



A Publication of the American Association of Christian Schools

The Washington Flyer
January 5, 2024

“The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.”
James Madison

AACS Podcast is Back!

The AACCS is bringing back the “[AACCS Today](#)” podcast, with a special edition out this week focusing on the work of the AACCS Washington Office. The AACCS Today podcast was first started during the COVID-19 pandemic as an effort to provide relevant help to AACCS ministries as they navigated the myriad of government mandates for education. Future episodes will focus on providing important information and news that is relevant to Christian schools and churches and also providing updates on services and opportunities offered by AACCS. In this newest episode, co-hosts Matt Ticzkus (AACCS Southwest Regional Director) and Jamison Coppola (AACCS Government Relations Director) discuss the work of the AACCS Washington Office in recent months on behalf of Christian education. “Our job is to represent our schools’ interests in Washington, D.C., in four policy areas—religious liberty, academic freedom, family formation, and the life issue,” explains Mr. Coppola. The AACCS invites you to subscribe to the podcast to get the latest information about our work and ministry for Christian education.

Looking Ahead: School Choice in 2024

As states plan for new legislative sessions in 2024, several lawmakers have indicated their intent to fight for school choice options for families in their states. In [Alabama](#), several legislators and the governor have voiced their support for getting school choice legislation passed. After an education savings account (ESA) bill failed to pass last year, Gov. Kay Ivey stated she wants Alabama to be “the most school choice-friendly state in the nation.” and she has indicated her staff is working on another ESA bill for this year. In [Tennessee](#), Gov. Bill Lee announced his plan to push a bill that will establish universal school choice by 2025. In [Texas](#), Gov. Greg Abbott remains committed to school choice, despite the failure to get a plan passed last year in several special legislative sessions. He has begun an effort to endorse candidates who will stand with him in school choice, and potentially oust those Republicans who failed to back his plan in last year’s multiple special legislative sessions. Notably, many of the school choice victories in 2023 were the result of several years of hard-fought battles, a fact that provides hope for those states reigniting their efforts in the 2024 legislative season. Corey DeAngelis, with the American Federation for Children, is optimistic about the possibilities in 2024, [noting](#) that “twenty-two states have GOP trifectas, where Republicans control the legislature and the governor’s office. If all legislators with ‘Rs’ next to their names voted like Republicans and listened to their constituents, we’d have at least twice as many states with universal school choice.”

An annual event that has been instrumental in advancing school choice is [National School Choice Week \(NSCW\)](#). This week provides families and schools an opportunity to highlight the positive influence that school choice has had on 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 that have highlighted the benefits of school choice for children and families. **This year, NSCW will begin in just two weeks, January 21, 2024.** For materials and ideas for your school or event, please [click here](#).

Ohio Governor DeWine Vetoes Bill Protecting Children

Ohio Gov. Mark DeWine has vetoed [HB 68](#), a two-part bill that would have protected minors and females. The first part of the bill, the SAFE Act, would have prevented physicians from administering cross-sex hormones to minors or performing sterilizing surgeries on them. The second part of the bill, the Save Women’s Sports Act, would have protected female athletes by prohibiting males from competing in women’s sports in schools and colleges. State Rep. Gary Click (R-88) introduced the bill, which overwhelmingly passed both the state house and senate. Yet DeWine vetoed the bill, saying that his decision was “about protecting human life” and arguing that his decision supports parental rights. However, Sen. J.D. Vance disagreed with DeWine’s argument. “This is a slogan, not a justification,” [said](#) Vance. “There are many things the law rightfully says no one, including parents, may do to children.” Despite vetoing the bill, DeWine promised to direct Ohio’s administrative agencies to prevent these types of surgeries for minors. However, many state lawmakers are unsatisfied with DeWine’s response and have promised to override his veto. Because the bill was originally passed with a veto-proof majority, it is likely that enough members will override the veto. “Momentum is on our side, and we will see this through,” [said](#) Click. “We will win this.”

House Committee Investigates Education Department’s Connection to Southern Poverty Law Center

Rep. James Comer (KY), chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, recently sent a [letter](#) to Education Secretary Miguel Cardona, questioning the Education Department’s relationship with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The SPLC frequently targets conservative groups and individuals by labeling them as “hate groups.” However, a [federal judge](#) found that the center’s opposition to conservative groups lacks objective evidence and is “an entirely subjective inquiry.” Despite this clear antagonism toward conservative groups, the SPLC has met with members of the Biden administration at least 11 times, causing some to [question](#) whether the center and the White House have colluded together. For example, in 2022, the SPLC added parental rights organizations to its “hate map.” Two days later, the Biden administration released a strategy plan that shared similar language with the center against “hate groups.” Comer has requested three things from the Department of Education. First, the department must provide any communication between the department and the SPLC. Second, the department must provide internal department communications about the SPLC. Finally, the department must provide communications about labeling parental rights groups as “antigovernment groups” or placing these groups on a hate map. The requested information will help the committee investigate what influence the department had on the SPLC—and what influence the SPLC had on the department.

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America’s Children](#)

[Religious Liberty Had Major Court and Legislative Wins in 2023](#)

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

[March for Life: January 20, 2023](#)