

EDUCATION REPORTER

NUMBER 213

THE NEWSPAPER OF EDUCATION RIGHTS

OCTOBER 2003

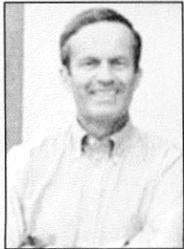
Texas Requires Pledge in Schools

Texas has joined 34 other states in requiring public school officials to lead students in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The new law, which became effective in September, requires recitation of pledges to both the U.S. and Texas flags, and a moment of silence to pray, meditate, or reflect at the beginning of each school day. Unless their parents submit a written objection, students are required to participate, although there is no penalty for failure to participate. The bill passed easily with little debate.

The Texas law is one of many legislative responses to the decision by the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals banning the Pledge of Allegiance on June 26, 2003 because of its words "under God." The U.S. Congress immediately adopted resolutions expressing indignation by votes of 416-3 in the House and 99-0 in the Senate.

After the full Ninth Circuit *en banc* refused to reconsider this decision, both houses reaffirmed



Rep. Todd Akin

their support for the Pledge as written by votes of 400-7 and 94-0 in March 2003. Seventeen states enacted new laws or amended policies concerning the Pledge in 2002 and 2003.

The Ninth Circuit decision against recitation of the Pledge by children in public schools is currently on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund submitted a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the Pledge.

Until the Supreme Court decides the issue, lawsuits challenging the Pledge can be expected in many of the 35 states that mandate its recitation in schools. A federal judge voided a Pennsylvania state law requiring teachers to lead students in reciting the Pledge or singing the national anthem each morning. The fourth stanza of the national anthem includes the words "In God is our trust." In Colorado, a federal judge has issued a temporary injunction against a state Pledge law.

Public opinion has always strongly supported schoolchildren reciting the Pledge. Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis's veto of a state law requiring teachers to lead the Pledge helped elect President George H. W. Bush in 1988.

Rep. Todd Akin (R-MO) has 221 co-sponsors for his federal Pledge Protection bill in the House (H.R. 2028), which would withdraw jurisdiction from federal courts to decide cases contesting the Pledge. A companion bill in the Senate is sponsored by Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Jim Talent (R-MO).



U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige (far right) addressing principals and state school officers last January at a celebration to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Feds Clamp Down on Nosy Questions

WASHINGTON, DC — Background surveys that accompany national achievement tests will have to be shorter and less intrusive under a new policy announced September 12 by the National Assessment Governing Board.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test administration includes questionnaires for teachers, principals and students covering such issues as television viewing habits and the performance of children in single-parent households. The governing board, which now oversees the testing under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, has directed the U.S. Education Department to eliminate 25% to 40% of the questions in use.

The No Child Left Behind Act bars the NAEP from asking about "personal or family beliefs or attitudes." The governing board concluded that the surveys were becoming too burdensome and had little to do with the primary mission of the test. As reported in *The New York Times* (9-16-03), board chairman Darwin M. Winick said researchers have been relying on the surveys as an omnibus research project at taxpayer expense.

Before the policy change, the questionnaires included approximately 100 questions for teachers, 65 questions for principals, and 30 to 50 questions for students. Noting that by law the NAEP may

collect only information "directly related to the appraisal of academic achievement," the new policy requires that future surveys focus on cognitive achievement and use "far fewer non-cognitive questions."

The NAEP, also known as "the nation's report card," tests students in grades 4, 8 and 12. In the 1980s, it began using many more non-cognitive questions as part of its background information gathering.

While parents can be relieved that their children will face fewer prying personal questions, social science researchers are complaining bitterly about losing a source of classroom data. The Heritage Foundation's research fellow Kirk A. Johnson, who has advocated broadening the surveys to include parent responses, told the *Times* he thinks the answers to the questions being eliminated are "of public policy interest."

Observers credit longtime parental opposition to nosy questionnaires for the new NAEP policy. Pro-family groups fought hard to put a provision against intrusive surveys in the No Child Left Behind Act. The parental victory in the lawsuit against the Ridgewood, N.J. survey (see *Education Reporter*, January 2002), and the cancellation of the survey in Fairfax County, Va. (see *Education Reporter*, May 2003) have had a big impact on the education establishment.

