



The

# Phyllis Schlafly Report



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## NEA Lists Its Goals and Democrats Agree

Some critics have complained that the issue of education has been conspicuously absent from presidential television debates. But the Democratic candidates did sound off about their pro-federal-government, pro-spending policies when addressing the annual convention of the National Education Association, and the nation's largest teachers union liked what they heard.

Senator Hillary Clinton told the NEA delegates that she will fight school vouchers "with every breath in my body." Reiterating the message of her book *It Takes a Village*, she called for universal preschool for four-year-olds.

Senator Barack Obama likewise inveighed against "passing out vouchers." Former Senator John Edwards also announced his opposition to vouchers and proposed that the federal government pay college tuition for all students who will work ten hours a week. Governor Bill Richardson wants to "raise teacher's average minimum wage to \$40,000 a year." Rep. Dennis Kucinich goes all-out for "a universal prekindergarten system which will provide year-around daycare for children ages 3-5."

All Democratic candidates look forward to increased federal control of and spending for public schools. And they all attacked George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind law for not appropriating more funds to implement it.

After cheering the promises made by the Democratic candidates, NEA delegates buckled down to the serious business of spelling out their political goals, many of which have nothing whatever to do with giving schoolchildren a better education.

The NEA demands a tax-supported single-payer health-care plan (socialized medicine) for all residents (a word artfully chosen to include illegal aliens). The NEA supports immigration "reform" that "includes [note: this is a change from last year's verb "may include"] a path to permanent residency, citizenship, or asylum" for illegal aliens.

For many years, and again this year, the NEA urged a national holiday honoring Cesar Chavez. The NEA must have forgotten that Chavez, a strident advocate for farm workers, vehemently opposed illegal immigration because he knew it depressed the wages of U.S. citizens and legal immigrants.

The NEA supports a beefed-up federal "hate crimes" law with heavier penalties. The NEA wants federal legislation to confer special rights on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

The NEA passed at least a dozen resolutions supporting the gay rights agenda in public schools. These cover employment, curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, school activities, role models, and language (with frequent use of terms such as sexual orientation, gender identification, and homophobia).

The NEA enthusiastically supports all the goals of radical feminism, including abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, school-based health clinics, wage control so the government can arbitrarily raise the pay of women but not men, the feminist pork called the Women's Educational Equity Act, and letting feminists rewrite textbooks to conform to feminist ideology.

The NEA supports statehood for the District of Columbia. The NEA supports affirmative action. The NEA calls for repeal of right-to-work laws, which allow teachers in some states to decline joining the NEA.

The NEA supports United Nations treaties, especially the UN Convention on Women (CEDAW), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Criminal Court. The NEA loves global education, which promotes world citizenship and taxing Americans to give away our wealth to other countries. Another NEA favorite is environmental education, which teaches that human activity is generally harmful to the environment and population should be reduced.

Here are some of the things the NEA **opposes**: vouchers, tuition tax credits, all parental choice programs, making English our official language, the use of voter ID for elections, and the privatization of Social Security.

High on the list of NEA policies that actually relate to education is opposition to the testing of teachers as a criterion for job retention, promotion, tenure, or salary.

The NEA reiterated its support for pre-kindergarten for "all three-and four-year-old children," mandatory full-day kindergarten, and "early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight." The NEA

demands that this "early" education have "diversity-based curricula" and "bias-free screening devices."

The NEA wants the right to teach schoolchildren about sex without any interference from parents, but on the other hand wants its pals in the bureaucracy to regulate all homeschooling taught by parents. The NEA opposes allowing homeschoolers to participate in any public school sports or extracurricular activities.

Two of the NEA's favorite words in its resolutions and policies are diversity (that means teaching that gay behavior is OK), and multiculturalism (that means stressing negative things about America and positive things about non-Christian cultures).

The exorbitant dues that teachers pay to the NEA enable its well-paid staff to lobby Congress and state legislatures in behalf of all these goals.

