

## Teacher's Gender Does Matter

As debate over the "gender gap" rages, research conducted by Thomas S. Dee, associate professor of economics at Swarthmore College and a faculty research fellow of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), indicates that a teacher's gender may have the greatest impact of all on student achievement. This is particularly true at the middle school level, where more than 80% of teachers are female.

Dee's study, titled *Teachers and the Gender Gaps in Student Achievement* (NBER Working Paper No. 11660) is an analysis of data collected in the 1988 National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS).

Although the survey is dated, Dee studied the NELS because it contains data on a nationally representative sample of nearly 25,000 8<sup>th</sup> graders from 1,052 public and private schools. It also includes data from two of each student's teachers in two different subjects, allowing an evaluation of the outcomes of each student when paired with two different teachers.

Writing in the Fall 2006 issue of *Education Next*, Dee described the NELS as "a goldmine of information for those interested in gender dynamics within the classroom."

Among his key findings:

- ▶ In English, science and social studies, having a female teacher instead of a male raises the achievement of girls by 4% of a standard deviation (the mean of the mean) while lowering the achievement of boys by the same amount.
- ▶ The test-score advantage for girls of having a female teacher is concentrated in social studies, increasing their performance in the discipline by 9% of a standard deviation.
- ▶ The greatest drop in achievement for boys is in science; boys' test scores drop 5% of a standard deviation when they have a female teacher.
- ▶ Overall results show an average positive impact of 4% of a standard deviation on test scores for both boys and girls when the teacher-student gender is the same.

### Why the gender difference?

Dee reviewed teacher perceptions and measures of students' intellectual involvement also included in the NELS data, in an attempt to ascertain reasons for the achievement differences relative to teacher-student gender. He found that:

- ▶ Boys are two to three times more likely to be viewed as disorderly and inattentive in class, and two to three times less likely to turn in homework.

- ▶ Girls are more likely than boys to report being afraid to ask questions in math and science classes, particularly when taught by a man. Girls were also less likely to look forward to the class or find the subject useful for their future.

- ▶ Overall, girls did better when taught by a woman, while boys' achievement improved when taught by a man.

Although Dee's study is being assailed — co-president of the National Women's Law Center, Marcia Greenberger, called the data "far from convincing," and NEA president Reg Weaver said student success "cannot be narrowed to the gender of the teacher" — Dee stands by his findings.

He raises the question of whether gender effects could be limited by offering teachers gender-specific training based on evidence supporting the different learning styles of boys and girls, as well as training to overcome gender biases in teacher behavior and expectations.

"My study suggests that gender interactions in the classroom matter, but it is still far from clear exactly why this is so," Dee wrote. "Perhaps the best policy solution is to keep an open mind about a variety of strategies that neither unequivocally endorse single-sex education nor rule it out of order altogether."

## Single-Sex Classes Get Backing of Feds

WASHINGTON, DC — After 31 months in review, the Bush administration announced new rules in October governing the creation of single sex classes and schools. The new rules took effect November 24, giving U.S. public school districts wide discretion in establishing single-sex classes and deciding how many subjects to hold such classes. The new rules are considered to represent the most significant federal education policy change on classroom segregation in more than 30 years.

The regulation published in the *Federal Register* (10-25-06) states: "... a recipient that operates a nonvocational coeducational elementary or secondary school may provide nonvocational single-sex classes or extracurricular activities. ..."

The announcement comes at a time when single-sex classes are on the rise — from a total of four in 1998 to approximately 230 today. The classes have been established chiefly in response to research over the past 10 years which shows clear differences in the ways boys and girls learn. Some studies have also suggested that low-income children in urban settings benefit from single-sex classes.

While the request for new rules originated in 2001 from both sides of the po-



## Gender Variance — Order or Disorder?

A California elementary school is taking the unisex concept to a new level, or new low, depending on one's point of view. As reported by SFGate.com (the *San Francisco Chronicle* online), Park Day School in Oakland has stopped grouping children according to their gender. Instead, girls who prefer to be boys and boys who'd rather be girls are affirmed in their behavior. The school even has a unisex bathroom.

Park Day's transformation took place over the past few years, as parents began enrolling children as young as kindergarteners "who didn't fit on either side of the gender line." In 2005, the school hired a consultant to help teachers deal with the transgender students.