States Mandating Pledge in Schools

The following 35 states require schools to include recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance during the school day:

Alaska	Arizona
Arkansas	California
Colorado	Connecticut
Delaware	Florida
Georgia	Idaho
Illinois	Kansas
Maryland	Massachusetts
Minnesota	Mississippi
Missouri	Montana
Nevada	New Hampshire
New Jersey	New Mexico

New York	North Dakota
Oregon	Pennsylvania
Rhode Island	South Carolina
Tennessee	Texas
Utah	Virginia
Washington	West Virginia
Wisconsin	

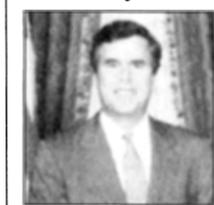
Five other states encourage schools to conduct the pledge — Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina and Ohio. South Dakota has a law protecting the right to recite the Pledge at school.

Source: Education Commission of the States website, Aug. 2003

Florida's Class Size Amendment Is a Costly Wake-up Call

TALLAHASSEE, FL — Florida's constitutional amendment to reduce the size of public school classes went into effect at the beginning of this school year, wreaking havoc on education budgets and leading to widespread criticism of the measure.

The amendment, which Florida voters approved last November, will cost the state nearly \$1 billion in the first two years



Jeb Bush

alone, according to state Board of Education figures. Reductions in class size are mandated over the next seven years, beginning with an average decrease of two students per class in the 2004-2005 school year. By 2010, classes will be limited to 18 pupils in pre-kindergarten through third grade, 22 in fourth through eighth grades, and 25 in high school.

Several board members have complained that there are more effective, less expensive ways to improve education than reducing class sizes. Gov. Jeb Bush, some education officials and commentators have suggested that Florida voters should repeal the constitutional amendment.

The nearly \$1 billion budgeted for class size reductions in the first two years pays only for operational costs, such as hiring more teachers and revising schedules. It does not fund the construction of new classrooms. "The real costs have not shown up yet and the real costs will dwarf what is spent so far," Jim Warford, chancellor of K-12 public schools, told the Associated Press (8-19-03). State education commissioner Jim Horne called the budget impact "a hurricane."

Meanwhile, state education figures indicate that only 41% of Florida's black fourth graders and 51% of Hispanic fourth graders could read at their grade level in 2003.

Of the hundreds of studies of the relationship between class size and student achievement, 85% found that reducing class size did not improve student performance, according to University of Rochester economist Eric Hanushek. The nationwide average class size has been dropping for decades without improvement in standardized test scores. In 1961, classes averaged 30 students; by 1998 the number had fallen to 23.

Florida is so desperate to find ways to reduce class sizes that the legislature passed a law last spring enabling high school students to skip senior year. Students are permitted to graduate with six fewer credits as long as they double up on English classes and study a foreign language for two years.

EDUCATION BRIEFS

The U.S. is first in school spending, but not in test scores. An annual review of industrialized nations found that the U.S. spends the most money on education (\$10,240 per student from elementary school through college in 2000), but its 15-year-olds perform in the middle of the pack on math, reading and science. Japan and Korea performed best in math, while the U.S. ranked 19th. In science, Korea and Japan topped the list and the U.S. ranked 14th. In reading, Finland was first and the U.S. was 15th. Average spending was \$6,361 per student among more than 25 countries surveyed by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in a report released September 22. Federal spending on education in the U.S. has grown by \$11 billion since President Bush took office.

A Philadelphia teacher alleges she was fired for telling city school officials that administrators helped students cheat on state assessment tests. According to a lawsuit filed September 17, Jean McKay contacted the school district office after she saw an administrator look through a student's test book and tell students to stop and check their work. Another teacher told her the same administrator pointed out incorrect test answers for some students and taught a lesson on one of the subjects being tested during a break, the complaint alleges. Three days after she contacted the district office, she was fired, supposedly for failing to order a test five months earlier.

