



The Washington Flyer
July 16, 2021

“The future of this nation depends on the Christian training of our youth.”
~ President George Washington

AACS Hosts Youth Legislative Training Conference in Washington, D.C.

Last week, the AACS Washington Office hosted the annual AACS Youth Legislative Training Conference (YLTC) where students from AACS schools across the country traveled to our nation’s capital for a week designed to give them the opportunity to experience the political workings of Washington, D.C., from a biblical worldview. Throughout the conference, the attendees participated in a mock senate, spent a day on Capitol Hill meeting with members of Congress, heard from conservative leaders, and toured several historical sites in our nation’s capital.

The mock senate, led by [Mrs. Gail Nicholas](#) from Bob Jones Academy, provided the students with some first-hand experience of the senate’s legislative process as the participants roleplayed current senators, engaged in caucus meetings and committee meetings, drafted legislation on domestic and foreign policy issues, and debated and voted on the bills they created. The “Day on the Hill” gave students the opportunity to attend a special briefing at the [Conservative Partnership Institute](#), which featured Representatives Greg Steube (FL) and Virginia Foxx (NC); Timothy Goeglein, who serves as Vice President for External Relations at Focus on the Family; and Rachel Semmel, who serves as the Director of Communications & Fellow at the Center for Renewing America. That day also allowed the teens to visit congressional offices on Capitol Hill and meet with several Hill staffers in their congressmen’s offices. The students also had opportunities throughout the week to hear from a range of wonderful speakers from the [Leadership Institute](#) (LI) and other conservative policy experts including Jim Neill, the Policy Advisor for Senate Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and Dr. Sohan Dasgupta, who served in the Trump administration as special counsel at the Departments of Homeland Security and Education. Several of the speakers shared their testimony of faith in Christ and how that faith guides them in their policy work for the country.

A highlight of the week was a panel of Hill staffers who were either YLTC alumni or AACS interns who pointed to the YLTC as the event the Lord used to direct them into their current career in the political world. Throughout the week, the students enjoyed a tour of Mount Vernon, a sunset monuments tour, and a tour of Arlington National Cemetery, where four of the students who excelled throughout the week represented AACS in laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The amazing week held many unique experiences, designed to give the students a greater understanding of our government and an appreciation of the freedoms we enjoy. We pray that God will use the lessons from this week to influence and guide their lives. The AACS is grateful to the many people who contributed to the program, providing financial support for student scholarships. For pictures of the week, please visit our [Facebook page](#).

Missouri Approves School Choice Program

Governor Mike Parson of Missouri [signed a bill](#) into law on Wednesday that includes “[a voucher-like program for private school scholarships](#).” Under this program, “current public school students could receive scholarships from private organizations for private school tuition or related expenses.” The bill will also provide tax credits for organizations that offer scholarships to students. The senate passed this measure in May by a vote of 20-13, marking a victory for one of the Republicans’ highest legislative priorities in the state. The governor’s signature turns this school-choice priority into reality in Missouri. Upon the senate passing this bill, Peter Franzen, associate director of the Children’s Education Alliance of Missouri, [commented](#), “This is a historic day for Missouri children. COVID has really shined a light on this. I think there’s a lot of pent-up demand and interest.” Opponents of the bill argue that voucher programs take students and taxpayer funding out of public schools resulting in poorer quality public education for other students. Missouri School Boards’ Association Executive Director Melissa Randol also [charged](#) that this bill “crosses an important line by allowing taxpayer dollars to go to private schools and homeschool.” But the Republican-led congress and the governor believe this bill is an important step in improving the opportunities for quality education in the state. *(Written by summer intern Zach Jewell)*

Supreme Court Refuses to Decide Religious Liberty Case

In a deeply disappointing decision, the U.S. Supreme Court has [declined](#) to protect the right of Washington florist Barronelle Stutzman to operate her business in accordance with her Christian faith. Stutzman, who owns Arlene’s Flowers in Washington state, has fought for eight years in the courts to exercise her religious freedom in her business. In 2013, [Stutzman politely declined](#) to provide the flower arrangements for the gay wedding of Robert Ingersoll, a longtime customer and friend of Stutzman. Her decision to abide by her faith resulted in both the Washington attorney general and the American Civil Liberties Union suing her in court. Stutzman’s case first came before the Supreme Court in 2017, after the Court ruled to uphold religious liberty in [Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission](#). The U.S. Supreme Court ordered the Washington Supreme Court to reconsider its decision against Stutzman in light of *Masterpiece Cakeshop*, but the state instead ignored the High Court and reiterated its ruling against Stutzman. Now, the U.S. Supreme Court has once again denied Stutzman her religious liberty, with only Justices Thomas, Alito, and Gorsuch voting to take up her case, one shy of the four needed to give Stutzman her day in court. While [other Christians](#) continue to fight in the courts for their right to participate fully in society while maintaining their fundamental beliefs, the Court’s decision not to hear Barronelle Stutzman’s case sadly is the final decision in her long fight for religious liberty.

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](#)

[Promise to America’s Children](#)

[AACCS Legislative Director Jamison Coppola Discusses “Critical Race Theory and Christian Education”](#)

[Betsy DeVos: Let's Liberate Children from Race Indoctrination with School Choice](#)