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## Clinton Demands \$1.4 Billion to Reduce Class Size

### *Do the costs outweigh the benefits? Do smaller classes help?*

WASHINGTON, DC — President Clinton jumped on the smaller class-size bandwagon in his 1998 State of the Union message. He proposed spending \$12 billion to hire 100,000 new teachers over seven years to reduce class size to an average of 18 pupils in grades 1-3. Clinton's budget request for 1999 includes \$1.4 billion for his class size reduction initiative for FY 2000. Legislators are courting the issue at both the state and federal levels.

Conventional wisdom says that smaller classes allow teachers to give students more individualized attention, exert greater control over their classes, and cover material faster and better. It is alleged that lower pupil-to-teacher ratios are especially beneficial in the early grades, and that improved test scores will follow.

Does research bear out the equation that class reduction = improved performance? Not according to findings by Eric Hanushek, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the University of Rochester. Professor Hanushek reviewed 277 studies that measured improvements in academic achievement relative to class-size reduction. Most of the studies were inconclusive, but nearly as many found that low-

ering class size had a negative effect on performance as found a positive effect.

Hanushek found that pupil-teacher ratios declined 35% between 1950 and 1995 with no corresponding rise in test scores. "Existing evidence indicates



that achievement for the typical student will be unaffected by instituting the types of class-size reductions that have been recently proposed or undertaken," he stated in a report on the results of his research. He concedes that, while achievement information for the entire period between 1950 and 1995 is not available, "the information that we have from 1970 for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicates that our 17-year-olds were performing roughly the same in 1996 as in 1970."

The study most often cited by propo-

nents of reduced class size is Project STAR, which was initiated in 1985 in Tennessee by a university consortium and examined 7,000 students and teachers over a four-year period. Teachers and students were randomly assigned — some to smaller classes of about 15 students, others to "regular" classes of about 25 students, and the remainder to "regular" classes of 25 students with one teacher and one teacher's aide. While the study showed that students in the smaller classes performed substantially better than students in the larger classes, some researchers have assailed the results.

Project STAR showed significant learning gains among kindergartners, but these gains did not last. By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, the advantage enjoyed by students in the smaller classes over their peers in the larger classes remained stagnant — it did not increase. The Feb. 18, 1998 edition of *Education Week* quoted an education professor at the

University of California-Riverside as saying: "The assumption is that [smaller classes] are going to change the rate of learning. If so, then every year students who get ahead should get farther ahead."

*Education Week* also reported on a 15-school project in Austin, TX, that involved reducing class sizes "in varying degrees." Each school received \$300,000 for the project, but "only two reported dramatic gains in student achievement as a result." These two schools were implementing other reforms at the same time, which raises the question of whether class size by itself makes any difference.

In Ohio, the Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions reports that there were approximately four fewer students in the average classroom in 1997 than in 1978, a 22% reduction in student-teacher ratios. "Despite these smaller class sizes," notes the Institute's president, Richard C. Leonardi, J.D., "Ohio's graduation rates (See *Class Size*, page 2)

## Government Teacher Pay

### *Does it make a case for privatization?*

CHICAGO, IL — Every August, local newscasts around the country are peppered with reports of striking public school teachers. TV cameras zoom in on picket lines, and sound bites usually reveal that the strikes are about pay and benefits. In August 1998, high school teachers at a suburban West Chicago district walked out for precisely those reasons, despite the fact that they were already earning more than 92% of all Illinois workers.

According to the Illinois Taxpayer Education Foundation (ITEF), most of the state's public school teachers (especially in suburban Chicago districts) earn more in nine months of employment than most Americans do in a year. The average government teacher earned \$43,707 for nine months' work in 1998, while the personal income for the average American laboring 11-12 months was \$24,225 (1996 figures). The average teacher at the two highest paying Chicago-area high schools grossed an average of \$77,763 and \$75,032 respectively in 1998, which doesn't include additional benefits in pensions, medical and life insurance, tenure, and tuition reimbursement for continuing personal education.