### *Marc Tucker's Warmed-Over Plan*

Marc Tucker, who peddled school "reform" in the 1990s from his National Center on Education and the Economy, has reemerged to sell us old wine in new bottles. His New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce received national publicity for a verbose report called "Tough Choices or Tough Times." Asserting that "it is the system that is the problem," Tucker calls for the total overhaul of U.S. education by 2021 into a "national public school system."

Tucker would abandon local funding of schools in favor of state funding on a uniform formula to make funding more "equitable," and sweeten the pot with an additional \$19 billion a year. He would send a \$500 check to each child at birth, continue tax-funded contributions to the kid's "Personal Competitiveness Account" until he is age 16, and make later payments if he then gets only a low-paid job. The student could use the money to pay for any "work-related" (not purely academic) program of study.

Tucker's report confidently assures us that the redeployment of resources by (1) recruiting smarter teachers (licensed by the state and paid up to \$95,000 for a school year), (2) putting all 4-year-olds and low-income 3-year-olds into universal public pre-school, and (3) spending more on disadvantaged students, will enable us to "send almost everyone to college and have them do well there."

The function of the local school boards would be to collect a "wide range of data," forward them to the state, and connect schools to "a wide range of social services in the community."

**Then comes national economic planning.** Tucker calls for federal legislation to get the states "to create regional economic development authorities" that would develop "goals and strategies for their regions," and coordinate "the work of the region's education and training institutions to make sure that each region's workers develop the skills and knowledge needed

to be successful in that labor market."

Those who follow education fads and follies will remember Marc Tucker as the author of a master plan for the federal takeover of public schools spelled out in his famous 18-page "Dear Hillary" letter written on November 11, 1992. That letter urged the incoming Clinton Administration "to remold the entire American [public school] system" into "a seamless web that literally extends from cradle to grave and is the same system for everyone," coordinated by "a system of labor market boards at the local, state and federal levels" where curriculum and "job matching" will be handled by counselors "accessing the integrated computer-based program."

Tucker's ideas formed the basis of the Goals 2000 and School-to-Work laws passed by the Democratic Congress in 1994. School-to-Work became the code word to change the mission of the public schools **from** teaching children knowledge and skills **to** training them to serve a national planned economy in jobs selected by workforce boards. Nothing in his plan had anything to do with teaching schoolchildren how to read.

The Tucker 1990s plan to restructure the public schools was based on specific mechanisms of control: (1) bypass all elected officials on school boards and in state legislatures by redirecting the funding; (2) build a database ("a labor market information system") into which school personnel would scan all information about every schoolchild and his family; and (3) use the slogan "high standards" to cement national control of tests and assessments.

"Tough Choices or Tough Times" is so *deja vu*. It will not make American students smarter; it will just make them cogs in the global economy.

### *Another Big Spending Boondoggle*

A new grab for power over education just passed by Congress called the America COMPETES Act would give us another costly and harmful expansion of the federal education bureaucracy. Its goals are artfully hidden behind words with specialized meanings such as "alignment," "21st century workforce," "P-16," "partnership," and "accountability."

We should be alerted to this new power grab when we read this sort of verbiage: "Alignment of secondary school graduation requirements with the demands of 21st century postsecondary endeavors and support for P-16 education data systems." To align means to bring into line with a group, party or cause, so to what cause will we be forced into line with? The bill responds: "the demands of higher education, the 21st century workforce, and the Armed Forces."

This mandated alignment will cover student knowledge, skills, academic content standards, assessments, and curricula in elementary and secondary schools. But federal politicians and bureaucrats have no business dictating school curriculum. It's ridiculous to appropriate tax dollars to induce public schools to find out what students need to know in order to

enter college or the Armed Forces. The secondary schools can make a few phone calls and get any college or military branch to send a free catalog full of application information and entrance requirements. Congress could do something really constructive by refusing all grants and loans to students taking remedial courses in college (to learn what the high schools should have taught them).

