



**The Washington Flyer**  
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*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*  
**1 Peter 1:3**

**AACS Hosts National Bible, Fine Arts, and Academic Competition**

Last week, the AACS hosted the 47th annual AACS National Competition in Greenville, SC. Approximately, 1,800 students from 187 schools in 34 states gathered to compete in the five basic areas of Bible, music, speech, art, and academics. A total of 1,167 entries were submitted across the field of 76 categories. The Bible competition included Bible quiz teams, preaching, and teaching. The academic competition included academic testing, creative writing, and a science fair. Art students displayed their pieces for the art contest, and music students challenged each other in solo and group competitions in both vocal and instrumental music. Speech contestants participated in several categories including debate, dramatic interpretation, original oratory, acting, and other group and individual categories. Bob Jones University faculty, staff, and students graciously facilitated the annual student competition and provided activities and accommodations for the event. During the three-day competition, students heard special messages during chapel time and an evening service. Pastor Kurt Skelly challenged the students to know and pursue Christ as their greatest treasure (Matt. 13:44), and to seek wise counsel and biblical advice (Eccl. 12). Dr. Josh Crockett encouraged the students from Isaiah 49, reminding them of God’s great love and care for them. The competition culminated Thursday night with an [awards ceremony](#), which included a showcase highlighting some of the best entries by several individuals and schools. The AACS Cup of Excellence was awarded to the state that accumulated the highest point total, going to Virginia this year, with Tennessee and Wisconsin as second and third place respectively. The AACS offers our warmest congratulations to all the students who participated and made this year’s National Competition a memorable event. To view the complete list of this year’s winners, click [here](#). For pictures and information from the event, please visit our Facebook page [here](#).

**Congress Considers School Choice as Part of Reconciliation Bill**

As Congress considers a reconciliation bill, several Members of Congress are pushing for school choice to be part of the reconciliation package through the inclusion of the [Educational Choice for Children Act \(ECCA\)](#). Introduced by Rep. Adrian Smith (NE) in the House of Representatives and Sen. Bill Cassidy (LA) in the Senate, the ECCA would establish a federal tax credit scholarship program that would provide a nonrefundable tax credit for individuals and corporations that donate to a nonprofit scholarship granting organization. These organizations would work with eligible parents to pay for expenses such as tuition, tutoring for learning loss, education technology, and special-needs services. According to a [press release](#) from Smith, 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 protecting the autonomy and religious freedom of Christian schools. The AACS supports the ECCA to provide educational options for parents because of its religious liberty protections for participating Christian schools. **ACTION: We encourage those who support school choice to call their [Representative](#) and [Senators](#) and urge them to support the inclusion of ECCA**

**in the reconciliation package, making sure the explicit protections for the autonomy and religious liberty of Christian schools remain in the bill.**

### **Republican Lawmakers Sign Amicus Brief Supporting Parental Rights in Case Before Supreme Court**

Over 60 House and Senate Republicans have signed an [amicus brief](#) in the case *Mahmoud v. Taylor*. As the AACS [reported](#), this case involves a group of Maryland parents who sued after their school district denied them the right to receive notice and opt their children out of the LGBT materials in school. In their amicus brief, the congressional Republicans argued that federal law does not require the board's policy. Thus, the board cannot claim federal law, such as Title IX, compels its notice and opt-out policy. The Republicans also point out that the board cannot use the Supreme Court's decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* to justify its policy. The Republicans further argued that current laws support parental rights and provide a roadmap to protecting those rights. Specifically, the Republicans noted that courts have used the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to protect parental rights. They also noted that the notice and opt-out request is much less onerous than the requirements of other laws like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. "For too long, radical voices have been silencing parents and pushing their beliefs on our children," [said](#) Sen. Chuck Grassley (IA), Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. "This amicus brief stands with parents and their right to oversee their own children's education. It reaffirms that families can raise their kids in accordance with their religious beliefs, as protected by the Constitution." The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the *Mahmoud* case this Tuesday, and a decision is expected this summer. The AACS continues to monitor the case.

### **Colorado House Passes Bill Threatening Parental Rights**

The Colorado House of Representatives has passed a [bill](#) that could cause parents to lose custody of children struggling with gender identity if they refer to them by their biological pronouns or birth names. The bill calls these actions "misgendering" and "deadnaming" and categorizes them as "coercive control," which includes actions such as child abuse. If passed, the bill would require courts to consider "misgendering" or "deadnaming" when determining custody cases. In addition, Colorado would not enforce other state laws that require the state to remove a child from the home of a parent who affirms a child's gender confusion when the parents live in separate states. Charter schools with a dress code would have to allow students to wear any option provided in the dress code. In a [committee hearing](#), Republican Rep. Jarvis Caldwell questioned: "How much stakeholdering went on both sides of the issue, and not just one side." Shockingly, Democrat Rep. Yara Zokaie smeared those arguing for sex realism as racist bigots by retorting, "We don't ask someone passing civil rights legislation to go ask the KKK their opinion." The bill passed the house 38-20 and has moved to the state senate for consideration. Democrats control the Colorado Senate by a 23-12 majority. Gov. Jared Polis, who openly identifies as gay, is likely to sign the bill if it reaches his desk. A similar bill in California was vetoed by Gov. Gavin Newsome. If passed, the Colorado bill would be the first of its kind.

### **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](#)

[Young People Driving Increase in Faith, Church Attendance in West, Reports Say](#)

[‘Starved for God’: Bible, Religious Apps See Explosive Growth](#)

[Georgia Governor Signs Religious Freedom Restoration Act](#)

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