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History Texts Draw More Salvos Federal Role Reasserted Despite Criticism

Ignoring conservative objections to federal involvement in history education, Congress late last year passed a law to dispense grants to set up student and teacher history academies.

The American History and Civics Education Act, introduced by Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and signed by President Bush on January 21, will support summer academies for several hundred teachers and students over four years. No specific content is mandated, but some conservative organizations such as EdWatch and Gun Owners of America have expressed concern that the academies will promote a globalist curriculum written by the Center for Civics Education. The center produced the controversial text *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution*, which a previous federal law specifically designated as the standard for civics education in public schools.

Because of the conservative objections, the final compromise bill has no funding and requires the U.S. Department of Education to pay for the program using existing funds.

Critics question why the federal government should have any involvement in history education in view of the checkered experience of federal intervention over the last ten years. An uproar erupted over the National Standards for United States History financed by a \$2 million grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to UCLA in the mid-1990s. The standards, intended to direct how American history should be taught in grades 5 through 12, proved to be so faulty and anti-American that the Senate denounced them by a vote of 99 to 1 and NEH chairman Lynne Cheney branded them as "politicized history."

300,000 federal booklets trashed

Subsequently revised to address some criticisms, the standards live on in both versions. A booklet recently published by

the Department of Education called "Helping Your Child Learn History" gratuitously included several favorable references to the notorious standards, even obliquely suggesting that President Bush supports them.



Lynne Cheney

After Lynne Cheney — whose husband is now Vice President — learned of the Education Department booklet, her staff communicated her displeasure to the department. The department then destroyed its inventory of 300,000 copies.

Politically correct, left-wing or inaccurate history textbooks continue to incur commentators' scorn. "The pages are carefully measured to spend equal time on the accomplishments of men and women, whites and nonwhites. They take care not to offend America's past enemies, but don't seem to worry about offending Americans," high school student Dan Gelernter complained in *The Weekly Standard*. (10-25-04).

The American Pageant (12th ed.), the textbook used in Gelernter's high school, never mentions President Reagan's achievement of ending the Cold War, giving credit to Mikhail Gorbachev instead. It describes the Reagan economic boom thus: "The poor got poorer and the very rich grew fabulously richer, while middle-class incomes largely stagnated" — even though the average income of all quintiles increased.

Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* is a "screed that depicts America as a continuing centuries-old conspiracy of rich white men to exploit minorities," according to Robert Holland of the *Washington Times* (12-15-04). As another illustration of the biases of many

(See *U.S. History*, page 4)

Corporate Naming Rights Catch On

Public schools have discovered a new source of revenue in the sale of naming rights to corporate sponsors. The trend began some three years ago, when the Alice Costello Elementary School in Brooklawn, NJ named its gymnasium after ShopRite for payments totalling \$100,000 over 20 years.

Similar deals have sprouted across the country. Three Texas high schools sold naming rights to their football stadiums for more than \$1 million to a bank, a health care provider and a communications company. A \$500,000 donation will give a credit union a big stadium sign at a Florida high school. A Chicago suburban high school has agreed to name its athletic field after Rust-Oleum.

Mimicking strategies used in profes-

sional sports, advertising now appears on tickets to school sports events, scoreboards, billboards in end zones, gym walls, locker rooms and buses carrying teams. Companies are allowed to sponsor specific home games. (*New York Times*, 10-18-04)

Some critics decry the effect on kids of the commercialization of school food and beverage service — which is dominated by soda, junk food and fast food companies — and suggest that Pepsi ads don't belong in the football stadium. (See related article this page on the Channel One ad controversy in Alabama.) There is also the danger that money from legal vices, such as alcohol, tobacco or gambling, will buy advertising in schools. That hasn't hap-

(See *Corporate*, page 4)

Early-Childhood Schooling Programs Proliferate in States

Several states are moving forward with ambitious plans for public preschool, while all-day kindergarten continues to spread.

