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*“Equal laws protecting equal rights, are found as they ought to be presumed,
the best guarantee of loyalty, and love of country.”*
James Madison

New Hampshire Passes Universal School Choice

New Hampshire recently became the 17th state to enact a universal school choice program. [SB 295](#) enables all students in New Hampshire to access exceptional learning alternatives tailored to their needs. The state previously had a school choice program. However, the new law expands the program by removing income limits so that every student can qualify for Education Freedom Accounts. The [law](#) saves spots for students renewing their accounts and offers flexible application timing. The program has a cap of 10,000 students, but that number will automatically increase if more families want to join. The program also prioritizes current students, siblings, kids with disabilities, and low-income families. Each student will receive approximately \$4,419 for approved educational expenses. With this law, New Hampshire joined states like Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, and West Virginia, which are all leading the way in creating a future of fully funded, adaptable, student-focused education. These states have expanded or adopted educational vouchers, tax credit scholarships, and educational savings accounts that allow families to choose the form of education that best fits their needs. Some organizations and community members opposed the program, arguing that it would be a handout to millionaires and hurt future funding for public schools. Although there was resistance towards this law, Gov. Kelly Ayotte [stated](#) that “giving parents the freedom to choose the education setting that best fits their child’s needs will help every student in our state reach their full potential.” *Written by AACCS intern Hudson Knight*

Supreme Court Decides in Favor of Religious Charity in Unanimous Decision

This past week, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 9-0 in favor of religious liberty, siding with a religious charity over a state’s supreme court. The [case](#) started with a dispute between the Wisconsin government and the Catholic Charities Bureau. The Wisconsin government requires employers to contribute to an unemployment compensation program, with exemptions for religious businesses. Catholic Charities Bureau, a company founded by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Superior, ministers to the needy in Wisconsin. Wisconsin’s Labor and Industry Review Commission denied the Bureau’s exemption request, citing the nature of the Bureau’s work. The Commission concluded that the Bureau’s work is secular because the Catholic Charities Bureau ministers to people of all faiths without explicit proselytizing. The Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the Commission’s conclusion, despite the charity’s obvious religious nature. The Bureau, represented by the religious liberty law firm, the Becket Fund, brought the case before the Supreme Court. Justice Sonia Sotomayor delivered the court’s [final opinion](#), stating that the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s ruling violated the First Amendment. The First Amendment requires the government to be neutral toward religion, yet the Wisconsin Supreme Court demonstrated a preference by differentiating between religions based on theological differences. Patrick Elliot of the Freedom From Religion Foundation [criticized](#) the ruling, calling it a “dramatic expansion of religious exemptions that invites confusion . . . and further erosion of state-church separation.” However, Eric Rassbach, senior counsel at Becket, [said](#), “Today, the Court resoundingly reaffirmed a

fundamental truth . . . the First Amendment protects all religious beliefs, not just those the government favors.”
Written by AACS intern Hayden Coates

Reason Foundation Study on Open Enrollment and School Choice

The Reason Foundation has released a new [study](#) on the use of open enrollment in K-12 schools. Open enrollment allows students to move from their assigned public school to another public school. Some open enrollment programs only allow students to transfer to another school within the same district, while other programs allow students to transfer to any school in the state. The study by Jude Schwalbach had several [takeaways](#) from the available data of 19 states. These takeaways also lend [support for school choice](#). First, Schwalbach found that 1.6 million students participated in an open enrollment program. Of those students, the majority of open enrollment students live in Florida, Texas, and Colorado. “Between students using open enrollment, charter schools, and private school scholarships, approximately 16% of students chose other publicly funded education options than their residentially assigned schools in 19 states,” Schwalbach [said](#). Consequently, he advised legislators to make education funding more portable. Schwalbach also found that over 40% of open-enrollment students were from low-income households. As a result, many of these families will send their children to another school that better suits their needs. Families also use school choice to advance their children’s education. In addition, almost a third of students in 18 states transferred to rural school districts. Opponents of school choice have argued that rural communities will suffer if school choice advances. However, families with more choices often transfer to rural districts and improve competition. [Support](#) for open enrollment remains high, with 74% of Americans supporting the idea.

White House Releases Merit Hiring Plan

The White House Office of Personnel Management has issued a memorandum outlining the administration’s “[Merit Hiring Plan](#).” The plan is in response to President Trump’s “[Restoring Merit](#)” executive order which directed the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy to create a “Federal Hiring Plan that brings to the Federal workforce only highly skilled Americans dedicated to the furtherance of American ideals, values, and interests.” The memorandum states that “a bedrock principle of the Merit Hiring Plan is that all Americans must be hired, recruited, and promoted in Federal jobs without regard to race, sex, color, religion, or national origin.” The memo repeatedly emphasizes the need to hire based on skill, merit, and patriotism, rather than racial quotas or academic pedigree. To ensure efficiency in the Merit Hiring Plan, the memo gives specific details regarding the recruitment, interview, and hiring process in federal agencies, including a new requirement for applicants to answer four short-answer essay questions regarding their commitment to the Constitution, the president’s policies, and their own work ethic. The memo recognizes the value of religious education in preparing strong workers, suggesting that Talent Teams in federal agencies recruit potential candidates at “state and land-grant universities, religious colleges and universities, community colleges, high schools, trade and technical schools, homeschooling groups, faith-based groups, American Legion, 4-H youth programs, and the military, veterans, and law enforcement communities.”

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](#)

[FACE Act Repeal Advances, as Dems Call Pro-Lifers ‘Terrorists’ Seeking to ‘Green Light Violence’](#)

[Female Athletes Fight It Out on X Over Men in Women’s Sports](#)