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Obama Unveils Plan to Send Every Student to College

On July 14, President Obama proposed directing \$12 billion to community colleges across the nation in order to increase the number of community college graduates by five million over the next 12 years. The president proposes \$9 billion in “challenge grants” to community colleges that develop new programs, \$2.5 billion for construction and renovation, and \$500 million for development of online courses. If Congress acts on the president’s proposal, the grants will be available in the first half of 2010.

The community college proposal, which Obama has labeled the American Graduation Initiative, is consistent with Obama’s goal of postsecondary education for all Americans. “Whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma,” he declared to Congress in February.

Along similar lines, Congress is also considering legislation that would involve the federal government even further in the business of disbursing student loans. On July 15, Rep. George Miller (D-CA) introduced a bill that would increase Pell Grants, not through subsidies to private lenders as Congress has done in the past, but through offering college loans directly from the federal government to students.

Conservatives are skeptical that short-circuiting supply and demand for higher education through more huge infusions of federal aid will result in the jobs and prosperity Obama promises. “More and more money has been pushed into higher education, both the schools and the students, for decades,” says the Cato Institute’s Neal

McCluskey. “Most of what that’s translated into is waste. So you’ve seen tuition skyrocket, you’ve seen these building arms races on campus.”

In an article for *Reason* magazine (8-3-09), one bright college student draws

several parallels between these higher education funding initiatives and the policies that contributed to the housing bubble and resulting collapse. “Someone de-

ci d e e d homeownership was a good thing for almost everyone,” writes Amanda Carey, “so the government started pushing people to buy homes, using the tax code and other incentives. The same thing is happening with college. But instead of people getting loans for houses they could never pay off, 18-year-olds are getting excessive loans for college. And just as we saw before the collapse of the housing bubble, the price of going to college in America is skyrocketing.”

Carey points out that direct government lending to students marks one step further in the same direction the country traveled when Congress approved massive bailouts for the banking industry. It also further undermines the constitutional roles of both president and Congress.

Carey writes,

Federal involvement in education is nothing new, but President Obama is taking it to an extreme level by taking the financing of college out of the private sector entirely. With the increase in and government administration of

(See *College Attendance*, page 4)



California ACLU Strives to Ban Abstinence Education

California’s sex education standards call for public school students to learn about sex and sexually transmitted diseases beginning in 5th grade. Beginning in 7th grade, students are to learn about condoms and other contraceptives, among a list of other sex ed topics. No public school student in California hears an “abstinence only” message in school. But now the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is working to prevent students from hearing about abstinence until marriage at all, even in the context of a sex education curriculum that also teaches them about contraceptives. So far, the ACLU has won support from at least one County Office of Education in its effort to keep speakers promoting abstinence out of California schools.

The ACLU has targeted Free to Be, a group that has sent speakers into Sonoma County schools for the past 17 years. Free to Be was affiliated with Catholic Charities from its founding until 2007. The group’s presenters, normally teens, talk to students about the benefits of abstaining from sex until marriage. Free to Be presents in about 30 middle and high schools each year, and has reached more than 75,000 teens since 1992.

Between 2000 and 2007, Free to Be received grants from the Community-Based Abstinence Education Program, a Bush administration initiative. Groups that receive these grants agree to teach “that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity,” and “that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects.”

According to the ACLU, it is illegal for speakers to present that message in California public schools. In 2006, a Santa Rosa parent complained to the ACLU that his son had heard a presentation by a Free

to Be speaker. After threats from the ACLU, the Sonoma County Office of Education informed the county’s 40 school districts that Free to Be was no longer allowed to present on campus. The ACLU followed up with letters to each district requesting written confirmation that Free to Be would be banned from all schools beginning in the 2009-10 school year.

The ACLU claims that schools violate state law by inviting Free to Be to campus, because Free to Be speakers do not teach students about contraceptives. Sue Bisbee, executive director of Free to Be, says it is not true that under California law, “anyone who goes in has to thoroughly cover all issues.” Currently, says Bisbee, “Public Health or Planned Parenthood goes in and does the contraception piece, United Against Sexual Assault goes in and does the sexual violence piece. There are many options for them. . . . We are a piece of the pie that teens need to hear.”