Next fall, Florida will have a pre-kindergarten program ordered by a statewide ballot measure passed by voters in 2002. In a special legislative session in December, legislators approved a plan for three-hour pre-kindergarten classes offered largely by private preschool and child-care providers.

The Florida instructors would need some training but would not be required to have a college degree. Republican majorities in the legislature rejected Democratic proposals for longer hours and more teacher credentials. Thirteen other states currently require teachers in public pre-K programs to have a four-year degree.

The program is estimated to cost about \$400 million per year. Early literacy skills, such as vocabulary and letter knowledge, will be emphasized. Still struggling to comply with a 2002 statewide class-size-reduction mandate, most Florida schools won't have space for the pre-K classes. Churches may participate in the program.

Georgia's lottery-financed pre-K pro-

gram served as a model for Florida legislators. Classes may be held in Georgia churches as long as no religious instruction occurs during the hours that pre-K is offered.

Tennessee's Gov. Phil Bredesen hopes to set up a public preschool program this year. His plan, estimated to cost \$200 million in the first year, will be financed by funds freed up by a restructuring of the controversial state health-care program. (*Education Week*, 1-5-05)

Full-day kindergarten

Massachusetts is building a universal system for early education and care, according to the *Boston Globe* (11-19-04). Maryland is implementing full-day kindergarten.

Last May, Arizona lawmakers approved \$25 million for full-day kindergarten in the state's poorest neighborhoods. About 44% of all Arizona 5-year-olds are enrolled in full-day kindergarten classes. Some charge a fee and others are fully paid for by the taxpayers. (*Arizona Republic*, 10-10-04) The Los Angeles school district is phasing in full-day kindergarten over the next several years.

About half of the public schools in

(See *Early-Childhood*, page 4)



Channel One Takes Hit in Alabama Conservatives Also Claim Evolution Victory

The Alabama Board of Education voted in February to recommend that Channel One stop advertising unhealthy foods, medicines, or movies or television programs with objectionable ratings. Furthermore, if local school systems continue to use Channel One, they should monitor the programming and evaluate it for content that affects food choices and healthy lifestyles.

Channel One is a 12-minute daily newscast with commercials that is beamed into 12,000 American middle, junior high and high schools with more than 8 million students and 400,000 educators.

The Board of Education's February 10 hearing drew vocal opponents of Channel One, who charged among other things that it exposes students every day to ads for junk food, medicines and violent movies. Former Lt.



Former Lt. Gov.
Jere Beasley

Gov. Jere Beasley, one of Alabama's most prominent trial lawyers, joined forces with John Giles, leader of the Christian Coalition of Alabama, and Eagle Forum lead-

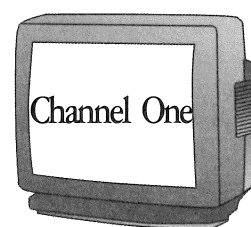
ers to urge the board to banish Channel One from Alabama schools.

Beasley, a grandfather of four public school students, said what concerned him most was the sometimes sexual content and violent language of Channel One programs. Giles said too many Channel One programs fall into what he called "the pollution of pornography." (*Birmingham News*, 2-11-05)

While declining to ban Channel One, the Board of Education voted 5-1-1 in favor of careful monitoring of content by local school personnel and recommended that Channel One "refrain from advertising high-sugar, high-fat, or low nutritional value food or drink products, over-the-counter medicines, or movies and television shows that receive a MPAA rating for sexual, violent, or drug content."

A Channel One opponent pointed out early in the hearing that five of the board members had received campaign contributions from Channel One lobbyists. One

(See *Channel One*, page 4)



EDUCATION BRIEFS

Repeating a grade improves academic performance vis-à-vis promotion, according to a Manhattan Institute report released in December. The study analyzed Florida 3rd-graders who failed the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test and concluded that pupils who were held back got more out of school and performed better on standardized tests than they would if they had been promoted.