School districts experiment with single-sex education in Dallas and Atlanta. The Dallas school board is considering a proposal to redevelop an old district building in the Oak Lawn area into an all-girls school for 600 7th and 8th graders. In Atlanta, King Middle School is separating the entire 6th-grade class by sex for everything except lunch and an elective. King is one of only 32 coed public schools nationwide that offer single-sex classes, according to the National Association for Single Sex Public Education.

(More Briefs on page 4.)

Education Reporter (ISSN 0887-0608) is published monthly by Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund with editorial offices at 7800 Bonhomme Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105, (314) 721-1213, fax (314) 721-3373. Editor: Sue Kunstmann. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the persons quoted and should not be attributed to Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund. Annual subscription \$25. Back issues available @ \$2. Periodicals postage paid at Alton, Illinois. Web site: <http://www.eagleforum.org> E-mail: education@eagleforum.org

Group Calls For Teaching About America's Greatness

Schools should do a better job of teaching American history and the United States' remarkably successful form of government, according to a report by the Albert Shanker Institute released September 9.

The report argues that students receive a distorted view of their country from textbooks that focus on the nation's flaws and fail to provide meaningful comparisons to representative societies around the world. A broad spectrum of political and educational opinion leaders co-signed the report, entitled "Education for Democracy."

The Albert Shanker Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit organization supported by the American Federation of Teachers. Albert Shanker, the union's late president, once observed, "If a youngster has to take a wild guess that Stalin is either an Olympic athlete or a Renaissance painter, he can't have much of a grasp of the terrors of a totalitarian society as a basis for comparison to his own life."

In calling on schools to impart "the learning necessary for an informed, reasoned allegiance to the ideals of a free society," the report endorses factual knowledge and rejects current education theory that emphasizes "learning skills" over content.

It quotes a number of experts on the negative bias of history textbooks, such as the following statement by historian Peter Gibbon: "There is much in these texts now about income inequality, environmental degradation, the horrors of immigration, and the hardships of the Western frontier. Strikes, massacres, and lynchings are vividly described. Contemporary history books cover in detail the Vietnam War and our shameful treatment of Native Americans. Little mention is made in them, however, of genius or heroism. . . . From many of our textbooks, one would not know that in the span of human history, the United States has stood for peace, wealth, and accomplishment and has made possible millions of quiet and contented lives. . . . Concentrating

on the dark side can lead young people to conclude that the world is a hopeless place."

Diane Ravitch's study *The Language Police* likewise notes the distortion in a dozen world history texts she examined: "The textbooks published in the late 1990s [tell] a story of cultural equivalence: All of the world's civilizations were great and glorious, all produced grand artistic, cultural and material achievements, and how the world is growing more global and interconnected. . . . The textbooks sugarcoat practices that they would condemn if done by Europeans or Americans. . . . Some texts present Mao as a friendly, inclusive leader who listened to the peasants and won their support, just like our politicians."

In addition to urging teaching about American freedom and what life is like in non-free countries, the report scores moral relativism in the classroom: "If there is only opinion - yours, mine, Osama bin Laden's - only personal perspective or preference or conditioning, then on what basis do we pass judgment on Hitler's gas chambers or Hussein's torture chambers? Objectivity does not require neutrality or blind tolerance." The report advocates biographies of exceptional men and women as a valuable educational tool to develop the virtues essential to a healthy democracy.

Conservatives have complained for years that history textbooks are slanted against the United States and preach multiculturalism. What makes the Albert Shanker Institute report unusual is that its signatories include such dyed-in-the-wool liberals as Bill Clinton, Donna Brazile, Kweisi Mfume, Donna Shalala, Ralph Neas and Bill Bradley as well as conservatives such as Linda Chavez, Ben Wattenberg and Midge Decter.

The report comes at a time of increasing historical illiteracy. On a 2001 U.S. history test given to a sample of the nation's twelfth graders, 52% did not know the Soviet Union was a World War II ally of the United States.