Not all Sonoma County school districts are eager to comply with the ACLU’s demands. “I’m really uncomfortable having one organization dictate to us that we can’t invite another organization into a school,” said Keller McDonald, superintendent of the West Sonoma County Union High School District. “The determination of that is the responsibility of each individual school district.” Two high schools in McDonald’s district have invited Free to Be speakers into classrooms in the past; the same students who heard from Free to Be also heard other guest speakers present information on contraception. “We invited [Free to Be] as a guest speaker to provide a viewpoint, but not the whole curriculum,” McDonald explained. “We look at it as one side of a complex issue.”

The next stage of the skirmish may depend partly on the results of an independent, third-party assessment of Free to Be. Selena Polston, a social worker who is participating in that evaluation, wrote in an editorial in the *Press Democrat* (6-22-09) that she is “one of the least likely people to be standing up for sexual abstinence education in the post-Bush era.” Polston is a native Los Angelean, not religious, not fond of abstinence education, and the daughter of “lefty” parents, one of whom was a sex therapist. Nevertheless, her interviews with hundreds of 9th-graders about their experiences with Free to Be have convinced her the program is



Republicans Return to Conservative Roots in Choice of Education Policy Leader

This summer, Rep. John P. Kline of Minnesota became the ranking Republican on the House Education and Labor Committee. House Republicans’ selection of Kline for the role marked a turning point in the recent history of Republican approaches to education policy. Each of Kline’s recent predecessors in the role voted for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the Bush administration’s landmark education law increasing the federal government’s role in education. Kline was not yet a Congressman when NCLB passed in 2001, and is not strongly committed to the law or to its principles of federally enforced testing and accountability.

“Let’s back the federal government out of dictating to schools how they’re going to do their business,” Kline said recently. This stance is clearly counter-cultural in a House that seriously considered regulating which brands of snacks are available in school vending machines.

On NCLB, Kline said, “I’m not looking to tweak No Child Left Behind. As far as I’m concerned, we ought to go in and look at the whole thing.” NCLB is widely unpopular and is overdue for reauthorization by Congress. The law’s stated aim of 100% proficiency in math and reading by 2014 looks more and more ludicrous as the deadline approaches, and teachers, parents and school boards have

raised a variety of other complaints against the act’s provisions.

Kline opposes Democrats’ efforts to increase direct government lending to college students, a tactic that free-market critics say would contribute to the inflated cost of higher education, among other problems. Kline



(See *Conservative Roots*, page 4)

(See *Abstinence*, page 4)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

High schoolers in Burlington, Vermont attended a publicly financed after-school program called "Gendertopia" at Vermont's Queer Youth Center. The program taught students a radical view of gender identity. "Most people come into it thinking, 'Oh there's two genders and two sexualities,'" explained one junior student. "People assume it's boy and girl, but it's so much more than that. There's a whole world out there full of different genders." (*Associated Press*, 6-7-09)

After the story made national news, the Lawrence, Kansas school district rehired history teacher Tim Latham, who was fired last spring over his conservative political views. Latham's supervisor, Assistant Principal Jan Gentry, had criticized Latham's website as "too patriotic," and said of his McCain-Palin bumper sticker, "I don't know how you could support that woman." District Superintendent Randy Weseman confirmed that Latham's firing was an "injustice," and that the district would reinstate his contract. (*Foxnews.com*, 6-23-09)

A California state appeals court ruled in favor of the state's policy to administer all achievement tests and high school exit exams in English. Californians approved a ballot measure in 1998 to prohibit most bilingual instruction. The First District Court of Appeal ruled against bilingual-education groups and nine school districts, concluding that the No Child Left Behind Act does not authorize a court to be "the official second-guesser" of state testing methods and requirements. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7-31-09)

A taxpayer-funded program in North Carolina gives 12- to 18-year-old girls \$1 a day not to get pregnant. "Our three goals are that they avoid pregnancy, graduate from high school and enroll in college," said maternity nurse Hazel Brown, who founded the "College-Bound Sisters" program. Girls who participate must attend weekly meetings, and some have already graduated with more than \$2,000 in the bank from the program. (*WXII12.com*, 6-24-09)

(See Briefs, page 3)

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Traditional History Courses Are in Decline

The teaching of history has changed significantly since the 1960s, with modern history departments deemphasizing great people and events and instead calling students' attention to social and cultural history and trends.

