

# EDUCATION REPORTER

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## Student's First Amendment Rights Denied by Ninth Circuit Court

With sharply divided opinions among its three judges, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued a ruling striking down a California student's right to wear a t-shirt opposing homosexuality.

In April 2004, Tyler Chase Harper, a student at Poway High School near San Diego, Calif., wore shirts to school on two days bearing separate messages: "I will not accept what God has condemned" and "Be ashamed, our school embraced what God has condemned." On the back of the shirts were handwritten: "Homosexuality is shameful, 'Romans 1:27.'"

On the second day, school administration requested Harper change his shirt. The student refused. Consequently, Harper spent the rest of the day in the school's front office versus being suspended as the student requested.

Harper, through his parents, filed a lawsuit on June 2, 2004 against Poway Unified School District and specific school officials, alleging a breach of his right to free speech, free exercise of religion, the Establishment Clause, the Equal Protection Clause, and the Due Process Clause. On July 12, 2004, Harper filed a preliminary injunction against the school to stop the "continuing violation" of his constitutional rights.

In his dissenting opinion against the majority decision, Judge Alexander Kozinski drew attention to the fact that the student "did not thrust his view of homosexuality into the school environment as a part of a campaign to demean or embarrass other students. Rather, he was responding to public statements made by others with whom he disagreed."

(See *Student's Rights*, page 4)



## Pro-Family Advocate's Child Beaten by Students on Anniversary of Same-Sex Marriage in Massachusetts

On the second-year anniversary (May 17) of same-sex "marriage" in Massachusetts, seven-year-old Jacob Parker — son of pro-family advocate David Parker — received multiple blows to his chest, stomach, and genital area. The beating occurred during recess at Jacob's school.

Around 8-10 students from Estabrook Elementary School (Lexington, Mass.) were involved, including four of Jacob's classmates. Because the teacher's aide was not able to see visible injuries, Jacob was not sent to the nurse, but his parents were immediately contacted.

In 2005, Jacob's father David Parker received national attention surrounding his objection to the human sexuality curriculum his son was exposed to in kindergarten. Mr. Parker has been at odds with school officials' lack of willingness to respect parental requests for notification of class discussion about homosexuality. (See "Charges Against Massachusetts Parent Dropped," *Education Reporter*, Nov. 2005)

*LifeSiteNews* reported on June 14: "Parker speculated that the cause of the attack was most likely what he called 'displaced aggression.' 'If children hear venomous things from their parents, the children do internalize this, . . . I certainly don't want to vilify the children . . . We understand that skirmishes happen on the playground. It's taking the child around out of view of the aides, and the number of children that stood around watching that concerns us.'"

Responding to inquiry about whether he was considering taking his son out of the school, Parker replied, "We're trying to be patient and tolerant. We're trying to

hang on to the notion that the schools are for every child and for everyone. I don't feel that we should have to leave for an injustice." But he added, "There are limits to how much patience we can have. I certainly understand why more and more parents are pulling their children out of public schools."

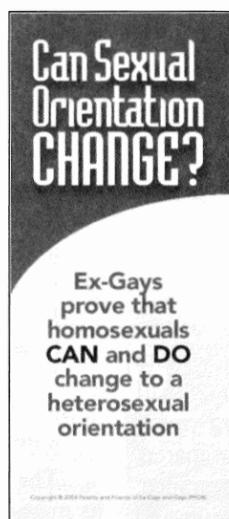
*LifeSiteNews* also reported, "Ironically, the school prides itself on its long-time involvement in various 'Safe School' programs" that include creating "safe" environments for homosexual students.

## 'Change is Possible Campaign'

Addressing discrimination and intolerance surfacing against those who decide to leave the homosexual lifestyle, two national organizations have launched the "Change is Possible Campaign": Liberty Counsel and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX).

Some of the activities encouraged by the organizations include distributing literature and posters acknowledging the existence of ex-gays, creating a Gay to Straight Club, and requesting "the ex-gay viewpoint be included in all diversity day presentations that discuss homosexuality."

