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*“Truth will ultimately prevail where there [are] pains to bring it to light.”*  
*George Washington*

**Model Education Bills Are Priority at State Legislators’ Meeting**

School choice, parental rights, and educational transparency were the top educational issues being promoted at the annual meeting for the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) held last week. [ALEC](#) is a “voluntary membership organization of state legislators dedicated to the principles of limited government, free markets and federalism”; the group provides model legislation and publications to promote conservative policies and aid state legislators in advancing and protecting freedom in their states. According to an [interview](#) conducted by the Center Square with ALEC’s CEO Lisa Nelson and National Chairwoman Karen Fann, two educational bills were the priority to be presented and discussed as model policy issues: The American Transparency Act and The Hope Scholarship Program Act. Both of these policies reflect growing dissatisfaction among parents with public education and the efforts of many state legislators to address the issues of critical race theory and gender ideology infiltrating many school systems. The [Academic Transparency Act](#) will ensure that public schools have the necessary tools in place to disclose learning materials for grades PreK–12, including staff training materials and those used for student instruction. Ms. Fann noted, “When it does come to public schools, or any school, your job is to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, it’s to teach geography, and history and all those things. It is not our job to be teaching sex education to five-year-olds or anything else that probably should be left up to the parents.” The [Hope Scholarship Program Act](#) will establish an education savings account (ESA) program, allowing families the financial means and opportunity to choose the best education for their children. To date, [nine states](#) have implemented an ESA program, with the two largest programs created in the last two years in West Virginia and Arizona. Once fully implemented, West Virginia’s program will be open to approximately 96% of families in the state; and the Arizona program, just signed into law last month, is universal, open to every family in the state. ALEC’s focus on promoting school choice policy may help more states advance educational freedom opportunities. As Ms. Fann stated, “The parents should always have the ultimate choice and decision [for] what is best for their children.”

**AACS DC Office Thanks Interns**

This year, the AACS was pleased to host two summer interns in our AACS Washington Office: Kaylee Soule and Olivia Summers. Kaylee just graduated from Pensacola Christian College (PCC) with a degree in interdisciplinary studies with an emphasis in political science and graphic design and a minor in advertising and public relations, and Olivia will be entering her senior year at PCC in the fall, majoring in political science with minors in Spanish and writing. Both Kaylee and Olivia provided great support to the AACS Washington Office staff through their research and writing (see some of their *Washington Flyer* articles [here](#)), and also through their help with our Youth Legislative Training Conference this summer. We are grateful for the hard work and contributions of both Kaylee and Olivia and pray the Lord will use their time with us to open doors of opportunity for them to serve Him and our great country.

## **Contraceptive Bill Passes the House, Contains Religious Liberty Concerns**

Recently, the House passed the [Right to Contraception Act](#) to create a new right to access contraception. Like the recently passed Respect for Marriage Act, this bill was rushed to the floor in response to Justice Clarence Thomas's concurring opinion in [Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization](#) that calls on the Supreme Court to reevaluate cases in which it used the faulty legal reasoning of *Roe v. Wade*, such as cases legalizing gay marriage and contraception. The Right to Contraception Act calls contraception access "a human right" and "safe, essential health care" and creates a new right to access contraceptives, including emergency contraceptives such as Plan B that act as abortifacients. The bill targets health care providers who object to providing some or all contraceptives based on their religious beliefs or conscience, specifically carving out the [Religious Freedom Restoration Act](#) (RFRA) from applying to the law. Since its passage in 1993, RFRA has served as a balancing test to ensure that Americans' religious liberty is not violated unless the government has a compelling interest that cannot be accomplished through alternative means. Unfortunately, House Republican leadership did not whip Republican members against the bill, and [eight Republicans](#) supported it, including two who previously supported the [Little Sisters of the Poor](#) in their lawsuit against the Department of Health and Human Services for refusing to provide contraception. In the Senate, ten Republicans would need to support the bill to overcome the filibuster. Republican Senator Susan Collins (ME), who is pro-choice, previously [voted against](#) the Women's Health Protection Act, which would protect abortion access, because it lacked religious liberty protections.

## **Teacher's Union Poll Shows Strong Support for Republican Education Policies**

A new [poll](#) shows Republicans are making significant voter gains in education, a policy area that has traditionally been dominated by Democrats and powerful teachers' unions. The poll results were released by Democrats for Education Reform, a political action committee that supports school choice, and the American Federation of Teachers, the second-largest teachers' union which is opposed to school choice. The poll focused on voters from seven battleground states (including AZ, FL, GA, MI, NV, PA, and WI). The voter sample was relatively even in partisanship, with 45% of participants saying they supported Joe Biden in the 2020 election and 48% saying they supported Donald Trump. However, the results skewed towards a Republican advantage in the upcoming midterm elections. Parents put Republicans up [nine points](#) when choosing which party they trusted to handle education policy. Sizable majorities of parents were dissatisfied with the way public schools handled the issues of race, sexual orientation and gender identity, and the level of parental involvement in what is taught in schools. Parents concerned about the educational opportunities for their children helped push Governor DeSantis to victory in his 2019 gubernatorial race, and school choice candidates are [gaining traction](#) in their primaries across the country. Similarly, Virginia's Governor Glenn Youngkin's focus on parental rights in education was a large part of his victorious gubernatorial campaign in 2021. "Let me tell you, it [education] is a top issue right now," [Youngkin](#) said, "and Republicans across the country can own this topic." *By AACS Summer Intern Olivia Summers*

## **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](#)

[The History and Meaning Behind Separation of Church and State](#)