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Arizona Bill Targets Classes Promoting Ethnic Resentment

Shortly after making national headlines for a new law cracking down on illegal immigration, Arizona passed HB 2281, another bill that some critics are decrying as racist. But Tom Horne, superintendent of public instruction for Arizona and a primary proponent, insists the bill is intended to curb racism.

The measure targets an ethnic studies program in the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), most particularly some Mexican-American classes known as Raza (“race”) studies. Specifically, the bill prohibits school districts from teaching courses that encourage the overthrow of the U.S. government, promote resentment of a particular race or class of people, or advocate ethnic solidarity instead of treating students as individuals. Districts that don’t abide by the law may have as much as 10% of their budgets withheld by the State Department of Education.

The sponsor of the bill, Representative Steve Montenegro, is an immigrant from El Salvador and a freshman Republican from Phoenix. His concern is that students “not be taught any resentment or hatred toward any race or any class of people” (*Associated Press*, 5-3-10). The bill does not prohibit ethnic studies in general or the teaching of historical facts about the oppression of a particular group of people based on ethnicity, race, or class.

The bill’s opponents say the study programs allow students to learn about the role of ethnic groups in history and culture. “If students see themselves in the curriculum, they know that school is for and about them,” said Sean Arce, director of the TUSD Mexican-American Studies program.

Some accuse Superintendent Horne of pushing the measure to gain support for his current run for attorney general, but the bill’s passage is actually the culmination of a battle he has been fighting for years. In 2007 Horne penned an open letter to Tucson citizens alerting them to what was being taught and calling for action.

Horne cited two Hispanic teachers familiar with the program as witnesses in the letter. Hector Ayala, a Mexican-born

English teacher at TUSD Cholla High School, reported that the director of Raza studies taught a “separatist political agenda.” Ayala also said the director accused him of being the “white man’s agent” and told students not to “fall for the white man’s traps.”

The other teacher, John Ward, wrote a piece about his experience in the Raza studies program for the *Tucson Citizen* in May 2008. Ward explained that he was asked to co-teach a U.S. history class for the department as a “convenient way of circumventing the rules,” because the other instructor, Sean Arce, lacked teacher certification at the time. Ward claims Arce taught students that America is a racist nation and said they should interpret social, political and economic events through the lens of their oppression. “[The instructors] are telling students they are victims and that they should be angry and rise up,” Ward told a columnist with the *Arizona Republic* in 2008.

Students were also told, according to Ward, that police officers are “an extension of the white power structure” used to “keep minorities in their ghettos,” and that few Hispanic students were in advanced placement classes because white teachers don’t want them to get ahead. Arce also reportedly claimed that California, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona are part of “Aztlán,” an ancient home of the Aztecs and the rightful property of indigenous Mexicans rather than the U.S.

When it became clear the course did not fulfill state requirements for U.S. History as purported, Ward told the ethnic studies department he “refused to be complicit in a curriculum that engendered racial hostility . . . discounted any virtues in Western civilization, and taught disdain for American sovereignty.” Department officials responded by removing him from the class and calling him a racist, despite his Hispanic heritage. They also accused him of being a *vendido*, the Spanish term for “sellout.”

Ward also contended that the Raza studies department operates with “much impunity” due to their “powerful allies in

TUSD, on its governing board and in the U.S. House of Representatives.”

Superintendent Horne grew concerned about the program back in 2006. After learning that labor activist and Democratic Socialist party member Dolores Huerta told the entire student body of Tucson Magnet School that “Republicans hate Latinos,” he asked his Deputy, Margaret Garcia Dugan, to address the students.

Dugan, a Latina and a Republican, urged students to think for themselves and avoid stereotypes. A small group of Raza students rudely interrupted her talk, and when their principal asked them to sit down and listen, they defiantly

walked out, according to Horne. He said he believes the students learned their defiant attitude not at home, but from their teachers.

The TUSD website describes the Mexican American (Raza) studies curriculum as “counter-hegemonic” and based on the teaching theories of Paolo Friere. Friere’s book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a staple in the curriculum; it asserts that non-whites must come to understand that they are oppressed, learn to give voice to their grievances, and resist the assimilation imposed upon them by the “dominant” white Western culture. Students
(See *Racial Resentment*, page 4)



Arizona Governor Jan Brewer

Prosecutor Warns Districts About New Sex Ed Law

In a letter sent to five Wisconsin school districts, prosecutor Scott Southworth warned that a new sex ed law could lead to criminal charges against teachers for contributing to the delinquency of minors.