Including "the 21st century workforce" in the alignment mandate is the bridge to grabbing federal control over high school curriculum for students who won't be going to college. That bit of jargon opens the door to pour more funding into the controversial Clinton school-to-work and workforce development programs. When the globalists talk about restructuring the U.S. education system to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce, they mean training our young people to compete with the low wages paid in the global labor market.

P-16 is a rather new term meaning that Big Brother government is now supervising the next generation from pre-school through the 16th year of education (*i.e.*, college graduation). We used to think K-12 (kindergarten through 12th grade) was the scope of government schools.

It appears that a major purpose of this audacious legislation is the establishment of a "P-16 education longitudinal data system." The plan is to enter all children into the government's database while they are in pre-school and then track them all the way through college. The P-16 data system will have a "unique identifier" for each child that will be retained from pre-school through college. The database will include, among other things, "information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 programs," "test records," "information on courses completed and grades earned," and how students "transition" from high school to college.

The America COMPETES Act gives states the power to make "changes that need to be made to a state's secondary school graduation requirements," "specifying the courses and performance levels necessary for acceptance" into college. States can also use the funds to make changes in coursework in high schools in order for students to be accepted into the 21st century workforce. Students will be taught "21st century learning skills" such as "global awareness."

This law authorizes the creation of a "statewide partnership" whose powers are unspecified. The "partners" will be at least a dozen politicians and education bureaucrats, plus one lone "representative of the business community," but, of course, no parents. The law wraps its goals in the comforting word "accountability." But the bill never says to whom the schools are to be accountable.

The America COMPETES Act will waste taxpayers' money, expand an unnecessary and overbearing bureaucracy, give the Federal Government control of all school curricula, and put information about all children in a government database.

## *Experimenting on Teen Girls*

The new vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV), called Gardasil, was not launched with a typical advertising campaign to sell the public by repetitive commercials on television network newscasts. Since the real money to be made from this drug depends on government mandating and funding it for **all** girls, the marketing plan was to hire lobbyists with access to important public officials, make strategic campaign contributions, and finance a new "Women in Government" organization, composed of women state legislators, to force school-girls to receive the vaccine. It all looked so easy.

So, the manufacturer, Merck, funded an effort to make Gardasil mandatory for schoolgirls as a condition of attending school. When Texas Governor Rick Perry issued an order on the Friday before the Super Bowl to accomplish this quietly, he was met with overwhelming public and legislative opposition. The Perry mandate would have forced the vaccine on good girls who don't engage in premarital sex and don't need the vaccine. At the same time, girls who received the vaccine would be given a false sense of security.

HPV is sexually transmitted but it is not contagious in school, so there is no justification for conditioning school admission on this vaccine. The HPV vaccine at most protects against strain types 6, 11, 16 and 18 of HPV. These strains of HPV have been associated with 70% of cervical cancer cases, but not even Merck claims that the vaccine actually prevents cancer. It was only in June 2006 that the Food and Drug Administration approved this vaccine. This approval was based on testing only a few thousand patients, including perhaps only a few hundred or less young girls.

The HPV vaccine does not protect against other sexually transmitted diseases (e.g., chlamydia, herpes, hepatitis, trichomoniasis, gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV, AIDS, etc.). The vaccine is not recommended for use in pregnant women or girls.

The long-term consequences of the HPV vaccine are not known and there have not been any long-term studies. Recipients were monitored only for 18 months, and there have been no studies of possible longer-term risks of the vaccine. Between July 2006 and January 2007, there were numerous reports of adverse events filed with the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) following the receipt of the vaccine. The vaccine itself may cause cancer, as Merck admits it did not even test for this in rats or other studies. Its package insert explains the limitations of the vaccine and describes its limited testing for safety and efficacy.

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Feb. 28, 2007) disclosed that only about 3% of women are infected in their lifetime by the particular types of HPV (Types 6, 11, 16, 18) targeted by the vaccine.

The HPV vaccine is not cost-effective. Merck sells it for \$360 (\$120 per shot in a three-shot series). With additional costs of administration, the three-dose vaccine costs about

\$500 per child. Accordingly, the cost of vaccinating 100 children would be about \$50,000, but only 3 out of that 100 will ever be exposed to the HPV types targeted by the vaccine. The average age of diagnosis of cervical cancer is 48 years old. Accordingly, the cost is \$15,000 to \$50,000 per to-be-infected child to possibly protect her against a cancer over 30 years in the future.

