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Inside Track

As Public-school Enrollments Drop, So Do School Budgets



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Public schools are opening across the country, but many students aren't returning. And that, as the Associated Press reported April 30, is causing many public schools major budgetary difficulties.

In Houston, for example, 11,000 students haven't returned, forcing the district to cut \$60 million from next year's budget. In Olathe, Kansas, 800 students haven't returned, forcing the district to cut 140 jobs. In Albuquerque, so many students are being homeschooled that the school district is facing a budget shortfall of \$25 million. In Minneapolis, the school district has lost more than 4,000 students, resulting in a budget deficit of \$27 million. In Lawrence, Kansas, school officials are being forced to deal with a \$7 million shortfall, while in Des Moines, 1,600 students haven't returned, causing a \$9 million deficit.

Strategies for dealing with these shortfalls range from laying off substitute teachers and aides, merging upper and lower age classes, cutting athletic and other budgets, and closing schools altogether. Some districts are even selling school buildings to raise revenue to cover the deficits.

The one exception is Florida. As Hot Air reported May 1, "School enrollment is actually up in the Sunshine State and school revenue has increased with it. Could that be because of the state's policies requiring schools to involve parents in decisions affecting their children? Could it be the fact that so many people fleeing failing cities in blue states are heading for Florida? It's probably a combination of both."

Although many districts are blaming Covid shutdowns, that is likely only a partial answer. As Keri Ingraham wrote May 29 for the *Washington Examiner*, "Parents were especially delighted to have their children escape the far-left political indoctrination that dominates today's K-12 public education classrooms (the daily promotion of the LGBT agenda, critical race theory divisiveness, and woke academics)."

In just one year, the percentage of students being homeschooled across the country jumped from three percent to nearly 12 percent. And as homeschooling becomes more widely recognized as viable and



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financially attractive, its growth is likely to continue apace.

By Bob Adelmann

Report: Big Tech Changed Outcome of 2020 Election



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An April 21 report from the Media Research Center (MRC) confirms what many have suspected — and anecdotal evidence has suggested — over the past two years: Big Tech has been placing its thumb on the political scales. Through its CensorTrack database, MRC found over 640 cases of Big Tech platforms intervening on Biden’s behalf.

“Big Tech’s campaign to protect President Joe Biden and his agenda has continued unabated,” according to the report, which lists “more than 640 examples of bans, deleted content and other speech restrictions placed on those who criticized Biden on social media over the past two years.”

Of the 646 examples listed, many of those were “cases of Big Tech censoring people over the *New York Post*’s bombshell Hunter Biden story in late 2020.” In all, MRC found 140 cases of Big Tech silencing mentions of the *Post*’s explosive story of Hunter Biden’s corrupt dealings in Ukraine, as shown in data discovered on his abandoned laptop. While that story — breaking just weeks before the 2020 election — would almost certainly have put Biden in a deservedly bad light, Big Tech made sure that would not happen.

The lengths to which Big Tech went to sway the election by killing the laptop story is beyond the pale. Twitter even placed a “warning label” on the GOP House Judiciary Committee’s website for linking to the laptop story.

The report continues, “But the largest category by far included users who dared to call out Biden’s notoriously creepy, touchy-feely behavior around women and children. The 232 cases of comedic memes, videos, or generic posts about Biden’s conduct composed more than one-third of CensorTrack’s total instances of users censored for criticizing the president.”

The report shows that fully “45 percent of Biden’s voters weren’t fully aware of the *Post* story precisely because the media and Big Tech tried to whitewash it.” The result of the story being known “would have led 9.4 percent of Biden voters to abandon him, flipping all six of the swing states he won to



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Trump.”

By C. Mitchell Shaw

SCOTUS: Christian Flag May Fly in Boston



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On May 2, the U.S. Supreme Court issued an important ruling protecting free speech.

The case, *Shurtleff v. City of Boston*, involved an appeal by Camp Constitution (“Camp”), a Christian group that, in 2017, applied to fly a flag with a Christian cross on it over City Hall in Boston. Camp was a volunteer association that sought “to enhance understanding of the country’s Judeo-Christian moral heritage.”

Camp’s application was made in accordance with Boston’s flag-raising program. As the Supreme Court noted in its opinion, “For years, Boston has allowed private groups to request use of the flagpole to raise flags of their choosing. As part of this program, Boston approved hundreds of requests to raise dozens of different flags. The city did not deny a single request to raise a flag until, in 2017, Harold Shurtleff, the director of a group called Camp Constitution, asked to fly a Christian flag. Boston refused. At that time, Boston admits, it had no written policy limiting use of the flagpole based on the content of a flag.”

Notwithstanding, Camp’s request was denied in accordance with Boston’s policy to “refrain respectfully from flying non-secular third-party flags in accordance with the First Amendment’s prohibition of government establishment of religion.” The District Court for the District of Massachusetts ultimately ruled in Boston’s favor, and the First Circuit affirmed. The Supreme Court disagreed and reversed the First Circuit’s decision.

The Court noted that Boston previously permitted many different types of flags in accordance with its flag-raising policy, some of which had nothing to do with Boston whatsoever. The Court also made additional findings that reflected how little control Boston had over the flags and/or their messages.

In accordance with these findings, the Court determined that Boston’s flag-raising program did not constitute government speech. As a result, Boston could not exclude speech based on religious viewpoint, as doing so would constitute impermissible viewpoint discrimination.



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By Elad Hakim

Leaked SCOTUS Draft: *Roe v. Wade* Will Be Overturned



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A reported draft of the majority opinion in a Mississippi abortion case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, suggests the U.S. Supreme Court will vote to strike down *Roe v. Wade*. The text of the draft was published by *Politico* on May 2.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito, reads, "We hold that *Roe* and *Casey* must be overruled. The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is implicitly protected by any constitutional provision, including the one on which the defenders of *Roe* and *Casey* now chiefly rely — the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.... *Roe* was egregiously wrong from the start.... Its reasoning was exceptionally weak, and the decision has had damaging consequences."

According to *Politico*, Republican-appointed Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett voted with Alito after hearing oral arguments this past December. "Progressive" Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan are reportedly working on one or more dissents. It is unclear how Chief Justice John Roberts will vote.

Roberts issued a May 3 statement confirming the draft's authenticity but noted that it does not represent the court's final opinion. He ordered an investigation into the source of the leak, calling it a "singular and egregious breach" of trust and a betrayal of confidence "intended to undermine the integrity of our operations."

Harvard Law professor emeritus Alan Dershowitz told Fox News' Sean Hannity May 3, "I think this was leaked by a liberal law clerk who was trying to change the outcome of the case, either by putting pressure on some of the justices to change their mind, or by getting Congress to pack the court even before June, which is very unlikely, or to get Congress to pass a national right-to-abortion law," he opined.

Anticipating a decision overturning or gutting *Roe*, at least 12 states have already enacted so-called trigger bans that would instantly prohibit abortion. SCOTUS is expected to rule on the case in late June or early July.



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By Veronika Kyrylenko



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