Mathew D. Staver, President and General Counsel of Liberty Counsel, stated: "We are confident that this project will help root out intolerance that exists under the guise of tolerance and diversity. There is an ongoing battle over the hearts and minds of our youth. We have an obligation to pro-



## 'Moscow Declaration' Adopted by G-8 Education Ministers — Secretary Spellings Commits U.S.

Incorporating Russian education initiatives, the Moscow Declaration was accepted on June 2, 2006 by the Education Ministers of The Group of Eight (G-8). The U.S. Department of Education explained that the joint declaration is to confirm G-8 member commitment to "cooperation in education at all levels in the 21st century."

The member states — having convened annually since 1975 to discuss economic and political issues — include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In 1997, the Russian Federation became an officially recognized member.

According to Russia's official news agency — the Information Telegraph Agency of Russia (ITAR-TASS) — Russia's Science and Education Minister Andrei Fursenko describes the declaration as:

"both a final document of the conference and the document that will be implemented by education ministers of all the world countries and international organizations, including the World Bank, UNESCO, and UN." (ITAR-TASS, 6-2-2006)

The U.S. Department of Education said the member delegates "pledged to share

best practices across borders" to build "education systems that can allow people . . . to live and contribute to a global society, and to work in a global economy," (U.S. Dept. of Education, 6-2-2006)

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings remarked at the closing meeting session, "I strongly support Russian Edu-

cation and Science Minister Fursenko's call to jointly issue the Moscow Declaration of the G-8 Education Ministers" and "This declaration is more than just words

on paper — they are words to live by and words to act on."

### Declaration commitments

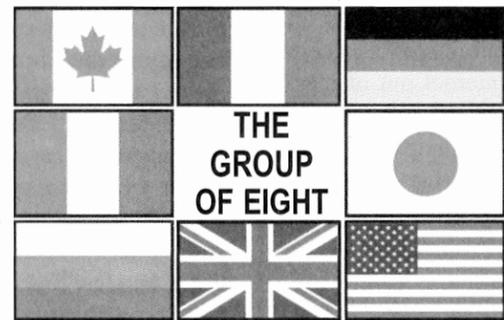
The Moscow Declaration commitments include promotion of public-private partnerships, "social cohesion, the rule of law and justice, as well as civic engagement," multicultural initiatives, and increased education use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

Decades-long existing United Nations and OECD lifelong education plans find support in the declaration's goal for continued development of "lifelong learning systems" spanning from "early childhood through adulthood" to strengthen links "between learning enterprise training and the labor market."

The declaration also cites:

- "exchanges in the science and technology fields," "wider exchanges and interactions at all levels of education and training," and "cross-border education delivery" to increase "international understanding, transparency and portability of qualifications and intensifying cooperation on quality assurance and accreditation"
- "responsive and accountable systems of governance"
- teach "civic values"
- develop mastery of "processing, adapting and applying existing information and . . . creating new knowledge"
- "promote better understanding of qualifications earned through informal and non-formal learning," "information sharing," "understanding of different national academic practices and traditions," "appreciation of labor-market driven mechanisms for recognition of qualifications," and more.

(See *Moscow Declaration*, page 3)



THE GROUP OF EIGHT

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

**Roughly 600 out of 15,000 school districts nationwide are drug testing students** in athletic and voluntary activities. A 1995 Supreme Court ruling allowed for random testing of non-suspects. The Bush Administration wants to spend \$15 million in the next fiscal year for drug testing grants, nearly double the \$8 million previously spent. A 2003 national survey involving 76,000 students "found no difference in drug use between schools that test students and those that don't." (Reuters, 3-19-2006)

**More colleges are banning laptop use in classrooms.** After substantial financial investment for wireless internet access by universities, increasingly more professors want computers and the internet out of class. Students are distracted with the technology that allows them to surf the internet, instant message, email and play computer games during lectures. (Christian Science Monitor, 5-4-2006)

**Two-thirds of undergraduates are in debt** at an average of \$19,000 to cover higher education expenses. The bulk of debt is for government loans. (The Associated Press, 5-31-2006)