SFGate reports Park Day's staff members "are among a growing number of educators and parents who are acknowledging gender variance in very young children. Aurora School, another private elementary school in Oakland, also is seeing children who are 'gender fluid' and hired a clinical psychologist to conduct staff training."

A survey by the Washington, DC-based activist organization GenderPAC, found that nearly 2,000 elementary schools and 150 preschools nationwide have district policies banning discrimination based on the gender identity and

sexual orientation of students.

These schools reflect a growing trend among some educators, psychologists and pediatricians to normalize behaviors in very young children that have long been considered Gender Identity Disorder (GID). "Children who suffer from GID are being redefined by radical pediatricians as 'gender variant' children who should be affirmed in their sexual confusions," laments Traditional Values Coalition (TVC) Executive Director, Andrea Lafferty. "These children need serious therapy, not affirmation for their gender confusion."

### Psychologists Weigh In

Psychologists at the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) say children who develop GID often live in homes where cross-gender behavior is tolerated or encouraged as a "phase." Dr. Kenneth Zucker observes that these children "are also frequently in homes where the maternal psychopathology is evident and [who] develop separation anxiety because of a mother who is emotionally unavailable."

Conversely, one clinical study showed that boys with GID had an overly close relationship with a mother accompanied by a distant, peripheral relationship with a father. Another study found that feminized boys spent less time with their fathers during the ages of one through five years than sons in a control group.

Dr. Zucker adds that GID children are often brought up in homes where "tolerance and non-responsiveness was common. Encouragement of these behaviors seems to be more common than negative or discouraging reactions."

On the opposite side of the issue, the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC publishes *A Parent Guide* "for parents who want information and advice on a child with gender-variant behaviors." The Center denies parents bear any responsibility for children with gender identity problems: "Although science has yet to pinpoint the causes, we know that gender-variant traits are not typically caused by parenting style or by childhood events, such as divorce, sexual abuse, or other traumatic experience."

According to NARTH, there are also behavioral traits linked to biological processes that may characterize children with GID. For example, prenatal sex hormones may impact the developing brains of pre-born children, such as congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), an intersex condition affecting genetic females. During fetal development, the external genitalia of these infants become masculinized. Dr. Zucker says it is presumed that this phenomenon also affects their developing brains; stud-

(See *Gender Roles*, page 2)

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

**New York City teachers could earn as much as \$100,000 per year under a new agreement reached last month.** Teachers' salaries will rise 7.1% over a two year period, with salaries for teachers with a minimum of three years' experience increasing from \$51,102 to \$54,730. Senior teachers currently earning \$93,416 would earn salaries of \$100,049 under the new pact. Unlike previous years, the New York City Department of Education and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) inked the deal 11 months before the current contract is set to expire.

**Public school students in Cleveland will get more sex education, beginning in kindergarten.** The expanded curriculum will teach children in grades K-3 "how viruses work" and about "appropriate and inappropriate touching." Students in grades 7-12 will learn about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy, and respect for others' sexual orientation. Some parents are wondering how to protect their children from inappropriate, sexually explicit classroom instruction.

**A 17-year-old Massachusetts student filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights claiming an education bias in favor of girls.** Doug Anglin maintains that his high school makes it easier for females to succeed, and some agree he has a point, including William Pollack, director of the Centers for Men and Young Men at McLean Hospital of Harvard Medical School. Pollack points to the many boys in grades K-5 who are unable to behave as well as girls due to biological and social differences. They need five to seven recesses a day, Pollack says, but are lucky to get one. Anglin's complaint also alleges girls have more freedom to wander the school hallways without passes, and are more often rewarded while boys are punished. Anglin recommends giving boys credit for participating in sports, and abolishing community service requirements for graduation.

(See Briefs, 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. Co-editors: D.K. Niwa and Mary Schiltz. 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](mailto:education@eagleforum.org)

## Gender Roles (Continued from page 1)

ies of girls with CAH indicate they have a higher risk of becoming bisexual.

### Encouraging Rejection of Gender Roles

The Children's National Medical Center warns parents not to automatically accept traditional assumptions about social gender roles and sexual orientation. "Some experts used to believe that gender variance represented abnormal development," the *Parent Guide* states, "but today many have come to believe that children with gender-variant behaviors are normal children with unique qualities — just as children who develop left-handedness are normal."