Curtis Ackerman/The Albert Shanker Institute.
Albert Shanker

Book of the Month



Persecution: How Liberals Are Waging War Against Christianity, David Limbaugh, Regnery Publishing, 2003, 416 pps, \$27.95

Attorney and syndicated columnist David Limbaugh has compiled a stunning collection of attacks on Christianity in American public schools. In a land where we exalt freedom of religion and tout tolerance as one of our highest modern virtues, the reader will be surprised, stunned, and then angered by the numerous examples of discrimination against Christians and the blatant, even ridiculous, suppression of Christian religious expression by students.

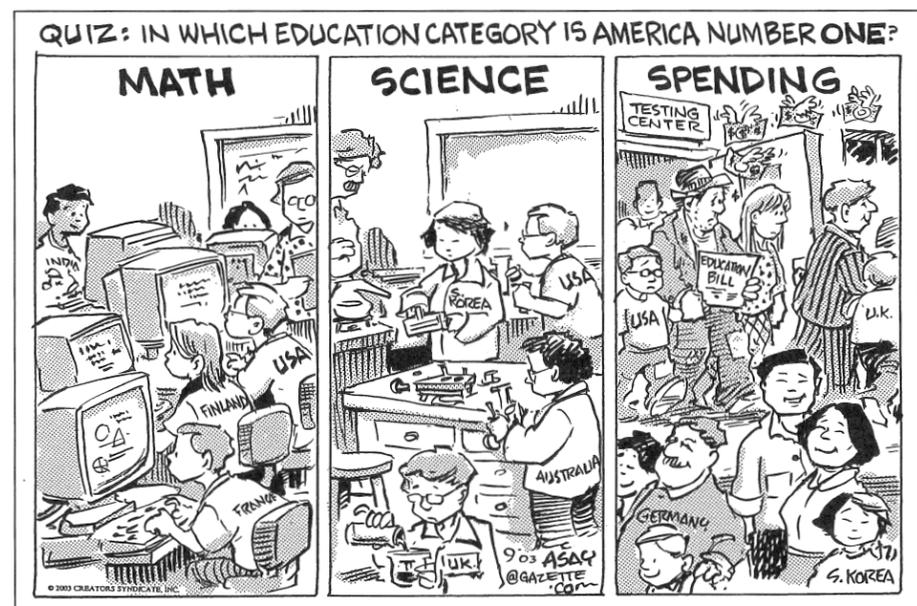
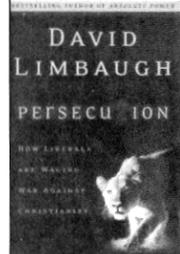
This antagonism toward Christianity is a rather recent development in U.S. history. In early America, all education was Christian and Bible-based. Almost all of America's first colleges, such as Harvard, were founded as Christian institutions. The war on Christianity really began with the Supreme Court decision in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), which banned an innocuous, nondenominational prayer that was recited in New York public schools. That decision took on a life of its own. Now we even ban student prayers before football games.

We also have anti-Christian school administrators carrying the notion of separation of church and state to ridiculous lengths. A kindergartner in Saratoga Springs, New York, was disciplined for holding hands with two classmates in the cafeteria and saying, "God is great, God is good, thank you, God, for my food." A fourth-grader in St. Louis was ridiculed and punished for bowing his head in prayer before lunch. Middle school students in Houston had the covers ripped off their books because the covers carried the text of the Ten Commandments. The passion to remove all religious references has led to such distortions of history as describing the Pilgrims who founded America as "people who make long trips" and Thanksgiving without ever mentioning to Whom they gave thanks.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and into the Supreme Court-created vacuum we found that the schools embraced not neutrality toward denominational religions, but the ideologies of humanism, secularism and multiculturalism layered with a virulent anti-Christianity.

Limbaugh's book will be a big help to enable Christian parents to know in advance what their children are up against in the public schools. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Visit www.regnery.com or call 202/216-0600.



FOCUS: Blind Guides, Cultural Malaise and the VMI Dinner Prayer

By John W. Whitehead

"How have we come to this?" That's what an increasing number of Americans want to know as the nonsense surrounding the acknowledgment of God in America reaches epic proportions.

