

## 'Quest' Drug Program Under Fire Nationwide Concerned, angry parents question psychological techniques

Parents from New York to California are standing up and speaking out about a nationally-used drug and alcohol education program called "Quest." Their common question is: "Is it a drug and alcohol education program or isn't it?"

According to Renee Beacom of Sioux City, Iowa, "When you look at it, it seems to be quite a bit more than drugs and alcohol." That "quite a bit more" is what has parents concerned and angry.

Parents are especially concerned about the program's overwhelming emphasis on students' feelings, emotions, and private family information, compared to the much lesser significance given to facts about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Those concerns are being translated into action nationwide.

In Mount Morris, Illinois, parents are requesting that their children be withdrawn from the class in the fall. The growing in questions of Michigan parents have resulted in an investigation of Quest by the state's Attorney General's office and the State Department of Education. Michigan state officials will determine whether or not the program violates Michigan laws on personality testing in the schools.

### Origins and Scope

The Quest program began in 1975 when Rick Little, the founder and president of the Quest National Center, obtained a grant from the Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek,

Michigan to develop a drug and alcohol prevention program for youth. Mr. Little is the son of an alcoholic.

Eleven years later, many parents think that Quest was a good idea, now gone bad.

Currently, the overall Quest program is divided into two main curricula: *Skills for Living* for grades nine through twelve and *Skills for Adolescence* for grades six through eight.

The promotion of *Skills for Adolescence* is a special project of the Lions Clubs International, based in Oak Brook, Illinois. Local Lions Club chapters promote and often finance the adoption of the Quest program in local schools.

According to many parents, the Lions Club's involvement in the Quest program can mislead parents to believe that the program must be good, and therefore does not need to be examined.

That assumption, parents say, is false. And, according to one official at the Lions Clubs International headquarters, "there are some uncomfortable things in the curriculum."

### Skills for Adolescence

As stated in Quest program literature, *Skills for Adolescence* is designed for "teaching coping skills with special emphasis on preventing drug and alcohol abuse and related problems."

It is divided into five "dimensions": Thinking, Feeling, Decision Making, Communication, and Action.

However, as parents like Nancy Poe of Mount Morris, Illinois pointed out, only one of

seven units in *Skills for Adolescence* is about the facts and dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Mrs. Poe and parents from states including New York, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and California object to the predominance of psychological exercises such as the following:

- "My Emotions." Students fill in a worksheet about "What makes me feel good [or uncomfortable]: What I do \_\_\_\_\_. What I say \_\_\_\_\_. What others do \_\_\_\_\_."

- "Boundary Breakers." Students complete 22 statements including: "Sometimes I wish I had \_\_\_\_\_. I get in trouble when \_\_\_\_\_. One thing I'd never want to do is \_\_\_\_\_. The thing that worries me most is \_\_\_\_\_. With my friends I \_\_\_\_\_. When I think about the future I \_\_\_\_\_."

- "Emotion clock." Students are told to "Fill in the blanks for (1) Time, (2) Feeling, and (3) Reason with feelings you've experienced at four-hour intervals during the past 24 hours, (except when you're asleep). Ask someone you know well to fill out the other copy of the worksheet in your workbook."

Mrs. Poe became aware that the Mount Morris 261 school district was considering the *Skills for Adolescence* program in January. When the local school board wanted to make the program mandatory for seventh-graders, Mrs. Poe objected, especially on the ground that it was non-academic in nature.

## Inside . . .

Does government-funded birth control increase teenage pregnancies?



Yes!  
According to recently released study, p. 2



Jacqueline Kasun

She also requested that the school board ask for parental permission before implementing the program. That request was denied.

As a result, Mrs. Poe contacted the 60 parents of children who, like her own daughter, will be in seventh grade this fall. She obtained their names and phone numbers from the school office.

Mrs. Poe held three meetings for parents to discuss the program. She invited the school principal to those meetings, but he did not attend.

See *Quest* page 4

## Washington Board Says Readers Stay Rejects teachers' claim that texts are sex biased

Pictures of little girls baking cookies and a discussion of "manmade satellites" in an elementary reading series do not constitute sex bias, according to the North Kitsap School Board in Bremerton, Washington.

The school board issued a formal statement in July which said that complaints from several local teachers about alleged sex bias in the Open Court Headway Reading Series were unfounded. The books will continue to be used.

Led by elementary school teacher Sheila Giles, three local teachers formally objected to the textbooks on the grounds that they contain sex bias and sexual stereotypes.