The Center's reference to left-handedness is interesting. According to NARTH's literature, Dr. Zucker's findings show that boys with GID have "a significantly greater rate of left-handedness than other boys." Additionally, Zucker found that GID boys have "an excess of brothers to sisters and a later birth order than non-GID boys, suggesting 'maternal immune reactions during pregnancy,'" whereby a male fetus is experienced by the mother as more "foreign" or "antigenic" than a female.

### Link to Homosexuality

Whatever the causes, Dr. Zucker believes parents should place limits on their children's cross-gender behaviors. If they do not, he says, the behavior in effect becomes reinforced. He points out that there is a link between GID and homosexuality and that clinical experience suggests psychosexual treatment is effective in reducing "gender dysphoria." NARTH experts believe "individual counseling and parental counseling are both effective methods of treating GID."

The Children's National Medical Center agrees there is a link between GID and homosexuality. "Research on boys with gender-variant histories suggests that most of them have a same-sex orientation (i.e., they are gay)..." However, the Center rejects the assumption that gender variance is abnormal and discourages any attempt to change such behavior. "What drives gender-typical or gender-variant traits cannot be changed through the influence of parents, teachers, coaches, or

therapists. . . . We strongly oppose parenting approaches or therapies that focus on pressuring children to change and accommodate to a stereotype of how a girl or a boy is 'supposed to be.'"

### "Acceptance" or Therapy?

Even more ominous is this admonition in the Center's *Parent Guide*: "You must reach acceptance in order to affirm your child's uniqueness." It later states: "A red flag should be raised when the therapist seems to focus on the child's behaviors as the problem rather than on helping the child cope with intolerance and social prejudice. In the past, professionals assigned the diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder to children. This approach is flawed because it implies that these children suffer from a mental disorder. Along the same lines, therapists used to recommend techniques to change gender-variant behaviors. Professionals that still make these types of recommendations should be avoided."

NARTH professionals disagree. "Boys and girls with gender identity problems are not freely experimenting with gender atypical activities," writes NARTH Scientific Advisory Board member Dr. Richard P. Fitzgibbons. "They are constrained by deep insecurities and fears and are reacting against the reality of their own sexual identity, usually as a result of failing to experience love and acceptance from the parent of the same sex or same sex peers. Therapy is not directed toward forcing a sensitive or artistic boy to become a macho sports fanatic, but toward helping the boy grow in confidence and be happy he is a boy."

Grove City College Associate Professor of Psychology, Warren Throckmorton, agrees that some gender-variant children can be redirected to their birth sex. Quoted on SFGate.com, Throckmorton said: "I've treated kids who were quite sure they were the opposite gender and are now quite consistent in their behavior and their feelings with their biological sex."

### Transgender Activism

The Traditional Values Coalition believes the notion of gender variance is being exploited by "transgender activists" (See *Gender Roles*, page 4)



## Book of the Month



**The Politically Incorrect Guide to English and American Literature, Elizabeth Kantor, Regnery Publishing Co., 2006, \$19.95.**

Elizabeth Kantor, Ph.D., has written a fascinating tale about modern academics. Professors don't want to teach English literature the way it was written, but instead try to deconstruct it and remold it into Marxist liberal feminist ideology. That's a hopeless task because great English literature is explicitly Christian, conservative, and celebrates heroism, marriage, and masculine courage.

Dr. Kantor's entertaining analysis is enlivened by inset quotations telling precisely what the political professors don't want students to know. The professors don't want them to learn from the poem *Beowulf* that no civilization will survive without heroes to defend it, or from Chaucer that chivalry has contributed enormously to women's happiness, or from Shakespeare that there really is such a thing as human nature and some people make inherently destructive choices, or from John Milton that our intellectual freedoms are Christian in origin. The feminists don't want young people to learn from Jane Austen that it's reasonable for a woman to look to marriage for happiness.

English Literature in many universities is taught as a process to uncover the oppression that's supposed to define Western culture: the racism, the patriarchy, and the imperialism that are alleged to lurk beneath the surface of all Western writing by dead white males. The problem isn't only that English professors don't teach the great English literature, but that they try to pervert it into the thesis that Western civilization is the root of all evil. University English departments have come under the control of people who really hate our English and American heritage.

Western culture is treated as something students need to be liberated from, not something to appreciate, pass on, and preserve. Censored out of discussion are the facts that Western civilization has developed concepts that are unknown in most of the rest of the world: unparalleled freedom, self-government, freedom of speech, and respect for women.