Spelling bee cancelled, then reconsidered. The Lincoln, RI school district last year decided to eliminate this year's spelling bee for grades 4 to 8. "It's about one kid winning, several making it to the top and leaving all others behind. That's contrary to No Child Left Behind," explained assistant superintendent Linda Newman. Furthermore, educators' organizations now frown on competition at the elementary school level and are urging participation in activities that avoid winners, she said. A new superintendent has decided to reconsider the cancellation. (WoonsocketCall.com, 1-27-05, 2-1-05)

Stripping promoted at middle school career day. A career day speaker at Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School in Palo Alto, CA listed "stripper" on a handout of potential careers and told 8th-graders that strippers can earn as much as \$250,000 a year. He explained that a larger bust - whether natural or augmented - has a direct relationship to an exotic dancer's salary. The principal subsequently wrote a letter to parents stating that the talk should not have occurred. (sfgate.com, 1-14-05)

Study quantifies edge of minorities, athletes and legacies in college admissions. In examining admission decisions at three unnamed private research universities, sociology professor Thomas Espenshade found that being black is worth roughly 230 extra points on the SAT I test; being a recruited athlete is worth about 200 points; Hispanic applicants get an average bonus of 185 points; and legacy status translates to 160 points. Asian applicants are at a disadvantage, comparable to a loss of 50 points. The study is part of the National Study of College Experience funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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School Violence Declines, But Discipline Remains a Challenge

Violent crime against students in schools fell 50% from 1992 to 2002, according to a report from the Education and Justice Departments released in November. Crime outside schools, too, is at a 30-year low.

Anti-crime measures by schools may be partly responsible, including installing metal detectors, hiring more security personnel, and implementing programs against bullying.

The report also found that from 1992 to 2000, students ages 5 to 19 were 70 times more likely to be murdered away from school than on campus.

659,000 is still a lot

However, students still suffered from 659,000 violent crimes in 2002 and teachers suffered an annual average of more than 90,000 violent crimes at school from 1998 to 2002.

Recent examples of shocking school crimes include:

- a student's machete slashing of five classmates in Spanish class in Valparaiso, IN (Associated Press, 11-25-04)
- a reported rape of a 6th-grade boy by an 11-year-old male classmate on a Philadelphia school stairway (philly.com, 11-19-04)
- a half-hour melee outside a Philadelphia charter school in which more than a dozen neighborhood thugs beat students and seven faculty members at dismissal time, after which the entire 185-student body and more than 50 parents took to the streets to demand a police presence at the school (phillynews.com, 11-19-04)
- a vicious assault on a Junction City, OR male high school student by two larger non-students who videotaped the event, set it to rap music and distributed the video. The fight took place after a nighttime volleyball game at the school as a crowd of onlookers watched. (Register-Guard, 11-9-04)

Surveys on discipline problems

The lack of discipline, cooperation and respect in the classroom remains a major frustration to teachers and parents. A study by Public Agenda released last year revealed that nearly 7 in 10 middle and high school teachers say their own schools have serious problems with students who disrupt classes.

In surveys of high school students, large majorities say they often hear cursing in the hallways; more than a third say there is a serious fight at least once a month; and barely one in five says most classmates treat teachers with respect. Nearly 8 out of 10 teachers say students are quick to remind them that they have rights and their parents can sue. Nearly half say that a parent has accused them of unfairly disciplining a child. (Education Week, 6-23-04)

A Rochester, NY elementary school teacher was placed on paid leave last year for washing a 3rd-grade boy's mouth out

with soap after he shouted what the teacher described as "a vile, very nasty sexual reference" at a classmate. More than 40 relatives of children in the class asked that the teacher be reinstated. (Associated Press, 6-11-04)

Special ed law relaxed

In response to the legal risks of disciplining special education students, Congress late last year passed a law limiting lawsuits and allowing such students to be suspended unless they prove their misbehavior is directly tied to their disability. The change to the Individuals With Disabilities Act was inspired in part by a notorious case of a 15-year-old Baldwin County, AL special education student with attention-deficit disorder who was accused of threatening to kill classmates, attacking his mother and commandeering a school bus. (wpmi.com, 12-2-04)

Legal difficulties remain, and not only with special education students. Since two U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the mid-1970s, even low-level punishments are subject to student and parental challenges in court, and if public school teachers or principals knowingly violate a student's due process rights, they may be held personally liable for monetary damages.