In contrast, the salaries of private school teachers are set by the free market. As the ITEF's Feb. 1999 newsletter, *ITEF Review*, notes: "Private schools compete against the subsidized public school behemoth as well as other private schools. They must focus on delivering results at affordable costs or go out of business."

They cite as an example the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago, which enrolls 131,000 students and pays its teachers slightly more than half the salaries of their public school counterparts. The newsletter states that "despite the lower salaries, there are usually many applicants for every available private school teaching position," and adds that private schools usually provide better education. "Contrary to popular opinion, private schools accept nearly every student who applies because they need the money."

Across the country, teacher unions routinely spend millions of dollars on campaign contributions to ensure that union-friendly legislators are elected to pass laws that support their political agenda and are favorable to their members. *ITEF Review* (See *Teacher*, page 2)

## School District Slapped for Sex Education Program

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL — In 1997, Jodi Hoffman, a mother of three students in the Broward County public schools, discovered that her children were learning what she called "inappropriate, inaccurate, unfair and biased" information about human sexuality. She especially objected to sex instruction that included condoms, abortion, and cross-dressing — concepts that she felt had no place in the public schools (see *Education Reporter*, Feb. 1999). Mrs. Hoffman filed suit on behalf of herself and her children, and a settlement was reached in December.

The lawsuit identified four main problems with the Broward County public school district — the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation. It alleged that the district: (1) Promoted abortion using a lesson from an interactive laser disc (produced by ABC) entitled "Understanding Ourselves: Teenage Sexuality;" (2) Directed children to the sports pages and classified sections of the *Miami Herald*, where explicit advertisements for sexual activities and nude strip clubs are located; (3) Failed to promote abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school-age children while teaching the benefits of monogamous heterosexual marriage; and (4) Failed to adhere to curriculum content guidelines.

When attempts to obtain redress in state court proved fruitless, Mrs. Hoffman

added federal claims for violation of her constitutional rights, and the case was removed to U.S. District Court in West Palm Beach. After four amended complaints were filed, the Broward County School Board offered to settle.

The school board agreed to discontinue using sections of the laser disc curriculum dealing with abortion, to curtail student exposure to newspaper ads promoting sexual material, and to require that sex education programs stress abstinence and heterosexual marriage as "the expected standard for all school age children."

While not completely satisfied with the outcome of their suit, the Hoffmans believe they have accomplished several worthwhile goals. The curriculum that promoted, condoned, and even facilitated abortion was deleted from Broward County's sex education program, and the school district acknowledged the importance of monogamous heterosexual marriage as the expected norm.



Paul & Jodi Hoffman

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

The California Labor Board has ordered 15 8<sup>th</sup> graders to be returned to a classroom from which their parents had requested that they be removed. Chief Deputy Labor Commissioner Jose Millan ruled that the Rio Bravo-Greeley School District (located about 100 miles north of Los Angeles near Bakersfield) wrongfully heeded parents' requests to pull their children from teacher James Merrick's class. The Commissioner accused the school district of treating Merrick differently because of his "perceived sexual orientation." The parents said their children had complained of feeling uncomfortable with Merrick's discussions about homosexuality. The school district has settled with Merrick, and has decided not to appeal the Labor Board's ruling to CA Industrial Relations Director Stephen Smith. The Pacific Justice Institute is representing the students' families. Merrick is represented by the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a gay rights organization.

Indiana basketball legend Bryce Drew champions sexual abstinence among young people. Drew (now a member of the NBA's Houston Rockets) joins former Chicago Bears football star Mike Singletary and other top athletes who speak out in favor of abstinence. Singletary appeared last November at a rally celebrating abstinence in Chicago sponsored by Project Reality. Currently, Drew is partnering with Indiana abstinence organization PATH (Positive Approach to Teen Health, based in Valparaiso) to produce an eight-page abstinence booklet that will be distributed to teens. The booklet "will speak specifically to high school students on the subject of abstinence as the preferred choice." PATH is already receiving requests for the booklet from other states.