Wisconsin schools aren’t required to offer sex ed courses, but those that do must now include instruction on how to use condoms and birth control pills. Southworth contends the law “turns objective instruction” into “implicit encouragement and advocacy” by going beyond the effects of contraceptives to instruction on how to use them. “It is akin to teaching children about alcohol use, then instructing them on how to make mixed alcoholic drinks,” he said.

The Juneau County district attorney explained that the new curriculum requirements are at odds with other state laws prohibiting intercourse with any child under the age of 18. He said he handles numerous sexual assault cases each year, many of which involve young adults having sex with teenage children; in Wisconsin, children under 17 who have sex with each other can be prosecuted as juveniles. Southworth holds that the new law “promotes the sexualization — and sexual assault — of our children.”

Moreover, Southworth said, “If a teacher instructs any student aged 16 or younger how to utilize contraceptives where the teacher knows the child is engaging in sexual activity with another child — or even where the ‘natural and probable consequences’ of the teacher’s instruction is to cause that child to engage in sexual intercourse with a child — that teacher can be charged” under Wisconsin’s delinquency of a minor statute.

Southworth also wrote that the statute undermines parental authority because schools must encourage kids to seek advice about

sexual behavior not only from parents, but also from other family members. Schools would also have to condone controversial sexual behavior because the law requires instruction about “gender stereotypes,” which would likely include discussions of homosexual, transgender and transsexual individuals.

The DA is also troubled by a provision that allows “volunteer health care providers” to provide sex ed instead of district teachers. That proviso opens the door for Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the country and a lobbyist for the new law, to come into schools. Students “should not be subjected to pandering by ‘volunteers’ from local contraception businesses whose real interest is likely obtaining new, young customers,” Southworth wrote.

The law’s primary author, Representative Tamara Grigsby (D-Milwaukee), dismissed the attorney’s letter as a scare tactic. Representative Kelda Helen Roys (D-Madison), former executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League and co-author of the bill, said that the DA was “not a credible legal source on this matter,” and that his letter was “irresponsible.” Southworth countered that



Scott Southworth

(See *Sex Ed Law*, page 4)

Texas Adopts New History Guidelines

After months of heated discussion and national scrutiny, the Texas State Board of Education gave final approval last month to new social studies and history guidelines. Democrats accused the Republican majority of politicizing history, but former board chairman Don McLeroy said the new guidelines bring back into balance a curriculum unfairly skewed to the left after years of Democrat control.

New amendments incorporated into the standards include requirements that students discuss the sustainability of Social Security and Medicare, and evaluate efforts by global organizations like the United Nations to undermine U.S. sovereignty. An amendment requiring students to compare and contrast the First Amendment’s freedom of religion clause to the phrase “separation of church and state” — which is not found in the Constitution — garnered bipartisan approval with an eleven to three vote.

The new standards will guide the instruction of some 4.8 million Texas students over the next ten years. (*Associated Press*, 5-21-10)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

California State University's Chico campus offered numerous graduation ceremonies to accommodate their student body this year. In addition to commencements for different fields of study, the school offered three separate race-based ceremonies for Asian, Latino and Black students. (www.csuchico.edu/alumni/commencement)

High school and college students in the District of Columbia complained to officials that the free condoms provided by the city as part of its HIV prevention program aren't the highest quality, and are too small. Students also said having to ask school nurses for the freebies is "just like asking grandma or auntie." Officials responded by restocking with the more expensive Trojan brand, and authorizing teachers and counselors, especially males, to hand out condoms if they complete a short online training course called "WrapMC," short for Master of Condoms. (*Washington Post*, 5-21-10)

George Washington University graduates wore gowns made with Renew Fabric — a cloth spun from recycled plastic bottles — as part of the school's "green" sustainability initiative. School officials also asked graduates to commit to considering the social and environmental impact of their career choices by voluntarily signing a "Green Graduation Pledge." (www.nbcWashington.com, 5-12-10)

The Alabama Board of Education complied with Eagle Forum's request to scrap new World History standards proposed by the Social Studies Committee and readopt standards in place since 2004. The proposed standards had numerous flaws, according to study committee member Katharine Patton. For example, students were to "evaluate the anticommunist policies of President Reagan" without any previous coverage of Marxism-Leninism, the Russian revolution or the creation of the Soviet Union. (www.alabamaeagle.org/issues)

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Students Challenge 'Our Lord' Wording on Diplomas

A group of students at Texas Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas lobbied to have the phrase "in the year of our Lord" removed from student diplomas. "A diploma is a very personal item, and people want to proudly display it in their homes and offices," said Sidra Qureshi, a Muslim and president of the Trinity Diversity Connection (TDC).

