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“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

Thomas Paine, 1776

CARES Act Becomes Law—Coronavirus Legislation Phase III

On March 27, Congress passed the third stimulus bill, the CARES Act, to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill contains over \$2 trillion of federal grants, loans, and programs to help Americans struggling through sudden economic hardships. Four of these provisions can directly help Christian schools that also find themselves having to adapt to new financial challenges. **First**, the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) provides \$350 billion in forgivable small business loans for employers with fewer than 500 employees. Through these [loans](#), employers can keep their doors open and their workers meaningfully employed. To have the loans forgiven, employers must use them for qualifying expenses including payroll, utilities, interest payments on mortgages, and group health care. Because religious organizations could not previously participate in Small Businesses Administration (SBA) loans, the AACCS Legislative Office is actively addressing the issue with Congress, the White House, and the Departments. Along with other groups, AACCS is trying to secure promises that the guidance from the SBA will make clear that religious organizations choosing to participate in these new programs should not be considered recipients of government funds. Any bank may participate in this program, and schools interested in applying for this loan should begin communicating with their banks now to understand the loan process. **Second, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance** expands unemployment insurance for workers to receive up to 39 weeks of combined state and federal benefits if they qualify under [certain COVID-19 related reasons](#). Employees of nonprofits that do not pay into the state’s unemployment insurance system would qualify for a weekly federal assistance benefit of \$600. Employees of self-insured nonprofits can receive \$600 plus a state benefit, although those employers receive only a 50% reimbursement for providing the benefit. Schools should communicate with their state unemployment office and state department of labor to find out more about how their state will implement this new program.

Third, an expanded charitable deduction incentivizes charitable giving to nonprofit organizations, including schools and churches, that are experiencing a sharp decline in charitable gifts. The CARES Act provides a temporary \$300 above-the-line charitable deduction for taxpayers who take the standard deduction. It also raises the cap on the charitable deduction for itemizing taxpayers, incentivizing even more Americans to support the charitable organizations that provide vital services to their communities in times of need. **Fourth, equitable services programs and grants** must include private school students. The CARES Act provides \$16.5 billion in aid to K–12 schools through grants to states and governors. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are required to distribute these funds equitably to non-public schools that wish to participate. A state’s ombudsman can help a school navigate the program and coordinate with its LEA. To find your state’s ombudsman, visit the

Department of Education directory [here](#). The AACCS is actively monitoring the SBA, IRS, and Department of Labor for pending guidance for CARES Act implementation.

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. As most schools are in a position of suddenly transforming their daily teaching methods, AACS is offering [webinars and tutorials](#) for using online tools, [podcasts](#) and information regarding [legislative and legal](#) requirements, and [additional resources](#) for teachers preparing at-home instruction. The information is updated continuously; so please [check the page](#) often for resources, educational tools, and current legislative and legal information.

AACS Accepting Application 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 Capitol’s historical sites. Interested students must apply through their State Association Office. For more information and the [application process](#), contact the AACCS legislative assistant (hdebruler@aacs.org).

Trump Administration Files Statement of Interest in Transgender Case

The U.S. Department of Justice has [filed a statement of interest](#) in a federal court case in which three female athletes are suing the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) for its policy which allows transgender athletes to compete according to their gender identity. The female athletes—Selina Soule, Chelsea Mitchell, and Alanna Smith—come from three different schools and charge that this policy has deprived them of wins and state titles because, as pointed out by their attorney Christiana Holcomb, “males will always have inherent physical advantages over comparably talented and trained girls—that’s the reason we have girls sports in the first place.” Holcomb added, “A male’s belief about his gender doesn’t eliminate those advantages.” The CIAC defends its position by claiming that the policy is in accordance with local law and Title IX, the federal law which prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of gender, especially in sports. The Department of Justice, however, disagrees, [stating](#), “Under CIAC’s interpretation of Title IX, however, schools may not account for the real physiological differences between men and women. . . . In so doing, CIAC deprives those women of the single-sex athletic competitions that are one of the marquee accomplishments of Title IX.” U.S. Attorney General William Barr noted, “In our pluralistic society we generally try to accommodate how individuals desire to live their lives up to the point where those desires impinge on the other people’s rights. Allowing biological males to compete in all-female sports deprives women of the opportunity to participate fully and fairly in sports and is fundamentally unfair to female athletes.”

In Case You Missed It:

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

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

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