Assistant Superintendent for Public Instruction Dr. Michael Terry said that their criticisms focused on vocabulary such as "men could fly."

Dr. Terry confirmed that the Board rejected the teachers' claims and issued a statement to that effect saying that the examples of sex bias "cannot reasonably be construed as evidencing



sex bias when viewed in the context of the materials."

"For example, the appearance of women in traditional roles in various fairy tales or historical literature furthers the reading series' pedagogical purposes of strengthening children's oral learning traditions from the home environment and portraying accurately certain historical attitudes."

But as of late July, Mrs. Giles said she will appeal the Board's decision.

The same Open Court series of readers is currently the focus of the nationally-publicized Tennessee textbook trial.

## Oregon Parents Win Textbook Debate Board drops push for social science book

Oregon parents are savoring their victory one year after they went into battle over a controversial social science textbook.

Due to parent and citizen objections, including petitions with 500 local signatures, the South-umpqua School Board has abandoned efforts to adopt a controversial seventh-grade social science textbook, entitled *Introduction to the Social Sciences*, published by Allyn & Bacon, Inc. The text would have been mandatory for seventh graders in two junior high schools.

Jenni Rabern of Canyonville initiated the textbook debate when she volunteered to serve on the textbook adoption committee in May of 1985. A beautician and mother of a seventh-grader, Mrs. Rabern was concerned that the new social science textbook for the junior high would not include Oregon history, as it has in previous years.

From talking with her teenage clientele, Mrs. Rabern had been distressed to discover that "some could not even name the capital city of Oregon."

When Mrs. Rabern reviewed the proposed text, she was upset to learn that, not only did it eliminate Oregon history, but it also introduced many new unrelated topics.

Upon examination, Mrs. Rabern specifically objected to a chapter on parapsychology, including discussion of how to use mind control to influence the actions of others. She expressed concern over exercises dealing with death and dying, and reincarnation. Students were also directed to write their own wills and to predict their age at death, based on family history.

Concerning government study, Mrs. Rabern said that one exercise in the text directed students to "write their own constitution, but not to pattern it after the United States Constitution."

The proposed text was not on the list of state-approved textbooks.

When the nine-member committee voted to adopt the book in early summer 1985, Mrs. Rabern was the only dissenting vote. But she did not remain silent.

After talking to her clientele, local citizens learned by word-of-mouth of the text's contents.

One local mother subsequently copied pages of the text and distributed packets to businesses and citizens throughout the district.

When the full school board met in August, citizens presented 500 signatures objecting to the textbook's adoption. The board then voted to reject the text at that time.

But the parents remained alert. When the same book appeared to be coming up for reconsideration in November, citizens were successful in postponing a decision once again.

Final victory came during the spring 1986 semester. When the issue of the social science text adoption came up again, *Introduction to the Social Sciences* was not among the proposed texts. Instead, the Board voted to adopt *A World View*, published by Silver-Burdett.

"All of a sudden, other texts became available," said Mrs. Rabern.

In addition, the psychology unit has been dropped from the seventh-grade social science curriculum.

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## EDUCATION BRIEFS

The Illinois State Republican Party passed resolutions condemning school-based sex clinics and encouraging schools to teach students to say NO to sex, at the state convention in Chicago on July 26. The State Republican Party went on record as opposing "publicly-funded school-based clinics" because they "not only compete unfairly with private health care providers, they intrude into the parent-child relationships on matters such as sexual counseling and dispensation of contraceptives."

New research on the transmission of Herpes indicates that genital herpes can be spread even when the infected partner shows no disease symptoms. Researchers at the National Institutes of Health reported in the volume of the New England Journal of Medicine that a 29-year-old man who became infected with genital herpes from one woman passed it on to another in the absence of any genital sores. This is the first documented case of asymptomatic genitally transmitted herpes. (Insight, July 14, 1986)

Parent protest helped keep a traditional school in Maryland open for the new school year, despite efforts by school officials to shut the doors for good. The local school board had voted on May 8 to close the Yoder school in Maryland's rural Allegheny plateau region, but that decision has been reversed. Garrett County Superintendent Jerome Ryscavage had supported the closing because of the lack of physical facilities at the school. But parents said they did not care about the lack of a gymnasium or cafeteria because the education was superior. Mr. Ryscavage claimed that the board decided to reverse its decision because it had followed outdated bylaws. The four-room white frame school house was founded in 1882 by the Amish and Mennonites, but less than half of the current 62 students share those affiliations.