**Four and six year old children were recruited for an 8-week study** of the drug quetiapine (Seroquel). The trial conducted at Massachusetts General Hospital was to find out if the drug is "well tolerated in the treatment of preschoolers with pediatric bipolar and bipolar spectrum disorder . . ." (Clinicaltrials.gov)

**A student tracking program using RFID and technology similar to the Global Positioning System (GPS)** has been piloted in Arizona's second largest school district. Last January, three Tucson Unified school buses were equipped with radio devices to monitor elementary students entering and exiting buses. Pending district wide approval of *BusPass*, Gateway Communication will "give TUSD's 12,000 bus-riders from fifth grade down a plastic watchband, a small black box hooked to a belt loop or a key fob." "Parents would pay about \$20 to participate in the program and buy the equipment." (Arizona Daily Star, 5-28-2006)

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## Hope for America's Future

By Orlean Koehle

As a public school substitute teacher in Santa Rosa, California, I often come home discouraged about the future of our nation. While there are exceptions — students who dress and act properly and really do care about learning — the majority of students I teach in junior high and high school are apathetic, rude, unkempt, improperly dressed, disrespectful, and have a care less attitude about learning or getting decent grades.

Many also have a care less attitude about the nation they live in or the blessings they enjoy from living in this free country. They show little respect for America and the flag that represents it. They know little about our history or form of government. If the school still asks students to begin the day by standing for the pledge of allegiance, often I am the only one saying the words.

As a former speech, drama, and journalism teacher, I am saddened that many students today cannot speak without the use of "valley or rap language." Every other word is "like, you know, man, dude" and, unless severely reprimanded, they throw in a few four-letter words, too. To get them to read and to write a good paragraph on any subject is like pulling teeth.

You can imagine my delight upon finding a large group of American youth who still know how to act, dress, and speak properly — youth who have a love for reading, writing, and learning and who are grateful to live in this free country, to be called Americans, and are prepared with the knowledge to speak out and defend what they believe about their country and their Christian faith.

I was asked to be a judge for a home-school speech competition held in Santa Rosa, CA, at the Santa Rosa Bible Church, March 24-25. There were 149 students competing, from the ages of 12-18. They represented various speech and debate clubs from northern and southern California that were part of the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA). The Santa Rosa club hosting the speech contest is named "Touche." The group consists of 20 families involved with 30 students.

If you need to recharge your batteries and to renew your faith in the future of our nation, this is the place to come. I was impressed by the outstanding young people I heard. They were well-prepared, articulate, and neat in their appearance. The young men were dressed in suits and ties and the young ladies wore suit jackets and skirts, or pantsuits, and heels.

There were ten entry categories; most students entered 3 or 4 events. One can imagine how much time and preparation that would take.

I served as a judge both days for five different meets. I heard contestants in humorous oratory, impromptu apologetics,

original oratory, and extemporaneous.

To give you an idea of how sharp these young people are, following are the apologetics and the extemporaneous category where young people speak on subjects as "Why the *Bible* is different from any other book," "Why I know the *Bible* is true and was not created by people who just wanted to start their own religion," "Why I believe the Scriptures are the authority foundation," "Why I know the Old Testament is not myths made up by the Jews to start their own nation and prove their superiority," "How the *Bible* is different from the *Koran*."

In the extemporaneous category, difficult topics were presented in an outstanding way: "What is the European Union's biggest economic problem currently?" "Is China a boon or a bane of the US economy?" "Is the Palestinian authority bound for bankruptcy?" "Has the GOP become the 'Grand Over-Spending Party'?" "What are the economic consequences of the growing Spanglish culture in America?" "Will the current budget deficit cripple the US economy?"

These students were amazing in how they could speak on these difficult topics with just five minutes preparation.

Winners from the Santa Rosa tournament qualified to go on to another contest in California. Those winners will go to the national tournament that will be held the first week in June at Patrick Henry College in Virginia. There are four qualifying tournaments that take place in California.

