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*“Guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism.”*  
*George Washington*

### **School Choice Opponents Block Opportunities in Illinois and Texas**

In a record year for school choice in which [nine states](#) have advanced school choice opportunities for students and families, the state of [Illinois](#) is poised to end the [Invest in Kids](#) program, which provides school choice through a tax credit scholarship program. In the 2021–22 school year, approximately 9,000 students received scholarships through the program, and previous years saw approximately 7,000 participating students each year. Created in 2017, Invest in Kids was designed to give tax credits to individuals or businesses that donate to scholarship organizations which then provide scholarships to students from low- and middle-income families to use towards the school of their choice. When the program was established, legislators agreed that it would sunset after five years, but in 2022, the state legislature extended it for one year. This year, several attempts have been made to continue the program; however, all proved to be unsuccessful primarily due to the strong opposition from the group Illinois Families for Public Schools. The group’s executive director Cassie Creswell, [stated](#), “We shouldn’t be handing over public dollars to very weakly or completely unsupervised private schools that are discriminating and teaching low-quality curriculum.” According to the group’s [website](#), schools which participate in the program “discriminate on the basis of religion, disability status, LGBTQ+ status and more,” and they further [point](#) to specific policies of religious and other private schools which follow faith-based or ideological missions. However, a [different perspective](#) of the success of the program is offered by Dan Vosnos, executive director of One Chance Illinois, a group that was instrumental in creating the school choice program: “It allows families that don’t have the means to provide their child with their best fit education. It gives families reassurance that their kids are in a loving, caring nurturing, safe environment getting the education that they may not have received at their neighborhood school.” According to the office of House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch, the program could still be revived in a special session or during the veto session which takes place in the fall.

In [Texas](#), the state legislature failed to reach an agreement to pass a school choice measure which would have created an education savings account (ESA) program. School choice has been a top priority for Texas Governor Greg Abbott and many of the Republicans in the state legislature. However, some rural Republicans continued to join Democrats in opposing school choice, fearing that a choice program would detract public funds from rural districts with no private school options available. In a last-ditch effort, the senate voted to add a school choice measure to [House Bill 100](#), which was originally intended only to increase teacher salaries and help public schools balance their budgets. The added language would have created an ESA program to provide approximately \$8,000 to eligible families to use towards the educational method that best meets the needs of their child, including tuition and tutoring. The program was designed to be available for almost all students in the state, with priority given to those students who are in public schools that rated a “C” or lower by the state accountability standards. The house and senate failed to reach an agreement on the final version, meaning school choice failed to pass, as well as the increase for teacher salaries and help for balanced budgets. Governor Abbott has hinted that he will call a special legislative session in order to pass school choice.

## **Religious Affiliation and Voter Preference Correlated**

A recent study shows a strong correlation between religious affiliation and voter preference. Ryan Burge, a professor of political science at Eastern Illinois University and research director for Faith Counts, overlaid partisan voting data with data from the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB). Every ten years, ASARB counts the number of people in each county who belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque. [Burge found](#) that “Democrats are making gains in areas where religion is fading, and Republicans are increasing their vote share in places where houses of worship are gaining new members.” Burge’s conclusion falls in line with other research from the past several years. In the 2022 midterms, for example, two-thirds of Democrat voters said they never attend religious services, while two-thirds of Republican voters said they attend religious services at least weekly. In a study done by the [American Enterprise Institute](#), 60% of Republicans say they are members of a religious congregation, whereas only 45% of Democrats say the same. Both numbers are down from their 1998 numbers (77% for Republicans, 71% for Democrats). The influence religion has on the two political parties can be seen in their party platforms, with the [Democratic party platform](#) supporting abortion till birth and LGBTQ+ rights and marriage, and the [Republican party platform](#) supporting traditional marriage, religious freedom, and pro-life efforts.

## **Over 240,000 Public Comments Delay Proposed Title IX Changes**

The Biden administration has been forced to delay the Title IX policy overhaul until October 2023 because of the quantity of comments received during the public comment period. The administration could face future legal challenges if it fails to read and review every unique comment. The proposed changes were expected to be finalized in May; however, the quantity of comments delayed the start of the new Title IX changes by at least five months and into the start of the new school year. The [Department of Education](#) said that the number of comments was “nearly twice as many” as it received during the last revision of Title IX. Although many of the comments submitted expressed serious opposition to the proposed rule, several organizations felt that the proposed changes did not go far enough in support of the LGBT community. “The final Title IX rule should affirm that it is illegal for schools to exclude trans, nonbinary, or intersex students from sports based on . . . fearmongering and lies,” said the [National Women’s Law Center](#). But many conservatives, including 23 Republican [attorneys general](#), submitted comments against the rule change. “The proposal appears to have completely outsourced its federalism analysis,” commented the attorneys general. The [AACCS participated](#) in the comment period, submitting its own comments showing how the rule will hurt female athletes and infringe on First Amendment protections.

## **In Case You Missed It:**

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACCS 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](#)

[Woke Brands Back Off Pride Month as American Fury Grows](#)

[10 Things for Christians to Remember During Pride Month](#)

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