Bubble gum cards depicting "Garbage Pail Kids" are coming under fire from parents and pro-family activists who are hoping to persuade the sellers and manufacturer, Brooklyn-based Topps Chewing Gum, that the cards are harmful for children. In West Virginia, State Treasurer A. James Manchin has asked merchants to remove the "monstrous" cards which depict torture, sex, and drug use from their shelves. The cards show pudgy youthful dolls such as "Curly Carla," whose curls consist of open-mouthed snakes protruding from her head, and "Drew Blood," a severely injured doll lying in a boxing ring with blood pouring from the nose. The dolls' form closely resembles the original Cabbage Patch dolls, whose artistic creator is suing Topps for copyright infringement, especially because the Garbage Pail Kids "debase" the image of "wholesome, family, quality fun" promoted by Cabbage Patch Kids.

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# New Study: Government-funded birth control, sex ed lead to increase in teenage pregnancies

Providing taxpayer-funded contraceptives and abortions to teenagers is leading to an increase, rather than a decrease, in teen pregnancies. So concludes a recently-released study by Professor Jacqueline Kasun, Ph.D., of Humboldt State University.

According to Dr. Kasun's spring 1986 report, entitled "Teenage Pregnancy: What Comparisons Among States and Countries Show," "comparisons among states and countries provide no support of the claim that government birth control can reduce pregnancy, but considerable evidence that restrictions on access, especially in the form of requirements for parental consent, can reduce pregnancy."

Dr. Kasun's research reveals that there are large variations in teenage pregnancy rates and programs among the American states. What is interesting, the research said, is a state-by-state comparison of those statistics.

Dr. Kasun found that four states led the rest in 1980 for (1) providing free access to publicly-funded abortion and (2) having spent higher than the national average amounts per person on publicly-funded birth control. Those states are California, Hawaii, Georgia, and New York.

Those states do not require parental consent or notification for minors' contraceptives or abortions, and abortions are provided at public expense.

Rather than experiencing a reduction in the number of teen pregnancies and abortion, Dr. Kasun's research discovered that "all four states have higher-than-average teenage pregnancy rates as well as higher-than-average rates of teenage abortions-plus-unmarried births." (See table)

California spent 227% and Georgia 142% of the per capita national average on publicly-funded birth control in 1980. But the teenage pregnancy rate, as a percent of the national average, was 133% for California and 128% for Georgia, and the rate of abortions-plus-unmarried births to teens was 150% of the national average for California and 135% for Georgia.

Since there are large racial differences in pregnancy and fertility for all age groups, Dr. Kasun prepared other tables to eliminate this effect so that the discrepancies between the states cannot be attributed to racial differences. She compared rates of teenage abortions-plus-unmarried births for whites only, and only for those states whose white populations have fewer than six percent Spanish-origin persons.

Dr. Kasun compared the per capita public expenditures on birth control (consisting of per capita state and federal expenditures) with the pregnancy rate of white teenagers (consisting of the rate of abortions-plus-unmarried-births among white women age 15-19).

Statistical testing by the method of rank correlation showed that "states that spend relatively large amounts on government birth control also tend to have high rates of teenage abortions-plus-unmarried-births." Those states include Georgia, Vermont, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

But those states which spent the least on birth control and abortions tended to have the lowest rates of abortions-plus-unmarried births. Those states include Utah, South Dakota, Idaho, and North Dakota.

### Programs create problems

"It may be argued that state programs for the control of teenage pregnancy are responses to problems, not causes of them," states Kasun. "The facts, however, suggest that the programs create problems." The researcher uses the California experience as her case in point.

California has consistently spent more than twice as much as the national average on government birth control, cites Kasun. In FY

## Rates of Teenage Pregnancy and Abortion-Plus-Unmarried Births for States With Free Access to Birth Control

| State      | Per Capita Public Expenditures on Birth Control as Percent of National Average, 1980 | Teen Pregnancy Rate as Percent of National Average, 1981 | Rate of Abortion-plus-Unmarried-Births to Teens as Percent of National Average, 1981 |
|------------|--|--|--|
| California | 227%   | 133%   | 150%   |
| Hawaii     | 170  | 122  | 134  |
| Georgia    | 142  | 128  | 131  |
| New York   | 111  | 105  | 135  |

1971-73, the California State Office of Family Planning spent \$4 million. But by 1983, spending had increased to where the state spent \$95 million a year on contraceptives, sterilizations, and abortions.

During this period, "the teenage pregnancy rate in California rose to a level that was 30% above the national level, and the teenage

reduced not by increasing teenagers' access to birth control but by restricting it."