Qureshi objects to the wording because it "directly [references] Jesus Christ, and not everyone believes in Jesus Christ." Her arguments persuaded student government representatives and a campus commencement committee to back the TDC request.

The debate began last year when Isaac Medina, a Muslim convert from Mexico, noticed the wording on a sample diploma in the student bookstore. He said he felt he was "a victim of a bait and switch" because when he applied to Trinity University, he was assured the school maintained only historical ties to the Presbyterian Church and was not a religious institution.

College Republican president Brendan McNamara pointed out that the school exhibits numerous signs of its Christian heritage including the chapel on campus and a Bible etching on the Trinity seal, not to mention the name of the school itself. "Once you remove that phrase,

where do you draw the line?" he asked.

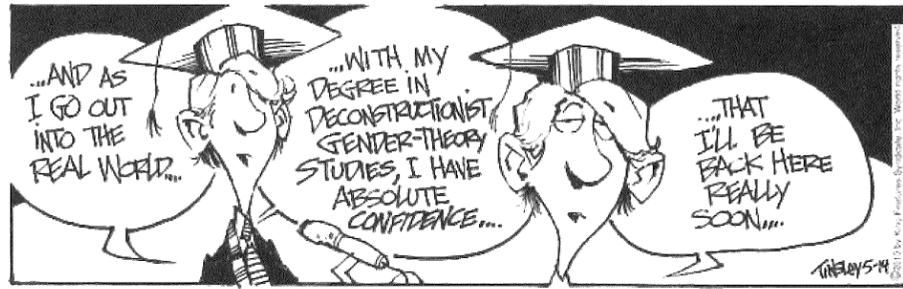
Although the board of trustees ultimately rejected the request to drop the phrase, the rationale for their decision was framed in terms of the university's "heritage and culture" rather than any religious doctrine or commitment. The bulk of the board's resolution stressed the school's dedication to diversity and an inclusive campus environment.

School officials have made a concerted effort in the last decade to diversify the student body, increasing the share of international students from one to nine percent during that time. The student body self-identifies as 70% Christian and .6% Muslim.

Founded in 1869 by Presbyterians, Trinity University's name is both a reflection of the historic Christian doctrine of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and of the three locations the school occupied before moving to its current campus. The school became an independent, nonreligious university in 1969, though it maintains a "covenant" relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA). (*San Antonio Express-News*, 3-29-10; 4-23-10)



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



More Teachers for Fewer Students

Even as student enrollment fell in recent years, districts hired more teachers and staff. A recent report from the Empire Center for New York State Policy found that New York public schools added 15,000 teachers between 2000 and 2009, despite losing 121,000 students during that time frame.

Teachers' unions say fewer students per class aids learning, but the evidence for improved academic outcomes is underwhelming. What is certain is that unions benefit from more dues-paying members. At any rate, New York's pupil-student ratio was small "even before the staff expansion of the past nine years," and in 2008 was the eighth lowest in the nation at 13 students per teacher, according to the Empire Center study.

The disproportionate hiring to enrollment ratio isn't limited to the Empire State. Between 2001 and 2007, 12 states experienced declining enrollments while expand-

ing teaching and support staff, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics and the Census Bureau. And in another half-dozen states, the number of teachers hired was not justified by the increase in student enrollment.

For example, student enrollment was up by 9% in North Carolina, but the number of teachers rose by 22%; Virginia's enrollment grew by 5%, but 21% more teachers were added. Florida experienced a 6% increase in students, but hired 20% more teachers.

"There ought to be some relationship between hiring personnel and the needs of the students," said Mike Antonucci of the Education Intelligence Agency. "At what point do we say that we're hiring too many teachers for the number of students that we have?"

That question is all the more important as states respond to shrinking

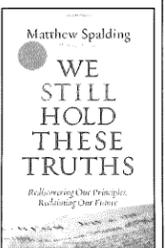


(See *Fewer Students*, page 4)

Book of the Month



We Still Hold These Truths: Rediscovering Our Principles, Reclaiming Our Future, Matthew Spalding, ISI Books 2009, 267 pages, \$26.95.



When Benjamin Franklin left the Constitutional Convention in 1776, an acquaintance asked him if the framers had created a monarchy or a republic. "A republic," responded Franklin, but then famously added, "if you can keep it."

We Still Hold These Truths is essentially a primer on the founding principles every American should have learned in school, but didn't. The Founding Fathers devised a government that, for the first time in history, would not be a relationship between ruler(s) and subjects. Instead, people would come together to decide how they should govern themselves, in order to secure the natural rights they possess as humans.

