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“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it.”
Thomas Paine

Priorities of the 118th Congress Include Conservative Measures

As the new Congressional session begins, the U.S. House of Representatives is looking to advance a new set of conservative priorities with a Republican majority. The new Majority Leader-elect, Rep. Steve Scalise sent a [letter](#) to his colleagues on December 30, outlining the GOP priorities that will be considered in the first two weeks of the new legislative session. While it is unlikely that these proposed bills would pass the Democrat-controlled Senate or gain the signature of President Biden, the passage of these issues in the House would provide a path forward for future laws that could rein in the progressive actions of the last two years under the Democrat-controlled Congress and administration. According to the [office of Rep. Scalise](#), the top agenda issues include “addressing Biden’s army of IRS agents, skyrocketing energy costs, the border and crime crises, the threat of China, and ensuring protections for life and those who stand for it.” Rep. Scalise’s letter listed eleven bills and resolutions, three of which offer [pro-life measures](#) intended to protect unborn babies and commend pro-life ministries. The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act will prohibit federal funds from supporting abortion, ensuring the permanence of the Hyde Amendment which has been added to appropriation bills for decades to ban federal funding of abortion. A second bill, the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, will ensure that infants born alive after an abortion receive the same medical care as any other newborn baby. The third pro-life measure is a resolution that condemns the recent violent attacks on pregnancy care centers and calls on the Biden administration to use law enforcement to defend and protect pro-life centers. In his letter, Rep. Scalise stated his belief that these proposed bills “should garner wide support and provide an indication of our bold agenda to come.” Prior to the midterm elections, the GOP had released their “Commitment to America” outlining their agenda for a new Congress. Their proposal includes a plan to provide more educational options for families across the country, causing many to [describe](#) this new Congress as the most “pro-school choice” Congress. Their proposal, the Educational Choice for Children Act, would establish a national tax credit school choice program. School choice has strong bipartisan support across the country, so supporters of educational freedom are hopeful that the new Congress will advance educational options for children and families.

Coming Up: March for Life 2023

The 50th March for Life will take place in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 2023. 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, please [click here](#).

Coming Up: National School Choice Week

[National School Choice Week \(NSCW\) begins January 22, 2023](#), providing families and schools an opportunity to highlight the positive impact that school choice has had in the lives of thousands of students. For materials and ideas for your school or event, please [click here](#).

New Accreditation Program for Christian Ministries Focuses on Child Abuse Prevention

This month, the Evangelical Council for Abuse Prevention ([ECAP](#)) will launch a [new accreditation program](#) specifically designed to help Christian ministries implement child abuse prevention strategies. ECAP, a membership organization that was launched in 2019, “seeks to assist leaders in developing best practices to protect individuals in their care and how to respond when an allegation of abuse is reported.” To that end, the ECAP program has been tested on 19 charter members, including churches, Christian organizations, and Christian schools, with the purpose of preventing child abuse through a [five-part strategy](#) covering governance, child safety operations, screening, training, and response. While many Christian ministries implement some form of child abuse prevention, whether through background checks or other policies, the ECAP program seeks to formalize the process to ensure greater protections and accountability within a ministry. The [accreditation process](#) includes six steps, including an application, self-study, remote assessment, validation visit, decision, and annual renewal. A team of ministry leaders, law enforcement professionals, and legal experts worked to draft the accreditation process. ECAP executive director Jeff Dalrymple stated that the purpose of the program is to “create standards that protect children from harm, as well as help organizations implement and sustain them.” ECAP currently has one fully accredited ministry and plans to expand to 30 members in the new year.

Circuit Court Dismisses Connecticut Title IX Case

On December 16, the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals announced that it would uphold the decision of a lower court to dismiss the case *Soule v. Connecticut Association of Schools, Inc.* In April 2021, [Judge Robert Chatigny](#) of the District Court of Connecticut announced that he was dismissing this case concerning [Selina Soule](#) and three other high school athletes who filed a preliminary injunction to prevent transgender athletes from competing in women’s sporting events. The four girls claimed that the two male athletes had an unfair advantage during competitions due to their biology. [Judge Chatigny](#) dismissed the case stating that the case was moot because the two transgender athletes graduated from high school while the case developed. The circuit court agreed when the case was appealed. [Alliance Defending Freedom](#) (ADF), representing the four girls, disagreed with the court’s ruling, stating, “The court got it wrong. . . . Our clients, like female athletes all across the country, deserve fair competition and that just does not happen when you allow male [athletes] to come in and to dominate women’s sports.” Currently, [ADF](#) has not decided on whether to appeal the court’s decision or not. Three of the female athletes are now advocating to protect female athletics, hoping to ensure the right of every female to fair competition in sports. The [Biden administration](#) has proposed a rewrite of Title IX regulations to include sexual orientation and gender identity as categories which are protected by Title IX from discrimination in schools that accept federal funding. *(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](#)