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*“Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such thing as Wisdom;
and no such thing as public liberty, without Freedom of Speech.”*
Benjamin Franklin

AACS Hosts Virtual YLTC

July 6–10, the AACCS hosted its 26th annual Youth Legislative Training Conference (YLTC) virtually, giving high school students from across the country a glimpse into the politics in Washington, D.C., through five interactive online sessions. The week started with a session from Gail Nicholas, teacher and Social Studies Department Head at Bob Jones Academy in Greenville, SC. For many years, Mrs. Nicholas has led one of the most important events of YLTC, the mock senate. Mrs. Nicholas gave students an overview of the mock senate, describing the process students use as they role-play senators to draft, debate, and vote on legislation. Other interactive sessions featured conservative professionals in D.C., including Autumn Campbell, International Program Manager at the [Leadership Institute](#) and former AACCS intern. Miss Campbell presented “Messaging, Social Media, and You,” a communications training geared toward students. In another session, [WORLD](#) journalist Harvest Prude held an engaging conversation with AACCS Legislative Director Jamison Coppola on “Navigating the Media with Biblical Discernment.” In this session, Miss Prude discussed Christian worldview and gave students valuable tips for viewing news with biblical discernment. In another session, three Hill staffers, who also were either YLTC alumni or former AACCS interns, shared with students what it is like to work for a U.S. Representative. Luke Ball, Communications Director for Rep. Matt Gaetz (FL); Peter Holland, Legislative Assistant for Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO); and Nicole Staley, Scheduler for Rep. Brian Babin (TX), encouraged the next generation of YLTC students to get involved in politics and courageously stand for their Christian faith.

To close the week, students enjoyed a special conversation with Rep. Vicky Hartzler (MO), who shared how the Lord led her to a life of public service. Rep. Hartzler encouraged students to seek God’s will for their lives and find ways to get involved in politics to influence their government. After a week of exciting sessions, we concluded the YLTC by presenting the new Winslow Terry Award. The Winslow Terry Award was given in honor of Winslow Terry, World War II veteran, Christian, patriot, and long-time supporter of the YLTC. To compete for the award, students wrote a one-page essay on one of several topics on the founding of America. In future conferences, the Winslow Terry Award will encourage students to honor heroes of the past who played an indispensable role in forming our country. Although YLTC 2020 was a vastly different experience from typical years, students eagerly participated in the online format. We pray that God will use each session to influence and guide students as they contemplate the next steps God has for them. AACCS is grateful to the many people who contributed to the program, and we extend our appreciation to our corporate sponsor, [WORLD News Group](#), for its support. We cannot wait to plan next year’s event and welcome students back to the heart of American politics here in Washington, D.C.

Supreme Court Rules for Religious Liberty in Guadalupe Case

On July 8, 2020, in the case *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru*, [the Supreme Court ruled](#) 7-2 that under the First Amendment the government cannot interfere with a religious school's employment decisions for teachers "who are entrusted with the responsibility of instructing their students in the faith." Justice Alito, who wrote the majority opinion, recognized "that religious institutions draw [close connections] between their central purpose and educating the young in the faith." The majority opinion drew upon the precedent set in the 2012 Supreme Court unanimous decision for *Hosanna-Tabor v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)*; in this case, the High Court ruled that under the "ministerial exception," the government could not interfere in the decision of Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School to terminate the employment of a church minister who taught in the school. Justice Thomas concurred, asserting that determining whether a teacher can be considered a minister is "an inherently theological question, and thus one that cannot be resolved by civil courts through legal analysis." The Supreme Court's decision to allow Our Lady of Guadalupe School to determine whether the plaintiffs (fifth- and sixth-grade teachers who taught all subjects) were ministers reflects the inseparable relationship between faith and academics in a religious school. "We're encouraged," AACS Legislative Director Jamison Coppola said in a press release, "that the High Court recognizes the importance of protecting the freedom of religious institutions to make employment decisions. This is an important step in ensuring our Christian schools can continue to fulfill their mission of providing a Christ-centered education for their students." *By Alison Heape, AACS Summer Intern*

Supreme Court Delivers Pro-Life Ruling for Little Sisters of the Poor

Last week, the Supreme Court [issued a 7-2 ruling](#) upholding the [pro-life regulatory relief](#) signed by President Donald Trump in 2017. At the heart of the case was a group of Catholic nuns, the Little Sisters of the Poor, who have pushed back against the [Obama-era regulations](#) which mandated that abortifacients be included in health care plans, without any religious exemption for religious organizations. This regulation placed an unnecessary, substantial burden on religious organizations, schools, and individuals. In 2017, President Trump signed an executive order which provided protection for the religious liberty of the Little Sisters of the Poor, which prompted the lawsuit that the Supreme Court struck down in its recent ruling. After seven years of litigation, Little Sisters of the Poor will now be able to continue their dedicated service to the elderly without being forced to violate their faith and pay for abortion-inducing drugs. Vice President Mike Pence praised the decision in a [tweet](#), stating, "All Americans of faith can be assured that under President Donald Trump the Obama-Biden assault on religious liberty is over!" In contrast, presidential candidate Joe Biden publicly [criticized](#) the SCOTUS decision and threatened to "restore the Obama-Biden policy that existed before the Hobby Lobby ruling" if he were elected President. Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, highlighted that under the Obama-Biden administration, the Little Sisters were unfairly threatened millions of dollars in fines, unless they provided coverage for the abortion drugs. He noted, "The Little Sisters' long struggle for survival is one evidence of the growing hostility to religion in America," but added, "We are pleased to see the Supreme Court still recognizes religious freedom." *By Ariana Rubbet, AACS Summer Intern*

In Case You Missed It:

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

[AACS Resource Page to Help Christian Schools Responding to COVID Crisis](#)

[Heritage Foundation: School Closures Threaten Kids More Than Covid-19, Pediatricians Say](#)