Readers gain a context for the radical experiment in liberty framed by the Declaration of Independence before the author goes on to explain the articles and amendments of the Constitution, along with the Bill of Rights.

Many will find they have believed numerous popular misconceptions. For example, many Americans understand our nation to be a democracy. The Founders instead chose a republic, so as to prevent the "tyranny of the majority" from undermining the rights of the minority.

Likewise, many understand the Supreme Court to be the final authority in interpreting the Constitution, but Spalding provides contrary quotes from the Framers. From Thomas Jefferson in 1820: "To consider the judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy."

What about the contradiction between the stated ideal of equal rights and slavery? Framers made compromises that temporarily tolerated slavery to gain widespread support; however, the Constitution was crafted to ultimately limit and extinguish slavery. Numerous quotes support the claim that the Founders intended to put domestic slavery, as Abraham Lincoln put it, on "the course of ultimate extinction."

Spalding also explains how progressive ideas of relativism and human perfectibility led us away from the founding principles, resulting in support for a "living constitution" and unlimited government. Results include a bloated central bureaucracy, newly discovered "rights," and ever-expanding entitlement programs.

In recognizing how far we've strayed from the Constitution's original design, we can begin to take steps to restore the liberties that made America great. Suitable for high school students and adults. Download the first chapter for free at WeStillHoldTheseTruths.org.

FOCUS: Indoctrinate Our Kids and Green My Parents

By Ashley Thorne

Actress Brooke Shields says it bothers her to hear about global warming skepticism:

"I don't know what is true or not, I only know what I can do on a daily basis because I believe in it. Whether I am turning the water off in between brushing my teeth, which my little daughter is the police of, or I am recycling, or switching my products or using an energy saving washing machine. . . . I just have to do the best that I can do and keep doing more."

Shields' faith in impending eco-catastrophe is tested by her young daughter's "policing" of her water use. This "help" from her daughter brings up a point I've touched on before: the growing cultural movement to encourage children to monitor their parents at home.

The mandate for children is to change their parents' behavior by constantly nagging them about small aspects of their daily lives such as recycling, turning off the lights, and bringing reusable bags to the grocery store. Kids are urged to ensure that their parents do "the right thing." Normally children don't make sure Mom and Dad eat their vegetables, treat family members with kindness, and go to bed on time. That's because it's widely recognized that it's the parents' job to train children in right living, not the other way around.

This concept has been rendered obsolete by eco-enthusiasts. Children are seen as the innocent ones, with sensitivity toward the environment and utopian thinking that their elders lack. They are the hope for the future, the influencers, and the change-makers. They are the generation that must grab society by the pant leg, stop it in its tracks, turn it around, and direct it on a new course.

Communist and Nazi regimes have used programs such as pioneer camps and the Hitler Youth to indoctrinate children into the regimes' ideologies of choice. A few years ago, the news came out that in the 1980s the secret police of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu enlisted thousands of children to spy and inform on their parents and teachers. While today's environmental movement in America calls for children to be more overt, there are signs that recruiting them as spies may not be too far away. The future Green Police could be our kids.

To prepare them for their role in unleashing eco-revolution, schools around the country are teaching students, beginning with the very young, to live a lifestyle centered on "sustainability." (Stay tuned to learn about one public school in Chicago that trains five- and six-year-olds to be "global citizens" by becoming sustainability activists.)

According to a poll by Habitat Heroes, one in three American schoolchildren fears that the earth will not exist when he grows up. I wrote about this in "Green Goblins," where I quoted the *New York Times*' observation that this generation has become "a growing army of 'eco-kids' — steeped in environmentalism at school, in houses of worship, through scouting and even via popular culture — who try to hold their parents accountable at home." In the *Times* article, a mom says that when she brushes her teeth, her four-year-old son will often "come over and turn [the water] off and say, 'Every day is Earth Day.' He learned it at school."

At last year's Presidential Youth Inaugural Conference at the University of Maryland, Al Gore told college and elementary school students, "There are some things about this world that you know that older people don't know." In a book recommended for American schoolchildren by Scholastic Corporation, *Captain Eco and the Fate of the Earth*, Captain Eco warns, "Your parents and grandparents have made a mess of looking after the earth.

They may deny it, but they're stealing your future from under your noses."

A MasterCard commercial that aired last year shows a small boy who silently reminds his dad to turn the water off and buy renewable energy light bulbs. The son looks self-righteously up at his eco-clueless dad each time he helps him make "green" choices. The tagline at the end is "helping dad become a better man . . . priceless." Note that being a "better man" now means being a "greener" man.