According to a Harris poll, 85% of teachers and principals believe that reducing the availability of legal challenges to day-to-day management and disciplinary decisions would help improve the quality of education in their schools. (National Review, 10-11-04)

Don't expect corporal punishment to make a comeback. A candidate for a master's degree in education was apparently expelled by LeMoyne College for writing a paper advocating the use of corporal punishment in schools. He received an A- for the paper on classroom management but was barred from enrolling for the spring semester. (The Daily Orange, 1-25-05)

Recess crackdowns don't help

Recess is disappearing or being curtailed in some school districts, reducing outlets for restless kids. In Tacoma, WA, at least 20 of 36 elementary schools have no breaks except for lunch. (Associated Press, 9-17-04)

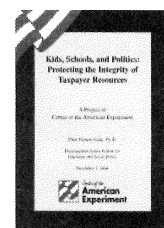
Dodgeball is banned in some schools in Maine, Maryland, New York, Virginia, Texas, Massachusetts and Utah. Last November, a New York appellate court refused to dismiss a lawsuit that claims a school wronged a 7-year-old girl by allowing dodgeball. The girl broke her elbow. (Associated Press, 11-20-04)

In some California school districts, dodgeball, tag, and cops and robbers are forbidden. Even pushing a fellow student on a swing may be considered too dangerous. Fear of lawsuits may be one of the motivating factors. (sacbee.com, 8-22-04) Such policies may also reflect the modern trend toward eliminating competition. (See Briefs.)

Book of the Month



Kids, Schools, and Politics: Protecting the Integrity of Taxpayer Resources, Cheri Pierson Yecke, Center of the American Experiment, 2004, 36 pp.



The problem of public school teachers using their positions for political purposes receives the attention it deserves from an educational policy expert in this position paper. Focusing on abuses in Minnesota during the 2004 campaign cycle, Dr. Yecke reviews applicable laws and regulations in all 50 states and recommends concrete policies to restrict such activities in the future.

Incidents in Minnesota last year include:

- a teachers union suing the Lakeville district to force the use of teachers' mailboxes for the distribution of material endorsing John Kerry for president
- fliers advertising a political fundraiser for a state legislative candidate were sent home in the backpacks of 3rd-graders
- numerous reports of teachers expressing their political views in the classroom.

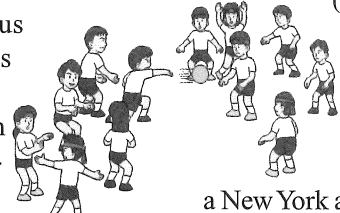
Such incidents were not, of course, confined to Minnesota, where Dr. Yecke formerly served as education commissioner. For example, in Boulder High School in Colorado, a teacher mentored a student overnight sit-in to protest the policies of the Bush administration. The same teacher plus a second teacher later performed with a student band named the "Taliband" which sang lyrics including "And I hope that you die, and your death'll come soon" while an image of President Bush was projected on a curtain. (Rocky Mountain News, 11-19-04)

In Montgomery County, MD, schools encouraged students to earn community-service credits by participating in a teachers' rally for education funding in February 2004. Schools closed early to encourage attendance. (Washington Times, 1-30-04) For other instances of teacher politicking last year, see *Education Reporter*, Nov. 2004.

The author concludes that Minnesota needs legislation to prohibit political activities in public schools and local district policies spelling out precisely what public employees may not do. Suggested language is included, covering such topics as political candidates, ballot measures, partisan political activities, classroom discussions, and fund-raising.