A darkly "comic" novel about a boy wrongly convicted of a crime who serves time at a strange juvenile detention facility in the barren Texas drylands has won the 1999 Newbery Medal for children's literature. The book is called *Holes*, by Louis Sachar. The award is presented annually by the American Library Association.

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## Class Size (Continued from page 1)

have declined and overall proficiency test scores have not improved."

International comparisons also do little to support the case for class-size reduction. Korean and Japanese 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored significantly higher on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) than U.S. students, but class sizes in those countries average 49 and 36 respectively.

At least 20 states have either implemented class size reduction programs or are planning to do so. According to *School Board News*, New York state lawmakers allocated \$440 million in 1997 for the purpose of hiring extra teachers to reduce teacher-pupil ratios, and Tennessee's program cost approximately \$600 million between 1991-96.

California's program is easily the most ambitious. The June 1998 issue of *State Legislatures* magazine reported that the cost of California's class-size reduction program will top \$1.1 billion. The legislation establishing the program passed in 1996 with the enthusiastic backing of former Governor Pete Wilson, and it immediately created a need for 18,000 new classrooms and 26,000 new teachers.

Every unused building was pressed into service, and portable classrooms were added. The legislature was forced to pass "emergency certification legislation" so that school districts could procure the needed teachers from a "reserve pool" of about 200,000 people with state teaching licenses. Estimates are that California will have to hire 250,000 additional teachers within the next decade.

Another key concern of educators and researchers who find no real merit in reducing class size is the inadequate number of qualified teachers available. Professor Hanushek maintains that "the quality of the teacher is much more important than class size." His research uncovered considerable evidence that "by far the largest differences in the impact of schools on student achievement relate to differences in the quality of teachers. We cannot rely on requirements for entry, but must switch to using actual performance in the classroom."

Some critics question whether the drive to reduce class size, which will require thousands of new teachers and result in thousands more union members, is really a political payoff to the teachers unions.



## Teacher Pay (Continued from page 1)

maintains that public school teacher salaries are based on politics, while private school teachers are compensated for their ability to teach. "Illinois public school teachers are rewarded for seniority," it states, "or for taking courses for which the tuition is usually paid by the taxpayers."

Lost in the campaign-contribution controversy and wage-comparison clamor is the issue of whether higher-paid teachers benefit students. The results of last year's Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) showed a continuing decline in performance among U.S. students in math and science (see *Education Reporter*, April 1998). Recently, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) issued a statement that 1998 NAEP reading test results for 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders showed some improvement, but added: "Unfortunately, there still are not nearly enough students who are reading well enough to handle a challenging curriculum or meet the nation's needs as

we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Results like these have contributed to the rising tide of parents who are assuming the financial burden of sending their children to private schools or home-schooling. Approximately 17% of Illinois students, for example, attend private schools, and the number is increasing. "These consumers," says the ITEF, "are the free-market proof that private schools provide a better education."

Many parents and concerned citizens believe that the only way to "fix" America's education system is to privatize it completely. Private scholarship programs have opened the door for thousands of low-income students to attend private schools, and the concept of tuition tax credits for all families with children in private schools is increasingly finding favor. A recent court decision in Arizona (see *Education Reporter*, March 1999) that allowed the state's tuition tax credit program to stand has further fueled the movement.

## Book of the Month



**Disney, The Mouse Betrayed**, Peter & Rochelle Schweizer, Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1998, 359 pps., \$24.95.

The Schweizers provide a fascinating behind-the-scenes glimpse into "The Wonderful World of Disney," which today grimly contrasts with its wholesome past. While the name still connotes apple pie and family values, the authors report that Disney has sacrificed its founder's high moral standards and scruples for the sake of profits.

In 1984, Michael Eisner became CEO, and the company that had long remained on the fringes of the movie industry "went Hollywood." Disney adopted Hollywood's morals, and making money became the number one objective.

The Schweizers demonstrate how the wellbeing and safety of employees and guests at Disney's theme parks have been sacrificed for the bottom line. Using employee interviews, company records, and a variety of documents, they provide shocking details of crime and cover-up at Disney World, including crimes by pedophiles, acts of violence, and serious accidents due to neglect of basic safety rules.

