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"The Declaration of Independence laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity."
John Adams

AACS Submits Amicus Briefs on Religious Freedom Cases

The AACS has joined amicus briefs in two cases that have important implications for religious liberty. The first case, *Cambridge Christian School v. Florida High School Athletic Association*, involves two private Christian schools that made it to the 2015 state championship football game. The private Christian schools asked to use the loudspeaker to pray before their game against each other. However, the state athletic association argued that it would violate the First Amendment's establishment clause by letting the private Christian schools broadcast the prayer. The AACS joined an [amicus brief](#) that has three main arguments. First, prayer in a public space must be treated at least as well as secular speech. For instance, the association often let school representatives offer welcoming comments using the loudspeaker before the game but denied the request of the Christian schools to pray. Second, an overbroad definition of government speech quashes First Amendment rights. By defining the schools' private prayer as government speech when using the loudspeaker, the government violated the schools' religious exercise rights. Finally, the illogic of this denial threatens other religious speech. If Christian schools cannot pray at a public event using government-owned property, what other private speech could qualify as public speech? The Supreme Court will consider today, November 14, whether it will hear this case.

The AACS also joined an [amicus brief](#) to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in the case *Youth 71Five Ministries v. Williams*. Youth 71Five Ministries serves all young people in Oregon but requires its employees to adhere to its faith statement. The ministry had previously been awarded state funding for its work. However, the state rescinded a \$400,000 grant based on a new rule that prohibits grantees from having faith statements. The 9th Circuit originally sided against the ministry, but Youth 71Five is asking for the full 9th Circuit to reconsider the case. The amicus brief argued that the full 9th Circuit should rehear the case because its decision conflicts with Supreme Court precedent, splits with other appeals courts, and could chill religious liberty. The 9th Circuit has yet to announce if it will reconsider the case.

Mock Supreme Court Competition for High School Students

The [Harlan Institute](#) is sponsoring a [mock Supreme Court competition](#) for high school students interested in debate, constitutional law, and the history of our country. This year's competition is organized around the theme of America's 250th Anniversary and will focus on the case of *Patriots v. Loyalists*. The competition is for teams of two high school students and gives them the opportunity to study constitutional law, practice writing appellate briefs, debate other students, and present their arguments before a panel of attorneys. This year, the final round of the competition will be held before a panel of federal judges in the Rotunda of the National Archives. The Heritage Foundation awarded this competition one of its America250 Innovation Prizes. For more information, please follow [this link](#). The deadline to sign up to participate is November 20, 2025.

Court Rules in Favor of Students' Free Speech

The U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals has [upheld](#) students' right to free speech in a case decided late last week. The case started when the Olentangy school district in Ohio required students to use inaccurate pronouns for students who identify as transgender or nonbinary. Parents and students who affirm the reality of biological sex sued and were represented by Defending Education. The parents initially lost at the district level and then before a three-judge panel of the 6th Circuit. Defending Education then appealed to the full 6th Circuit, which agreed to take the case. Defending Education argued that the school district violated the students' First Amendment free speech rights. The school district argued that its speech policy prevents bullying. In a 10-7 decision, the 6th Circuit sided with the parents. Writing for the majority, Judge Eric Murphy [decided](#) that school activities would not be substantially disrupted if a student uses biologically accurate pronouns. He also noted that the "school district may not skew this debate [on transgenderism] by forcing one side to change the way it conveys its message or by compelling it to express a different view." The case will now go back so the district court can issue a preliminary injunction. Sarah Parshall Perry, vice president of Defending Education, celebrated the court's decision. "A resounding victory for student speech and parental rights was long overdue for families in the school district," she [said](#), "and we are thrilled the court's ruling will benefit others seeking to vindicate their rights in the classroom and beyond."

New Report Shows Resurgence of Church Attendance among Young People

Recent reports from the Barna Group show a growing number of young people are attending church more frequently and outpacing older generations in their church attendance. The data released is part of Barna's [State of the Church](#) project that conducts research to provide church leaders with information that will help them effectively minister to their congregation and community. According to a [recent report](#), Millennials and Gen Z Christians (born between 1984 and 2015) are attending church almost twice a month on average, while those in the Gen X and Boomer generations (born between 1946 and 1983) average 1.4 and 1.6 times per month, respectively. "It's typically older adults who are the most loyal churchgoers. This data represents good news for church leaders and adds to the picture that spiritual renewal is shaping Gen Z and Millennials today," noted David Copeland, vice president of research for the Barna Group. The State of the Church Project also reported a significant rise in church attendance among young men. According to the [report](#), in 2025, "43 percent of men and 36 percent of women report attending church regularly, based on reported weekly attendance." This is a shift from historic trends, which showed a larger percentage of women attending more regularly in the early 2000s. But, while men's attendance has remained relatively steady, women's attendance has significantly declined, creating the wide gap currently being noticed. During the last year, church attendance has increased for both groups, but at a much larger pace for men than women. "These trends prompt a deeper look into how women are experiencing church today, particularly younger women and single mothers," noted Copeland.

In Case You Missed It:

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

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

[How Millennials and Gen Z Are Driving a Bible Reading Comeback](#)

[The New Reality with Universal School Vouchers: Homeschoolers, Marketing, Pupil Churn](#)

Jamison Coppola: Government Relations Director

Olivia Summers: Government Relations Assistant

Maureen Van Den Berg: Policy Analyst

Washington Office, 119 C Street SE, Washington, DC 20003