There are so many magnificent books, novels, plays and poems written in the English language. It is so unfortunate that our high school and college students are not introduced to the beauty and inspiration of this literature. Dr. Kantor's book is an introduction to what you should have learned in college but didn't. This politically incorrect guide will introduce you to the grand range of things you can learn from English literature, but probably won't in university courses.

# FOCUS: Kill the Teacher?

By Nachum Shifren

I have been a language teacher with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) since 1991. In 2005, after an exhaustive grievance process, I signed a final agreement never to teach in the District again. For its part, the District removed my negative teacher performance evaluation.

In the fall of 2003, I was a Spanish teacher at Dorsey High School. My classroom was burned to the ground; I had a death threat, physical assaults, and constant accusations of racism.

I endured countless demeaning "parent conferences" where lack of student comportment and academic achievement was inevitably spun into my "lack of classroom management and insensitivity to the needs of a diverse student population."

Students who did little or no homework, refused to turn in term papers and did not pass a single exam, were able to manipulate conferences with allegations of racism or personal animosity. When students were sent from my classroom to the Dean's office for outrageous behavior, such as stabbing another student with a pencil, obnoxious epithets or racial slurs, and open defiance, they would never arrive. Instead, they were picked up by security (after being found walking around the campus) while our ever-resourceful administration documented against me a "clear lack of student-teacher rapport and managerial skills."

The picture I've painted becomes clearer when one considers that the student who threatened to kill me was allowed to run for student body officer! If I had any doubts about my stature on our campus, they were quickly dispelled.

True racism is in the presumption that inner-city kids cannot be expected to complete homework (nor come in for tutoring which was provided in my class on a daily basis), sit down in assigned seats (without wandering around the room disrupting others trying to learn), and display proper conduct.

I dressed in a suit and tie, establishing standards based on professionalism. My appearance had the effect of accentuating differences in attitude and mindset. I represented an authoritarian figure, an "outsider" infiltrating the community with an alien belief system, using coercion to have students comply with class rules. Add to this my orthodox "Jewish" beard and head covering, and I became a lightning rod for resentment.

At some point, community "activists" started dredging up archaic Jewish/Black

antagonisms and issues of divisiveness. "Why you always wanna keep the black man down, Shifren?" was an oft-repeated refrain usually heard after a low score on a test or report card. "I'm not trying to keep anyone down. If you'd do your homework, your grade would be higher."



Rabbi Shifren

## Classroom Burned

When my classroom was burned, the damage was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, with adjacent buildings also heavily damaged. Our "C" building was roped off as a hazardous area, with the pungent smell of burned asbestos lingering as a constant reminder of the episode.

The reaction on the part of the administration was business as usual . . . with no attempt to use the event to catalyze student respect for property. Everyone knew that this "burn-baby-burn" mindset was condoned by the principal, Dr. Mahmud, as evidenced by her silence.

This indifference put me on the defensive with students and parents. Permeating everyone's mind was the feeling that a teacher whose students so hate him that they feel "compelled" to burn his classroom down, cannot be taken seriously and is a liability to both staff and students.

When Dr. Mahmud reminded me that I was a probationary teacher and needed a positive evaluation from her for tenure in the District, I knew I was a goner. But why was there no fuss about the hundreds of thousands of dollars' damage caused to taxpayers? Where was the regret that the situation at Dorsey was so out of control that "burning out" a teacher was somehow justified?

## Activists in Authority

Community "Activists" were given a position of authority at Dorsey, charged with heading the "Parent Center." Their role was ostensibly to serve as liaisons between the parents and the school. Actually it entailed monitoring teachers with whom students were having difficulties.

The Center instigated a flood of letters to the Superintendent of Schools, prevailing upon him to remove me from my teaching position. I was having a "detrimental effect upon students and community."

## Teaching Hebrew?

What was so remarkable about one particular letter from the "Parent Center" was the accusation that children were complaining about "not learning anything" (read: poor grades) due to my teaching Hebrew! Even if this were true, would not such a charge be checked out first by the administration? If confirmed, a warning would be given, putting the teacher on notice.

At my dismissal hearing, this letter was thrown in my face for the first time, presented as one of the reasons for my removal from the district.