The NCFCA was started ten years ago by Mike Farris and Christy Shipe, attorneys from the Home School Legal Defense Fund, as a way to help prepare home schooled youth to defend what they believe in and a way to give them fun interaction with other home schooled youth. This is the NCFCA mission statement:

"The National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) believes that formal speech and debate can provide a means for home schooled students to learn and exercise analytical and oratorical skills, addressing life issues from a Biblical worldview in a manner that glorifies God. To provide these opportunities to home schooled students, NCFCA shall facilitate qualifying tournaments throughout the country and the annual national tournament."

The NCFCA certainly has achieved its mission. The young people who competed in the speech events I judged were all outstanding with analytical and oratorical skills based on a strong Biblical worldview that is critically needed at this time in our nation and our world.

Orlean Koehle is the State President of Eagle Forum of California.

For more information about NCFCA, go to [www.NCFCA.org](http://www.NCFCA.org).

## Book of the Month



**John Dewey & the Decline of American Education: How the patron saint of schools has corrupted teaching and learning**, Henry T. Edmondson III, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006, 129 pp., \$15.



John Dewey, who lived from 1859 to 1952, was the most influential advocate of progressive education. His ideas were very unorthodox for his time, but he concealed their really radical nature by overwhelming people with the sheer volume of his writings. His disciple William H. Kilpatrick, who taught at Columbia Teacher College for 28 years, used Dewey's writings as the textbook for education methodology.

In *John Dewey & the Decline of American Education*, Henry T. Edmondson gives us the essence of the radical ideas that Dewey inflicted on education and even on what is taught in public schools today.

Dewey was a prominent signer of the *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933, which was a secularist call to arms that emphatically rejected religious faith. He had an unrelenting passion for discrediting and demolishing all that is traditional. He wanted the concept of the *public* to replace that of the individual. He argued for greater government involvement in society at large.

Dewey espoused the notion that the real goal of education and the primary task of the teacher is to socialize students, not educate them to reach their individual potential. Dewey wasn't really interested in the good of individual students, but rather in promoting a political and social agenda. Dewey put down the importance of reading books, arguing that education must be predominantly a social experience. His disciples could cite him for the outright exclusion of textbooks from the classroom in favor of unpredictable and unaccountable classroom wandering.

Dewey argued that belief in objective truth and authoritative notions of good and evil are harmful to students. He wrote that if a child clings to religion, tradition or any other inherited values, he is not thinking intelligently. He denied that, as an institution, the family has any inherent sanctity. Dewey opposed discipline or correction of schoolchildren, arguing that a teacher's duty is to understand and follow the student's interests in setting the curriculum.

Dewey's legacy can easily be seen in the fad called Values Clarification that swept the public schools in the 1970s and 1980s, and in Outcome-Based Education that was the big fad of the 1990s, and in the many courses in Critical Thinking, which some people call "How to criticize your parents and what they believe in."

# FOCUS: End Federally Funded Textbooks



By Henry Lamb

Why did the federal government give \$25,511,064 to a non-government organization last year to prepare the textbooks for teaching civics to schoolchildren? Since 1997, the Center for Civic Education has received at least \$110,418,717 from the government and has succeeded in essentially taking over the supply of materials for teaching civics in American schools.

Of the many questions that surround this program, the first to be addressed must be the appropriateness of government funding of any textbook. Public education is not among the enumerated powers of the federal government. But, of course, the feds long ago discarded the notion that “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

President Bush eliminated this funding in his 2006 budget, but 38 senators, led by Arlen Specter (R-Pennsylvania) and Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), joined 98 representatives, led by Ralph Regula (R-Ohio) and David Obey (D-Wisconsin), to have this funding restored.

Public education has historically been a responsibility of state and local government. In recent years, however, the federal government has taken control.

Proponents of the CCE program agree that the federal funding is, indeed,

appropriate and necessary. Even if there were universal agreement on the appropriateness of federal funding, should there not be competitive bidding? Should local school boards not be able to choose from among several possible texts? Government funding of textbooks is bad enough, but when the money is specified to go to a single non-government organization — without competition or bids — to produce materials for a subject as important as civics education, it causes a very bad smell to surround the entire project.

