



**The Washington Flyer**  
**April 25, 2025**

*"My only hope of salvation is in the infinite, transcendent love of God manifested to the world by the death of His Son upon the cross. Nothing but His blood will wash away my sins. I rely exclusively upon it."*  
**Benjamin Rush, Signer of the Declaration of Independence**

**Texas Legislature Passes School Choice, Moving it to the Governor's Desk**

In a historic vote, the Texas House [passed a bill](#) last week that will establish universal school choice for families in the state. Senate Bill 2 (SB 2), which passed the state senate earlier this year, will create a \$1 billion education savings account (ESA) program, providing approximately \$10,000 per student for families to use towards the education that best meets the needs of their children. As an ESA program, the funding will be distributed to parents who can then direct it towards a variety of educational methods. "This is an extraordinary victory for the thousands of parents who have advocated for more choices when it comes to the education of their children," [stated](#) Governor Greg Abbott, who has vowed to sign the bill when it reaches his desk. While all families will be eligible for the program, it will prioritize low-income families, students with disabilities, and students currently in a public school who choose to switch to private school. The bill also includes protections for the mission and autonomy of participating private schools. Matt Ticzkus, regional director for the Mid-South American Association of Christian Schools, noted the importance of these protections for Christian schools: "I'm thankful that the autonomy and religious liberty language in this bill is rock solid as it provides for a school's protection from government interference. The bill specifies that schools that choose to participate are not recipients of federal financial assistance and are not considered to be state actors. In addition to those two things, the bill prevents the government from implementing program requirements that are 'contrary to the religious or institutional values' of a school and prevents the government from interfering in a school's admissions policies, personnel decisions, and curricular choices." He also noted that participation in the ESA program would require that "a school must be accredited, have been in operation for at least two years, and annually offer a nationally norm-referenced test."

The Texas legislature has considered school choice in previous sessions, but the issue failed to pass due to opposition from some Republican legislators from rural areas who feared school choice would decrease the financial backing for public education. Their lack of support prompted the governor to campaign against them, resulting in the election of new legislators who support school choice. This provided the necessary votes to get school choice across the finish line in the house, with a vote of 85-63. "For the first time in Texas history, our state has passed a universal school bill out of both chambers in the Texas legislature" [stated](#) Governor Abbott. "I applaud the legislators who took a stand with the overwhelming majority of Texans who support school choice." The state senate voted to approve the changes in the house version of the SB 2, and the bill now waits for the governor's signature. Once the bill becomes law, it will be the largest day-one school choice program that has been created on the state level. Mr. Ticzkus praised the passage of this bill: "I'm confident that this bill is going to help tens of thousands of Texas families find an education that is the best fit for their children, and one that is not solely based on their zip code. As the old saying goes, 'everything is bigger in Texas,' and with a day-one launch of more than \$1 billion, the Texas ESA program certainly meets that standard. I look forward to working together with our Texas school leaders to navigate the implementation of this program in our state."

## Surveys Show Increase in Young People Growing in Faith

New research indicates young people are increasingly more interested in Christianity. As the AACS [reported](#), a recent survey by the Pew Research Center shows that the decline of Christianity has slowed. Part of that decline might be attributed to more young people's search for deeper meaning through Christianity. A recent [study](#) by Barna found an increased percentage of young adults have made a personal commitment to following Jesus. Specifically, 67% of young Gen Z men report a personal commitment to Jesus, a 15-point increase from 2019. Because men have been less spiritually engaged than women in recent years, this increase marks an important shift. The number of young people reading the Bible has also increased. A [survey](#) by the American Bible Society found that only 11% of Gen Z were scripturally engaged in 2024. That number rose to 15% this year. Millennials also experienced an increase in scriptural engagement, from 12% in 2024 to 17% this year. Younger generations are engaging with [religious apps](#) like the AI chatbot Bible Chat and the Catholic prayer app Hallow. Nearly [800,000 people](#) installed the YouVersion Bible app on the first Sunday of 2025. "The political and cultural 'vibe shift' we've all sensed might actually point to a spiritual awakening," [said](#) Joseph Backholm, a senior research fellow at Family Research Council. "People are looking for clarity, truth, and hope in a confusing world, and many are turning—or returning—to faith as the foundation for that."

## Oral Arguments for Supreme Court Case Involving Parental Rights and Religious Liberty

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments for [Mahmoud v. Taylor](#) on Tuesday. As the AACS has previously [reported](#), the case involves religious parents who wish to opt their children out of LGBT storybook lessons. The Montgomery County school district in Maryland initially had a notice and opt-out policy for these materials but then reversed course by removing the parental opt-out. The court will decide whether the school district substantively burdens the parents' free exercise of religion. Eric Baxter, counsel for the religious parents, relied heavily on the past Supreme Court decision [Wisconsin v. Yoder](#) to argue that the state has substantially burdened the free exercise of the parents. Baxter also noted that the school board made anti-religious comments against religious parents. The counsel for Montgomery County argued that the notice and opt-out policy was administratively unfeasible. He claimed that exposing children to different viewpoints did not qualify as coercion. However, the majority of the Court appeared to [favor the parents' arguments](#). Many legal analysts expect all six Republican-appointed justices to side with the parents. Even the liberal news outlet [Vox](#) said the argument "went disastrously for public schools." If the Court rules for the parents, it could broadly support the right of free exercise. Or, it could give a narrower ruling that requires notice and opt-out for only young children. The Court could also rule against the school board solely because of their religious animus. The Court is expected to release its decision at the end of its term in late June or early July.

## 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](#)

[Poll Finds Majority of Voters Support the Dismantling of the Department of Education](#)

[UK Supreme Court Defines 'Man,' 'Woman,' and 'Sex' as Biological](#)

[Children 'Do Not Belong to Government,' Education Department Warns Colorado on Transgender Bill](#)