"The boomer generation made a decision in the 1960s that history was starting over," Naval War College history professor David Kaiser explained to the *New York Times*. As a result, today the teaching of history "is no longer focused on government, politics, or institutions" — in other words, on the field of diplomatic history. This change in focus recently became even more evident when the executive editor of the journal *Diplomatic History*, the sole publication devoted to the subject, proposed changing the journal's name.

Since the 1970s, the number of history professors at four-year institutions has more than doubled, but the growth has primarily occurred in newer specialties such as women's or gender history. Four out of five history departments now boast at least one faculty member who focuses



on women's history. Just half of departments employ a diplomatic historian, and 31.7% employ an economic historian. In 1975, three-quarters of history departments had at least one diplomatic historian, and 54.7% had an economic historian. Intellectual and constitutional history have also shrunk as specialties, while cultural history has grown.

Brett Lintott, a Ph.D. student in international relations at the University of Toronto, said that "being a young historian in this field is thus a rather lonely and sobering experience." Some historians in more trendy fields, according to Lintott, feel and express "genuine derision" toward the study of international relations in history. (*New York Times*, 6-11-09)

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Jeff Tinsley



'Stimulus' Requires States to Put All Students on a Database

The \$787 billion stimulus bill, signed into law in February, designated over \$100 billion for education and job training. It's no surprise that this money, earmarked in the hundreds-of-pages-long American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), comes to states with plenty of strings attached. ARRA requires states to maintain their own state-level education budgets at 2006 levels; to rate teacher performance and report on the number and percentage of teachers rated as high performing in the classroom; and to develop tests showing that students are progressing toward college readiness.

Hidden among these "so-what" bureaucratic requirements, however, is an ominous requirement moving the country a giant step closer to national electronic databasing of students, and ultimately of all Americans.

According to the Department of Education, any state that wants to receive funds for education must "establish a longitudinal data system that includes the elements described in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act." The America COMPETES Act sets out a vision for statewide, longitudinal databasing of "student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information" for all students "P-16" — from preschool through postsecondary education. According to

the bill, for students in grades preK-12, these electronic databases should contain "yearly test records of individual students," "a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students," "student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned," and "student-level college readiness test scores."

For postsecondary students, states should database "information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework," and "other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education."

The ostensible purpose of all this is so that federal and state governments can "use the data in the system to . . . inform education policy and practice in order to better align State academic content standards, and curricula, with the demands of postsecondary education, the 21st century workforce, and the Armed Forces." The America COMPETES Act authorized the Secretary of Education to provide grants to states that wanted to develop such statewide databases. The ARRA makes databasing mandatory for all states that want to re-

(See *Student Databases*, page 4)

Book of the Month



The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Sixties, by Jonathan Leaf, Regnery, 2009, 247 pps., \$19.95

In this latest addition to the "Politically Incorrect Guide" series, critic and playwright Jonathan Leaf takes a careful second look at 1960s protest movements, the Warren Court, the sexual revolution, drug culture, the Vietnam War, and more. Leaf shows that most Americans in the 1960s were conservative, but a radical minority has forever colored modern perceptions of the decade.

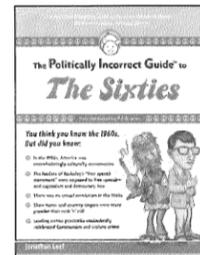
There is a corollary today. "A large number of student radicals went on to graduate school in order to maintain their [draft] deferments," Leaf remarks. "After completing a higher degree, it made good career sense for them to become professors and adopt the comfortable, bourgeois lifestyle they had spent the previous decade denouncing." From positions of authority in the academy, 60s radicals still disproportionately affect our culture.

