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“A sacred respect for the constitutional law is the vital principle, the sustaining energy of a free government.”
Thomas Jefferson

Dozens of Christian College Students Sue Department of Education

Last week, the *Washington Post* broke [news](#) of a lawsuit filed by 33 college students and alumni primarily from Christian colleges and the Religious Exemption Accountability Project (REAP) against the Department of Education alleging that the [religious exemption](#) in Title IX is unconstitutional because it enables colleges to have discriminatory policies against LGBT students. Title IX is the federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on sex in federally funded education programs that also allows colleges to claim certain religious exemptions when parts of the law conflict with the college’s religious mission. The Biden administration, however, has sought to redefine the word “sex” to include sexual orientation and gender identity by executive order and bureaucratic action. In his recent [executive order](#), President Biden claimed that students are guaranteed an education without discrimination based on LGBT identity, and the Department of Education has [announced](#) that it will review all its Title IX regulations and revise them according to President Biden’s order. Thus, this lawsuit comes at an opportune time for LGBT advocates bent on crushing all religious dissent at the source—religious institutions that are faithful to the Bible’s teachings.

The students who filed the suit against the Department of Education are associated with 25 Christian colleges that accept federal education funding, such as grants and scholarships, which nearly all private and religious colleges accept. The students argue that the “oppression” they experienced on campus was “fueled by government funding, and unrestrained by government intervention” and “persists with injurious consequences to mind, body, and soul.” This is not the first time REAP has targeted Christian colleges; earlier in March, REAP published “[The LGBTQ+ Student Divide](#),” a survey of more than 3,000 Christian college students “to better understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ students at these campuses.” The survey alleges that Christian colleges “explicitly discriminate against LGBTQ+ students,” leading to feelings of loneliness, bullying, harassment, anxiety, and depression. The Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU), a membership organization which represents many of the colleges targeted in the lawsuit, has defended the rights of their institutions under the First Amendment to teach biblical sexual ethics. The tactics taken by [REAP](#) against Christian colleges send a clear message: There is no room in the new sexual revolution for Christian views of human sexuality and marriage. Since the lawsuit was filed, other news sites have highlighted [this story](#) and have added others from the perspectives of disgruntled students. A recent [article](#) in *Inside Higher Ed* highlighted an LGBT student and alumni movement against Lee University because of a chapel message given by its president reaffirming the Bible’s teachings about sexuality and marriage. As these attacks intensify, Christian educators, parents, and students must join in raising their voices against these harmful, blatant attacks on religious freedom by those who are bent on imposing a secular, radical belief system on all Americans.

New Study Shows Educational Freedom Yields Higher Test Scores

Educational freedom and school choice have a positive effect on the academic progress of all students, including public school students, according to a [recent study](#) conducted by the University of Arkansas. The

study examined how the level of school choice opportunities in each state correlated with the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) scores per state, and the findings showed that those states with the highest NAEP scores also had the greatest allowance for school choice. The researchers created an Education Freedom Index, ranking states according to four areas—private school choice, public school choice, homeschool, and charter schools. The report compared not only the connection between school choice and academic achievement, but also examined changes made over the last 20 years regarding the increase and growth of school choice programs and how that affected academic progress. Of particular interest were the gains made in Florida, which moved from ranking 35th in the Education Freedom Index in 2000 to ranking 7th in 2021. The authors noted the Florida school choice programs target specific student groups, such as low-income or disability. During the last 16 years, test scores of low-income students in Florida rose 10-17 points compared to a gain of 3-7 for low-income students nationally. Students with disabilities likewise tested 15-21 points higher on NAEP tests than the national average of students with disabilities. Those who oppose school choice, mainly teachers’ unions, often argue that choice programs will take away funding from public schools and thereby damage the education received by students in those schools; however, the study also found there was not a “significant cognizant association” between per-pupil spending and higher scores.

“Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” Spreads in Education

The woke ideology that claims to combat racism in our country is being promoted through “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (DEI) programs in corporate America and [higher education institutions](#), and the trend is spreading now to K–12 public schools and some private schools. The American Federation for Children, an organization focused primarily on promoting and advancing school choice policies, [recently released a report](#) that claims private schools do not currently have enough diversity and school leaders must make a deliberate decision and effort to ensure their student body, faculty, and staff reflect a DEI culture. However, a recent commentary by Jarrett Stepman in the *Daily Signal* points out that the “woke ideology, building on critical race theory, not only rejects the concept that people should be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character, it increasingly also embraces actual governmental race-based discrimination.” Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute has also [voiced concern](#) that the effort to ensure equity in education based on race and ethnicity actually misses the fundamental point of education which is to meet the individual learner’s needs, regardless of skin color. Hess explains that “today’s avatars of ‘equity’ and ‘anti-racism’ aren’t as focused as they should be on the ethical and practical implications of the professional code they’re birthing. After all, I’d think it would be self-evident that the push for equity stumbles into a truly gruesome place when educators are being trained or directed to shortchange some students based on how they look or where they live.”

In Case You Missed It:

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

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

[Resource: America's First Freedom Curriculum](#)

[New AACCS Podcast Discussing Emergency Assistance to Non-Publics Schools in COVID Relief Bill](#)

[AACCS Podcast: Protecting Religious Liberty](#)