Only two individuals came to my assistance during this nightmare: Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson, community activist and director of BOND International, and Congressman Dana Rohrabacher of Huntington Beach. Congressman Rohrabacher stepped up to the plate on my behalf. He faxed, emailed, and left countless messages through his Washington office for Superintendent of Schools Roy Romer, attempting to arrange a meeting to deal with the lawlessness at Dorsey. For weeks, Romer was either in the Caribbean on vacation or simply unavailable. Rev. Peterson was present at one of my grievance hearings and was moved to make the comment that I would never get a fair hearing from my administrator.

## Riots Over Exit Exams

Dorsey was beset with riots over the issue of Exit Exams, the standardized state levels of minimum performance required

*No overstatement can describe the anarchy in our schools from masses of [illegal] foreign students, principally from Mexico.*

in order to graduate from high school. For several hours, hundreds of students were marauding through the campus, causing a school-wide lockdown. The LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department] was out in force, helicopters flew overhead. No one was allowed out of their classrooms for hours, not even to go to the bathroom. There was real fear for teachers' lives, such as the hysteria. Why? The students know they're dumbed down and failing. They know, as do their parents, that if they were forced to prove their competence in academic skills, they would fall short of the measure.

In my two years at Dorsey, not once was staff development focused on these vital concerns. One activist bemoaned students being taken to task for poor language skills, calling English the "language of the oppressor."

## The Illegal Alien Factor

No overstatement can describe the anarchy in our schools from masses of foreign students, principally from Mexico. A myriad of programs designed to bring them up to grade level are tying our hands. Bilingual education is as much a failure as it is a fraud. In nearly all cases, the families are here for economic reasons that have nothing to do with assimilation into American society.

Chicano activists abound, and encourage the flood across the border. Groups like Aztlan and MEChA preach to these illegals that it is We, the white establishment that owes them a free education, housing, and a host of other gratuities. Actually, they are told, the "reconquista" (reconquering of Southwest

United States) is in full swing, so efforts to learn the host language and culture are unnecessary. Furthermore, since our country has an institutional racism (their claim) toward Latinos, they can only use confrontational politics to wrest control from the controlling population.

There is no shortage of Leftist groups and sympathizers to help them reach their goal. The Balkanization of our schools is already a fact.

Since "cultural diversity" is the new mantra of the Left, the logical consequence is that our American institutions based on God, patriotism, and individual rights and freedoms guaranteed by our constitution, have come into question. The illegal alien agenda is one of the weapons used to break the system. The more Third World, non-English speaking people flooding our schools, the better (they believe).

The proof that this agenda is working can be seen in LAUSD's policy of not questioning the legal status of any foreigners. There are gangs in our schools terrorizing entire communities whose members are here illegally.

Growing up in America, most of us remember reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. This small act did more than anything to unify diverse cultures and ethnic groups. We instinctively knew we were bound together through a higher purpose, with a spiritual and patriotic calling.

My classroom at Dorsey had no flag, despite my requests for one. No pledge of allegiance was recited; nothing spiritual or patriotic was presented to give the faintest hint of something more profound than "it's all about me."

I received a letter in my mailbox one day from a student who had been absent for nearly a month. "Dear Mr. Shifren, I apologize for not letting you know that I would miss taking your final exam. I was on my way to school when I got shot. I should do OK. Thanks for letting me take the test when I get back."

Shot on the way to school? The guy pulling the trigger just "thought" my student was a rival gang member. This is the miserable harvest we've reaped as a result of our corrupt school system.

There is a deep sadness within me, a feeling of disconnectedness from the many students I was fortunate enough to befriend. As I told the District Superintendent during the last stage of my grievance process, I forgive the death threats, the physical assaults, the demeaning racial slurs. If students didn't have the support of "activists" and malevolent do-gooders intent on redressing perceived wrongs, the despicable behavior and attitudes would never prevail.

I hope everyone reading my story will take a lesson in responsible parenting and guardianship of our local schools. We need not be experts to grasp that our national strength has come from a belief in God, in the eternal bond with a Creator that has given us the ability to choose Good and Righteousness, or the opposite.

The preceding is excerpted from Rabbi Shifren's book, *Kill Your Teacher: Corruption and Racism in Los Angeles City Schools*, Heaven Ink Publishing, P.O. Box 214, Santa Monica, CA. [www.killyourteacher.com](http://www.killyourteacher.com)

# The Second Greatest Christmas in History

By Michael Gerardi

Did you learn this Christmas story in American History class? Chances are you did not, but it is an inspiring account of how early American courage, resilience, and determination laid the foundation for the greatest nation on earth.

