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“It is an object of vast magnitude that systems of education should be adopted and pursued which may not only diffuse a knowledge of the sciences but may implant in the minds of the American youth the principles of virtue and of liberty and inspire them with just and liberal ideas of government and with an inviolable attachment to their own country.”

Noah Webster

Student Scores in U.S. History and Civics Lowest in Decades

The National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) recently released the [latest test scores](#) for history and civics education in America, and the results reveal a concerning lack of knowledge among America’s students in U.S. history and government. Often referred to as the “Nation’s Report Card,” the NAEP report reveals that only 13% of eighth graders are proficient in U.S. history and 22% show proficiency in civics. The test was [administered](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics, a part of the U.S. Department of Education, in January–March of 2022 to 15,800 students in 410 public and private school across the nation. The [U.S. history test](#) content focuses on four themes, including “change and continuity in democracy, culture and society, technological and economic changes, and America’s changing world role.” The content for the [civics test](#) focuses on the function and operation of our nation’s government, and participation in the democratic and political process. The test has been administered since 1990, and the scores have steadily been declining since 2010. These most recent scores are the lowest the scores have ever been, causing debate among educators and policy makers as to the reason for the clear lack of knowledge of our nation’s history and how the government works.

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona [addressed the problem](#), stating, “We need to provide every student with rich opportunities to learn about America’s history and understand the U.S. Constitution and how our system of government works.” In his statement, he pointed to the “profound impact the pandemic had on student learning” as a cause for the low scores, but also inserted a political controversy as a contributing factor; he stated, “Banning history books and censoring educators from teaching these important subjects does our students a disservice and will move America in the wrong direction.” However, Adam Kissel of the Heritage Foundation [disagreed](#), pointing to the history standards recently adopted by Florida which require that “textbooks need to be good and teach core history and not teach false information, kind of in line of critical race theory or diversity, equity, and inclusion textbooks.” As Kissel points out, “Any book that meets the high standards gets in, any book that doesn’t meet the high standards doesn’t get in. . . . That’s not banning the bad textbooks, that’s just saying the bad textbooks don’t qualify.” An additional [contributing factor](#) is likely the fact that only 49% of 8th graders have taken a class solely devoted to civics during grades K-8, and just 68% have taken a class for U.S. history during that same time. [Conservative policy analysts](#) also [point](#) to the increase of political activism in the classroom by some teachers, especially after the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, the introduction of the 1619 Project, and the infusion of Critical Race Theory in many school districts. Adam Kissel suggests several solutions for improving the history and civics education for students, including an emphasis on core topics, our founding documents, and improving teacher development for instruction in these areas.

U.S. House of Representatives Protects Women's Sports

The U.S. House of Representatives [passed](#) the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act (H.R. 734) along a party-line vote of 219-203. The bill, introduced by Rep. Greg Steube (FL), states that schools that receive government funding and allow a male to compete on a female sports team are in violation of Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition. The legislation also states that an athlete's sex is to be determined by his "reproductive biology and genetics at birth." Several Democrats have accused the Republicans of using the bill as a means to bully transgender students, with Rep. Mark Takano (CA) going so far as to claim that the bill "makes school sports less fair by singling out and banning transgender women and girls as young as kindergarten." Rep. Virginia Foxx (NC), Chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, responded by saying that Republicans "hate no one" and called it "ridiculous" that they have to defend female athletes from unfair competition. The bill's sponsor Rep. Steube stated in a [press release](#) that "the Left's fervent support of the radical trans agenda has come at the expense of women's rights across the country." The bill will now head to the Senate. While the Senate is not expected to pass the bill, the White House has said that President Biden is prepared to veto the bill if necessary.

Montana Governor Signs Bill Protecting Baby Abortion Survivors

Last week, Montana Governor Greg Gianforte signed into law the Infant Safety and Care Act which specifies that any baby born after a failed abortion is entitled to the same basic care and protection as other humans. The [law specifically states](#) that once the baby is born, health care professionals should "exercise the same degree of professional skill, care, and diligence to preserve the life and health of the infant." The passage of the bill comes after an effort to pass a similar bill, the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act, [failed](#) by a 53-47 vote during last year's legislative session. Shortly after the 2022 November election, the state legislature introduced the Infant Safety and Care Act which passed the state senate on April 12, and then passed the state house on April 19. [Some states](#) have kept a record of how many babies have survived a failed abortion, with three states (MN, AZ, FL) reporting forty babies born alive between 2016 and 2018. On the federal level, Republicans in Congress have attempted to pass the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, but their efforts have thus far been thwarted by Democrat leaders. This bill would add the same protections as the new law in Montana, except it would provide a nationwide protection for all infant abortion survivors, even in states that allow abortion up to birth, such as New York and California.

In Case You Missed It:

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[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](#)

[A Celebration of America: Resources on American History from the Heritage Foundation](#)