One might suspect CCE gets this special funding treatment because someone, somewhere, wants to be sure that the content of the material says what the funding source wants said.

The content of the material raises another set of questions. CCE provides basic textbooks, *We the People: the Citizens and the Constitution*, in three versions, for early grades, for middle school and for high school. The organization also maintains a nationwide network of supporters who conduct seminars for teachers to encourage the use of CCE’s materials. Many people believe the government is perfectly justified using tax money for this purpose, because the material teaches about the Constitution and the foundations of freedom.

Or does it? The material titles sound impressive. All would agree that students should learn about the Constitution and the foundations of freedom. CCE’s literature sounds as if it does just that. But a growing number of critics who actually read the literature are crying foul.

One very thorough reviewer is Allen

Quist, adjunct professor of political science at Bethany Lutheran College. He is a former three-term member of the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota House Education Committee. He is author of three books and numerous articles on education policy.

Among Quist’s books, is *FedEd: The New Federal Curriculum and How It’s Enforced*. Quist analyzes the material in CCE textbooks. Here is a sample:

“In the past century, the civic mission of schools was education for democracy in a sovereign state. In this century, by contrast, education will become everywhere more global. And, we ought to improve our curricular frameworks and standards for a world transformation by globally accepted and internationally transcendent principles.”

Quist and many other reviewers are convinced that CCE’s educational materials strive to transform American students into “global citizens.” American principles of government, such as the Bill of Rights, are minimized, and global values are promoted. CCE’s material diminishes the notion of “inalienable rights” and suggests that rights guaranteed by the Constitution reflect 18th century ideas, which should change with time to reflect global values.

Why is the federal government spending so much money to have this material published and pushed in American

schools? By subsidizing the publication costs, these materials can be made available to schools free of charge. School boards that may wish to use other material are forced to pay market prices for it.

**“American principles of government, such as the Bill of Rights, are minimized, and global values are promoted.”**

EdWatch, of Minnesota, Eagle Forum, Gun Owners of America, the American Policy Center and other groups are working to get the *We the People* textbook out of the public classroom and stop the globalist curriculum.

These groups are promoting legislation called The Freedom in Education Act, which clearly states:

“... [N]o federal funds shall be used to develop, publish, advertise, promote, support, or distribute textbooks or curriculum; that competitive bidding shall be required for all education-related federal grants to non-governmental organizations; all questions in federally funded education assessments shall be released to the public within three years of being administered; and no federal funds shall be used for cooperative education activities between the Department of Education and UNESCO.”

Enactment of this bill will end federally funded textbooks.

*Henry Lamb is the executive vice president of the Environmental Conservation Organization and chairman of Sovereignty International.*

## Moscow Declaration (Continued from page 1)

### Globalized Education

The Moscow Declaration stated: “Ministers recognized that the internationalization of education is a reality.”

In the U.S., many declaration objectives already receive attention through federal grants — like those existing in the No Child Left Behind Act — that encourage school reforms that align with prior and existing efforts to internationalize America’s education system. (For background information on international school reform (a.k.a. UNESCO/OECD lifelong education/learning), see “Redefining Education for Global Citizenship,” *Education Reporter*, March 2005)

### US-Russia MOU

Several days prior to the G-8 issuance of the Moscow Declaration, Secretary Spellings and Minister Fursenko signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that expands on the “cooperation and exchanges in the field of education” and development of partnership between the United States and Russia.

A May 31, 2006 U.S. Dept. of Education press release claims: “This Memorandum of Understanding is the first of its kind between the U.S. Department of Education and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.”

### A call to heed history?

Recent decades of mainstream news have pointed out and sharply criticized the declining condition of U.S. public schools. The decline has coincidentally existed and grown in conjunction with U.S. federal promotion and implementation of so-called international education reform through U.S. acceptance of international agreements and declarations.