To support her claim, Dr. Kasun points out that "during the 1970s, the state of South Dakota reduced its use of Title X family planning funds, and there occurred a reduction in teenage pregnancy."

Similarly, "in 1980 the state of Utah passed a law requiring parental consent for minors to be given birth control, and rates of pregnancy and abortion among girls 15-17 fell."

In 1981, the state of Minnesota passed a law requiring parents to be notified of minors' abortions.

"There ensued dramatic reductions in abortions, births, and pregnancies," states Kasun. "The teenage abortion rate fell by 20% between 1980 and 1983; the pregnancy rate by 16%; and the fertility rate by 13%"

And, "in 1984, an English court prohibited giving prescription contraceptives to girls under 16; there ensued a decrease in abortions among this age group."

Dr. Kasun said that she conducted the study "because the press is full of the gospel that the way to control pregnancy among teenagers is to increase access to birth control ... I wondered if the facts bore this out, so I looked at the studies and found problems with the statistics."

For her own research, Dr. Kasun looked at the most current data available from as many sources as possible, including the National Center for Vital Statistics, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and the Alan Guttmacher Institute. The Guttmacher Institute is a special affiliate to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, a research organization.

## "Comparisons among states and countries provide no support of the claim that government birth control can reduce pregnancy"

abortion rate more than tripled, to a level that was 60% above the national level."

In 1981, almost 60% of teenage pregnancies in California were aborted, compared with 45% for the nation.

According to Dr. Kasun, California promoted and provided sex education at all grade levels during this period, sent pregnancy counselors into schools, and promoted contraceptives and abortions to teenagers at public expense without notifying parents.

### Reduced access means reduced pregnancies

Based on statistical evidence, Dr. Kasun also suggests that "there is additional evidence ... that unwanted teenage pregnancy may be

## No Federally-funded Sex Ed in Louisiana

A Louisiana state law that prohibits the use of federally-funded sex education programs in that state will remain on the books, following an unsuccessful attempt by sex education proponents to repeal that law.

The Education Committee of the Louisiana House of Representatives voted in June to reject a proposed repeal of the sex education law.

The same law also forbids the Legislature from mandating sex education programs for statewide use. Instead, jurisdiction rests with the individual school districts.

According to state pro-family leaders, the debate over the law began in the Shreveport area where a 32-member panel is currently studying and debating a possible expansion of sex education programs for the Caddo schools.

Among those who gave presentations to the panel was Sandy Cahn, who represented the federally-funded "Adolescent Family Life Project." Under the state law, that program is currently ineligible for use in the schools.

Sandra McDade, a pro-family leader and panel member, challenged the statistics and conclusions embodied in Sandy Cahn's report.

Mrs. McDade and other pro-family and pro-life leaders also recognized that the emerging drive to cultivate support for this federally-funded program was aimed at developing support to overturn the existing state law.

As a result, opponents of expanded sex education were able to provide witnesses and testimony in June which persuaded state legislators to support the existing law.



**Book of the Month...**  
will return next month

## FOCUS: A Religion Policy That Works

Parents and school officials nationwide are looking for a policy on religion in the schools that works. Parents and officials in the North Carolina school district of Charlotte-Mecklenburg think they have found exactly that.

The North Carolina district wrote and implemented a new policy one year ago due to a local controversy which came to national attention.

The debate focused on Lillie Ellis, a local teacher who was told by her principal at Kennedy High that she was not allowed to read the Bible while on lunch duty. However, teachers were allowed to read newspapers and magazines.

School officials also advised Miss Ellis not to meet privately with other teachers to begin the day with a prayer.

Miss Ellis challenged those directives, and the ensuing debate resulted in a policy both



Lillie Ellis

parents and school personnel said is reasonable and workable.

According to an official at the Board of Education, the policy was "well accepted" during its first year of implementation.

### "Religion in the Schools" Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (adopted August 13, 1985)

Teachers and other staff members shall incorporate the highest standards of honesty, integrity and morality in all of their teaching, counseling, and other contacts with students. Because there are students of many religious faiths, convictions and beliefs enrolled in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, it is especially important that all school staff members be sensitive to the freedom of religion and other Constitutional rights of all students.<sup>1</sup>

The following guidelines on religion and religious practices in the schools are provided in order to avoid infringement of individual rights and to set forth the Board's position concerning certain religious issues:

1. Teachers may include religion's role in appropriate subjects in the curriculum, such as literature, history, the humanities, and the arts. When teaching about religion, teachers shall not promote a particular religion but use fairness and objectivity.

