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*“Our contest is not only whether we ourselves shall be free, but whether there shall be left to mankind an asylum on earth for civil and religious liberty.”*  
**Samuel Adams**

**Next Week: March for Life, January 20, 2023**

The 50th March for Life will take place in Washington, D.C., on January 20. The theme for the 2023 March for Life is “Next Steps—Marching in a Post-Roe America.” The march will focus on continuing the fight to protect the unborn and make abortion unthinkable. For information on participating in the March for Life, or to watch live updates on January 20, please [click here](#).

**Governors Provide Public Support for Expanding School Choice in New Legislative Sessions**

School choice is a top priority for governors in many states as state legislatures across the country convene for their new legislative sessions. In [Virginia](#), Governor Glenn Youngkin has expressed support for the creation of an education savings account program to expand school choice and improve educational opportunities in the state. Control for the legislature is split with the Republicans holding a majority in the House of Delegates, and the Democrats holding a slim majority in the senate; however, school choice has had strong support in the past, so there is hope that a program could be enacted this year. In [Oklahoma](#), Governor Stitt, a strong [supporter](#) of sending education dollars to “students rather than systems,” called on the state legislature to pass “true school choice” and reiterated his commitment to make that a priority this year. [Iowa’s](#) Governor Kim Reynolds, also a leading voice for school choice, [stated](#), “I’m really excited about implementing school choice this next election cycle. That’s my top priority.” Both Iowa and Oklahoma [came close](#) to enacting school choice programs last year but fell slightly short of votes in the state legislatures. In [Texas](#), the Lieutenant Governor (Dan Patrick) sets the legislative agenda, and in talking about his legislative priorities, he called school choice “parental freedom,” explaining that parents should have the financial freedom to determine what type of education is best for their children. In referencing the argument that school choice programs take money away from public education, he refuted, “The school system doesn’t have any money, it’s the taxpayer’s money. It’s their school taxes, so they should have that right.” In [Arkansas](#), newly elected Governor Sarah Sanders has indicated her top priority is education reform which will include improving teacher pay and reading proficiency in students, addressing the “culture wars” in education, and expanding school choice for families. She stated, “We have to make sure that parents have a lot more power about deciding how and where their child is best educated.” She further explained, “I’m not opposed to parents having the ability to spend their taxpayer dollars on the best education possible for their kids.”

Many more governors will likely issue proclamations during [National School Choice Week](#) (NSCW) which begins January 22. Last year, 31 governors along with approximately 400 cities and counties published proclamations supporting school choice. NSCW began in 2011 as a way to highlight the positive impact that school choice has had in the lives of thousands of students and families across the country. For materials and ideas for your school or event, please [click here](#).

## **Court Rules Against Ohio School Choice Program**

A Franklin County judge in Ohio has ruled that a lawsuit against Ohio's Educational Choice Scholarship Program (EdChoice) can move forward. The EdChoice program has been providing school choice opportunities for nearly 20 years for low-income families. The [lawsuit](#), filed in January by nearly 100 school districts, argues that the EdChoice program is unconstitutional and promotes segregation. [Ohio](#) defended the program, pointing out that the U.S. Supreme Court deemed it constitutional in 2002 and that the school districts could not prove harm. However, Judge Jaiza N. Page [sided with the plaintiffs](#), ruling that the EdChoice program has expanded since 2002 and that "students could show harm, including potentially in 'overcrowded facilities, inadequate materials, and . . . insufficient learning supports.'" His ruling means that the case will move forward and likely face a trial. A recent study by the Fordham Institute found that the EdChoice program does not harm students, but rather benefits them. The study analyzed 13 years (2006–2019) of data from the program and came to [several positive conclusions](#). First, the study found that "EdChoice . . . led to modest achievement gains" causing "a positive influence on district achievement." Second, the study found that "EdChoice has helped to lessen district segregation" as "the likelihood that public school students are in a racially 'isolated' school has declined." Finally, the study found that "EdChoice does not decrease the per-pupil expenditures of districts," a common argument from school choice opponents. *(By AACS winter intern Gavin Shedal)*

## **South Carolina's Abortion Ban Deemed Unconstitutional**

In a [3-2 decision](#) on January 5, the South Carolina Supreme Court struck down the state's new law which prohibits abortions once a heartbeat is detected in the womb. The Fetal Heartbeat Protection Act was signed into law by [Governor Henry McMaster](#) in February 2021, and became effective when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June of 2022. Abortion rights supporters quickly [sued the state](#), stating that the Act was unconstitutional and violated a woman's right to privacy. In her majority opinion, [Justice Kaye Hearn](#) wrote, "Few decisions in life are more private than the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy." When speaking about the decision, [Governor McMaster](#) disagreed with the finding, stating that the Court "found a right in in our Constitution which was never intended by the people of South Carolina. With this opinion, the Court has clearly exceeded its authority. The people have spoken through their elected representative multiple times on this issue." South Carolina will now return to the abortion law banning abortions past [20 weeks](#) after fertilization, which was put into place in 2016. The South Carolina decision came on the same day the [Idaho Supreme Court](#) upheld a six-week abortion ban as being constitutional in a 3-2 vote. Writing the majority opinion, [Justice Robyn Brody](#) wrote, "The Idaho Constitution, as it currently stands, does not include a fundamental right to abortion." In the coming months and years, many more cases concerning abortion bans will likely arise, as states decide where they stand in a post-Roe world. *(By AACS winter intern Gavin Shedal)*

## **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](#)

[Christian Hope in 2023](#)

[House Votes for New Subcommittee to Investigate Weaponization of FBI, DOJ](#)