



**The Washington Flyer**  
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*“And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”*  
*Luke 24:5–6*

**AACS Hosts National Fine Arts, Academic, and Bible Competition Next Week**

Next week, approximately 1700 students from 191 schools in 32 states will compete in 76 categories in the five basic areas of Bible, music, speech, art, and academics in the 45th annual AACCS National Competition. We are looking forward to an exciting week with these students as they compete. There will be no *Washington Flyer* next week, but you can follow/like the event [here](#).

**School Choice Update: Florida Passes Universal School Choice**

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has [signed into law](#) a bill which expands one of the state’s current school choice programs in order to make school choice a reality for every family in the state. The [new law](#) expands the existing education savings account (ESA) program by eliminating the cap on the number of students who can participate as well as eliminating the financial eligibility requirements, thus opening up the program to all K–12 students in the state. As an ESA program, participating families can use the scholarship money on a variety of educational expenses, including tutoring, therapies, tuition, and other educational methods. This makes Florida the 4th state to enact universal school choice this year, joining Utah, Iowa, and Arkansas, and the 6th state to do so through an ESA program (Arizona and West Virginia enacted ESA programs within the last two years). Due to the large number of students in Florida, Governor DeSantis [praised](#) the program for being the largest school choice program in the country. He stated, “This bill signing cements us [Florida] in that number one position because we’ll be signing legislation which will represent the largest expansion of education choice not only in the history of this state but in the history of these United States. That is a big deal.”

Other state legislatures [continue to consider](#) school choice programs, reflecting the growing awareness and belief that parents should have the financial freedom to determine what is best for their children’s education. In [Texas](#), the senate is considering a bill (SB 8) which would establish an ESA program while also strengthening parental rights in education. In [Alabama](#), legislators are considering the introduction of the PRICE Act, which would provide school choice to every child in the state through an ESA program. [Ohio](#) is also considering a universal ESA program through its “Backpack Bill.” Opposition to school choice programs often charge that the programs are discriminatory and cause segregation, and that the programs really just benefit students already enrolled in private schools. However, in response to one of these arguments against a school choice program in Ohio, a [recently published report](#) showed that segregation in Ohio schools has actually decreased since the program was enacted. An additional [article](#), by Jay Greene and Jason Bedrick of the Heritage Foundation, provided evidence that school choice programs across the nation actually benefit public school students who need options, rather than catering only to students who are already enrolled in private schools.

## **AACS Submits Public Comments to Stand for Religious Liberty**

The AACS submitted [public comments](#) on a proposed regulation, titled [Partnerships with Faith-Based and Neighborhood Organizations](#), that seeks to overturn a 2020 Trump regulation that protects the religious liberty of faith-based organizations that offer public services, such as city missions and foster care agencies. The proposed regulation would apply to nine different government agencies, and the Biden administration claims that it is necessary to “correct inconsistencies and confusion.” However, the AACS comments point out that the proposed changes “will unnecessarily burden faith-based providers with pressure from the government to alter their religious practices or identity in order to compete fairly with secular organizations.” In addition to several changes which affect the provision of services, the proposed rule alters the language which protects religious exercise and which affirms that specific federal laws protect religious liberty and allow for faith-based organizations to operate according to their faith-based mission. The AACS urged the administration to leave in place the 2020 Rule and thereby ensure “that faith-based organizations are able to participate in service programs on an equal footing with secular organizations.” The AACS concluded, “When this happens with the full protection of the Constitution, federal law, and Supreme Court precedent, the American people benefit.”

## **Kentucky Legislature Protects Minors by Overriding Governor’s Veto**

On March 24, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear vetoed a bill which would ban transgender treatment in the state. However, the state legislature responded by overriding the veto in both the state senate and house chambers with overwhelming majorities (29-8 in the senate and 76-23 in the house), cementing the bill into law. This [bill](#) includes several components, all in relation to minors, provides parental rights protection, and protects minors from transgender treatments. The bill [explicitly states](#) that health care providers cannot prescribe hormone blockers, provide sterilization surgeries, artificial tissue reconstruction surgeries, or remove healthy body parts for the purposes of a minor’s attempted sex change. Pro-LGBTQ activists have criticized the bill as the most “extreme” and “worst” anti-LGBTQ bill in the nation. The law comes during a time when many other states are passing legislation to ban transgender treatment for minors. Currently, [ten states](#) ban these transgender treatments, while twenty-one others have passed legislation in either the state senate or state house that would ban transgender hormone or surgery treatments on minors. Four of the states which have banned transgender treatments—Tennessee, Arkansas, Idaho, Florida—are facing lawsuits from pro-LGBTQ activists. The law will go into effect in June of 2023, unless a court injunction is issued.

## **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](#)

[ADF Video: Respect for Marriage Act: What Church and Ministry Leaders Should Know](#)

[AACS Executive Director Jeff Walton Weighs in on School Security after Tennessee Tragedy](#)