Enthusiasts who liken Barack Obama to liberal icon John F. Kennedy may not know that JFK advocated massive tax cuts on both income and capital gains. The tax cuts he promised, which Johnson carried through after JFK's death, spurred a decline in unemployment from 5.4% in 1964 to 4% in 1966.

Of course, Johnson later reversed these gains with a string of tax hikes and restrictive policies. Leaf gives careful attention to Johnson's presidency, especially to the "Great Society" policies affecting the nation's poor. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the poverty rate declined, hitting a low of 13% in 1968. It has never fallen below that level again, and Leaf believes the War on Poverty's unintended consequences are to blame.

The caseload of Aid to Families with Dependent Children increased 71% between the 1964 announcement of the War on Poverty and the end of the decade. "Great Society" policies paid employable people *not* to work, and paid young women *not* to marry the fathers of their children. Such policies horribly undermined the low-income black family. In 1963, *before* widespread abortion, the black illegitimacy rate was 23%. That rate rose to 48% by 1980, and now approaches 70%.

This history is very pertinent today. "Originally presented as a low-cost public benefit program for the indigent, Medicaid now costs \$276.4 billion a year, with its accumulated costs accounting for around half the total U.S. debt. The expense of Great Society entitlement programs far exceeds all military spending even when, as currently, the country is at war in multiple theaters."



FOCUS: The Insanity of the Right

by David d'Escoto

Most likely you've heard Einstein's definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Nowhere is this more obvious today than with political and religious conservatives, the so-called right. What do I mean? This month the right will send millions of their own children to public schools that are literally controlled by the left — meaning that it is only the liberals' "values," "morals" and curriculum that are taught in our government schools.

Some may ask if this is true — can liberals actually be running the schools? Is it possible that there is a direct link between our country's precipitous slide into socialism and decades of indoctrination in leftist school ideologies? You be the judge. Read below what the founder of today's schools and other public school advocates have said over the years:

"I believe that . . . [public] education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform . . . this conception has due regard for . . . socialistic ideals." and "There is no God and there is no soul. . . . There is no room for fixed . . . or moral absolutes." — **John Dewey**, father of modern public education and signer of Humanist Manifesto (1930)

"Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American school is a school of humanism. What can a theistic Sunday school's meeting for an hour once a week and teaching only a fraction of the children do to stem the tide of the five-day program of humanistic teaching?" — **C.F. Potter**, signer of Humanist Manifesto (1930)

". . . [E]very child in America entering schools at the age of five is insane because he comes to schools with certain allegiances toward our Founding Fathers, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural

being, toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. . . ." — **Chester Pierce**, professor of education at Harvard (1970)

"The old order is passing. . . . Social controls cannot be left to blind chance. . . . Man must be the builder of new forms of social organizations. . . . Here [public] education must play a stellar role." — **Dan W. Dodson**, professor of educational sociology at N.Y. University (1970)

"We are the biggest potential political striking force [union] in this country, and we are determined to control the direction of [public] education." — NEA President **Catherine Barrett** (1972)

"Public schools promote civic rather than individual pursuits. . . . We must focus on creating citizens for the good of society. . . . Each child belongs to the state." — **William H. Seawell**, professor of education (1981)

". . . [T]he battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classrooms by teachers who correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new religion. . . . The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity . . . and the new faith of humanism. . . ." — **John Dunphy**, Secular-Humanist (1983)

"We do not need any more preaching about right or wrong. The old 'thou shall nots' simply are not relevant. Values clarification is a method for teachers to change the values of children without getting caught." — **Dr. Sidney Simon**, creator of "Values Clarification"

Just this summer, the NEA's retiring general counsel publicly aired his true

feelings by calling conservatives "right-wing bastards."

Is it really that hard to see that the left has already declared war on conservative America? To borrow Aragorn's words to King Theoden in the movie *Return of the King*, "Open war is upon you whether you will risk it or not!"