2. School personnel will take into account the possible effects of religious holidays on school attendance when planning school calendars. When possible, examinations and other major events will not be scheduled on such holidays.

3. Students who miss school because of religious reasons that are approved system-wide or have the approval of the principal will be given an opportunity to make up school work.

4. School personnel will give careful consideration to written requests from parents that students be excused from activities that the parents deem objectionable on religious grounds. If such a request is approved by the principal, an alternative activity will be provided for the student.

5. The use of religious symbols and music as a part of a religious holiday, such as Christmas or Hanukkah, is permitted as a teaching aid or resource. Symbols that are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday are to be used on a temporary basis.

6. A moment of silence, not to exceed one minute in duration, is permitted at the beginning of the first class each day provided no instructions are given on how the period of silence is to be used.<sup>2</sup>

7. Religion classes that are historical survey courses and offer an elective credit in social studies are permitted as a part of the high school curriculum.

8. Religious books, including Bibles, or religious symbols may be given to students as an award for achievement in religion classes but may not be generally distributed by religious groups to students at school.

9. Students may read religious materials, including the Bible, during the school day except when they are involved with their classroom work or other school activities as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others or interfere in any way with the school program.

10. No restrictions shall be placed on prayer by students as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others or interfere in any way with the school program.

11. Chapters of religious affiliated organizations should meet outside of school and without school sponsorship. Students may assemble for voluntary meetings which may be of a religious nature during noninstructional time (before the school day begins for students and after the school day ends for students) as long as the meetings do not interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational activities within the school. School personnel are not permitted to promote, lead or participate in such meetings; however, a school person may be present at the meetings to maintain order and discipline and to protect the general welfare of students and faculty. School personnel may not influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity nor require a person to participate in prayer or other religious activity at such meetings. Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control or regularly attend the activities of such student-initiated, noncurriculum-related groups.<sup>3</sup>

12. School personnel may read religious materials, including the Bible, and pray on their free time and may carry or wear religious symbols when on duty at school as long as it does not interfere with their work. Principals and other administrative personnel should be sensitive to and show respect for religious beliefs held by other employees and students. In dealing with religious issues, they should do so in a manner that will not show or imply favor or disfavor with any employee's or student's religious beliefs.

13. Religious groups, just as any other nonschool related group, will be permitted use of school facilities provided there is no conflict with school activities and Board policy, and administrative regulations are followed.

14. Individuals giving verbal prayers at functions, such as graduation exercises, PTA meetings and other programs should be sensitive to the religious beliefs of others.

15. Counseling of students or informal discussions with students by school personnel shall neither infringe on the students' religious beliefs nor seek to indoctrinate students in the particular religious beliefs of the individual.

16. In scheduling speakers for classes and school assembly programs, schools may schedule motivational speakers; however, speakers should not advocate a particular religious belief.

<sup>1</sup>The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides not only that government may not establish religion but also that individuals may have the right of free exercise of religion. Article I, Section 13 of the North Carolina Constitution, dealing with religious liberty, reads as follows: "All persons have a natural and inalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and no human authority shall, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience".

<sup>2</sup>The Supreme Court decision of June 4, 1985 (Wallace vs Jaffree, 53 LW 4665) indicates that schools may have moments of silent meditation as long as no reference is made to prayer. North Carolina General Statute 115C-47 permits local school boards to authorize the observance of a moment of silence each day in school.

<sup>3</sup>Based on the Equal Access Act of 1984 (P. L. 98-377).

## Experts Debate Link Between TV Movies and Teen Suicides

Do television movies on teenage suicide result in an increase or decrease in youth suicides? That question is the subject of a hot and growing debate.

At the National Conference on Prevention & Interventions in Youth Suicide held June 11-13 in Oakland, CA, experts examined the effects of the media on youth suicide. They were not always in agreement.

David Shaffer is a professor of clinical psychiatry and pediatrics and director of the division of child psychiatry at Columbia University in New York. In his keynote address, he concluded that television programs "do not reduce the number of suicide attempts and may, in fact, increase them."

Dr. Shaffer and his associates examined "the impact of dramatized television presentations of suicide on a youthful audience." They focused on a period of approximately four months when the major U.S. networks broadcast four dramatizations of either a young person's suicide or a reaction to a suicide in a parent.

One of those films was the ABC movie, "Surviving", which starred teen idol Molly Ringwald.