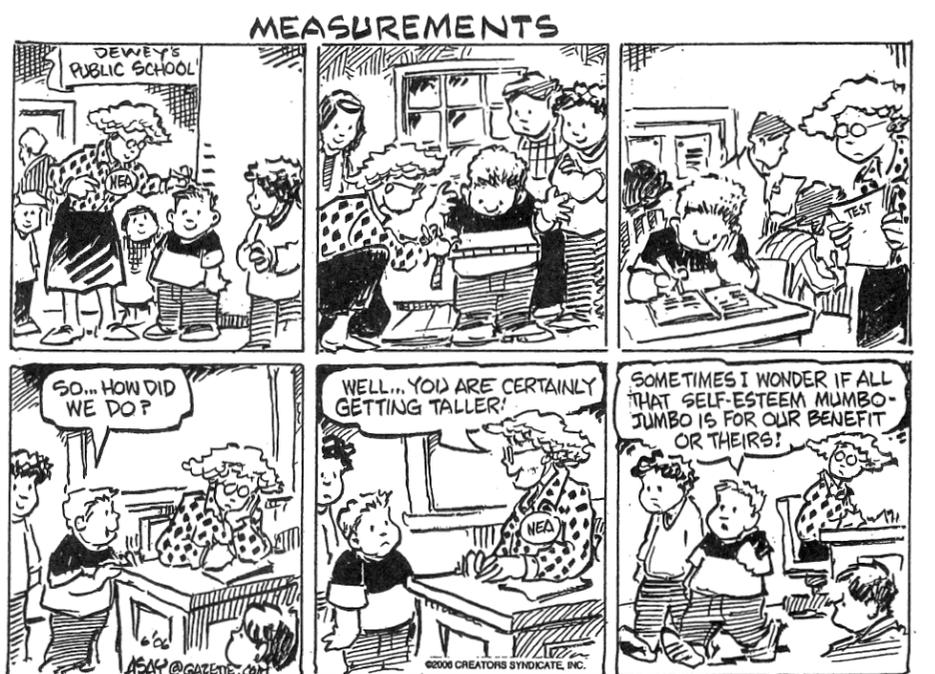
Included in previously adopted initiatives — many of whose goals are similar to those found in the 2006 Moscow Declaration — are those from UNESCO as well as the 1985 agreement with the USSR called “The General Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR] on contacts, exchanges and cooperation in scientific, technical, educational, cultural and other fields.”

The General Agreement with then-communist USSR was signed Nov. 21, 1985 in Geneva, Switzerland. The document was signed by at-the-time U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz on behalf of the United States and the Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze.

Secretary Spellings has committed the U.S. to an agreement that continues

the same old international school reform ideas, plus so-called innovations from an area of the world that has suffered a long history of social, economic, and political turmoil. As Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the USSR, said in his May 2005 opening speech to the National School Board Association’s Annual Conference, two-thirds of his fellow Russian

countrymen are living in poverty today. What can be expected from the Moscow Declaration? If the historical results of U.S. participation with international reforms continue in the same vein, it is not unreasonable to expect the whole of U.S. education — from preschool, elementary, secondary, and higher education — will encounter further upheaval and decline.



## Student's Rights (Continued from page 1)

### "Day of Silence" ignites contention

Poway High School has a history of problems centered around the school sanctioning the "Day of Silence," including altercations and incidents that took place surrounding the event in 2003. Several students were suspended as a result.

One week after the 2003 "Day of Silence," a "Straight-Pride Day" was informally organized by heterosexual students. Contention was also involved and students were suspended.

Harper contends the "Day of Silence" was to "endorse, promote and encourage homosexual activity" and that he had a right to respond to the pro-gay activity brought into school. Assistant Principal Lynell Antrim described the event as "a student activity trying to raise other students' awareness regarding tolerance in their judgement [sic] of others."

