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“The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. . . . and I also believe that without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel: . . . I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations.”

Benjamin Franklin

Senate Finance Releases Text of Senate Version of “Big, Beautiful Bill” with School Choice Included

Last week, the Senate Finance Committee released its [version](#) of the reconciliation bill, often referred to as the “Big, Beautiful Bill.” The bill contains [provisions for a tax credit scholarship program](#), intended to enhance school choice opportunities for families in all 50 states. Much like the House-passed version of the bill, the Senate version would allow a tax credit for contributions to a scholarship granting organization (SGO) which, in turn, would provide scholarships to students for various education expenses, including tuition at private or religious schools, curriculum, and tutoring. The Senate version changed the cap on the program from \$5 billion a year to \$4 billion and makes the program permanent by removing the provision inserted by the House that would have limited the program to ten years.

Two key differences between the House and Senate versions are of particular interest to private and religious schools. First, the Senate version removed the unfunded mandate that would have required private schools to provide special education services for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). While religious private schools work diligently to meet the needs of all students in their schools, the [requirement in the House-version](#) that private schools establish and maintain a system for providing these services would have prevented the vast majority of the private schools from being able to participate in the program. The draft of the Senate version removed this requirement for participating private schools. A second difference is in regards to the religious liberty protections for participating schools. The House version included language which explicitly [protected](#) the religious liberty of participating schools, ensuring that Christian schools could maintain their autonomy and mission. However, this language has not been included in the Senate version of the bill. Rather, the bill states, “Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit, allow, encourage, or authorize any Federal control over any aspect of any private or religious school.” Some argue this language together with Supreme Court precedents are sufficient to ensure that participating religious schools can maintain their autonomy and adherence to their faith-based mission. However, a coalition of faith-based education organizations led by AACCS is concerned about the exclusion of language which specifically states that the religious liberty of participants in the program is protected. AACCS Government Affairs Director Jamison Coppola stated, “The inclusion of school choice in this bill has the potential to be a tremendous help to families across the country, and protecting the religious liberty of Christian schools is vital to the success of the program.” The bill is a [top priority for President Trump](#) as it includes many of his top agenda issues, including the creation of a national school choice program. As the Senate considers the bill, Majority Leader Thune has indicated his plans to [hold a vote on the bill](#) as early as this weekend.

Poll Shows Fewer Americans Find “Changing Genders” to be “Morally Acceptable”

Recent [polling](#) shows that public opinion on gender identity and LGBT issues is changing. A new Gallup poll reports that 40% of Americans believe the concept of changing one’s gender is morally acceptable, down six points from 2021; of those polled, this includes 71% of Democrats and 45% of independents. Simultaneously, 54% of respondents now say that the concept of changing one’s gender is morally wrong. Republican support has dropped the most, by 13 points. While Democratic support has slightly increased, support among independents has declined by three points. This poll is one of several pointing to broader changes in public attitudes. Last year, Gallup found a [7%](#) drop in the number of Americans who view same-sex relationships as morally acceptable, the largest decline among any issue covered in its annual Values and Beliefs survey. A recent Harvard CAPS/Harris poll found that 82% of parents support legislation to strengthen parental rights, 77% oppose medical transitions for minors, and 70% believe schools should not teach that gender is a choice. In addition, several [surveys](#) show growing public support for laws protecting sex-specific spaces, athletic fairness, and transparency in school curricula around gender. Joseph Backholm, a senior fellow at Family Research Council, [mentioned](#) that “the mood of the country has changed,” and also noted, “Cancel culture has lost much of its power.” *Written by AACS intern Hudson Knight*

Ten Commandments in Schools in Texas, Blocked in Louisiana

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott reignited the debate over the separation of church and state earlier this week when he signed a bill allowing the Ten Commandments to be displayed in public school classrooms. This [bill](#) requires that each display be at least 16 inches wide and 20 inches tall, placed prominently so that every student can see it. If schools do not have a compliant Ten Commandments display, they must accept a privately donated copy or may purchase one using district funds. Opponents claim that the Ten Commandments infringe on the religious freedom of others. However, supporters [argue](#) that this law acknowledges the foundational role of the Commandments in the United States’ educational and judicial systems. In contrast, efforts to implement a similar law in Louisiana were blocked by the appellate courts. The U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the law, [ruling](#) it unconstitutional under the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. Heather Weaver, staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, [called](#) the ruling a “resounding victory for the separation of church and state and public education.” Even so, Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill said she will appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court if necessary. Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry strongly supports the mandate, [claiming](#) “the Ten Commandments are the foundation of our laws—serving both an educational and historical purpose in our classroom.” Texas’s bill is effective September 1, 2025, while Louisiana awaits legal appeal.

Written by AACS intern Hayden Coates

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](#)

[Could the Department of Education Reverse Titles for Trans-Identifying Athletes](#)

[Rethinking Influence: True Impact Comes from Christians Who Prize Faithfulness over Applause](#)

[Colorado Frees Christian Summer Camp to Operate According to Beliefs](#)

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