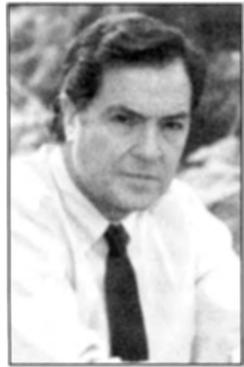
It is one thing for the U.S. Supreme Court to decide that forcing young schoolchildren to recite a prayer is unconstitutional. However, it is totally different for a panel of judges on a federal appeals court to rule, as they recently did, that a brief dinner prayer, lasting less than 20 seconds, recited by future officers at the Virginia Military Institute is now unconstitutional because it offends several cadets.

When the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held last year that the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance made it illegal for schoolchildren to recite, it was clear that some judicial minds had short-circuited. That case may now be on its way to the Supreme Court.

More is at stake here, however, than mere malfunctioning judges. Indeed, the entire foundational structure of our society is under attack. Our society faces a nervous breakdown of the sort that could destabilize the country. And like nations and empires that have gone before us, when they renounce their basic religion and condemn it, collapse is inevitable.

As any schoolchild should know, this country from its inception was strongly undergirded by religion — the Judeo-Christian religion in particular. This is reflected in the prayers of those who landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620, to the affirmation in the Declaration of Independence that God created all men equal, to the prayers and God-affirming language found in the Inaugural Address of every President from George Washington to George W. Bush.

God is emblazoned on our money as well. And as Judge H. Emory Widener, Jr., said in his dissenting opinion in the VMI case, our government has sanctioned religious rituals and symbols on and in our public buildings, including a sculpture of Moses with the Ten Commandments — "the most flagrantly religious document of Judeo-Christian religion" — on the wall of the U.S. Supreme Court building.



John Whitehead

With such a backdrop, we have now been handed the decision of the federal appeals court that VMI's dinner prayer "exact[s] an unconstitutional toll on the consciences of religious objectors." The brief prayer, which is given by a cadet captain, is typical of prayers of thanksgiving and ends by stating: "Now O God, we receive this food and share this meal together with thanksgiving. Amen." There is no mention of any particular God—such as Jesus Christ, Buddha or Allah—and no cadet is required to recite the prayer, bow his or her head or participate in its recitation.

Dinnertime prayers at VMI have been in place at the 162-year-old military academy since Civil War General Stonewall Jackson taught there. The prayers are, thus, part of VMI's educational program. And they are precisely the kind of prayers recited in the U.S. military, on ships at sea each night and before lunch at the U.S. Naval Academy.

The military is a special society, and prayer has been a mainstay of the American soldier since 1774, when the first

prayer book was issued to members of the Continental Army. And no less than 67 different prayer books have been adopted by the branches of the American armed forces over a 225-year period.

History is, therefore, one reason why a prayer was recited at VMI's dinnertime meal. And as history illustrates, VMI is first and foremost a military institute, not a civilian college. VMI's purpose is to prepare our men and women for war.

This, of course, brings us to the compelling reason for military prayer, which stems from the old axiom that there are no real atheists in foxholes. Men do not generally die for their country or for their buddies. They enter the heat of battle believing that, if they are fatally felled by a bullet, there is something beyond our chaotic and violent world. And many die with a prayer on their lips.

This fact has been recognized by the

"Urge, instruct, and indoctrinate every fighting man to pray as well as to fight."

General George Patton, December 1944

most unlikely of characters. For example, in December of 1944, General George Patton ordered that 250,000 prayer cards be distributed, one to every soldier in the Third Army, and 3,200 training letters to officers and chaplains.

"Urge, instruct, and indoctrinate every fighting man to pray as well as to fight."

We are supposedly turning out soldiers who can stand against the most ferocious enemy — men and women who will not be intimidated by anything. Simply put,

then, whatever coercion a 20-year-old military officer trainee may experience at VMI during a 20-second dinner time prayer pales in comparison to the military's need to prepare its people to fight and possibly die in combat. "With all due respect to the panel, its ruling goes too far," Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III wrote in dissent to the appeals court decision in the VMI case. "The supper prayer at Virginia Military Institute is the most benign form of religious observance." Indeed, as Judge Wilkinson recognized: "I doubt that cadets who are deemed ready to vote, to fight for our country, and to die for our freedoms, are so impressionable that they will be coerced by a brief, nonsectarian supper prayer."