Using public education as a "weapon" is nothing new. It was Josef Stalin who said, "Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed." Wake up, conservatives! They want our children, and we are handing them right over. Remember, giving aid and comfort to the enemy during time of war is considered treason, and this is what we are doing by placing our children in the leftist schools.

Many conservatives have spent decades and millions of dollars trying to reform public schools but with no success. Should anyone be surprised that the right has had zero success in making the left-run schools . . . well, more conservative? Conservatives have forgotten that the greatest Teacher of all said, "Everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). The sad truth about school reform is that it just doesn't work — period. The schools continue to get worse and worse. School "reform" can be likened to a bunch of misguided good-willed people organizing the deck chairs on a sinking Titanic. If the reformers truly cared about the kids, their time and money would be much better spent helping them get off the sinking vessel, and quickly.

The right thinks that public schools are as American as apple pie but are completely clueless about the Prussian roots of today's schools. The right has been brainwashed to believe that there should be a "free education for all children in public schools," but miss the fact that this thinking mirrors that of Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto. Conservative writers and TV and radio personalities often bemoan our pathetic public schools, which are directly linked to our rapid slide towards socialism. Still, we have yet to witness one of these prominent figures display the fortitude

to rally the right to pull their kids out. All these folks do is complain and offer futile action steps.

Fact after fact shows that

when children are subject to 12 years of liberal ideologies for about 14,000 hours of their lives, the overwhelming majority of them will grow up to think, act and vote like . . . you guessed it, liberals. We ignore all of that even when studies shows that "83% of children from committed Christian families attending public schools adopt a Marxist-Socialist worldview." Question: How long can the conservatives hold out when the liberals are having somewhere between a 70-90% success rate at proselytizing our children to their leftist worldview? Those are the facts, people.

So next time the right wants to accuse the liberals of having a mental disorder or some sort of madness, consider that this mental illness must be contagious and that we conservatives just may have given it to them. After all, it is the right who still send their children and youth every year to the left's schools for an "education."

Let's quit complaining about how bad things are in America and do something about it. Let's pull our kids out. If we don't, then are we not the truly insane ones? You know: "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

David d'Escoto is a teaching elder, the co-author of The Little Book of Big Reasons to Homeschool and co-hosted the former radio program "Homeschooling for Life." He and his wife, Kim, have homeschooled their five children for over ten years. For info on their free webinars, visit their website: <http://dexios.info/>.



John Dewey

Briefs (Cont. from page 2)

Former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders's extreme views on sex ed won a standing ovation from the annual summit of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. Elders served one year under President Bill Clinton before she was dismissed for advocating teaching young people about masturbation as a way to curtail riskier sexual behaviors. Elders's speech in July affirmed her long-standing support for school-based clinics offering contraceptives and other "health services" to all students. Elders also spoke out in favor of "comprehensive" sex education beginning in kindergarten. When CNSNews.com staff asked Elders about statistics showing that African-Americans constitute 13% of America's population

but 36% of aborted babies, Elders blamed lack of sex education, lack of available contraceptives, and failure to "let women be in control of their reproductive health." "I feel like anybody out there in the black community looking at this as genocide, to me genocide is having an unplanned pregnancy such that you don't get your education and you end up growing up poor and slaves for the rest of their lives," said Elders. "That, to me, is genocide." (CNSNews.com, 7-9-09)

In July, Arizona became the most recent state to authorize tracking adults' vaccination histories in a statewide, electronic registry. The Arizona State Immunization Information System has

tracked children's vaccinations since 1998. According to the American Immunization Registry Association, 27 other states also maintain electronic immunization registries for adults as well as for children. (*Arizona Republic*, 7-19-09)

The federal government has called on school districts to set up in-school flu-shot clinics to administer the swine flu vaccine this fall. This appears set to become the most widespread school vaccination effort since the first administrations of the polio vaccine. Federal officials will ship the swine flu vaccine to states in mid-October, and millions of students will receive two injections each, about three weeks apart. (MSNBC.com, 8-16-09)

