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*“Liberty must at all hazards be supported. We have a right to it, derived from our Maker. But if we had not, our fathers have earned and bought it for us, at the expense of their ease, their estates, their pleasure, and their blood.”*

*John Adams*

**Coming Up: National School Choice Week**

The [National School Choice Week \(NSCW\)](#) will take place January 21–27, 2024, providing an opportunity for families and schools to highlight the positive influence that school choice has had in the lives of thousands of students. With a [record number](#) of advances for school choice in 2023, supporters of school choice are [optimistic that 2024](#) will bring more expansion of academic freedom for students and families. Organizers for NSCW offer materials and ideas to help plan events that highlight the benefit of school choice to children and families. For materials and ideas for your school or event, please [click here](#).

**States Pushing Back on Advancement of Harmful Gender Ideology**

Several states are taking action to protect minors from so-called gender transition procedures as more information becomes available regarding the devastating effects of this dangerous ideology. Through the testimonies of parents and people like detransitioner [Chloe Cole](#), more information is becoming available regarding the harmful and irreversible consequences of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and sterilizing surgeries. Additionally, parents and female athletes like swimmer [Riley Gaines](#) continue to testify of the unfair nature of allowing males to compete in women’s sports and the threats to privacy and safety that such a situation creates. These advocates speaking out are making a difference in influencing lawmakers to take action.

In 2023, 23 states saw victory in their efforts to push back against the harmful transgender ideology. According to one [report](#), 84 different laws were passed in 23 states to protect parental rights, prohibit sterilizing surgeries for minors, protect women’s rights and privacy in sports and restroom facilities, protect children from drag queen shows, and bolster religious freedom. The battles over these bills are often intense, with those supporting the radical transgender ideology claiming the procedures are necessary for the mental health of the person suffering. One such bill was Ohio’s H.B. 68 which prohibits sterilizing surgeries, puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and also protects women’s sports. Although the state legislature passed the bill with strong support before Christmas, Gov. Mike DeWine vetoed the bill, [claiming](#) he was protecting parental rights. He then followed up with an executive order banning sterilizing surgeries but did not address the problem of puberty blockers or cross-sex hormones for minors, nor the protection of women’s sports. On Wednesday, the state legislature [voted 65-28 to override](#) the governor’s veto, and the bill is now waiting in the state senate for a final vote. School boards across the country are also starting to take action. In [New Jersey](#), two school boards recently voted to reject the state’s recommended transgender policies, a move which reversed their previous positions. In [California](#), some school boards are defying the state-imposed policy for transgender-identifying students and ensuring parents are informed of students’ decisions regarding their gender. Moving into the 2024 legislative session, approximately 200 bills are advancing through state legislatures that will protect children and girls from the harmful consequences of the radical transgender ideology.

## **Court Rejects Biden Attempt to Force Texas ER Doctors to Perform Abortions**

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals has [upheld an injunction](#) that protects life. After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the Biden administration released guidance that reinterpreted the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA). This law was originally passed in 1986 to prevent hospitals from denying emergency medical care to patients, including to a pregnant woman or her unborn child. Although this law was designed to protect women and children, the Biden administration sought to weaponize the EMTALA to advance its abortion agenda. Under the guidance, the administration could deny Medicare funds to hospitals that refuse to perform abortions. Physicians who perform abortions could use the guidance to claim that the abortion was necessary to stabilize the treatment of the woman. The guidance could also force emergency room physicians to perform abortions, even if they have religious objections. In addition, because all states with pro-life laws have an exception to save the life of the mother, the EMTALA guidance is unnecessary. For instance, the Human Life Protection Act in Texas protects life by banning all abortions, except to save a pregnant woman's life. The overreach of the guidance prompted Texas to sue the Biden administration. The 5th Circuit [unanimously upheld](#) a lower court's injunction blocking the guidance in that circuit. The court found that Congress did not intend to include abortion in the EMTALA and that the administration should have gone through the rulemaking process instead of releasing guidance. "EMTALA does not mandate any specific type of treatment," [said](#) the court, "let alone abortion."

## **Coming Up: March for Life and Pro-life Advocacy Workshop**

The 51st March for Life will take place in Washington, D.C., on January 19, 2024. Since the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* which overruled the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision, pro-life advocates have focused their efforts on lobbying for legislation to protect life at all stages. 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. The March route will end at the U.S. Capitol to highlight the need for pro-life laws. For more information on participating in the March for Life, please [click here](#).

In addition to the March, [several events](#) will be held that weekend to educate and engage pro-life supporters in the work of protecting life. One of these is the "[Marching 101: Pro-life Advocacy Workshop](#)," which will highlight a panel of pro-life lobbyists and policy experts to share the proven strategies used to promote pro-life legislation that protects both the mom and the baby. Attendees will learn the critical role that state legislators and members of Congress play in protecting life, particularly now that *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned. Attendees will also learn about a wave of new legislative threats facing pregnancy care centers nationwide and what can be done to help combat these efforts. "Marching 101" will be held at the Westing Hotel in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, January 18th from 11:00 a.m. to noon. High school and college student groups are highly encouraged to attend! Admission is FREE! There is a live stream option as well. Register [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](#)

[New! AACCS Today Podcast: Congressional Preview for 2024](#)

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