The "Day of Silence" is a nationally promoted political activity. The event is sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). GLSEN describes the event as "an annual, national student-led effort in which participants take a vow of silence to peacefully protest the discrimination and harassment faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth in schools." (GLSEN, Press Release, 4-14-2004)

Judge Kozinski expressed in his position: "I find it far more problematic — and more than a little ironic — to try to solve the problem of violent confrontations by gagging only those who oppose the Day of Silence and the point of view it represents. Or, as Judge Rosen put it in *Hansen v. Ann Arbor Public Schools*, 293 F. Supp. 2d 780 (E.D. Mich. 2003), '[t]hat Defendants can say with apparent sincerity that they were advancing the goal of promoting "acceptance and tolerance for minority points of view" by their demonstrated intolerance for a viewpoint that was not consistent with their own is hardly worthy of serious comment'."

Kozinski reflected on another pertinent quote by Judge Rosen: "no matter how well-intentioned the stated objective, once schools get into the business of actively promoting one political or religious viewpoint over another, there is no end to the mischief that can be done in the name of good intentions."

### Court opinion split 2-1

The trial court decision by District Judge John A. Houston to suppress Harper's first amendment rights was endorsed in a majority opinion by appellate Judges Stephen Reinhardt and Sidney Thomas, who held that the first amendment did not protect students expressing their views opposing homosexuality. The rationale was that anti-homosexual messages were not protected because they caused 'psychological injury' and lowered the self-esteem of other students.

Dissenting, Judge Kozinski challenged his colleagues' thinking: "While I find this a difficult and troubling case, I can agree with neither the majority's rationale nor its conclusions. On the record to date, the school authorities have offered no lawful justification for banning Harper's t-shirt and the district court should therefore have enjoined them from

doing so pending the outcome of this case. Harper, moreover, raised a valid facial challenge to the school's harassment policy, and the district court should have enjoined the policy as well."

Judge Kozinski noted the t-shirt neither infringe on homosexual students' rights nor hindered their ability to engage in school activity: "Nor can I join my colleagues in concluding that Harper's t-shirt violated the rights of other students by disparaging their homosexual status. As I understand the opinion, my colleagues are saying that messages such as Harper's are so offensive and demeaning that they interfere with the ability of homosexual students to partake of the educational environment. This is not a position briefed or argued by any of the parties, and no one introduced any evidence in support of, or opposition to, this proposition. The school authorities did not try to justify their actions on this ground; instead, they argued that they can ban any t-shirt derogatory to another individual, a proposition that the majority rejects."

Kozinski also offered the following assessments about PISD harassment policies involved in the case:

"... the policy here focuses expressly on what the individual who believes himself to be the target of the speech believes was the motivation of the speaker. Given the propensity of individuals, particularly adolescents, to view themselves as the center of the universe, this strikes me as a particularly broad and chilling aspect of the policy."

"As the *Saxe* court noted, '[t]he Supreme Court has held time and again, both within and outside of the school context, that the mere fact that someone might take offense at the content of speech is not sufficient justification for prohibiting it.'"

"... the policy here ... prohibits not only speech that denigrates others, but also any speech that the student seeks to justify by expressing pride in his own traits. We are taught to take pride in who we are; it is, in a sense, the American way. It seems particularly chilling to free expression to restrain speech that expresses pride in one's own religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc."

In an unrelated case, Arizona's second largest school district, Tucson Unified, is under state legislative investigation for district administration support of immigration-related political protests and partisan political endorsements. (See "Arizona District Encounters Scrutiny; Criticism About Political Agendas in Schools," *Education Reporter*, May 2005)

### Most reversed court

Columnist John Leo pointed out in his commentary about the Harper ruling, "If this case goes to the Supreme Court, the eccentric 9th Circuit ruling is very likely to be overturned. It will be one more reversal for the most reversed district court in the nation." (*Townhall.com*, 4-23-2006)

## U.S. Elementary and Secondary Public School 'Interest on Debt' Expenditures in the Billions

The National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) cites the U.S. total for elementary and secondary public school expenditures for "interest on debt" at nearly \$11.5 billion dollars, based on the 2002-2003 school year — the most current publicized figures for this category. Voter-approved school bonds funded by property tax increases are usually the top source of interest on debt. Loans and lease agree-

ments also contribute to the problem.

According to NCES, "interest on debt" expenditures are "long-term debt (i.e., obligations of more than 1 year)."