In December of 1776, the cause of American independence was on the verge of collapse. The American army had yet to achieve a decisive victory. Philadelphia was laid bare to the British army, forcing Congress to adjourn and flee for safety. One-fifth of General George Washington's army of 7,500 was unfit for combat due to sickness, and hundreds more were suffering through the brutal winter without adequate clothing. Worst of all, American enlistments were due to expire on January 1, 1777, and few soldiers would renew their contracts without some hope of victory to mitigate their suffering. "Our affairs are hastening fast to ruin," Joseph Reed wrote to General Washington on December 22nd, "if we do not retrieve them by some happy event."

To bring about a "happy event," Washington planned an attack on Trenton, New Jersey, where 2,000 Hessian mercenaries were headquartered. The offensive was scheduled for Christmas night, with three groups of Americans crossing the Delaware River from Pennsylvania into New Jersey, converging on Trenton from north and south. Washington himself would lead the primary force of 2,400 troops stationed north of Trenton near McKonkey's Ferry, PA. The pass-word that night was "Victory or Death."

Washington's troops reached the river at sunset on Christmas day. The high water level and large chunks of ice in the river complicated the crossing. At 11 PM, a winter storm blew in, so vicious that two men froze to death before they reached Trenton. Washington was three hours behind schedule when the crossing was completed at 3 a.m. Unbeknownst to him, the smaller groups of American forces to the south of him had suspended their attacks

## Gender Roles (Cont. from page 2)

who are "aggressively targeting our public school children." "This insanity must stop," says TVC's Lafferty. The Coalition's *Back to School Report* for 2006 describes "the growing movement of transgender activists, including teachers, counselors and pediatricians who are teaching children that being male or female is 'fluid' and changeable."

"This is absolutely crazy, but pediatricians from some of the nation's most prestigious children's hospitals are involved in this gender confusion movement," maintains Lafferty.

In a statement of "Purpose" titled "Defending True Diversity," NARTH offers this 50-year-old definition of normal from researcher C.D. King, which is perhaps the bottom line: "Normality is that which functions according to its design."

because of excessive ice in the river. Washington pressed on; he and his young nation had reached a point of no return.

Washington's men arrived at Trenton at 8 AM. Despite the snags in the plan, the Americans had achieved complete tactical surprise. The Hessians had expected a possible American offensive, but they mistook an earlier incursion for the attack, and assumed Washington would not risk attacking in the middle of a northeaster. The Americans quickly seized the high ground of the city and took control of the battle with artillery fire.

The Americans fought tenaciously with the Hessians from house to house in spite of the grueling march the night before. In 45 minutes, the battle was over; 21 Hessians were killed, 90 wounded, and 900 taken prisoner. Not a single American died in the fighting, and only four were wounded. Against all odds, a "happy event" had come to pass.

News of the victory spread quickly through the states via newspapers and word of mouth. Washington had hoped that a "lucky blow" would "rouse the spirits of the people," but even he could not have anticipated the effect of his unexpected triumph. The victory at Trenton convinced Americans, and the rest of the world, that their struggle was not in vain. George Washington's Christmas present was the birth of a free nation.

*Michael J. Gerardi is a senior electrical engineering major at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana). He writes about film and other cultural topics for his web blog, "Just an Amateur" (<http://justanamateur.blogspot.com>). He may be contacted by e-mail at [mgerardi@nd.edu](mailto:mgerardi@nd.edu).*

## Bob Schaffer was elected

to the Colorado State Board of Education on Nov. 7. A former Member of Congress, Schaffer earned the gratitude of education buffs all over the U.S. for putting into the **Congressional Record** the famous "Dear Hillary" letter from Marc Tucker, which laid out the grand plan to change the mission of schools from teaching children academic basics and knowledge to training them to serve the global economy in jobs selected by workforce boards. Schaffer placed the full text of the letter in the *Congressional Record* on Sept. 25, 1998, (105th Cong., 2nd Session, pages E1819 to E1824). After correcting dozens of typographical errors, Eagle Forum has made the letter available at:

[www.eagleforum.org/educate/marc\\_tucker/](http://www.eagleforum.org/educate/marc_tucker/)



Bob Schaffer



# California Legislature Moves Left

Since California is a trendsetter in public policy and legislation, here is a recap of the bills pertaining to public schools that passed in the State Legislature in 2006. The new laws signed by Governor Schwarzenegger are followed by the bills passed by the state legislature but vetoed by the Governor (due to energetic lobbying by the grassroots).

