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"A sacred respect for the constitutional law is the vital principle, the sustaining energy of a free government."
Thomas Jefferson

Wisconsin Attorney General Fights Religious Liberty, Despite Supreme Court Ruling

Last June, the U.S. Supreme Court [issued a 9-0 ruling](#) in support of religious liberty in the case *Catholic Charities Bureau v. Wisconsin Labor and Industry Review Commission*. Despite the clear, unanimous decision from the court, state officials are still looking for a way to discriminate against the Catholic Charities Bureau (CCB). The [case](#) began when the Wisconsin Labor and Industry Review Commission denied the CCB's request for the religious exemption to the state's unemployment compensation program. The CCB provides services to the elderly and those who are disabled in their community. The Commission argued that the CCB did not qualify for the religious exemption because the CCB's work is secular as they minister to people of all faiths without explicit proselytizing. In other words, the state deemed that CCB was not religious enough to receive the religious exemption. The Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the Commission's conclusion, prompting the appeal to the Supreme Court. Justice Sonia Sotomayor authored the majority opinion for the High Court in which she [explained](#), "When the government distinguishes among religions based on theological difference in their provision of services, it imposes a denominational preference that must satisfy the highest level of judicial scrutiny." The Supreme Court's decision sent the case back to the Wisconsin Supreme Court for further review.

Earlier this week, Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul filed a brief with the Wisconsin Supreme Court, asking them to eliminate the religious exemption entirely. However, this move would affect all faith-based organizations across the state, not just the CCB. Kaul claimed that the Supreme Court offered no recourse to their ruling, and thus, he is petitioning the state Supreme Court to eliminate the religious exemption completely. Eric Rassbach, senior counsel at the Becket Fund representing CCB, [stated](#), "Wisconsin's bald-faced defiance of the Supreme Court is nothing short of remarkable. Rather than accepting defeat, the state is now trying to punish all religious groups in Wisconsin, not just Catholic Charities. Doubling down on excluding religious people makes a mockery of both our legal system and religious freedom."

Judge Rules Against LGBT Books in School Libraries

A federal judge has upheld the right of public school districts to remove inappropriate LGBT-related books from school libraries. In 2023, the Escambia County School Board in Florida removed LGBT books from its libraries. Justin Richardson, the author of one of those books, [sued](#). He argued that the board violated his First Amendment rights by engaging in viewpoint discrimination. However, Chief Judge Allen Winsor of the Northern District of Florida disagreed. In his [ruling](#), Winsor noted that the school library is not a public forum. Consequently, the board has the right to select the books in its libraries. He ruled that Richardson had "no First Amendment right to speak through the library." In addition, Winsor also found that students do not have a First Amendment right to receive certain viewpoints at school libraries. "The Escambia County School Board has simply decided students wanting this particular book will have to get it elsewhere," [wrote](#) Winsor. The plaintiffs have already appealed Winsor's decision to the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. Escambia County has been

no stranger to lawsuits over its book decisions. A coalition has [sued](#) the county over its decision to remove inappropriate materials from school libraries. The case is ongoing.

CA Governor Signs Law that Threatens Parental Rights

Last week, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed [AB 495](#), a law with [significant implications](#) for parental rights. The law was advertised as a way to help children whose illegal alien parents have been detained. However, the law has much more far-reaching consequences: it allows almost anyone who claims a familial relationship to take guardianship of a child. The new law expanded the definition of a caregiver in an existing statute to include adults “within the fifth degree of kinship.” By signing a Caregiver’s Authorization Affidavit, this adult can then claim guardianship over a child. This affidavit is not notarized, the information is not verified, and no parental consent is required. This adult then assumes the power to make decisions for a child, such as authorizing medical procedures or enrolling the child in another school. Alliance Defending Freedom CEO Kristen Waggoner [warned](#) that the law could be used to enable child trafficking and “gender transition.” Jonathan Keller, president and CEO of the California Family Council, [noted](#) that the law applies to children whose parents are “deported, detained, or deployed.” However, without verification, all children are at risk. The California Family Council has encouraged parents to [update](#) emergency contact lists and write that only those people listed have the authority to make decisions for the child. “With AB 495, state-sanctioned kidnapping is now legal,” [said](#) Julianne Fleischer, senior legal counsel at Advocates for Faith & Freedom. “This is more than overreach—it is a betrayal of families and a blatant disregard for parental rights.”

Department of Ed Launches First Negotiated Rulemaking Session on Student Loans

Earlier this month, the Department of Education launched its first of two negotiated rulemaking sessions on Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE). The RISE committee is tasked with crafting proposed regulations to implement parts of the One Big Beautiful Bill that affect federal student loans. A [list](#) of committee members includes representatives from private and public colleges, college associations, public interest organizations, student loan servicers, legal organizations, student loan borrowers, and Department officials. The committee [discussed](#) several changes in the OBBB to federal student loan programs, including streamlining federal [repayment plans](#) into two options and ending [Direct PLUS loans](#) for graduate and professional students. The [draft regulations](#) on loan repayment plans provide for two options for new borrowers who receive a federal student loan after July 1, 2026: repay the loans through the new Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP) or through a standard repayment plan. Borrowers currently repaying their student loans will continue to have access to existing repayment options, including Income-Based Repayment. [Discussion](#) during the session included creating definitions of “professional” students, which could include medical, law, and theology degrees. Negotiators also [discussed](#) loan limits for borrowers who are part-time students and how the Department would determine how much in federal loans a part-time student could borrow. The draft regulations also [implement](#) parts of the OBBB that end deferment of payments due to economic hardship and limit the number of times a defaulted loan can be rehabilitated. The next RISE committee rulemaking session is scheduled for November 3–7.

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACSB Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Justice for a Kentucky Christian](#)

[The Silent Genocide](#)