Disney's animated films have incorporated adult themes and controversial elements, such as subliminal sexual messages. The authors note that each film now "has an underlying message that is central to the project." Historical Pocahontas, for example, who converted to Christianity and is buried in England, "was transformed into a cover girl for Native American philosophies and present-day ecological concerns."

The book profiles the world of Miramax Films, a Disney subsidiary acquired in 1993. Extreme bloody violence, obscene language, violent and even child-centered pornography, and vicious religious attacks (directed primarily against Catholics and Christianity in general) are a sample of the Miramax fare.

The Schweizers also describe how Disney:

- \* Signs recording artists who sing about drugs, sex, suicide and satanism.
- \* Employed a convicted felon/pedophile as a writer/director;
- \* Allows its memorabilia to be produced in sweatshops;
- \* Sells out its creative control to market to the Chinese communists; and,
- \* Champions the gay culture in its theme parks and film projects.

Regnery Publishing, Inc., One Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 216-0600.

# FOCUS: Planning the American Economy

## The Workforce Investment Act of 1998

by Karen Holgate

Just as the 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STW) set in motion the federalization of American education, and "Hillary's Health Plan" sought to federalize America's health care, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) passed in August 1998 will federalize this nation's job training. Its impact will eventually have far-reaching consequences for every man, woman, child, employee and business in America.

The WIA:

- ◆ Undermines the checks and balances of the three branches of state government;
- ◆ Places unprecedented power in the hands of the governors of each state and their appointees;
- ◆ Bypasses state legislators in the decision-making process;
- ◆ Creates a planned and managed economy by centralizing direct control over the U.S. workforce; and
- ◆ Burdens America's taxpayers with the cost of supporting this massive restructuring.

WIA will control and manage the lives of adults, just as STW will control and manage the lives of children.

In his State of the Union message, President Clinton literally glowed in praising the success of the U.S. economy. In a White Paper dated August 8, 1998, U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Alexis Herman wrote: "The American economy is stronger than it has been in a generation, and it is increasingly driven by creativity, innovation and technology."

The President was right; Secretary Herman is right. Free enterprise works and works well. So the big question is — in light of America's glowingly successful and thriving economy, based on the principles of a free market-driven economy — why has the Federal Government enacted legislation designed to alter the course of this successful formula?

Secretary Herman gives us a hint of the intent and purpose of WIA: "[WIA] provides unprecedented opportunity for major reforms that will result in a reinvigorated workforce investment system!" Apparently, having one of the strongest economies in the last generation isn't enough to deter Congress from passing massive federal mandates that will "reinvigorate" our workforce by drastically changing how business is conducted in the U.S.

In direct opposition to the basic concept of freedom, upon which this country was founded, WIA is quite clearly designed to direct individuals into jobs that meet the needs of "business and the community" — **not** to meet the needs of individuals. It will give the federal government, along with Governors and their appointees, the power to predict and direct all employment opportunities throughout the nation; and to determine which individuals are qualified to fill those jobs.

In an effort to prevent this bill from being used to further the agenda mandated by STW legislation, Sen. John Ashcroft submitted the following amendment:



Karen Holgate

"None of the funds made available under this Act may be used to carry out activities authorized under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994."

The importance of this simple sentence was evidenced by Bill Clinton's reaction. White House aides quickly notified sponsors of the bill that unless Sen. Ashcroft's amendment was dropped, the President would veto the bill.

The amendment was amended until it was acceptable to the President. The final language of the bill was creatively reworded to prevent funds from WIA to be used for STW, but **not** to prohibit funding for the *activities* outlined in STW!

The President was appeased; he signed the bill two days after it passed Congress. Senators DeWine and Jeffords and aides for the Committee on Education and the Workforce continue to say that WIA has nothing to do with STW or elementary and secondary education. However, notices regarding the implementation of the Act contradict these assertions. In New York, the School Executive's Bulletin (Jan. 1999) says about WIA, "The legislation will **directly** affect **all** components of the educational system: elementary, middle, secondary and continuing education . . ." Despite their cleverly worded releases, judge for yourselves if this bill mirrors the mandates and promotes the goals of the STW plan.