Dr. Shaffer noted that "the programs were broadcast with advance publicity clearly stating that they were intended to make the public aware of the problem of youth suicide."

To determine what, if any, effect the movies had on youth suicide, Dr. Shaffer examined the incidence of completed suicides among teen-

agers aged 19 or under in the states of Connecticut, New Jersey and part of New York state. Researchers focused on 14-day segments during the four months during which the programs were shown, and for two one-month periods before the first program and after the last program.

Comparisons were made both between the death rate during the 14 days before and after each program, and between an overall expected rate and the observed rate after each show. Similar comparisons were made of the number of attempted suicides treated at six large hospitals in the New York City area. Dr. Shaffer reported at the national conference that "suicidal deaths increased significantly during the ten days following three of the programs but there were no deaths after one of them. A similar effect was noted on attempted suicides."

He said, "It seemed unlikely that the increased number of deaths was due to a bringing forward of suicides which might have occurred anyway."

"If this had been the case," said Dr. Shaffer, "one would have expected to note a reduction in the frequency of deaths at some point after the program, and this was not seen."

Dr. Shaffer also cautioned that the television docudramas, such as a recent after-school special, give youth the dangerous impression that they can become a celebrity or inflict punishment on people by committing suicide.

Dr. Alan Berman, a professor of psychology at American University in Washington, D.C., also addressed the conference on "Mass Media

and Youth Suicide Prevention."

As noted by Dr. Berman, Dr. Shaffer's position concurs with the recent findings of sociologist David Phillips of the University of California at San Diego.

Professor Phillips examined the national suicide statistics for all ages, and found that widespread reporting of violence on television and radio and in newspapers increases murder and suicide rates.

But Dr. Berman was hesitant to confirm the research which links youth suicide and television movies. Dr. Berman said that no direct

links between the television movies and the suicides have been conclusively proven.

Dr. Berman did concede that following the ABC movie, "Surviving," in which two teenagers killed themselves by inhaling carbon monoxide, there was an imitative shift by teenagers who committed suicide to use that method.

He said he did not believe that the shift indicated that the movie had actually prompted the suicides. "Those victims may have committed suicide anyway," said Dr. Berman, "but in another way."



### Legislation Update: Teen Suicide

While most people agree that teen suicide is a problem, many disagree over what the solution should be. They also disagree over what role the government should play in addressing this challenge.

Current disagreement focuses on pending federal legislation, H.R. 4650, the "Youth Suicide Prevention Act." The bill, which passed the House by voice vote on July 14, would provide one million dollars in federal grant money to education agencies and private non-profit programs related to youth suicide prevention.

In its original form, the bill would have provided \$10 million in each of the fiscal years 1987, 1988, and 1989.

The amended H.R. 4650 is now in the

Senate, where opponents say they will try to stop its passage.

Many pro-family leaders are concerned that the proliferation of suicide prevention programs financed by the legislation will actually harm the majority of normal, healthy schoolchildren. "It is harmful to treat all schoolchildren as potential suicide victims," said one opponent.

Opponents also object that the legislation "will establish still another federal bureaucracy."

A June 1986 report on youth suicide programs from the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services stated that there are already 261 agencies throughout the country serving 1.6 million youth.

## Innocent Parents Sue School Over Child Abuse Report

When officials at a New Jersey elementary school accused parents Bruce and Linda Tarlowe of child abuse, they did not anticipate how their actions would backfire.

Now, the innocent parents have filed a lawsuit against the Union Board of Education, and they are at the forefront of a statewide movement to safeguard the rights of parents and families from proposed legislation.

Bruce and Linda Tarlowe of Union, New Jersey, filed suit against the Union Board of Education, because their only daughter suffered serious psychological problems after school officials suggested that she was a victim of child abuse.

Mrs. Tarlowe said that the problem began on September 20, 1985 when she dropped her then-third-grade daughter off at Livingston Elementary School. Her daughter was crying when she entered the school because she had been verbally scolded by her mother.

School officials sent the girl to the new "intervention counselor" who specialized in detecting child abuse. Mrs. Tarlowe said that her daughter later reported that she was told

"not to tell mommy" about their discussion.

Her daughter said that the counselor asked her if she had been beaten at home, but the young girl did not understand what "beating" meant.

When her daughter arrived home that afternoon, she was spanked by her mother for her "arrogant" behavior. Following the spanking, Mrs. Tarlowe said that the weekend went smoothly, with no further incidents.

But on Monday, school officials repeatedly took the young girl out of the classroom. They asked her what had happened over the weekend. When she reported that she had been spanked, school officials disrobed and examined her. Department of Youth and Family Services officials were called in and likewise disrobed the young girl.