Most other states in her 50-state survey have laws, legal opinions or other state requirements prohibiting the use of public resources for political purposes.

This report is a useful, practical guide to anyone interested in the rules on teacher politicking and how to improve them. To order a copy, call 612-338-3605 or visit www.amexp.org.



Kansas Parents Organize to Improve High School Reading Lists

A list of objectionable novels assigned to high school students in suburban Kansas City proved too much for a group of parents there, who have worked for the last year and a half to pressure the Blue Valley school system for better-quality literature assignments and/or parental consent procedures.

Some 600 people in the affluent district have joined a web-based petition drive to ask the school board to replace 14 books in the curriculum that fail the board's own policy requiring the "absence of vulgar language, sexual explicitness or violent imagery that is gratuitously employed."

The offensive titles include:

- All the Pretty Horses
- Animal Dreams
- The Awakening
- The Bean Trees
- Beloved
- Black Boy
- Fallen Angels
- Hot Zone
- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
- Lords of Discipline
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
- Song of Solomon
- Stotan
- This Boy's Life

Many of these books, which are assigned for a grade, include "graphic and vulgar descriptions of sexual acts, murder, rape, incest, pedophilia, bestiality, child molestation, and torture of people and animals. In addition, some contain an excessive use of profanity," the petition states.

www.classkc.org

In a detailed website, www.classkc.org, Citizens for Literary Standards in Schools provides the history of the dispute and some objectionable excerpts from each book (which are too graphic to reprint in the *Education Reporter*). Replacement titles from classic literature are suggested. Concerned citizens are urged to attend and speak at public meetings, contact school board members and look ahead to the July school board elections.

Lisa Friedrichsen, a community college computer professor who has helped coordinate the group, described the effort in a recent interview with the *Education Reporter*. The website has facilitated spreading the message to parents in the large district, which includes five high schools. A core group of volunteers reviews the hundreds of e-mails received from parents over the last year and pro-

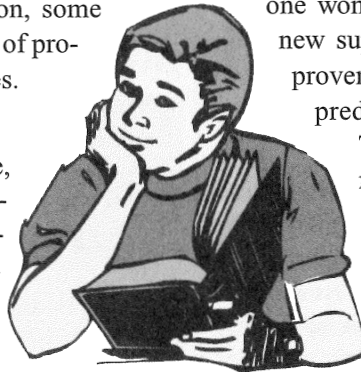
vides suggested additions to Friedrichsen, who serves as the webmaster.

"The school board has mostly wanted it to simply go away," she said. The local media are hostile "with the exception of one wonderful talk-show host." A new superintendent, however, has proven more sympathetic than his predecessor.

The Blue Valley district already permits parents to request an alternative reading assignment, but there is no advance notice of R-rated content and students who opt out of the general assignment may have to

miss significant class time and face negative peer pressure. Friedrichsen would prefer any of the following alternatives:

- better book selections in the first place,



Pro-Gay SEED Program Debunked in Two Reports

A diversity teacher-training program seeks to promote homosexuality and multiculturalism and condemn traditional American culture, according to two new examinations.

"Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity" (SEED) has been used to train K-12 teachers in 32 states and seven Asian countries since 1987. In some districts it also fosters student meetings, typically between 5th and 8th grade.

A 2004 report by teacher Barb Anderson of the Minnesota Family Institute exposes the "anti-American, pro-homosexual bias" in SEED classes and questions the program's appropriateness under federal and state funding policies.

"Once teachers have undergone 'personal transformations' of their views of America and other cultures, they are encouraged by the group facilitators to transform their curriculum with the carefully selected, SEED-approved materials," Anderson charges. The "social change" desired by SEED's founder Dr. Peggy McIntosh "will occur after teachers have fully transformed their curriculum in all subject areas K-12 to reflect all areas of diversity including sexual diversity."

