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“Education means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth, the light by which men can only be made free.”
Frederick Douglas

School Choice Update in the States

State [legislatures in 20 states](#) are considering bills that would either create or expand school choice programs. In light of the educational struggles that families have faced due to prolonged school closures, many state legislators have introduced bills which would direct education funds to eligible parents and students, rather than to schools, through the creation or expansion of an education savings account (ESA) program. These school choice programs allow parents to use the funds for a variety of educational expenditures, including private school tuition, tutoring, educational therapy or educational pods, and educational technology tools. In [New Hampshire](#), the bill to establish an ESA program has the support of the governor as well as the state’s department of education. A recent analysis by the state’s department of education shows that the program would provide savings of \$360 to 390 million in tax dollars over the next ten years. In [Florida](#), legislators are considering a bill which would merge five current tax credit scholarship programs into one program, the Education Scholarship Programs, and include an ESA option and expand student eligibility for the programs. The Missouri state legislature is considering two bills, one that would [establish an ESA program](#) and one that would [expand charter school options](#), especially in rural areas. In [Washington](#), Rep. Vicki Kraft has introduced a bill which would establish an ESA program, providing \$7,000 per child to families looking to use private school or home school for their children’s education. In [Georgia](#), Rep. Wes Cantrell, a former public school teacher, has introduced legislation that would establish an ESA program for families with students who have disabilities, come from foster care, have experienced bullying, or families whose income is “200% below the federal poverty level.” The program would also be available to military families and those without access to remote learning during the pandemic. In [Iowa](#), the governor has introduced a plan to expand the state’s charter school program and to establish a “student first scholarship” to send funding directly to students.

The demand for school choice among parents is indeed growing, especially in areas of the country where teachers’ unions have kept schools closed, claiming pandemic concerns while making political demands for returning to the classroom. Corey DeAngelis, Director of School Choice at the Reason Foundation, recently noted in a [podcast](#), “Teachers’ unions have done more to advance school choice this year than anyone could have ever imagined.” DeAngelis further pointed out the fallacies in the arguments made by teachers’ unions when opposing school choice and the problems that are created when education funds go directly to schools rather than students. For example, public schools receive funds regardless of whether or not they perform well, so teachers’ unions work to keep students “in” public schools (i.e., oppose choice opportunities) rather than work to bring students to the schools. While charter schools and private schools that underperform are shut down or lose their funding, government schools that underperform actually receive more money, thus providing no incentive for improvement. DeAngelis further emphasizes that the best use of educational funds is to direct them to the parents to put towards the educational method that best meets the needs of the individual students.

Supreme Court Upholds Religious Liberty for California Churches

Last weekend, the Supreme Court struck down California Governor Gavin Newsom's ban on indoor church services in the case [South Bay United Pentecostal Church v. Gavin Newsom](#). In a 6-3 decision, the Court struck down the total prohibition of indoor worship services for churches that fell within the governor's Tier 1 zone, an area covering "most of the State" with spiking COVID-19 cases. In their joint statement, Justices Gorsuch, Thomas, and Alito write that although they are not scientists, the Court cannot "abandon the field when government officials with experts in tow seek to infringe a constitutionally protected liberty. . . . Even in times of crisis—perhaps *especially* in times of crisis—we have a duty to hold governments to the Constitution." Noting that California is entering its second year of COVID-19 restrictions, Justice Gorsuch writes that "it is too late for the State to defend extreme measures with claims of temporary exigency, if it ever could." Although the Court lifted the blanket closure, it did not lift the state's ban on indoor singing. While Justices Alito, Thomas, and Gorsuch would have granted that relief, Justices Kavanaugh and Barrett requested additional information on the ban. Dubious of the state's complex regulations on singing, Justice Gorsuch urged California to "do more to tailor the requirements of public health to the rights of its people." Liberty Counsel, representing Harvest Rock Church in the case, has already [filed a brief](#) to seek further relief from California's singing and capacity restrictions.

Poll Shows Large Majority of Americans Oppose Taxpayer Funding of Abortion

Results from a recent [Knights of Columbus/Marist Poll](#) show that 77% of Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion, and 76% support restrictions on abortion. Regarding federal funding of abortion in government programs, 55% of those polled support a prohibition on using federal dollars to fund abortions through government programs such as Medicaid. This policy is currently covered by the [Hyde Amendment](#), supported by presidents and Congress since it was enacted in 1976. Additionally, 77% oppose taxpayer dollars funding international programs, including 55% of those who identified as Democrats and 64% of those who identified as pro-choice. Regarding *Roe v. Wade*, 48% of Americans believe that decisions regarding abortion restrictions should be made at the state level, which would be the result of the infamous Supreme Court decision being overturned. Only 31% indicated they believe abortion should be available without restriction, which would be the result of codifying *Roe v. Wade* into law. President Biden has indicated his goals regarding abortion are to reverse the [Hyde Amendment](#) and codify the Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision into law. One of President Biden's recent executive orders [reversed the Mexico City Policy](#) which was initially instated to prohibit federal funds from supporting international abortions. However, results from this poll show that most Americans, including Democrats and those who consider themselves "pro-choice," do not support the positions of the Biden administration on abortion.

In Case You Missed It:

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

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[How 'Socio-Emotional Learning' Became Another Vehicle for Anti-White Racism in Schools](#)

[Texas Has Now Defunded Planned Parenthood Entirely](#)

[Sen. Lee Introduces Legislation to Protect Women's Sports in Response to Biden's Transgender Executive Order](#)