any religious exemptions to SOGI ideology. These groups support the [Equality Act](#), a bill which passed the U.S. House of Representatives last May that would codify SOGI into law without any religious exemptions. Given the controversial nature of the bill and the timing of its introduction, most political pundits agree that the bill will not likely move forward in this Congress.

**AACS Submits Public Comments on Adoption and Foster Care Proposed Rule**

This week, the AACCS submitted public comments on an adoption and foster care [proposed rule](#) issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that removes an unnecessary burden on faith-based providers. The proposed rule modifies two paragraphs in an Obama-era regulation that prohibit HHS grantees,

including religious adoption providers, from discriminating on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, even though gender identity and sexual orientation are not protected classes in federal law. The regulation also required grant recipients to “treat as valid the marriages of same-sex couples” according to Supreme Court decisions in *United States v. Windsor* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*. The proposed rule would fix these suppressive regulations by clarifying that grantees need comply only with federal nondiscrimination law, instead of rules imposed by agency bureaucrats. It would also balance the agency’s enforcement of court precedent by requiring that “HHS will follow all applicable Supreme Court decisions,” instead of singling out LGBT-friendly cases. This proposed rule is especially timely since some states and localities have recently targeted faith-based providers for their religious beliefs about marriage and human sexuality. In Philadelphia, Michigan, and South Carolina, faith-based providers have fought intense state pressure to change their beliefs or close their doors to children in need. The proposed rule takes an important step toward protecting religious providers whose mission is to place children in loving, permanent homes.

### **National Poll Shows Strong Support for School Choice**

A [recent public opinion poll](#) by the American Federation for Children and Real Clear Politics shows a majority of registered voters support educational choice. The poll gauges support from voters on key educational choice issues and further breaks down responses by demographics. When asked whether they support a federal tax credit scholarship program (e.g., Secretary DeVos, Sen. Cruz, and Rep. Byrne’s Education Freedom Scholarships), 70% of respondents supported such a proposal. Voters were also asked whether they support the general idea of school choice, to which 68% responded with support. Lastly, the poll asked what voters’ preferences were for K–12 education for their children. A clear majority, 69.7%, responded that their first choice in education was something other than traditional public schools, whether that preference is private school (21.5%), religious schools (18.5%), public charter school (13.2%), or home school (10.6%). Breaking these responses down by demographics, the poll found that a majority of Democrats and Republicans support educational choice, as do a majority of black and Hispanic voters. Urban and Rural community members were also more likely to support educational choice, although majorities exist across all area types. Parents of school aged children (35–44) were also most likely to support educational choice. Results of polls such as this one show that giving parents the power to choose an educational option that works best for their children is a winning, nonpartisan issue for voters.

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

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

[Coming Soon: National School Choice Week, January 26 – February 1, 2020](#)

[Coming Soon: March for Life, January 24, 2020](#)

*Please note: There will not be a Washington Flyer the next two weeks during the Christmas and New Year’s weeks. The AACCS staff wishes you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! The Flyer will resume in 2020.*