Mrs. Tarlowe knew nothing of the incident until a week later when her daughter experienced nightmares and vomiting, and complained of headaches.

The DYFS then brought charges against the Tarlowes, but those charges were immediately dropped upon investigation.

But the Tarlowes are suing the Board of Education because their daughter is still suffering the after-effects of that incident.

Although transferred to a private school, she has been in private therapy for six months. Her doctor anticipates that she will require another six months to "get rid of the fear" of being separated from her parents.

Mrs. Tarlowe said that she doesn't want other families to experience the same trauma.

### Innocent parents oppose legislation

The Tarlowes are not the only New Jersey parents who have been victimized by child abuse reporting procedures. They are joined by the members of the Coalition for the Unjustly Accused (CUA) and Victims Against Child Abuse Laws (VOCAL). VOCAL has 50 chapters nationwide.

These parents point out that the DYFS has been unable to substantiate two-thirds of all child abuse reports it has received over the past two years.

They are particularly upset because, despite DYFS's failure to substantiate these reports, legislation is pending in New Jersey which



would increase the number of accusations.

Senate Bill 1475 would mandate that "any person who has a reasonable cause to believe that an act of child abuse has been committed and knowingly fails to report that act ... is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree."

Parents succeeded in substituting the word "cause" for "suspicion" in the original language.

The bill passed the Senate earlier this year and is currently in the Assembly Health and Human Services Committee, where opponents hope to stop it.

Such a law, said Mrs. Tarlowe, would only increase pressure on school personnel to report an alleged child abuse incident.

According to New Jersey law, she said, the accuser is protected from any criminal charges. But the innocent parent will be at the mercy of the state.

### QUEST continued

At a meeting with middle school principal Gary DeMoss on May 19, Mrs. Poe submitted withdrawal slips from parents which read: "Having familiarized myself with the program, I request that my child not be admitted to this class. I also urge you to reevaluate the Quest program before putting it into our school system."

She anticipates that at least one-third of the parents will eventually withdraw their children.

### Skills for Living

Simultaneously, the high school counterpart of *Skills for Adolescence* ignited a fire in

you and your feelings, you and your friends, parent participation program, you and your family, you and the person you marry, you and your own parenting, you and those great big beautiful dollars, you and what you will do, you and your concept of the universe."

Currently serving as president of the school board, Mrs. Rinks became concerned about the content, purpose, and legality of the Quest program earlier this year. She communicated her concerns to State Representative Thomas Scott.

With Representative Scott's assistance,

and "Boundary Breakers" because "the items in the last of these duplicate or parallel the items in such conventional and widely used personality tests as 'Incomplete Sentences Test,' used routinely in psychological testing."

The investigation is not the first victory for Michigan parents. Earlier this spring, the volume of questions from concerned citizens prompted the state Superintendent of Public Instruction to issue a notice to all school superintendents.

That April 28 memo said: "Recently staff of the Department of Education have had a number of inquiries, both from legislators and school districts, regarding the program's merit as well as its appropriateness for particular communities. It is for that reason that I want to make it clear that Quest *Skills for Living* has not been endorsed by the Department of the State Board of Education."

Nor is the Michigan state superintendent the first authority to distance himself from the Quest program. In a 1981 letter to Quest Director Rick Little, nationally-known pro-family leader Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family withdrew his previous endorsement of the program "in view of the continuing controversy that swirls around Quest activities."

### Officials Defend Quest Techniques

Both Dave Miller of the Quest Center and Jeanette Krema of Lions Clubs International were enthusiastic in support of the Quest program.

But both agreed that Quest is much more than just a drug program.

According to Mr. Miller, the Quest program is a "negative behaviors prevention program" which "addresses many risk factors." Mr. Miller, who studied under Dr. Sidney Simon, denied that the Quest program emphasized values clarification techniques.

Activities such as role-playing "all reinforce positive behavior," he said. He added that teachers have been "very receptive" to the program.

With regard to parental involvement in the program, Mr. Miller said that the Quest program does encourage parent participation. However, he said that local school policies determine whether parental consent is required, rather than the Quest Center.

Ms. Krema claimed that parents who have reacted negatively to the program tend to be "somewhat paranoid."

She explained that the program emphasizes feelings rather than facts about drugs because students "know the facts by the age of sixth grade" and "you can't have things both ways."