In the table below, the "state average interest on debt per student" was calculated by dividing each state's "total interest on debt" by the state's "total student membership." Per student state average figures are rounded to the nearest cent.

2002-03 U.S. Elementary & Secondary Public School Interest on Debt Expenditures

State	Per student state average interest on debt expenditure	Total student membership	Total interest on debt expenditure
1. Indiana	\$ 692.03	1,003,875	\$ 694,712,000
2. Wisconsin	567.76	881,231	500,324,000
3. Nevada	456.16	369,498	168,549,000
4. Minnesota	421.93	846,891	357,332,000
5. Pennsylvania	409.51	1,816,747	743,981,000
6. Michigan	375.09	1,785,160	669,603,000
7. Colorado	365.09	751,862	274,499,000
8. Texas	343.38	4,259,823	1,462,762,000
9. Oregon	336.32	554,071	186,345,000
10. Washington	319.23	1,014,798	323,954,000
11. Massachusetts	307.47	982,989	302,243,000
12. Hawaii	295.98	183,829	54,410,000
13. Arizona	283.19	937,755	265,562,000
14. Kansas	282.81	470,957	133,191,000
15. South Carolina	275.53	694,584	191,379,000
16. New York	255.35	2,888,233	737,518,000
17. Illinois	255.04	2,084,187	531,557,000
18. Missouri	253.16	924,445	234,034,000
19. Connecticut	247.91	570,023	141,313,000
<b>United States</b>	<b>238.56</b>	<b>48,202,324<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>11,499,160,000</b>
20. Maine	216.04	204,337	44,145,000
21. New Jersey	211.36	1,367,438	289,021,000
22. North Carolina	210.23	1,335,954	280,854,000
23. Nebraska	190.96	285,402	54,501,000
24. Ohio	189.63	1,838,285	348,594,000
25. New Hampshire	188.39	207,671	39,124,000
26. Florida	185.00	2,539,929	469,897,000
27. Rhode Island	183.96	159,205	29,288,000
28. Alaska	182.82	134,364	24,565,000
29. Utah	181.38	489,072	88,710,000
30. South Dakota	169.69	128,039	21,727,000
31. Arkansas	154.96	450,985	69,884,000
32. Vermont	154.12	99,978	15,409,000
33. Tennessee	153.27	928,000 <sup>1</sup>	142,236,000
34. Louisiana	153.16	730,464	111,876,000
35. Delaware	151.01	116,342	17,569,000
36. Kentucky	148.43	660,782	98,079,000
37. Idaho	144.44	248,515	35,895,000
38. Alabama	143.73	739,678 <sup>1</sup>	106,315,000
39. Mississippi	137.09	492,645	67,539,000
40. Iowa	133.41	482,210	64,330,000
41. Virginia	124.04	1,177,229	146,022,000
42. Georgia	121.81	1,496,012	182,229,000
43. New Mexico	114.62	320,234	36,704,000
44. Maryland	105.78	866,743	91,688,000
45. California	88.03	6,356,348 <sup>1</sup>	559,547,000
46. North Dakota	84.76	104,225	8,834,000
47. Oklahoma	83.63	624,548	52,228,000
48. Montana	79.09	149,995	11,863,000
49. Wyoming	75.82	88,116	6,681,000
50. West Virginia	37.31	282,455	10,537,000
51. District of Columbia	0	76,166	0
Outlying Areas:			
Puerto Rico	30.87	596,502	18,415,000
Virgin Islands	0	18,333	0
American Samoa	0	15,984	0
Northern Marianas	0	11,251	0
Guam	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup> Includes pre-kindergarten data imputed based on current year (Fall 2002) data.

Source for "Interest on debt" figures: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "National Public Education Financial Survey," 2002-03. Accessed 6-4-2006. < <http://nces.ed.gov/quicktables/Detail.asp?Key=1313> >

Source for 2002-2003 state totals for student membership: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, NCES 2005-314, "Public Elementary and Secondary Students, Staff, Schools, and School Districts: School Year 2002-03," February 2005, p. 11-12.