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“The Bible is the chief moral cause of all that is good and the best corrector of all that is evil in human society—the best book for regulating the temporal concerns of men and the only book that can serve as an infallible guide to future felicity [happiness].”
Noah Webster

New Partnership Formed to Protect School Choice Programs

EdChoice and Institute for Justice have announced that the organizations will be teaming up to create the [EdChoice Legal Advocates](#) (EdLA), an organization dedicated to protecting school choice programs in court cases. EdChoice is a nonprofit school choice think tank whose [mission](#) is to “advance full and unencumbered educational choice as the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society.” Institute for Justice, a nonprofit public interest law firm, was originally formed to defend the constitutionality of school choice programs, and has grown to defend a broader spectrum of cases in an effort to protect the “constitutional rights that allow all Americans to pursue their dreams.” “IJ and EdChoice have worked together for decades to pass, promote, and defend educational choice programs, and we are excited about our new partnership to ensure vigorous defense of state programs throughout the country,” [said](#) IJ President and Chief Counsel Scott Bullock. IJ has won several cases that ruled that school choice programs are federally constitutional. One notable IJ win was [Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue](#), in which the Supreme Court found that it is unconstitutional to deny religious schools access to school choice programs solely based on the religious nature of the school. IJ also won [Carson v. Makin](#), in which it argued on behalf of families in Maine who were prohibited from choosing a religious school through the state’s school choice program. The 6-3 ruling by the Supreme Court for the families represented a major victory in the school choice program. The court found that Maine’s restriction of religious schools was unconstitutional under the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

Although victories have been won at the federal level, most school choice programs are at the state level, and many of these face litigation. The focus of EdLA will be twofold: working to ensure legislation that creates school choice programs can withstand lawsuits and also working to defend school choice programs in courts. “We must not merely create educational freedom programs, but also ensure they withstand legal challenge in state courts,” [said](#) EdChoice President and CEO Robert Enlow. “Just as we anticipate a need to help implement school choice, we also anticipate an increased need to represent parents and defend these statutes across the country.” For the first two years of the partnership, EdChoice and IJ will work together as co-counsel in state school choice cases. Then in the next two years of the partnership, IJ will start to transfer full responsibility to EdLA for bill review and legal defense of school choice programs. Thomas Fisher, the former solicitor general of Indiana, has been hired to head up the EdChoice Legal Advocates group. Fisher previously defended Indiana’s voucher program before the state’s supreme court. “I am a lawyer who believes in a calling,” [said](#) Fisher. “And after two decades in the Office of Attorney General, I have been called to advance the cause of liberty on a new front.”

Texas Pushes Back Against Climate Change in Textbooks

The Texas State Board of Education has voted to approve five out of twelve proposed science textbooks. The board rejected the remaining seven textbooks over concerns that the textbooks placed an [outsized role](#) on human contributions to climate change. In addition, they were worried that the textbooks portrayed fossil fuels negatively or were published by companies that have environmental, social, and governance policies. For example, one of the textbooks was [rejected](#) because students were told to “write a pretend story warning family and friends about climate change.” This is the first year that the board has approved science textbooks since a 2021 decision requiring eighth graders to learn about how humans can influence climate change. “My fear is that we will render ourselves irrelevant moving forward when it comes to what publishers want to work with us . . . and for me that’s very heartbreaking,” [said](#) board member Marisa Perez-Diaz, a Democrat. But others have defended the actions of the board members. Texas Railroad Commissioner Wayne Christian spoke out applauding the work of the board, [saying](#) that “America’s future generations don’t need a leftist agenda brainwashing them in the classroom to hate oil and natural gas.”

Coming Up: National School Choice Week

[National School Choice Week \(NSCW\) begins January 21, 2024](#), providing families and schools an opportunity to highlight the positive impact that school choice has had in the lives of thousands of students. Since the first celebration of NSCW in 2011, the organizers have helped plan or promote over 270,000 events which have highlighted the benefits of school choice for children and families. For materials and ideas for your school or event, please [click here](#).

Coming Up: March for Life 2024

The 50th March for Life will take place in Washington, D.C., on January 19, 2024. The annual march began in 1973, with the goal to overturn the Supreme Court’s infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion in all fifty states. After the Supreme Court overruled *Roe* in the case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, pro-life advocates have continued the fight to protect pre-born lives from the horrors of abortion. The theme for the 2024 March for Life is “With Every Woman, For Every Child,” to emphasize the need to care for the mother as well as the child. “We really try to discern what’s most pressing in the moment, and the heart of the pro-life movement is really support for moms,” [stated](#) March for Life President Jeanne Mancini. The route for the March will end at the U.S. Capitol rather than the U.S. Supreme Court, a change to reflect the change of focus since the overturning of *Roe*. For more information on participating in the March for Life, please [click here](#).

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](#)

[Opportunity to Support the AACCS Youth Legislative Training Conference](#)