We live in a curious time where it is advocated that virtually everything is acceptable and that tolerance is to be our guide. However, at the same time, it is increasingly apparent that it is a hypocritical tolerance that our society advocates. And less and less does it include any public reference to God within its bounds.

This is all too evident in the growing number of court cases that are erasing our cultural-religious heritage. Nothing too small seems to escape the judicial eye when it comes to religion.

The average person is often confused by the decisions of our judges. There is a sense that our guides are leading us astray. As a wise master once proclaimed: "Blind guides, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!" How much more can they swallow before they explode?

John W. Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute, is an attorney and author who has written, debated and practiced widely in the area of constitutional law and human rights. The Rutherford Institute's website is www.rutherford.org.

Teachers' Rights Legislation Needed

By Forrest L. Turpen

It's the beginning of the school year and, as usual, teachers union leaders are using scare tactics to intimidate educators into joining. In forced union states, they tell new teachers that in order to work they must join the union within 30 days or be terminated. That's a half truth—and a half truth is a lie.

The full truth is that teachers may choose not to be union members and may donate all of their dues money to charity. At a minimum, they may opt out of the political activities of the union, keeping about 25% of their dues money. Unfortunately, very few local school districts provide teachers with complete, factual information.

On behalf of educators all over the nation, I am calling for passage in every state of legislation mandating that each school district provide teachers the whole truth about alternatives to union member-

ship. We are not proposing anti-union legislation. It's pro-teacher legislation. This is bound to stir up a hornet's nest, but if no action is taken, teachers union leaders will continue their campaign of falsehoods.

Unions in both forced union states and right-to-work states have also resumed their perennial attacks on the 50-year-old Christian Educators Association International. Reports are pouring in from all over the country that the NEA and AFT are up to the usual shenanigans. They are telling teachers that CEAI membership is made up of mostly private and Christian school teachers. The truth is that over 90% of our members are public school teachers.

A new twist this year is the assertion that CEAI's liability insurance program for teachers will not cover teachers liability for issues related to the No Child Left Behind Act. This is absurd and un-

(See *Rights*, page 4)

'Abstinence-Plus' Courses Teach Everything But

The government-funded Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to promote sex education programs that teach masturbation, condom use and homosexuality, according to a Heritage Foundation research fellow—even though the Bush Administration last year ordered the programs discontinued.

Moreover, "Nearly all of the government-funded abstinence-based or 'abstinence-plus' programs delivered in schools nationwide contain little, if any, reference to abstinence," Robert Rector asserted (www.nationalreview.com 9-2-03). Instead, they are replete with explicit demonstrations of condom use and direct encouragement to experiment sexually.

The CDC-promoted program "Focus on Kids" includes a "condom hunt" to local stores and "condom races" between teams of students who put on and take off a condom using a cucumber. In "Becoming a Responsible Teen," kids are taught about grocery store staples that can be used as lubricants. "Be Proud! Be

Responsible!" shows children as young as 13 "how to make condoms fun and pleasurable" and encourages role-playing to negotiate "safer sex", including homosexual and bisexual examples. CDC-approved "Reducing the Risk" advises teachers to tell students to take notes of condom store hours.

A recent Zogby poll found that three out of four parents disapproved or strongly disapproved of "abstinence-plus" curricula and want their children to receive an authentic abstinence education.

Researcher Barbara Dafoe Whitehead delivered a scathing review in *Atlantic* magazine of "comprehensive sex-ed" in New Jersey. In 1980 67.6% of teenage births were to unmarried mothers. After 11 years of comprehensive sex education, the figure had risen to 84%. "Research does not support the idea that early sex education will lead to more responsible sexual behavior in adolescence," she wrote.