Alternative means of protection against cervical cancer include abstinence (most effective and free), and early detection via pap smear (cheap and effective if done regularly, as it can detect infection or precancerous changes). The U.S. government spends billions of dollars to promote teenage abstinence from illegal drugs, and forces the tobacco companies to spend billions to promote teenage abstinence from smoking. Why not put a fraction of that into promoting teenage abstinence from sex?

Leading doctors and medical groups oppose making this vaccine mandatory. The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, the Texas Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics do not support making this vaccine mandatory. State legislatures in Michigan, Indiana and Maryland have declined to make this vaccine mandatory.

The backlash against the mandate caused Merck to suspend its lobbying campaign to make its vaccine compulsory. In May, the Texas Legislature passed a bill by a veto-proof margin to block the Governor's order to impose the HPV vaccine on schoolchildren. In July, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to withhold federal funding for the vaccine from any state that requires it as a condition of school admission.

The 2007 HPV vaccine controversy ended in a big victory for parents and grassroots citizens against political and financial powers-that-be.

### ***Opportunity to Restore Parental Rights***

The reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act offers Congress a splendid opportunity to enforce parents' rights that have been outrageously trampled on by the public schools.

When the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that parents' right to control the upbringing of their children "does not extend beyond the threshold of the school door," the House erupted in unprecedented bipartisan criticism. On Nov. 16, 2005, by a vote of 320 to 91, the House passed H.Res. 547 to reassert the settled law of the *Meyer-Pierce* doctrine affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1920s.

Since Congress is doling out hundreds of millions of dollars a year to public schools, it's perfectly proper to attach strings to the receipt of taxpayers' money. The easy way to do this is to require all schools receiving federal funds to sign compliance statements similar to the way grantees pledge not to discriminate on account of race or sex.

In November 2005, the House passed the Child Medication Safety Act, sponsored by Rep. John Kline (R-MN) by 407

to 12, but it never passed the Senate. If this bill had become law, it would have prevented public schools from denying entry to a child whose parents refuse to medicate him with psychotropic drugs (such as Ritalin). Such a lopsided majority proves that this type of legislative defense of parental rights is possible even in the Democratic-controlled Congress. Congress should also require the schools to get written parental consent before subjecting children to mental health screening.

Five federal circuits have handed down anti-parent, pro-public school decisions, and not one of them even offered parents an "opt out" option to the courses or materials that parents found offensive.

In Kentucky, a federal court put its stamp of approval on a public school forcing students and staff to watch a one-hour video that included dogmatic claims that homosexuality is immutable and that it is wrong to object to the gay lifestyle.

A federal court in Massachusetts ruled against a father, David Parker, who had the temerity to demand that he be notified before his kindergarten son was given a "Diversity Book Bag" containing a book illustrating and describing same-sex couples.

In California, a federal court approved the public schools' requirement that a course in Islam be taught to 7th-graders. The course included giving the students Muslim names, having them recite Muslim prayers and passages from the Koran, wear Arab clothing, and write a "positive" essay about Islamic culture. Parents lost their case and the Supreme Court refused to hear their appeal.

The aforementioned "threshold" case and a much-litigated case in Ridgewood, NJ both involved a privacy-invading, self-incriminating nosy questionnaire about teenage sex and use of illegal drugs, which the schools required students to answer. Again, the parents were not accorded any right to opt-out or even to be informed in advance about the survey.

Congress could require public schools to confirm that they have a policy of requiring parental permission for a student to join an extra-curricular school club. This could safeguard students from being recruited into high school gay clubs.

One more rider that Congress should add to an education bill is a requirement that schools give parents a yes-or-no choice about putting their children into "bilingual education."

We are looking for congressional advocates of parents' rights in public schools. Who will answer parents' plea for help?

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