## Quest Quotes

The following quotes are taken from the *Skills for Adolescence* teacher's manual (emphasis added):

**"Processing Questions.** All of the sessions in the curriculum contain questions designed to help students determine how they felt during the activity, what caused their feelings and reactions, what they thought, what they learned, and how they can apply that learning to their lives -- in short, questions that can assess the process of the session, as contrasted with the content. Although 'processing' is usually done in the form of questions and answers, in some cases we have preferred to use unfinished sentences ('I was surprised that ...') Processing can also be done through reflections notebook writing or specific follow-up questions or activities. Feel free to include additional questions of your own. [Examples] What feelings did you have during this activity? What are your feelings right now? ... Make sure you spend no less than five minutes at the end of class processing the activity."

"Other kinds of activities that can be used for processing are: **Here-And-Now-Wheel:** Draw a circle and divide it into four sections. Have the students write a word or phrase in each section describing how they feel at that moment. **Letter-to-the-Teacher:** The students write a brief letter telling how they are feeling, how they are doing, and how they are reacting to the class."

**"Reflections Notebook:** You [the teacher] may wish to read the notebooks and make comments. Another option would be to read the entries only when the students write 'please read' or a similar message indicating that the entries are not private ... Also, given the sometimes private nature of the reflections notebooks you may decide that it's necessary to keep them in a locked storage closet."

**"Energizer"** exercise: "Establish quiet contemplative mood. Then tell the students, 'You are in an elevator. Notice the buttons on the side for different floors. Each button has the number 'five.' See the doors close. Feel the elevator descending. Feel it stop. The doors open and you are looking out on a scene from your fifth year of life: Notice everything that is there ... who is there ... how it smells ... how the air feels. Now say goodbye to the scene and push the button marked '11.' The doors are closing ... At each stop encourage the students to recall one or two specific memories. Make several stops that aren't age oriented such as a button marked 'Happy Experience, Happy Birthday, Very Important Person and the Future.' You may wish to process this activity by having the students write in their reflections notebooks or by discussing it in a conversation circle. Be sensitive to those who may have stopped on an unpleasant floor."

## The common question is: "Is it a drug education program or isn't it?"

Michigan this spring which is getting hotter by the day.

*Skills for Living* was the original Quest curriculum and, according to parents, it, too, is typically introduced to schools and parents as a drug abuse prevention program.

But parents throughout Michigan disagree with this interpretation. They contend that the focus of *Skills for Living* is likewise emotions, feelings, attitudes and beliefs.

To support their claim that the emphasis of the *Skills for Living* program is values clarification, concerned parents like Janice Rinks of Mount Morris, Michigan, have pointed to the stated philosophies of the program writers.

The co-authors of the *Skills for Living* curriculum are Howard Kirschenbaum and his wife, Barbara Glaser. Dr. Kirschenbaum is also one of the co-authors, along with Sidney Simon, of the book *Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies*. He is currently the Director of the National Humanistic Center in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Parents pointed out that the *Skills for Living* teacher's manual lists the following units for study: Self-Concept, Feelings, Friends, Family, Marriage, Parenting, Financial Management, Life Planning, and Life Philosophy.

Dave Miller, vice president of programs at the Quest National Center, confirmed in an interview that the *Skills for Living* program "does not contain one unit on drugs."

Another element of the high school program which has upset many parents is the journal writing exercises. Suggested topics for journal writing include: "You are somebody special,

Michigan parents recently succeeded in persuading state officials to conduct an investigation of the whole Quest program to determine whether it violates Michigan School Code 380.1172 pertaining to "personality testing."

The law defines "personality testing" as "instruments designed primarily to assess behavior characteristics of individuals other than the characteristic of aptitude, interest, achievement or intelligence."

The law requires that "personality tests may be administered as a part of a school project or program only after due notice in writing is given to the parent or guardian that such tests are being contemplated for the pupil."

Furthermore, any person interpreting the tests must have submitted evidence that "he has been granted an earned doctor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited institution with a major in psychology, education psychology, counseling, guidance or education..."

Mrs. Rinks claims that the Quest program constitutes "personality testing" and that the conditions necessary for such testing in Michigan have not been met. She is supported by other parent leaders in the state including John and Jane Greller of Spring Lake and Professor and Mrs. Robert Crowner of Saline. Quest has also been used in their communities.

The parents' claim is also supported by Dr. Joseph Adelson, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan Psychological Clinic in Ann Arbor, who stated that "certain parts of the syllabus qualify as personality testing."

Dr. Adelson specifically cited exercises including "I'm Comfortable," "My Emotions,"