Intolerant of traditional views

SEED teaches that homosexuality is normal and unchangeable and relies heavily on the fraudulent research of Alfred Kinsey, the Anderson report states. The teacher training class information is treated as confidential and no parents are allowed to observe. The program pushes gay-propaganda videos and books, and activist websites such as those of the National Organization for Women and the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network. Teachers may be required to attend the classes, and dissenting viewpoints are unwelcome.

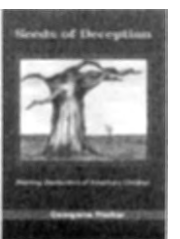
"While there is constant talk in SEED about tolerance and safety, it is meaning-

less. SEED is *not* a safe place for anyone choosing to express conservative

political views, traditional religious and moral values regarding homosexuality, or any other view that does not affirm homosexuality as a normal, healthy, alternative lifestyle," Anderson concludes.

Georgiana Preskar's book *Seeds of Deception: Planting Destruction of America's Children* also takes aim at SEED along with the history of the pro-gay agenda in public schools. She additionally describes her successful efforts to keep national pro-gay "Day of Silence" observances out of the classroom in her school district in Elk Grove, CA. (The 400-footnote book is available from AuthorHouse Publishing at 800-839-8640 or www.authorhouse.com, or from Amazon.com)

Citizens for Literary Standards in Schools hopes to collect many more signatures on its petition and continue to pressure the school board and administrators for constructive change.



Videotaping mom forced out

Preskar's book would probably be useful to parents at a Boston-area school who were forced off the property when one tried to videotape frank homosexual advocacy at a "Transgender, Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Awareness Day." For the last ten years Newton North High has sponsored the day, allowing students to skip classes and attend sessions with titles like "Out at the Old Ballgame" and "Color Me Queer."

Two parents were attending out of curiosity when a man on a panel talked about being attracted to his sister's husband. An offended mother whipped out a video camera and started taping. The principal and four police officers gave her and another parent, a newspaper columnist, one minute to leave or face arrest for trespassing, she told the *Boston Herald*.

"This does not belong in curriculum," said Kim Cariani. "It's against my religion. It's morally wrong and forced in a child's face." (12-16-04)



Testing Scandals Taint Many School Systems

Facing pressure to show higher standardized state test scores, more than a few educators apparently cheat on exam conditions or doctor the scores in order to improve outcomes.

Texas officials in January announced a sweeping review of test security after the *Dallas Morning News* concluded that as many as 400 schools reported suspect scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills for 2003 and 2004. The principal and two teachers at one of Houston's highest-rated elementary schools were reassigned pending the outcome of a state investigation.

Evidence of cheating included the fact that 31 of Sanderson Elementary's 38 5th-graders scored perfect or near-perfect scores on the math exam last spring, results that were substantially out of line with their past scores. The principal of Wilmer Elementary also resigned shortly after state education officials arrived to begin interviewing administrators, teachers and students about testing procedures there. (*Houston Chronicle*, 12-20-04)

California education department investigations over the past five years found that nearly 200 public school teachers helped students cheat on state exams by giving them hints, answers or extra time to finish. Most investigations led to reprimands and warnings, but a few teachers were fired or resigned. (sfgate.com, 6-23-04)

In Broward County, FL, 19 students alleged a 5th-grade teacher gave them answers on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test and told them to keep it secret. (*Naples Daily News*, 3-8-04) (See *Education Reporter*, Mar. 2004 for earlier examples of teacher cheating.)

