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“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”
George Washington Carver

National School Choice Week Offers Thousands of Celebrations!

This week is National School Choice Week (NSCW) with over 27,000 activities and events taking place across the country highlighting the benefits of school choice for children and families. These include [68 flagship events](#), organized by 66 nonprofit organizations and taking place in 44 states. Of these flagship events, [34 school fairs](#) in 26 states will give parents an opportunity to meet representatives from several different schools in one location. In addition, 21 states are [illuminating 39 major landmarks](#) with yellow and red lights, the official NSCW colors. Official proclamations recognizing National School Choice Week have been published by [27 governors](#), and lawmakers in both the U.S. House and Senate have introduced resolutions to recognize National School Choice Week and state their support of school choice. “It is unacceptable that today—in the United States of America—millions of kids who grew up just like I did still lack access to quality education simply because of their zip code,” [stated](#) Sen. Tim Scott (SC), a lead cosponsor of the Senate resolution. “We cannot leave our kids’ education and the future of America’s children to chance. Instead, transforming our nation’s education system and ensuring every child has access to a quality education must be our call to action every single day.” Also this week, the American Federation for Children and the Club for Growth launched the [Federal Education Freedom Pledge](#), an effort to get congressmen to commit to supporting school choice. Those who sign the pledge commit to “cosponsor and vote for legislation that allows federal funding to follow students—rather than government-assigned schools—to increase freedom in K-12 education, empower parents, and end roadblocks to high-quality educational opportunities in America.” To date, 17 representatives and 4 senators have [signed the pledge](#).

Thousands Join the March for Life

Last Friday, thousands of pro-life supporters gathered in Washington, D.C., braving the cold and snow to join the [March for Life](#). The theme for this year’s March was “With Every Woman, For Every Child,” to emphasize the need to care for the mother as well as the child. Throughout the events of the weekend, the work of pregnancy care centers was highlighted, with several women sharing testimonies of the help these centers gave them during their pregnancies. One such [powerful testimony](#) was given by Jean Marie Davis who escaped sex trafficking and found hope for herself and her baby at a pregnancy care center where she was also led to the Lord. She now serves as the Executive Director of Branches Pregnancy Resource Center in Vermont. The day before the March, the House of Representatives passed two pro-life bills, both of which would provide help to pregnant women. The Pregnant Students Rights Act (H.R. 6914) passed 212-207 and will require that pregnant college students be informed of rights and resources available to help them and their babies. The Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act (H.R. 6918) passed 214-208 and will ensure that a proposed rule by the Biden administration cannot prohibit government funds from supporting pro-life pregnancy care centers. In the coming months, several [state capitols will host a March for Life](#) as the movement seeks to raise awareness of the need for pro-life legislation on the state level. To find a March near you, click [here](#).

Bill Introduced to Protect Tax-Exempt Status of Religious Schools

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Rep. Greg Steube recently introduced the [Safeguarding Charity Act](#), a bill that would protect private schools from government regulation by clarifying that a school's tax-exempt status is different than receiving federal financial assistance (FFA). Activists have claimed that an organization's tax-exempt status is the equivalent of receiving FFA and some courts have agreed. In other words, they are asserting that the government is giving an organization money when the government does not take taxes from an organization. Despite the illogic of this argument and longstanding precedent against it, [two federal district courts](#) have ruled that a private school's tax-exempt status is the same as receiving FFA. Of these two cases, one has been appealed to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals while the other was settled out of court. [Hillsdale College](#) is also being sued under this argument in a pending case. However, early this year a court in [Arizona](#) found that a tax-exempt status is not the same as receiving FFA. The Safeguarding Charity Act, which the AACCS has endorsed, would cut through that patchwork of court cases and confusion by codifying the distinctions between the tax-exempt status and FFA. The bill "will help prevent the weaponization of our judicial system against America's house of worship, religious schools, charities, and other non-profit organizations," [said](#) Rep. Steube. "These organizations should not be subjected to a series of laws and regulations triggered by receipt of federal financial assistance."

Nominate a Teacher for Christian Teacher of the Year

The [Herzog Foundation](#) is now accepting nominations for its 2024 [Teacher of the Year](#) award. The foundation is named after Stanley Herzog, a Christian businessman who bequeathed his wealth to create the foundation after his passing. The [foundation](#) is "dedicated to catalyzing and accelerating the development of quality Christ-centered K-12 education so that families and culture flourish." To that end, the foundation offers a variety of programs and resources. One such program is the Herzog Foundation Institute which provides [training events](#) for Christian educators. The foundation also sponsors a Teacher of the Year Award, which is awarded to 12 teachers each year. Last year the award recipients spanned eight states all across the country. Nominees must meet several requirements. Any nominee must be a K-12 teacher in a Christian school having served in K-12 Christian education for at least a year. In addition, nominees must have plans to continue teaching after receiving the award. The teachers must demonstrate excellence, be highly respected, and align with the Herzog Foundation's [mission](#). The award recipients will attend a special reception in their honor at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. The nomination deadline is February 16. [Click here](#) to nominate a teacher.

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: Meet Olivia Summers](#)

[Houses of Worship Must Be Free to Protect Themselves](#)

[Congress Can Protect Parents, Kids from Biden Administration Overreach](#)

[We're Christian – And We Hire Christians](#)

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