The Modesto, California school district backed away from a policy that would have allowed students to leave campus without parental consent to receive "confidential medical services," including abortions. The board passed in June a preliminary motion in favor of the new policy, but retreated from that position by declining to vote again on the proposal in August. The Vista and Fairfield-Suisun School Districts also recently rejected policy changes that would have allowed students to leave campus for medical treatment without their parents' knowledge. (www.pacificjustice.org, 8-27-09)



'Race to the Top' Initiative Offers Even More Funding to States for Schools



President Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan held out in July another \$4.35 billion in federal funding for K-12 schools. The "Race to the Top" initiative challenges states to compete with each other for these funds by expanding charter schools, raising academic standards, and improving teacher quality. "This competition will not be based on politics, ideology, or the preferences of a particular interest group," Obama said. "Instead, it will be based on a simple principle — whether a state is ready to do what works. We will use the best data available to determine whether a state can meet a few key benchmarks for reform, and states that outperform the rest will be rewarded with a grant."

States will share a pot of over \$100 billion from the ARRA stimulus bill that passed Congress earlier this year, but that money will be divvied up by formula, and states must only comply with a few provisions to ensure they receive the funds (see "Stimulus Requires States to Put All Students on a Database," page 2).

Improving teacher quality, for many states that wish to win the "Race to the Top," may involve a movement toward merit-based pay for teachers. Obama has consistently expressed support for charter schools as well as merit pay, although these reforms are unpopular with the nation's largest teachers unions. The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have warmed up slightly toward charters in recent years, but both are still stone-cold on the possibility of paying higher performing teachers more than lower performing ones.

The teachers unions have traditionally represented an important and even crucial constituency for Democratic candidates. "We'll see who blinks first," wrote the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* after the "Race to the Top" was announced (7-30-09). "The acid test is whether Messrs. Duncan and Obama are willing to withhold money from politically important states as the calendar marches toward 2012."

Higher Education: Bias Against Women? Or Against Men?

A new congressionally-mandated study, *Gender Differences at Critical Transitions in the Careers of Science, Engineering and Mathematics Faculty*, concludes that women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are afforded career opportunities comparable with their male peers at major research universities. The findings for the six disciplines examined varied, but mathematics hiring data are representative: During 2004 and 2005, women made up about 20% of tenure-eligible applicants, but constituted 28% of those interviewed and 32% of those offered positions.

These data contradict claims made in a 2006 report, *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering*, which complained of a "pervasive gender bias." Based upon that report, Congress has authorized millions for anti-bias programs and instructed the Department of Education to review college science programs against Title IX gender equity standards.

Lawrence Summers, then president of Harvard University, incited much criticism in 2005 when he suggested the dearth of female STEM faculty might be due to a "different availability of aptitude at the high end." A 2009 study by Stephen Ceci, Wendy Williams and Susan Barnett of Cornell University notes that while the gap between female and male median scores has narrowed in recent years on math and science portions of college-entrance exams, males continue to outscore

females at the extremely proficient range.

However, even women who are highly skilled in mathematics don't tend to prefer STEM careers, and leave them twice as often as men do. The report suggests women are underrepresented due less to institutional bias and more because women are more likely to identify themselves as "home-centered" rather than "careerist" in orientation. Also, women's "career preferences tilt toward . . . medicine, teaching, law, and veterinary medicine, over engineering and physics."

Meanwhile, college graduates from all degree levels are now disproportionately female. In 2009, universities conferred degrees to 148 women for every 100 men, and the Department of Education expects the disparity to widen in the coming years. "If there is a crisis in the academy that merits a congressional investigation, it is not that women Ph.D.s are being shortchanged in math and science hiring and tenure committees, for that is not true. It is that men are quickly becoming the second sex in American education," said Christina Hoff Sommers, author of *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming our Young Men*.

Student Databases (Continued from page 2)

ceive stimulus money for education.

