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*“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.”
Frederick Douglas*

AACS Joins in Celebration of National School Choice Week

The AACS Washington staff attended a school choice reception on Capitol Hill last week in honor of National School Choice Week. The event was hosted by Sen. Tim Scott (SC), a leading supporter of school choice and co-chair of the Congressional School Choice Caucus. “As a kid growing up in poverty, one of the challenges that my mother faced was finding the right school for her kid. I went to four different elementary schools by the fourth grade because there’s a transient nature in poverty,” said [Scott](#) to the group of over 100 school choice leaders and supporters at the reception. He added, “Today, because of so many people in this room, I get to stand on your shoulders and advocate for kids I will never meet . . . [who] will shape this nation because they had parents who were able to find the right school for their kids, and that is the right future for our nation.” Several other senators also spoke to the group, including Sens. Katie Britt (AL), Roger Wicker (MA), Marsha Blackburn (TN), John Cornyn (TX), Lindsey Graham (SC), Mike Braun (IN), and John Boozman (AR). AACS Government Relations Director Jamison Coppola [represented AACS schools](#) at the event, along with AACS Government Relations Assistant Olivia Summers. “It is encouraging to see the growing number of congressmen who recognize the importance of advancing educational freedom through school choice. Providing educational options for parents and students will help strengthen the future of our country,” stated Mr. Coppola. The event was sponsored by the [American Federation for Children](#) and the [Invest in Education Coalition](#). John Schilling with the Invest in Education Coalition stated in an [op-ed](#), “School choice does not undermine democracy. On the contrary, school choice is about equal opportunity. All children in America, regardless of their parents’ income or socio-economic background, deserve access to the school or education service that works for them.”

Members of Congress who spoke at the event also advocated for the passage of the [Educational Choice for Children Act \(ECCA\)](#), a bill that would provide \$10 billion in annual tax credits for individuals or businesses that make a contribution to a scholarship organization that then grants scholarships to students for tuition and other education-related fees at an elementary or secondary school. According to a [press release](#) from the office of Sen. Bill Cassidy (LA), the bill’s sponsor in the Senate, the [bill includes language](#) that “uses a limited government approach with respect to federalism, thus avoiding mandates on states, localities, and districts.” The bill also includes language that explicitly prohibits government interference and control over any participating religious schools, thereby providing protection for the autonomy and religious liberty of Christian schools. Introduced by Rep. Adrian Smith (NE), ECCA currently has [143 cosponsors](#) in the House of Representatives, and [29 cosponsors](#) in the Senate. While passage of the ECCA is unlikely during this Congress and under the Biden administration, growing support for a national program is reflective of the significant increase in popularity of school choice programs across the country.

Bill Introduced to Restore Parental Rights

Members of Congress have released a bicameral bill that would [enshrine parental rights](#) as fundamental rights. Sens. Tim Scott (SC) and James Lankford (OK) along with House Education and Workforce Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (NC) introduced the [Families' Rights and Responsibilities Act](#) in response to the growing attack on parental rights. Across the nation, schools and institutions are indoctrinating students with radical ideologies like critical race theory or the transgender agenda. Yet when parents try to protect their kids by opting them out of certain curricula or demanding transparency, they often face pushback and legal action from public officials. This bill, which the AACS has endorsed, would counteract this problem by ensuring any infringements on parental rights must withstand the strict scrutiny test. In other words, anyone infringing on parental rights would need to prove he is doing so by the least restrictive means possible to achieve a compelling government interest. [Key components](#) of the bill include government accountability, school choice, and transparency. "In America today, the rights of millions of parents are under siege," said [Foxx](#). "This moment calls for a targeted course correction so that these proud men and women can raise their children without government interference."

Supreme Court Declines to Hear Transgender Case

The Supreme Court recently declined to decide whether Title IX permits students to use bathrooms of the opposite sex. The case involves the Martinsville school district of Indiana and a girl who identifies as a boy. When the girl started middle school, she was allowed to use the single-user sex-neutral restroom in the school's health clinic. Eventually, her family requested that she be allowed to use the boys' restroom. The school declined that request and instead maintained that she could either use the girls' restroom or the single-user restroom in the clinic. The girl and her family sued, claiming that Title IX and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment allow her to use the restroom of her choice. Both the district court and the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the girl and ruled that the middle school allow her to use the boys' restroom. The 7th Circuit [noted](#) that it expected the Supreme Court to "step in" given that other circuit courts have split over this issue. The 4th and 7th circuits have ruled that students can use the restrooms of the opposite sex, but the 11th Circuit disagreed. However, the Supreme Court decided against reviewing the case. Consequently, the patchwork of legal decisions will remain in effect. The Supreme Court's refusal also means that no national standard will be in place when the Biden administration releases its Title IX rule that is expected to grant students access to spaces designated for the opposite sex.

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](#)

[NEW! AACS Today Podcast: Hot Sauce, Ice Cream, and School Choice in Texas](#)

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

[Ohio Overrides Governor's Veto in Order to Protect Kids](#)

[The Transgender Administrative State](#)