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*“If virtue and knowledge are diffused among the people, they will never be enslav’d.
This will be their great security.”*
Samuel Adams

Senator Lankford Calls on Senate to Support School Choice

Last week, Senator James Lankford (OK) [called on the U.S. Senate](#) to pass a resolution affirming parental rights in education. The resolution (S. Res. 493) was [introduced in January](#) during National School Choice week and provides a detailed list of the challenges parents are currently facing with their children’s education—including COVID-19 issues such as school closures and masking, the harmful racist ideology infiltrating education, and the active efforts of school boards and the U.S. Attorney General to silence parents’ concerns. The resolution concludes with the statement that the U.S. Senate “recognizes and promotes the importance of parental involvement in their child’s education” and “recognizes the necessity of school choice as a tool to empower all parents with the freedom to choose the best educational environment for their children and to reject the destructive ideologies promoted by many public schools, such as Critical Race Theory.” Senator Lankford sought to have the resolution passed by unanimous consent, but the effort was blocked by Democrats (a unanimous consent needs only one Senator to block the procedure), so there will now be an effort to get the resolution passed in the regular order. The AACCS Washington Office was able to work with Senator Lankford’s staff in shaping the resolution as it relates to the dangers of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the importance of parental choice in education. AACCS Government Relations Director Jamison Coppola applauded Senator Lankford’s efforts, stating, “The resolution points the Senate back to the important fundamental truth that parents are the primary educators. We are grateful for Senator Lankford’s passion for education and his recognition of what is happening at the local level where parents are fighting for the ability to direct their own children’s education.”

On the state level, [several state legislatures](#) are responding to the outcry from parents who are concerned with the trends in education, including the infiltration of gender ideology and racist theories like CRT in the curricula. This week, the [Kansas](#) legislature passed a bill which ensures curriculum transparency by affirming parents’ fundamental right to raise their children and allowing them to review any part of the curriculum for their children’s classes. The bill also prohibits teaching that violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964, such as CRT. (CRT proponents often criticize the Civil Rights Act, calling it a racist bill that was passed to ensure white people have power.) In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis has indicated his support for the [Parental Rights in Education Bill](#), recently passed by the state legislature, which reaffirms parents’ right to be involved in their children’s education and prohibits classroom instruction on gender ideology in K–3rd grades. Responding to criticism from the media and LGBT activists who have misrepresented the bill as discriminatory against gay people, DeSantis [said](#), “I think people need to get out of their bubble and actually talk to parents in this state, because they do not want this in kindergarten or first grade or second grade. We want our kids to be kids.” A recent poll by the Daily Wire showed that a [majority of Americans](#) do indeed support the Florida bill, indicating that there is a growing movement among parents to fight back against the efforts to infiltrate public education with woke and gender ideology.

AACS Signs Letter Supporting Universal Charitable Deduction for Nonprofit Organizations

The AACS recently signed onto a letter supporting the universal charitable deduction (UCD) and encouraging more Americans to give to charitable civic and religious organizations. The UCD would give Americans who do not itemize their taxes a “below-the-line” deduction for giving to charitable organizations. The letter was sent to Senator James Lankford (OK), who led efforts to temporarily expand the charitable deduction in the CARES Act during the COVID-19 pandemic. That temporary provision was extended for 2021 but has now expired. The UCD helps Americans by easing the tax burden on charitable giving while also helping the charities that depend upon private giving to serve their communities. The letter stated, “Unfortunately, the charities caring for our nation’s most vulnerable often are the most vulnerable themselves to economic downturns and crises. . . . Restoring an expanded and extended UCD as soon as possible in 2022 will help these smaller congregations and faith-based ministries weather the pandemic’s impact while also combating long-term trends for religious giving.” Senator Lankford [stated](#) in a Senate Finance Committee hearing on charitable giving, “Nonprofits are the best example of our community safety net. . . . Encouraging more Americans to give will help direct additional resources to nonprofits to ensure they can continue to provide vital services to their communities.” Senator Lankford has also introduced a bill, the [Universal Giving Pandemic Response and Recovery Act](#), that would expand the UCD up to \$4,000 for individual filers and \$8,000 for joint filers.

Senate Begins Hearing on President Biden’s Supreme Court Nominee

The Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings this week on President Biden’s nominee to fill the seat that will open when Justice Stephen Breyer retires from the Supreme Court, Ketanji Brown Jackson. Throughout the week, senators were given opportunity to question Judge Jackson on her judicial philosophy, how she has decided in past cases, and her stance on cultural issues that may come before the Court in the future. While Judge Jackson repeatedly stated her commitment to judicial restraint and following the Constitution, her answers to some questions raise concerns that she would interpret the Constitution according to cultural pressures rather than enduring truths. One contentious [moment](#) during the weeklong hearing was when Senator Marsha Blackburn (TN) asked Judge Jackson if she could define “woman.” Judge Jackson responded, “No, I can’t. . . . Not in this context. I’m not a biologist.” Judge Jackson’s refusal to acknowledge the biological reality of the sexes is particularly relevant considering the many areas of political and social life in which Americans are fiercely debating what it means to be a man or a woman. Conservatives point out the irony of Judge Jackson’s refusal to define what a woman is even as she is being championed by Democrats on the Judiciary Committee as a groundbreaking choice for the Court because of her sex and race. Judge Jackson also made clear that she [supports](#) the precedent of legalized abortion, stating that “Roe and Casey are the settled law of the Supreme Court concerning the right to terminate a woman’s pregnancy.” Democratic leadership hopes to vote on Judge Jackson’s confirmation by Easter.

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](#)

[Promise to America’s Children](#)

[AACS Executive Director Jeff Walton and School Administrator Alan Hodak WORLD Interview](#)