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“Education spending will be most effective if it relies on parental choice & private initiative—the building blocks of success throughout our society.”
Milton Friedman

Trump Administration and Congress Recognize National School Choice Week

This week marked the 10th annual celebration of National School Choice Week (NSCW). As [thousands of events](#) across the country highlighted the benefits and successes that come from school choice, the Trump administration and Congress also added their support. In a [Presidential Proclamation](#), President Trump stated, “Each child is a gift from God who has boundless potential and deserves a fair shot at the American Dream. To have that fair shot, children and their families must be free to pursue an educational environment that matches their individual learning style, develops their unique talents, and prepares them with the knowledge and character needed for fulfilling and productive lives.” On Tuesday, Vice President Mike Pence joined Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos at a school choice rally in Wisconsin, [paying tribute](#) to the state which established the first school choice program in 1990: “For the past thirty years, Wisconsin has shown again and again that when parents are given the opportunity to choose the best school for their children—whether that’s public, private, parochial, Christian, or homeschool—outcomes improve; kids do better.” Secretary DeVos championed the administration’s federal [school choice proposal](#) which would establish a national tax credit scholarship program. Also this week, Secretary DeVos discussed the connection between school choice and religious freedom in the [Espinoza v. Montana case](#) currently before the Supreme Court. A favorable outcome by the High Court could rule Blaine amendments to be unconstitutional and remove a barrier often used by states to deny school choice because of the participation of religious schools in choice programs. In an [interview](#) with Fox news, DeVos said she was “very hopeful about the prospects for true religious freedom when it comes to education for all kids.”

The U.S. Senate recognized NSCW by passing a [resolution](#) which supported school choice efforts, recognized the successes of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, and encouraged parents “to learn more about the education options available to them.” The bipartisan resolution was introduced by Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) who [stated](#), “As someone who was raised in a single-parent household in a distressed community, I know all too well what it’s like to feel overlooked. I firmly believe that a child’s zip code should not affect his or her access to quality education nor should it affect the child’s future.” Democrat Senator Dianne Feinstein (CA) [added her support](#), stating, “I have long believed that parents should have an informed and meaningful choice in their children’s education. A one-size-fits-all approach to our children’s education does not always work and different school models may work better for different students.” A similar resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives but did not receive a vote. Despite the hesitation of some lawmakers to support school choice, there can be no doubt that support for school choice programs is growing across the country as more and

more parents and students are experiencing the success that comes from the freedom to choose the educational method that best meets their needs.

President Trump Speaks at March for Life

Last Friday, the annual March for Life achieved a historic accomplishment when President Donald Trump gave remarks before the vast crowd of participants. Just a few years after former President Obama became the first president to address Planned Parenthood in person, President Trump showed his support and encouragement for the pro-life movement at this important event. To great applause, President Trump declared that “all of us here understand an eternal truth: Every child is a precious and sacred gift from God. Together, we must protect, cherish, and defend the dignity and the sanctity of every human life.” The president also highlighted his administration’s efforts to protect religious liberty, stating that although “religious liberty has been under attack all over the world and frankly, very strongly attacked in our nation,” his administration was dedicated to “preserving faith-based adoption and to uphold our founding documents.” He further touted the 187 federal judges who have been confirmed to various courts since he took office, including Supreme Court justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh. Noting the 2020 March for Life theme, “Life Empowers: Pro-Life is Pro-Woman,” the President praised the 19th Amendment and thanked women across the country for their courageous stand for life. In closing, President Trump stated that “above all, we know that every human soul is divine and every human life, born and unborn, is made in the holy image of Almighty God.” To read and watch the President’s entire speech, click [here](#).

Florida Governor Rejects Common Core

Last Friday, Florida took a major step toward improving education when Governor Ron DeSantis announced [the elimination of Common Core Standards](#). Florida had adopted the Common Core Standards (CCS) in 2010, after the Obama administration promoted the CCS by tying adoption of the standards to the Race to the Top grants, and later spent \$360 million on developing assessments aligned with the CCS. However, critics charge the CCS math often confused teachers and parents, and watered-down civics education left students without a thorough understanding of American history. In fact, the results of National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing shows that math scores have actually declined over the past 10 years. The new Florida standards, called BEST, or Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking, will emphasize understandable math, greater civics education, and whole literary works as opposed to only segments. Students will be required to take courses which teach practical tools for financial responsibility, such as balancing checkbooks and applying for loans, and the Florida Civic Literacy Test, which includes the U.S. citizenship exam and questions on important Supreme Court decisions. Although greater details are yet to be released, the Florida Department of Education has published a [quick sheet](#) highlighting some of the improvements in the BEST program. The stated goals include making Florida the most literate state in America, including parents and teachers in decisions, and building a foundation of civics education for all students.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Trump Administration Actions to Protect Life and Conscience](#)

[DeVos: Irony of Being Pro-Choice but Not School Choice](#)

[Supreme Court Hears Case Questioning Public Funding of Religious Schools](#)