#### School-To-Work Goals

In an 18-page letter now known as the "Dear Hillary" letter, Marc Tucker, President of the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE), laid out the comprehensive plan for STW. This letter eventually became the framework for the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, and now, the Workforce Investment Act.

The STW plan envisioned by NCEE includes: (1) the establishment of a "new form of governance," (2) a seamless web—from "cradle to grave" and (3) one system for everyone.

#### How WIA Furthers STW Goals

Sold to Congress as an adult job training bill that would streamline government by consolidating programs and eliminating wasteful duplication, WIA in reality expands the scope of government by centralizing control. Consider the following:

(1) During the WIA signing ceremony, President Clinton said, "it is a model of how our government should work." By consolidating over 60 different programs, it would seem to streamline government.

However, on closer inspection we see that any savings in that consolidation is lost in the formation of a massive bureaucratic morass. Secretary Herman said the bill will "require enhanced coordination between the Departments of Labor, Education, Health & Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Agriculture" and "envisions business, labor organizations, community organizations, school and other interested entities to be fully involved . . ."

In anticipation of WIA's passage, members of Missouri's State Workforce Development Transition Team met last year to discuss how to accomplish the extensive consolidation of departments and programs required by WIA. So far the biggest obstacle in the consolidation process appears to be that the bill maintains separate funding streams for the different departments.

However, WIA includes waiver provisions that may allow these departments to share "administrative" duties while maintaining separate funding for the different programs. This may allow them to centralize administration and circumvent the problem of separate funding streams.

(2) WIA creates an entire system of state and local Workforce Development Boards — more than 800 nationwide. (This is called streamlining government?)

(3) WIA creates a system of One-Stop Delivery Centers.

(4) WIA furthers this "new form of governance" by giving unprecedented power to Governors and Governors' appointees. The Governor directs the development of both state and local plans and appoints members of both the state and local Workforce Development Boards. (Two members of each state house will be appointed by their respective leaders, but their impact will be minor because the bill makes it clear that the vast majority of members must be business leaders.)

The Governor can remove board members at any time for any reason, and he approves and submits the state plan to the Secretary of Labor.

Because the Federal Government controls the money, the one caveat to the Governor's expanded power is that his plan must conform to the federal plan. Of course, local plans must conform to the state plan. Only after the Secretary of Labor reviews the state plan to insure that it conforms to federal dictates will funds be released to the state.

Funds released by the Department of Labor go to the Governor — bypassing the state legislatures, which have no authority in creating the plan or directing how the funds are spent. Section 191 of the bill **does** say that the state legislatures will appropriate the funds. However, it is clear that they may do so **only** under the specific mandates of the bill, and the bill repeatedly designates the Governor as the one to "allocate" the funds.

Secretary Herman says that WIA will "increase significantly the Governor's

flexibility in using state reserve funds" and will "provide the Governor with a significant new role in developing performance standards."

The Secretary is right. By law, WIA continues the new governance structure that began with Goals 2000 and continued in STW. It mandates the Governor as the sole authority in each state and forms a type of partnership between the Governor and the Federal Government.

The advantage of this new "governance structure" is easily understood. Only 50 people, one per state, need be convinced in order to enact sweeping reforms under this system. In many states, key components of WIA and STW have been put in place as a result of Governors' Executive Orders.

The bill talks about flexibility. However, it is important to note that the **only** flexibility is in **how** to implement the program, not **what** to implement.

#### Workforce Development Boards

These boards will help the Governor write the plan, predict the jobs that will be available in the future, and determine the training needed to fill the jobs. (Just as STW directs students into "career pathways" to "meet the needs of the community," WIA will channel adults into jobs to meet the "needs of business and the community.")

The Workforce Development Boards will also decide who will provide training; oversee and manage the "One-Stop Delivery System"; and disburse money through contracts to businesses, schools and groups that are part of the system.