Grade alterations

An Austin, TX middle school principal apologized to teachers for changing the grades of 208 students during the 2002-03 school year, causing 37 of them to pass instead of fail. (*Austin American-Statesman*, 4-14-04)

In Howard County, MD, a deputy superintendent was accused of using her position to have two grades changed for her teenage daughter at Centennial High School. In the same area, a varsity football student was allowed to play on the team after a failing grade was changed. That incident plus several others like it forced the Oakland Mills football team to forfeit eight victories. (*Washington Post*, 12-10-03)

The Minnesota education department announced it made a statistical "error in judgment" resulting in the inflation of the percentage of elementary school students who passed the 2003 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in math and reading. The mistake related to the definition of "passing," not the raw scores. (*Star Tribune*, 3-9-04)

U.S. History (Continued from page 1)

history educators, he quoted a paper presented by Central Missouri State University faculty members in late 2004: "The silent but deadly oppressor of the ethnic minority child's spirit is a state of injustice that is imbedded in . . . a one-sided truth espoused through the Eurocentric lens of American education."

'Street law' replaces civics

Street Law: A Practical Guide to the Law is widely used in lieu of traditional civics texts for high school. The book "replaces conventional civics with a bleak world of torts, liability, rights, entitlements, discrimination, and self-expressive lifestyles," charges Gilbert Sewall, director of the American Textbook Council. (nationalreview.com, 11-10-04) "Its civics no longer expects students to act as citizens of a republic. Instead, young people are taking instruction as members of factions, clients of the state, and subjects of the lawyer class."

Textbooks used in English as a Second Language programs, such as *High Point* and *Talking Walls*, seem to "destroy any patriotic thoughts these new Americans might develop toward their adopted country," writes Edgar B. Anderson in *FrontPageMagazine.com* (7-1-04).

Inaccuracies abound

Factual errors are a perennial problem with textbooks. *Oh, California!* by Houghton Mifflin contained so many inaccuracies that the Simi Valley Unified School District (which was required by law to use the book) voted unanimously in June 2001 to request state legislation requiring a warranty of accuracy.

Among other errors, the book stated that the southern border of California with Mexico was the Rio Grande; that Columbus started out from Portugal; that Malibu and Santa Monica are in the San Fernando Valley; that Gov. Hiram Johnson was mayor of San Francisco; that the transcontinental railroad went south of Lake Tahoe instead of north of it; and that borax was still being mined in Death Valley (the mining stopped in the 1920s).

More recently, the watchdog group

Textbook Trust exposed historical inaccuracies in the textbook *Earth Science* despite its list of more than 40 paid academic reviewers from prestigious universities. Highlights from the group's detailing of errors include missing the date of the discovery of the Rosetta Stone by a century, stating that gold dissolves in hot water, and asserting that a 200,000-pound dinosaur lived in ancient New Mexico.

Bleeding hearts for Aztecs

The prevailing multiculturalist attitudes in textbooks were on display in the recent exhibit on the Aztec Empire at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, wherein the chief curator's essay bitterly lamented the destruction of the Aztec Empire by Spaniards. The exhibit made no mention of Aztec cannibalism and only gently alluded to its practice of human sacrifice, which occurred on a large and gruesome scale. (*The New Criterion*, Dec. 2004)

Help may be on the way. A new history book, *A Patriot's History of the United States: From Columbus's Great Discovery to the War on Terror* by Larry Schweikart and Michael Patrick Allen, promises to "put the spotlight back on America's role as a beacon of liberty to the rest of the world."

The authors, history professors at the University of Dayton and the University of Washington, decided to make an "end run" around textbook companies and faculty committees by using a trade publisher, Penguin/Sentinel. Their target market is college and high school teachers and homeschoolers. Schweikart was galvanized to write the book by the "seriously distorted" coverage of the Reagan administration economic policies in *The American Pageant*, a textbook referenced earlier in this article. (*FrontPageMagazine.com*, 1-31-05)

See also *Education Reporter*, July 2004 for earlier criticisms of U.S. history textbooks.



Early Childhood (Continued from page 1)

the country now offer at least one full-day kindergarten class, up from 20% in the 1970s, according to the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Nine states require districts to offer full-day kindergarten, with seven providing financial incentives for districts to do so. The governors of Indiana and Massachusetts placed full-day kindergarten at the top of their legislative agendas last year along with Arizona's Gov. Janet Napolitano.

