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“Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him, who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulty.”

Abraham Lincoln

Congress Passes Coronavirus Legislation—Effects for Christian Schools

Since the coronavirus became a pandemic, Congress has worked on [three pieces of sweeping legislation](#) to provide relief to Americans suffering sudden economic hardships. The first stimulus became law on March 6 and provided \$8.3 billion in funding to several agencies, including the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration, to improve access to coronavirus testing and research. The second stimulus became law on March 18 and provided far-reaching paid leave benefits to millions of Americans who work at businesses and tax-exempt organizations with fewer than 500 employees. The third stimulus, called the CARES Act, has been passed by the Senate and is now waiting for action in the House. Its eventual passage will affect AACCS ministries; but until it is passed by the House, it is uncertain how its specific provisions will apply. It will likely provide [\\$2 trillion](#) in loans to select industries and direct cash payments to taxpayers.

At this point, the phase 2 law called the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (FFCRA) contains important provisions that are already directly affecting Christian schools under two provisions: paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave. The first provision, Emergency Paid Sick Leave, requires employers to provide 10 days (up to 80 hours) of paid leave to any employee who requests time off from work because of COVID-19. If an employee requests paid leave under 6 conditions, he is entitled to wages during his absence. The second provision, Emergency Family and Medical Leave, requires employers to provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for emergencies related to COVID-19. To offset the burden this requirement places upon employers, the law requires the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to provide a dollar-for-dollar reimbursement to the employer for the paid leave. It is understood that employers may deduct the amount paid to employees for these mandated leave reimbursements from their quarterly payroll tax deposits. If the amount of reimbursement exceeds the amount to be deposited, the Treasury plans to issue rapid refunds to organizations for any additional amounts. This means that at least after the law’s effective date of April 2, 2001, employers who paid sick or family and medical leave may hold back the amount of the wages from the amount the employer would typically deposit to the IRS for the employee’s federal taxes. In addition to the IRS guidance, the [Department of Labor](#) is expected to issue regulations in April on an exemption from the Emergency Family and Medical Leave for employers with fewer than 50 employees “when the imposition of such requirements would jeopardize the viability of the business as a going concern.” The AACCS is actively working with the Department of Labor to obtain a voluntary exemption from this provision for private schools that wish to be exempt. However, until the Department of Labor issues guidance on how to seek an exemption, Christian schools should maintain good records of how they have responded to the COVID-19 crisis. This pertains especially to the efforts of ministries

to continue employee pay during leave due to COVID-19. Visit the [AACCS website](#) for more resources on the coronavirus and how these laws affect Christian schools.

Coronavirus and the Pro-Life Battle

As federal and state policies are enacted to combat the coronavirus, pro-life advocates have been working to ensure measures are taken to protect unborn life. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act included the provision of the [Hyde Amendment](#) which ensures that no federal funds will go to cover abortions, despite efforts by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to create a loophole to the Hyde Amendment. Upon passage of the bill, Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, [lauded the Trump administration](#) for demonstrating “unyielding pro-life resolve by successfully applying the Hyde Amendment to funds in the coronavirus supplemental bill.” On the state level, while several states (LA, MD, MS, OH, TX) are including abortions in the category of “nonessential or elective surgeries and procedures” which must be canceled in order to preserve protective medical equipment for those affected by COVID-19, others states (MA, NJ, and WA) are allowing abortion clinics to remain open. Abortion advocates are claiming that abortion is an essential health service, and that aborted baby body parts are necessary to find a treatment for the virus. However, the pro-life organization Charlotte Lozier Institute [countered this claim](#) by pointing out that “there are [modern, successful alternatives](#) available. Already, [over 60 potential treatments](#) are under investigation—none of which need aborted fetal tissue to fight coronavirus.”

AACS Accepting Applications for Youth Legislative Training Conference

The American Association of Christian Schools legislative office is accepting applications for the annual [Youth Legislative Training Conference](#), scheduled for July 6–10, 2020. The week-long conference, held in Washington, D.C., provides high school students from AACS member schools the opportunity to experience the political workings of our nation’s capital from a biblical worldview. Throughout the week, the students participate in a mock senate where they have the unique opportunity to role-play actual Senators, writing and debating legislation on current issues. One day is spent on Capitol Hill, giving students the opportunity to attend a Congressional briefing and meet with their own Representatives and Senators. The conference also includes presentations from some of our nation’s top conservative leaders and the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our nation’s rich heritage through tours of historical sites. The week culminates with the honor of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Our goal for this event is to inspire high school students for active citizenship and to equip them for effective leadership. Students interested in attending the AACS Youth Legislative Training Conference (YLTC) must apply through their state association office. For more information about the program and the [application process](#), contact the AACS Legislative Director Jamison Coppola (jcoppola@aaccs.org).

In Case You Missed It:

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

[New Podcasts: "AACCS Today"](#)

[President to Pastors: Pray for Strength](#)

[Inside the Outbreak: Teaching and Feeding](#)

[Small Business Aid Available to Churches as Part of COVID-19 Stimulus Package](#)