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*“Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves;
and, under a just God, can not long retain it.”
Abraham Lincoln*

AACS Welcomes New President, Dr. Richard Callahan

Dr. Richard Callahan has been elected by the Board of Directors and the Board of State Representatives to serve as the next president of the AACCS. Dr. Callahan serves as the senior pastor of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Archdale, North Carolina, and he has been actively involved in Christian education for more than four decades through his leadership of Mount Calvary Christian School and his involvement with the North Carolina Christian School Association. This week’s episode of the AACCS Today Podcast [features Dr. Callahan](#) as he shares his testimony and vision for Christian education. As we welcome the leadership of Dr. Callahan, the AACCS would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Mike Rouse for his many years of service and leadership as the previous AACCS president.

Kentucky Introduces State Constitutional Amendment to Advance School Choice

The [Kentucky Legislature](#) is considering two bills that would both add an amendment to the state constitution that would allow for school choice options. The first bill, [HB 208](#), was filed in January and would allow lawmakers to allocate funds outside the public school system to help families of “limited financial means.” A second bill was filed last week, [HB 2](#), which also allows the legislature to allocate educational funds outside the public school system, but without the restriction of families in need. Both of these proposed amendments are in response to court rulings that have blocked school choice programs that were passed in the state. In both cases, the judges pointed to a provision in the state constitution that [states](#), “No sum shall be raised or collected for education other than in common schools until the question of taxation is submitted to the legal voters.” In 2022, the Kentucky Supreme Court [ruled against](#) a tax credit scholarship program, upholding a decision by Judge Phillip Shepherd who ruled that the program violated the constitution. Defenders of the program pointed out that the donations that supported the student scholarships never entered state coffers, yet the opinion by the state Supreme Court stated that the tax credits for the donations were “against the income taxes they would otherwise contribute to the Commonwealth.” A [second court ruling](#) a year later in 2023, also by Judge Phillip Shepherd, struck down the newly created charter school program on the grounds that charter schools were “private entities” and thus could not be considered “common schools.” The addition of an amendment to the constitution would provide lawmakers the opportunity to advance school choice opportunities without the charge that it would violate the constitution. “It’s not to determine at this point what school choice policies will actually be considered; It’s rather to remove all the obstacles to any of those policies that we want to pursue in the future,” [explained](#) Jim Waters, president and CEO of the Bluegrass Institute. Both bills are currently being considered in a committee that will decide which one will advance to the floor for a vote. If approved by both houses of the Legislature, voters will see the [issue on the ballot](#) in the 2024 general election.

The After Party and Christian Colleges

Curtis Chang, David French, and Russell Moore have launched The After Party, a [six-part program](#) developed for individuals and churches to “separate[e] our Christian identity from our political one.” The program urges participants to shift from a focus on ideology, party, and policy toward spiritual values, relationships, and relational practices. A key audience is Christian college students, evidenced by the program’s [Ambassador Program](#) partnership with the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The After Party purports to bridge political gaps by grounding political engagement in spiritual values rather than ideology. However, critics have pointed out that while the program claims to be nonpartisan, it has received [heavy funding](#) from partisan donors who support abortion and LGBT causes. Apart from the program’s funding, its curriculum, designed to lower the importance of politics in a Christian’s mind, is led by three men who have been quite active in politically charged issues. Each of these men relies on The After Party’s definition of humility as “I’m doing my best but I’m not sure” as his guiding principle in discerning politics. This definition of humility could lead Christian voters to lack the confidence that they can engage in politics with biblical principles. The program calls Christians to move beyond being a Democrat or Republican. Yet while party stances can change over time, Christians should recognize that some clearly biblically defined moral issues transcend routine politics. Although the program reminds Christians to put their identity in Christ, the overall effect might persuade believers to step away from the political arena.

Christian Employers Alliance

The AACS is pleased to let its ministries know of an organization fighting for religious liberty and Christian employers. The Christian Employers Alliance (CEA) is an alliance of Christian-owned businesses and organizations. The CEA provides various services and protections for its members from a government that is often hostile to the religious beliefs that guide Christian practice. One of the CEA’s benefits is that its member businesses have associational standing. Associational standing allows the CEA to sue on the business’s behalf without exposing it to reputational harm because it can remain anonymous while the CEA carries its case. All CEA members then benefit from the legal precedents. For instance, the CEA [sued](#) the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for its regulations that require religious organizations to pay for procedures such as sterilizing surgeries or puberty blockers. The CEA has received a preliminary injunction. As a result, all CEA members are now protected from being forced to carry out the commission’s regulations. “All employers and healthcare providers, including those in the Christian Employers Alliance, have the constitutional right to conduct their business and render treatment in a manner consistent with their deeply held religious beliefs,” [said](#) Jacob Reed, an Alliance Defending Freedom legal counsel. The CEA advocates on Capitol Hill in addition to providing other services. Individuals interested in learning more about the CEA can [click here](#).

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](#)

[Teacher Edition Podcast: AACS Executive Director Jeff Walton Discusses Unlocking the Power of Standardized Testing](#)

[“The Blessing and the Curse’: Christian Nationalism and the War for the West](#)

[A Black History Month Tribute to Clarence Thomas](#)

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