ADD Drugging Prompts New Laws and Studies

Scientific studies continue to pour in questioning the widespread diagnosis of attention deficit disorder (ADD) in schoolchildren and use of medication to address the problem, leading to legislative efforts at state and federal levels to protect children and their parents. The number of American children taking psychiatric drugs more than doubled from 1987 to 1996 and continues to increase, according to a study led by Julie Magner Zito published in the January issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*.

Most children's health specialists agree that about 2% of schoolchildren are pervasively overactive or inattentive. But up to 17% are being labeled for ADD, Dr. William B. Carey, director of behavioral pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, told a House panel on May 6.

A survey by Dr. Leonard Sax of 400 physicians in the Washington, D.C. area found that more than half of schoolchildren thought to have ADD were first diagnosed by their teachers, not by physicians. Frequently the school then pressured a doctor to rubber-stamp the diagnosis and prescribe medication. His study, which he described at an August conference in Toronto, is expected to be published in a medical journal shortly.

A study led by physiologist Joan Baizer at the University of Buffalo shows that Ritalin may cause long-term changes in the brain, similar to those seen with cocaine and other psychoactive drugs.

On May 28, the House of Representatives passed the Child Medication Safety Act, which is intended to prevent a parent from being coerced into medicating a child so that the child can attend school.



Dr. Peter Breggin

The bill, which passed by a vote of 425-1, requires states to enact policies prohibiting the practice as a condition of receiving federal funding for education. Psychiatric organizations are fighting the measure, and its fate in the Senate is unclear.

Four states – Connecticut, Minnesota, Illinois and Virginia – have passed similar laws. Georgia, Hawaii, North Carolina, Utah and Texas have established commissions or enacted resolutions to encourage schools to use proven methods of addressing behavior problems instead of relying on medication.

The legal reforms are a response to cases like that of Patricia Weathers, who now heads the New York chapter of Parents for Label and Drug Free Education. When her son was having trouble reading, officials at his public school told Weathers to put him on medication. She did so, but negative side effects led her to terminate the treatment. The school then called child welfare officials, who threatened to charge her with medical neglect of her son. She escaped legal action only by obtaining a letter from a psychiatric

professional who asserted her right to explore alternative therapies.

President Bush's brother Neil Bush has also publicized the issue of misdiagnosed ADD through his education technology company Ignite! Learning, which he founded in 2001 after his son was wrongly diagnosed.

The federal government is conducting a controversial study of the safety and effectiveness of generic Ritalin in preschoolers, ages 3 to 5. This unusual clinical trial is financed by the National Institute of Mental Health and overseen by the New York State Psychiatric Institute in Manhattan.

To Dr. Peter Breggin, the nation's best-known ADD critic and author of *Talking Back to Ritalin*, the current federal study marks "a tragedy for America's children." He argues that ADD is a figment of modern psychiatry's imagination. "There is no disease," he told the *New York Times* (11-17-02). "It's a list of behaviors that annoy adults."

U.S. psychologist Dr. Bob Jacobs told a youth affairs conference in Australia last April that doctors and pharmaceutical companies have turned behavioral problems in children into a disorder, and powerful drugs like Ritalin may affect their long-term mental and physical development.

In the past year the Food and Drug Administration has approved two more psychiatric drugs for children – Strattera for ADD and Prozac for depressed children 8 years and older.

purposes, Landmark Legal Foundation asserts. The foundation filed complaints September 4 asking the IRS and Justice Department for a criminal investigation of the nation's largest teachers union to ascertain whether the union evaded paying taxes on money spent for political activities. Under the federal tax code, unions may not use dues to influence the election or defeat of any candidate.

The number of aspiring engineering students has declined dramatically in the U.S., according to a new study by ACT, which administers a national college entrance exam. Among the more than 1.1 million seniors in the class of 2002 who took the ACT test, fewer than 6% planned to study engineering in college, down from a high of nearly 9% in 1992. Moreover, the 6% show a lower level of preparation and achievement, measured by math courses taken, class rank and average ACT composite score.

Durham public schools start the school year with a new dress code. The school

board in Durham County, North Carolina decided last May to ban clothing deemed profane, revealing or gang-related. A specific list of what is and is not allowed prohibits students from wearing hats, bandanas, baggy pants, or anything that reveals portions of the midsection. Educators hope the dress code will improve discipline and the overall appearance of the students.

