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“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

John 11:25–26

Religious Organizations Included in CARES Act Provisions

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has released [guidance](#) and an [FAQ document](#) which clarifies that religious organizations can indeed participate in the CARES Act provisions for small businesses and organizations. Signed into law last week, the CARES Act created \$2 trillion worth of federal grants, loans, and programs to help American businesses and workers weather the storm of economic uncertainty that has covered the nation. Religious organizations, including churches and Christian schools, were included in the provisions, but language was not included explicitly to protect the religious freedom of religious groups receiving assistance. Many conservative and religious organizations, including the AACCS, worked hard to communicate this concern to the SBA and the administration, resulting in a [clarification](#) last weekend from the SBA that “all faith-based organizations impacted by Coronavirus (COVID-19) are eligible to participate in the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, without restrictions based on their religious identity or activities.” SBA administrator Jovita Carranza stated, “Faith-based organizations have always provided critical social services for people in need, and SBA will make clear that these organizations may access this emergency capital.” She continued, “While every American is being affected by COVID-19, the impact of this pandemic is particularly hurting our schools and places of worship, and disproportionately impacting the underrepresented communities, the sick, the elderly and the lower income. It’s vitally important that organizations focused on delivering critical social services and meeting community needs remain viable, particularly during this economically challenging time.”

AACS Legislative Director Jamison Coppola praised this news as a “positive indication that the administration wants religious organizations that participate in this new federal program to be protected.” However, he also noted that “religious liberty groups and advocates are still processing the potential risks Christian schools would assume for the duration of the loan.” Some groups, such as the [Alliance Defending Freedom](#), have offered analysis that indicates religious freedom of churches and religious organizations will be protected, while others [offer caution](#), pointing out that receiving an SBA loan would make the borrower a recipient of federal financial assistance (FFA), which could possibly require compliance with some civil rights laws. In a recent [AACCS podcast](#), Mr. Coppola discusses these considerations and offers principles to guide Christian school leaders as they determine best steps to help their school and ministry, as well as some practical steps to help navigate the process should a ministry decide to participate. The AACCS has also prepared a [CARES Act Legal and Legislative Report](#) which outlines these principles and steps.

Justices Gorsuch and Thomas Dissent from Court’s Decision Not to Hear Religious Ad Case

The Supreme Court [has declined](#) to take up a First Amendment case filed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., against the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and one in which the AACS joined as a co-amici with other religious liberty organizations. In 2017, the WMATA denied the Archdiocese access to advertisement space on a WMATA bus because its Christmas ad purportedly violated WMATA’s guidelines against religious, political, or controversial topics. The ad featured the slogan “Find the Perfect Gift” and included a picture of three shepherds and sheep under a starry sky with the church website and hashtag. The Archdiocese filed suit, claiming that the WMATA guidelines violated the First and Fifth Amendments and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). After the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled against the Archdiocese, the case was appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court declined the case because Justice Kavanaugh, who was part of the D.C. Circuit when it decided against the Archdiocese, would recuse himself and leave only eight justices on the bench. However, [Justices Neil Gorsuch and Clarence Thomas issued a statement](#) supporting religious liberty, writing, “But for [Justice Kavanaugh’s recusal], however, our intervention and a reversal would be warranted.” The statement condemned WMATA’s rejection of the Archdiocese’s ad as “viewpoint discrimination by a governmental entity and a violation of the First Amendment,” concluding that while WMATA could discern what ads it allowed, “the one thing it cannot do is what it did here—permit a subject sure to inspire religious views . . . and then suppress those views.”

AACS COVID-19 Resource Page for Christian Schools

AACS has prepared a [COVID-19 resource webpage](#) to aid Christian schools as they make critical adjustments to ensure the health and safety of those in their ministries while also providing necessary services. The page is continuously updated to provide the most recent information regarding help and aid available to private schools and churches through recently passed legislation, [webinars and tutorials](#) for using online tools, [resources for teachers](#) preparing at-home instruction, [help for parents](#) now engaged in at-home instruction, and even [Facebook tips for churches and schools](#). This week, new [podcasts](#) and [documents](#) were added specifically addressing the resources available through the CARES Act.

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. A week-long conference in Washington, D.C., the YLTC offers high school students an exciting opportunity to participate in a mock senate, attend meetings with U.S. Congressmen, glean from workshops and seminars from the nation’s top conservative leaders, and tour some of our Capital’s historical sites. Interested students must apply through their State Association Office. For more information and the [application process](#), contact the AACS legislative assistant (hdebruler@acs.org).

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Appeals Court Allows Texas to Ban Abortions](#)

[The Schoolwork My Kids Are Bringing Home Exposes Public Schools’ Radical Leftist Politics](#)

[DeVos Supports School Choice to Help Education During Coronavirus](#)