In *Teacher* magazine this summer, teacher and author Dan Brown set forth an enthusiastic vision of all that a massive national student database could contain and achieve. "With access to comprehensive ESRs [electronic student



'Sexting' Involves Students in Child Pornography

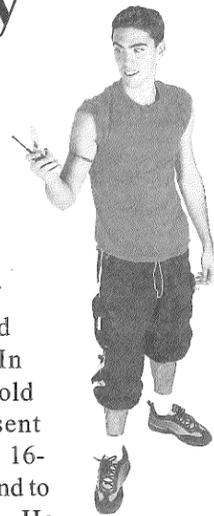
States and school districts are confronting a major problem in students' practice of "sexting," or sending pornographic images over their cell phones or email. Teachers and administrators report that middle school and high school girls commonly send nude pictures of themselves to their peers, especially to older male students whose attention they want to attract. Recipients then forward these images on to other teens' cell phones or email accounts.

In a survey by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 22% of teenage girls and 18% of teenage boys said they had sent nude pictures of themselves electronically. "In our survey, four out of ten said exchanging this sexy content in the ether makes dating or hooking up with others much more likely," said the campaign's spokesman, Bill Albert. "Those who exchange sexy content are expected to hook up."

High-profile cases in several states have highlighted the resulting damage. In Ohio last year, an 18-year-old girl committed suicide after her ex-boyfriend forwarded nude photos of her, which she had sent to him, to many of her classmates. But this practice can also have serious consequences for students who are

involved merely in sending or receiving photos of their peers. In most states, these students can be charged with the felony crime of possession of child pornography. In 2007, an 18-year-old boy in Orlando sent nude photos of his 16-year-old ex-girlfriend to dozens of people. He was charged with distributing child pornography, and is now on the state's sex-offender registry.

"We investigate 'sexting' like any kind of child pornography case, because that's basically what it is," said Broward Sheriff's Office Detective Eric Hendel (*South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, 7-27-09). Most students don't realize that both sender and receiver are equally culpable of possessing the pornographic images. School districts across the nation are considering ways to address this practice, make students aware that it is a crime, and deal with "sexting" as a frequent disciplinary problem in schools.



College Attendance (Continued from page 1)

Pell Grants, Obama is aggressively funneling young people into college, a decision that just isn't right for everyone. Apparently it's not enough to be the country's head auto exec and commander in chief: Obama is eager to try out the role of guid-

ance counselor in chief, too.

While both the American Graduation Initiative and the Pell Grant expansion have wide Democratic support in Congress, Democrats also face growing disapproval from the public of the unprecedented levels of deficit spending since 2008. (*Washington Post*, 7-14-09)

Abstinence (Continued from page 1)

a good one.

"What many students have told me," Polston relates, "is that Free to Be has helped them realize that choosing to be sexually abstinent during high school does not mean that they are undesirable or that they are condemning themselves to the life of a social outcast." Polston quotes a letter in which one 9th-grade girl wrote, "I had always thought that sex was just a part of high school that everyone with a social life would go through. . . . [The Free to Be presentation] made me realize absti-

nence wouldn't make me a friendless loser. Rather, it would make me a healthy smart person."

Surveys showed that students' opinions about abstinence until marriage and their abstinent peers were 25% more positive after listening to a Free to Be speaker. Free to Be is considering its legal options for fighting the ACLU's interpretation of state law on sex education. Several school district superintendents who disagree with the ACLU also said they are seeking legal counsel. (*The Press Democrat*, 6-7-09)

Conservative Roots (Continued from page 1)

also criticized the majority party for killing the successful Washington, D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, a school choice initiative that Congress created in 2003. Kline says he hopes to work with the majority to increase funding for special education and independently operated

public charter schools.

According to Dan Lips of the Heritage Foundation, House Republicans' selection of Kline marks "an opportunity for Republicans to return to their more conservative roots, favoring moving decisions back to the states." (*Washington Post*, 7-13-09)

records] — containing an e-portfolio of grades, test scores, teacher commentary on academics and behavior, curricular information, scanned work samples, and relevant health information — our schools could serve children far more effectively."

Brown's editorial did not neglect the

workforce-development angle of federal involvement in such extensive databasing. Detailed electronic records on every student would yield "better-functioning schools and better-equipped students — and therefore a more competitive, productive workforce," he claimed. (*Teacher*, 7-8-09)