Is School Out For Junk Food?

BOSTON, MASS. — State Rep. Peter J. Koutoujian has proposed a bill to introduce strict nutritional guidelines for food in public school cafeterias in Massachusetts. California has already prohibited high-fat food from elementary and middle schools. New York City and San Francisco schools plan to eliminate soda and reduce fat in cafeteria meals.

If the bill passes, it will be the first state to succeed in banning both junk food and soda at the elementary and secondary levels. Food industry and vending machine companies plan to lobby lawmakers to block the junk food ban, which they claim demonizes the industry. They believe a ban will not reduce student consumption of junk food, since students can walk to the corner store for chips and soda.

But Koutoujian, House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Health Care, believes that if parents are taking care of their children at home with healthy foods, they shouldn't have that effort undone by a system that's not offering healthy selections. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees has not taken a position on the ban because schools get a share of sales from the vending machines. Companies typically pay school districts 15% to 30% or more of the sale price of snacks, and even more for soft drinks.

Koutoujian has surveyed some of the schools in his district and found the financial contributions from sugar and fat to be nominal at best. Bottled water, juices and sports drinks can replace soft drinks and do not put vending machines out of business. The ban would simply require food and beverage companies to shift their offerings.

Rights (Continued from page 3)

founded, as is the insinuation that the professional liability insurance we offer is substandard.

We have the same insurance as the International Reading Association, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Association of Teacher Educators, National Association for Biology Teachers, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association for Education of Young Children, and Phi Delta Kappa, to name a few. It is superior in many ways to the coverage offered by unions.

Union leaders want dues money any way they can get it, and then they use it to promote a radical political agenda which is, significantly, the opposite of a Christian world view.

We at CEAI represent our educators very well and have a good track record of doing it without (as is the union practice with dues moneys) supporting abortion on demand, endorsing homosexual life style as an acceptable alternative, pushing condom distribution, or lavishing money upon the election campaigns of leftist politicians across the nation.

Forrest Turpen is Executive Director of Christian Educators Association International.

Briefs (Continued from page 2)

A homeschooled student served on the U.S. team that won the world championship in a 2003 geography competition. Fifteen-year-old John Rice, who is taught by his mother on a Maddock, N.D. wheat farm, was one of three members who defended the U.S. title July 16 in the National Geographic World Championship, held every two years. It was the fourth time the U.S. won the competition since the first championship in 1993.

A Massachusetts superintendent and 24 "bilingual" teachers recently flunked legally required English tests.

A new state law changed the policy for educating immigrant students from bilingual education to English immersion, requiring teachers to speak only English in the classroom. The 24 Lawrence, Mass. teachers who failed a proficiency test were placed on unpaid leave. Meanwhile, Lawrence school superintendent Wildredo Laboy, for whom English is also a second language, reportedly failed three times to pass the basic literacy test all state educators must pass to be certified. However, he was subsequently given a 3% salary increase, which raised his annual income to \$156,560 and angered the 24 teachers he placed on leave. (CNSNews.com 8-8-03)



University of Michigan requires new "diversity" essay on applications. In response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in June finding a racial "point system" unconstitutional, the University of Michigan has revamped its undergraduate admissions process to force applicants to write an essay on one of two topics: how the applicant's acceptance would contribute to "an academically superb and widely diverse educational community," or how a personal experience of "cultural diversity – or a lack thereof" changed the applicant's life.

Group urges meditation in Chicago schools. The Committee to Promote TM in Schools wants Chicago-area schools to adopt programs to teach students and teachers Transcendental Meditation, a relaxation technique popularized by 1960s guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The technique involves sitting quietly for 20 minutes per day and silently repeating a Sanskrit mantra. TM programs exist in three schools in Iowa, Washington, D.C. and Michigan. It costs an estimated \$2,500 per person to learn the meditation technique. (*Chicago Sun-Times* 9-12-03)

The NEA has illegally spent tens of millions of dollars of members' tax-exempt dues for Democratic political