While full-day kindergarten tends to be preferred by working parents because it alleviates the need for half-day child care, there is little solid evidence that it improves academic achievement as children move into 1st grade and beyond. (*Education Week*, 1-26-05)

Birth to age 5 eyed

The National Governors Association may soon set its sights on children even younger than age 3. In late January it released a report recommending that states devise long-range plans for serving the needs of all children from birth through age 5. "Building the Foundation for Bright Futures" is the product of two years of work by the association's task force on school readiness.

Moreover, three Democratic governors have made early-childhood program

quality rating systems part of their legislative agendas this year. Under proposals in Arizona, Iowa and Wisconsin, more highly rated child-care centers would receive more state money to serve low-income families, and more highly rated preschools would be more likely to be chosen to take part in the states' preschool programs.

Sixteen states already have some form of quality-rating system. Rating systems typically measure indicators such as staff-child ratio and the educational credentials of the teachers. (*Education Week*, 2-9-05)

In California, advocates of universal preschool are regrouping since Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger helped derail a proposed statewide ballot initiative in the spring of 2004. Pending legislation would set forth a legislative intent that California develop a cohesive strategy to ensure that children have access to quality preschool programs.

In 2002 the Bush administration proposed an early-childhood initiative to help states and local communities strengthen early learning for young children. The initiative included a new accountability system for the federal Head Start preschool grant program and recommendations that states develop voluntary guidelines on pre-reading and language skills.

Channel One (Continued from page 1)

board member, Randy McKinney, subsequently indicated that he planned to return the \$500 he received.

Jim Metrock of Obligation Inc., which has battled the use of Channel One for nine years, called the board's action "a huge step forward."

Science guidelines adopted

At the same meeting, the Alabama Board of Education unanimously adopted science guidelines including a slightly revised disclaimer for textbooks covering evolution. The disclaimers included in science textbooks since 1996 warn that evolution is a "controversial theory" that should be questioned. The new guidelines delete the word "controversial" but also state they are intended to educate students in science, "not to question or diminish one's beliefs and/or faith."

The guidelines had been endorsed by the 36-member state Science Course of Study Committee with only one dissenting vote. The dissenter wrote a "minority report" objecting to the "unjustified direct influence of a non-scientific political

group" — Eagle Forum of Alabama — on the Board of Education. Larry Darby, president of the Atheist Law Center, spoke against the new guidelines at the Board of Education hearing, asserting that "science and religion are not compatible."

Eagle Forum of Alabama president Eunie Smith praised the new disclaimer language as "scientifically accurate and, at the same time, respectful of the many Alabamians who disagree with Darwin. Students will be taught this theory, and, in addition, be encouraged to exercise critical thinking regarding the assumptions underlying it."

A shorter textbook disclaimer stating that evolution is "a theory, not a fact," and "should be approached with an open mind, studied carefully, and critically considered," in sticker form, was declared unconstitutional in January by a federal district court in a case involving the Cobb County, GA school district. (See *Education Reporter*, Dec. 2004, Feb. 2005.) That district is appealing the decision.

Corporate (Continued from page 1)

pened so far and probably won't, given the existence of laws to protect minors from such activities.

However, names that sound respectable at the time of payment can bite the educational institution later, as the University of Missouri-Columbia discovered. The flagship state university has a still-vacant economics chair which was financed by and named for former Enron chief Kenneth Lay long before he was indicted in the collapse of his energy company.

Even more embarrassing, the same university named its basketball arena the Paige Sports Arena after the daughter of Wal-Mart heiress Nancy Laurie and her husband Bill, who donated \$25 million toward the \$75 million construction cost. Paige Laurie never attended the university, a fact that raised eyebrows initially. But it got worse.

Last November, allegations surfaced

that Paige Laurie had cheated her way through the University of Southern California by paying a roommate about \$20,000 to do some of her academic work. Fortunately for the university, her parents quickly gave up the arena naming rights and the university renamed the venue Mizzou Arena.

