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*“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity,
religion and morality are indispensable supports.”*
Benjamin Rush

Register Now for the AACCS National Legislative Conference

It is not too late to [register](#) for the AACCS National Legislative Conference, September 9–11! This important conference provides valuable opportunities for you to support our efforts on your behalf in Washington, D.C. The conference will include updates from our Washington staff, a briefing at the Heritage Foundation, and time for attendees to visit with members of Congress. Our banquet this year will feature Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA) as the speaker. An alumna of a Christian college, she has been a strong advocate for the issues important to AACCS for over 20 years in Congress. Join us for this exciting and important conference! For more information, including a tentative schedule and registration form, visit our website [here](#).

Life Issue on Ballots this November as States Consider Abortion Amendments

This November, at least [nine states](#) will consider ballot measures that promote abortion and, in some cases, undo pro-life protections. Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Montana, and South Dakota have ballot initiatives that will enshrine state constitutional amendments to establish a right to abortion and undo any existing pro-life laws. Most of these measures will make abortion legal up to the point of “fetal viability,” when it is deemed by a medical professional that the infant can survive outside the womb, usually estimated to be around 24 weeks into a pregnancy. In five of these states—Colorado, Nevada, New York, Maryland, and Montana—abortion is already legal until around 24 weeks, so the addition of a constitutional amendment is just a political move to enshrine the practice further. State requirements in Colorado and Nevada stipulate that a second vote on the issue must take place in 2026 for the amendment to be officially added to the state constitution. The [measure in New York](#) will approve abortion by expanding the state’s civil rights language that prohibits discrimination to include the categories of “ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy.” While the list does not include the term “abortion,” the practice is implied. Because Florida, South Dakota, and Missouri currently have laws that significantly restrict abortions, the passage of the measures would mark a dramatic change in these states.

Since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Democrats have ramped up their efforts to legalize abortion across the country. In the last two years, [seven states](#) have passed abortion-related ballot initiatives. However, pro-life supporters continue to fight back. In [Nebraska](#), pro-life supporters have gathered enough signatures to place a measure on the ballot that would prohibit abortions after the first trimester. A competing measure that would make abortion legal until fetal viability has also garnered the necessary number of signatures. Both measures are waiting for the certification of the secretary of state, and state officials have indicated that the measure that receives the most votes in November will become law.

Federal Court Rules in Favor of Religious Liberty Against WA State Law

The Yakima Union Gospel Mission can [continue its case](#) against the state, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals found. As the AACS previously [reported](#), the Mission sued after the Washington Supreme Court ruled that religious organizations must be willing to hire anyone who applies for a non-ministerial position, regardless of the person's beliefs. The Mission cares for anyone, but it requires its employees to abide by a biblical definition of marriage and sexuality. As a result, the Mission stopped hiring and posting job openings online for fear that the state would prosecute it. The state is currently investigating similar hiring practices at Seattle Pacific University. U.S. District Judge Mary Dimke initially dismissed the case. She argued that the Mission lacked standing and that the case was outside her jurisdiction. However, the 9th Circuit disagreed. In a decision last week, the 9th Circuit sent the case back to Dimke. The court found that the Mission faced a credible threat of enforcement because state officials refused to say whether they would prosecute the Mission. The 9th Circuit also found that the Mission had to self-censor by restricting where it advertised for job openings. "The 9th Circuit rightly overturned the lower court's dismissal," [said](#) Ryan Tucker, senior counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom, "permitting the ministry to pursue protection for its constitutional rights in federal court."

Liberty University Faces Lawsuit for Firing Transgender-Identifying Employee

[Liberty University](#) has been sued by a former employee who identifies as transgender. In February 2023, Liberty hired an employee who applied under the name Jonathan Zinski to work at its IT Helpdesk. Unbeknownst to the university, [Zinski](#) identified as a woman and had started taking hormone "treatments" to mimic feminine features. However, he continued to go by the name Jonathan and conceal his transgender identity for several months. In July 2023, Zinski notified the university's human resource department that he was legally changing his name to "Ellenor" and identified as a woman. A month later, according to his lawsuit, Liberty officials fired him for violating the school's employee doctrinal statement that upholds a biblical definition of sexuality. The American Civil Liberties Union, which represents Zinski, claims that Liberty violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Supreme Court has ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that "sex" in Title VII employment law includes sexual orientation or gender identity. However, Liberty may seek to invoke Title VII's religious exemption. The university has yet to issue an official statement on its recourse. Alliance Defending Freedom attorney Greg Baylor, [pointed out](#) that "religious organizations ought to have the [right] to draw their workforces from among those who share their religious convictions. It's wrong for the government to force religious employers to retain employees who reject the employer's religious teachings."

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: Reflections on the AACS Internship](#)

[What Is the State of School Choice? An Interview with Patrick Wolf](#)

[One Million Students Now Using Private School Choice](#)

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