**AB 2560 — Public School Health Center Expansion. Signed into law.** This law will establish, retain and expand "health centers" in public schools. These health centers will collect data on children and then compile a biennial report on the collected data. AB 2560 allows school-based health centers to provide diagnostic and treatment services. This means that teachers and school staff may take students to the health clinic and "treat" them for maladies including "mental health disorders." School officials may also immunize students and provide counseling for "newer morbidities" such as teen sex, substance abuse, smoking, violence and behavioral problems. Under this legislation, the rights of parents to direct their children's healthcare will be denied. School officials will possess the power to prescribe medication to students they believe have "behavioral problems."

## AB 172 — Universal Preschool. Signed into law.

This legislation requires the state to offer "voluntary" universal preschool for 3-5 year olds. Although this legislation requires "voluntary" preschool, it is certainly a step towards requiring attendance and adds yet another layer to the education bureaucracy. (California voters defeated universal pre-school on a statewide referendum in June.)

## SB 1441 — State Funding vs. Religious Beliefs. Signed into law.

SB 1441 requires all businesses and organizations receiving funding from the state to condone homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality or lose state funding. There is no exception for faith-based organizations or business owners with sincerely held religious convictions.

## SB 1437—Homosexual Indoctrination in Schools. Vetoed.

This bill, which passed the Assembly 46-31 on a partisan vote, would have banned teachers, textbooks, instructional materials or school activities that "reflect adversely" on people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (but adversely was not defined). A violation could be reported to the state Department of Education for possible reprisals. The bill would have added sexual orientation to the list of protected classes: race, sex, color, creed, handicap, national origin or ancestry. Public school teachers would have been forbidden to say homosexuality is wrong. The terms "mother and father" or "husband and wife" could have been removed from textbooks because they reflect adversely upon homosexuals. This bill was a flagrant attack on California families.

## AB 1056 — Thought Police Redefine Tolerance. Vetoed.

This bill was the most blatant attack on freedom of speech and religion to date. It would have integrated tolerance training into history and social science curricula and started a pilot program that forced students to learn a "new definition" of tolerance. According to this new definition, students would have been forced to not only accept, but advocate homosexuality by "conveying respect" for a lifestyle that violates their religious beliefs.

## AB 606 — Superintendent of Public Instruction. Vetoed.

AB 606 would have required the State Board of Education (instead of individual school districts) to increase sensitivity to so-called "discrimination." Under this proposed law the State Superintendent of Public Instruction would have had unlimited discretion to withhold state funds from schools that did not comply with his interpretation of AB 606.

## AB 2510 — Bias Survey Promotes Homosexual Agenda. Vetoed.

AB 2510 would have required the Attorney General's office, working with the State Department of Education, to survey students on bias-related discrimination and harassment incidents in public schools. 7th, 9th and 11th graders in public schools would have been forced to fill out questionnaires asking whether they have experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender (actual or perceived). In his veto message the governor stated that, "This bill adds little to the prevention of bad behavior, but merely focuses on collecting information that is generally already known by principals, teachers, parents, and law enforcement."

## SB 1471—Sex Education in Schools (Kuehl-D) Vetoed.

This legislation would have prohibited teaching or promoting "religious doctrine" in sex education classes. It also would have prohibited any teaching that "reflects or promotes bias" against people based on their sexual orientation. This legislation would have applied to any school or program that receives state funding—it would not have been limited to public schools.

## Briefs (Cont. from page 2)

**A teacher at Baker Middle School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, recommended a sexually explicit book to her 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.** One mother complained, and a local TV station, WAFB 9 News, investigated the book, *B-Boy Blues*, by James Earl Hardy, published in 1994. The reporter found that the book was "filled with sexually explicit scenes, including men having sex together." Baton Rouge School Superintendent Lester Klotz told WAFB News that school officials met with the teacher, and she assured them such an incident will not happen again. Some parents aren't convinced, and want the teacher removed from the classroom.

