



One Voice for Public Policy

MINNESOTA DISTRICTS

JULY 2020 | SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT . . . SOMETHING VERY GOOD

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greeting in the name of our Lord Jesus.

"Something very important . . . something very good" are not words we've been able to use to describe many of the Supreme Court rulings recently. These, however, are the appropriate words to describe the Court's decision in the [Espinoza v. Montana](#) case rendered this week.

It is a case which answers the question, "When it comes to disbursing government benefits (funding), can state governments treat the educational choices of parents who choose a private religious school for their children less favorably than those who choose a private, secular school?"

And the answer to that was a resounding "NO!"

Building on the earlier [Trinity Lutheran](#) case, the Court essentially declares that it is unconstitutional for a state constitution to prevent state funds from ever flowing to religious schools, even if those funds are directed to those schools by the independent decision of parents. There are 38 states, including Minnesota, that have such clauses, commonly called Blaine Amendments, which have been used as the primary legal (constitutional) obstacle preventing parents who desire a religiously grounded education for their children from receiving the same level of support from the state as all other parents.

To be clear, this does not force states to "fund private education, but once it does so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious." Which is to say, the decision to fund both public and private schools remains a political decision to be made by state legislatures and governors, but no longer can politicians and others who oppose the equal funding of all parental school choice decisions claim that the constitution forbids it. It does not.

From now on, those who would deny state funding to parents who choose a religious school must explain why a system which rightly insists that we all pay for the education of all of our children as a common good can then turn around and exclude a whole class of citizens (citizens choosing a religious education) from that public benefit.

This decision moves us toward that day when the state is what it is called to be in matters of religion: truly neutral, neither favoring nor disfavoring any particular religion nor religion in general. It moves us toward that day when equal respect will be shown for the educational choices of all parents. So indeed, "something very important . . . something very good" happened this week, for which we give thanks and praise to God, who has given us this great nation and all of its blessings.

If you're interested in reading more about the Espinoza ruling and its impact, please consider the following articles and news releases:

1. ["Supreme Court Says States Cannot Discriminate Against Religious Schools"](#) by John Stonestreet and Roberto Rivera, Breakpoint

2. [“Supreme Court Hands Huge Victory to Families on School Choice”](#) by Lindsey Burke and Emilie Kao, The Daily Signal
 3. [“Supreme Court Paves Way for Americans to Drop Anti-American, Anti-Christian Schooling”](#) by Joy Pullmann, The Federalist
 4. [“Landmark Victory for Parents in U.S. Supreme Court School Choice Case”](#) by John Kramer, Institute for Justice
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If you have questions about the Espinoza v. Montana ruling or anything else related to public policy, please feel free to contact me via email at fred.hinz@mnsdistrict.org or via phone at 507-317-9634.

God's blessings to you as you interact with your friends and neighbors concerning public matters on behalf of the Gospel.

In Christ,

Rev. Hinz

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