A **one-stop center**, in Secretary Herman's words, is "the cornerstone of the new workforce investment system. . . it will unify numerous training, education and employment programs into a single . . . system [that will include] the integration of programs, services and governance structures." WIA's new system will include "common intake and case management systems," *i.e.*, data collection. One-stops will provide and coordinate **all** the services, and are seen as the local delivery mechanism that will make the system work.

#### Three-tiered system of services

The Tier 1, or core services, were supposedly enacted to put people on welfare back to work and help them become self-sufficient. Secretary Herman makes it clear that this is not the real intent of WIA.

For welfare and dislocated workers: "In the new system . . . individuals can access information and services continuously throughout their lifetime . . . former welfare recipients who are placed in a job through the Welfare-to-Work initiative will be able to remain in the workforce investment system and continue to obtain the information and services they need in order to progress through the labor market."

For everyone else: "In the new workforce investment system, all Americans will see the One-Stop Centers as a

(See *Workforce*, page 4)

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community resource they can use throughout their lifetime to enhance their job skills as they move up the career ladder — rather than just a place to go in times of crisis, such as when they lose their jobs. Funding from a combination of Wagner-Peyser, funds from WIA, and funds from other one-stop partners should result in dramatic expansion of accessibility to core services.”

Implementing these strategies will require collaboration among the key partners “... employer and worker commitment to lifelong learning, and more intensive involvement and follow-up after employees are on the job.”

These comments make it clear that “lifelong learning” means lifelong dependence on the system and the public coffers for periodic job training and guidance. Secretary Herman says: “We will know if we have successfully implemented this legislation if in less than five years... more and more Americans seek access to the system’s services.”

A National Governor’s Association Report dated April 1998 concludes with this statement: “... the promotion of training should not end upon employment. Some of the strategies that states could explore include developing enhanced credential systems that help workers certify their skills and advance on the job...”

Business should be forewarned that someone will have to pay for all this training and national certification of employees. Tucker laid out the plan in his “Dear Hillary” letter: “Employed people can access the system through the requirement that their employers spend an amount equal to 1½% of their salary and wage bill on training leading to national skill certification... to support the costs associated with employed workers gaining these skills. We propose that Bill [Clinton] take a leaf out of the German book. One of the most important reasons that large German employers offer apprenticeship slots to German youngsters is that they fear, with good reason, that if they don’t volunteer to do so, the law will require it.”

In 1996, *Business Week* reported that German employers pay 80% of all vocational education. However, Germany’s largest union association, DGB, recommended that companies “put 2.5% of their gross wage costs into a kitty to finance training programs.” Maybe big business can afford this, but what about small- to medium-sized businesses?

While businesses may be solicited to fund additional training for their own employees, who will fund the remainder of this incredible expansion of government control and government services? The taxpayer, of course. The cost of this new system is unknown, but because the WIA is now law it will be funded.

Tier II services will apply to people the one-stop centers decide need more intensive services to become employed. These include: diagnostic testing; development of individual employment plans; group counseling; individual counseling and career planning; case management; and short-term “pre-vocational” services.

For the unlucky few who still can’t get a job, the government has another plan.

The Tier III services plan will offer individuals, through the use of vouchers, credits, a debit card, or even a repository for training funds, the opportunity to take part in training from “other” (unspecified) programs. The Workforce Development Boards will arrange for these services and pay for them with taxpayer dollars.

According to Secretary Herman: “Through the one-stop system, these individuals will be evaluated to determine whether or not they are in need of training and if they possess skills and qualifications needed to participate successfully in the training program in which they have an interest.” She means that U.S. citizens will not be able to go to the taxpayer-funded job training centers, choose a career field in which they have an interest, and train for that field. Under WIA, the government agency will decide which job or career path a person is qualified to follow.

Just like STW directs career paths for children, the WIA will allow the government to direct the career paths of adults. Under STW, parents are complaining that their children are being funneled into pathways not of their choosing.

WIA also gives Workforce Development Boards the ability to provide — via the one-stop centers — “Customized Job Training” that will be: (1) “... designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (or group of employers); (2) ... conducted with a commitment by an employer to employ an individual; (3) the responsibility of the employer to pay for no less than 50% of the cost of the training.”

WIA will require taxpayers to pay for the other 50% of the cost of employee training. In practical application, this will only serve the needs of big business. After all, who is most likely to be sitting on these Workforce Development Boards? WIA is a government mandate that will force taxpayers to subsidize big business, and the businesses represented on these boards may exert far more power than those who voted for the bill envisioned.

One-stop centers are charged with “encouraging the participation of all employers in the area.” Employers who are not members and who do not want to participate in the new system will pay a price. They won’t have access to the “cream of the crop” from the job applicant pool, and will conceivably face fines or levies as inducements to “get on board.”

Two years ago, the California state legislature introduced SB 901, which would have imposed a fine on every business that failed to register all available jobs within seven days of opening. The reason? Businesses were not supporting government unemployment agencies to the degree some California legislators

thought they should.

### Is WIA an adults-only bill?

Although WIA was presented as an adults-only job training bill, it contains numerous provisions for youth. The same language is used to define the desired outcomes as is used in STW legislation.

Youth Opportunity Grants are available for youth aged 14-21, and for “activities relating to leadership development, citizenship, community service and recreation activities...”

Youth Councils are also part of WIA. Secretary Herman says: “Creation of these councils will be an unprecedented opportunity for a broad range of entities to play an integral role in the development and oversight of the youth development and training system... in order for a youth to be eligible for services, the youth must be between ages 14-21.”

The Secretary is careful to enumerate the long list of services, including tutoring, paid and unpaid work experience, supportive services, adult mentoring, comprehensive guidance and counseling. She says: “Each participant must be provided information on the full array of appropriate services that are available through the local one-stop system.”

The Secretary says that “30% of the funds in local areas must be expended on ‘out-of-school youth’... and youth who do not meet the eligibility requirement must be referred to the one-stop...”

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act stresses the establishment of partnerships between businesses and schools to provide mentoring and training for students in their “chosen” career pathways. Isn’t it reasonable to expect that many of those business leaders will be members of the Workforce Development Boards?

Since STW and WIA both make it clear that children and adults must be trained to fill the “needs of business and the community,” is it unreasonable to assume that a student’s career pathway, work-based learning, CIM, and the curriculum designed to “integrate” these skills (as mandated by STW) will be

based on what the board determines is needed to fill the jobs they’ve determined are necessary? Not only will these boards impact adult training, but their decisions will determine the career paths taught in schools. (Note: The bill does prohibit the Workforce Development Boards from writing curriculum. However, they don’t need to write the curriculum, they will be establishing the requirements and goals the schools must meet.)

The final passage of WIA took place after a long week of late night votes at the end of a busy session. According to some members, the bill was not listed on the schedule, and most members were unaware that it would be brought for a vote on that Friday night in August 1998. Many members were already on their way home to their districts. Less than a dozen Congressmen passed this onerous mandate by unanimous consent — by a voice vote. Many members only learned of the vote when they received invitations on the following Monday afternoon to attend the White House signing of the bill.

Most Congressmen did not read the bill, and most don’t understand STW, let alone the far-reaching impact on constitutional freedoms created by WIA.

### STW/WIA Modeled on German Plan

Since this plan is modeled in large part on the German Plan, we should look to Germany to see our future...

- ◆ an unemployment rate of 11.2%—nearly double that of the U.S.
- ◆ some of the highest taxes in the industrialized world
- ◆ an economic growth rate of 0.5%

According to some of Germany’s own economists, the country is perched on the precarious edge of economic collapse at all times due to the strain on its businesses and taxpayers.

(Karen Holgate is president of Parents National Network (PNN), Palm Desert, CA. Excerpted from PNN’s special report on WIA.)



### Correction:

In the Jan. 1999 issue of *Education Reporter*, the article, “Traditional Education vs. Direct Instruction,” by Tracy J. Hayes, contained the following sentence which was not part of the original

article: “In Direct Instruction, it is the method that is important, not the student.”

We apologize for the error.  
— Ed.