Green My Parents just launched in April on Earth Day. It is "a movement that activates & enlists kids to lead their families in measuring & reducing environmental impact at home & 'challenge' their parents to share savings with kids." On the website is a picture of a child saying, "Here's a timer for your shower, Mom." There's an accompanying *Green My Parents* book by the campaign's leader, Tom Feegel, released at the end of May. More about the movement from the website:

GreenMyParents connects the environmental crises directly to life at home through personal action, simple, creative and meaningful solutions, and learning the values of sustainability, health, family and money.

GreenMyParents features fun "eco-assignments" that save money and the planet. Kids learn how to kill energy vampires, make their pets greener, and more. They grade their parents on saving energy, water and gasoline.

GreenMyParents teaches kids how to calculate savings from electricity & water bills and negotiate for their fair share of the money.

So kids that get involved with this are supposed to "grade their parents" and demand pay for their services.

GreenMyParents relies on vocal young activists to spread the message; its poster child is a thoroughly indoctrinated 12-year-old prodigy named Adora Svitak, who has published several books and speaks regularly at schools. She recently gave a speech at a conference, where she said that "certain types of irrational thinking" could be "exactly what the world needs." She urged the adults in the audience to listen to kids and stop restricting them with oppressive rules and low expectations, because the goal is for kids to turn into "better adults than you have been." Adora's mom told *The Oregonian* newspaper she didn't mind her daughter nagging her about her water use.

The theory behind GreenMyParents, says Feegel (paraphrased by *The Oregonian*), is to "get them before they're indoctrinated," so that kids grow up seeing "green" actions as normal. But is GMP engaged in its own form of indoctrination?

Perhaps not. The campaign seems to capitalize on beliefs that have already solidified in children's minds through their education, extra-curricular programs, and pop culture. As an opinion writer at the *New York Times* put it, "Within the GMP program, it's the parents who have to get on board. The kids are already there. So ultimately what this program does is help raise a generation that no longer needs convincing on climate change."

By badgering their parents over household energy use, children may help their families save a wad of money on utilities. Surely parents would be grateful that their kids want to keep them from wasting money. But to eco-educators like Feegel, the monetary benefit is merely a carrot to entice parents who lack the activist's zeal for sustainability.

The savings also seem to be outweighed by the notion that kids are entitled to "their fair share," and by the nagging itself. The recurring message to children is that they are entitled to defy their parents and should correct them day-to-day in the home.

Kids are being taught that the fate of the planet rests on their shoulders, and that "doing their part" means bossing their parents around. This is a complete reversal of attitudes. Formerly it was understood that parents and grandparents should be treated with reverence as those wiser and more experienced. The green movement tells children just the opposite — that adults should learn from children, because they know better. Such teaching subverts the family and robs parents of their rightful authority.



The National Association of Scholars has primarily focused on the manifestations of the sustainability movement in higher education, but we must also be mindful of where the indoctrination begins. The defiance cultivated in students at an early age grows up with them and goes to college. In many cases, it recycles itself into "sustainabullying."

As Katherine Kersten pointed out in the *Star-Tribune*, "sustainability" has managed to "piggy-back on legitimate environmental concerns and open the door to every left-wing cause under the sun." Most people can agree that thrift and prudent stewardship of resources are good practices, but "sustainability" is being used to cover a much wider spectrum of "good" attitudes and beliefs. Among them is the idea that an "equitable distribution of resources" is preferable to capitalism and consumption.

Sustainability moves easily from the earth to feminism to gay marriage to race to population control. The environment is only a small part of the story. These social, economic, and political aspects of sustainability make it an *ideology*, a system of ideas that shuts out questions and opposing evidence by ruling in advance that the questions are illegitimate and the evidence irrelevant.

America is inculcating such closed-minded ideology into our children's minds today. And now they're turning around to shake a finger at parents who fail to conform. Feegel and others like him seem to have created a well-oiled machine that fuels itself. How sustainable of them.

Ashley Thorne is the director of communications for the National Association of Scholars. She writes frequently about issues in higher education at www.nas.org. She received her undergraduate degree in politics, philosophy, and economics from The King's College in 2007.



Arizona Grades Teachers on Fluency

In the midst of an intense debate about immigration, the Arizona State Board of Education notified school districts they will ramp up enforcement of state and federal laws regarding English fluency for teachers. The law applies primarily to classrooms with students who are still learning English themselves, and requires teachers to possess comprehensible pronunciation, correct grammar and good writing skills.

"As you expect science teachers to know science, and math teachers to know math, you expect a teacher who is teaching kids English to know English," said Tom Horne, state superintendent of public instruction.

Arizona hired hundreds of native Spanish-speaking teachers during the 1990s, with many recruited from Latin America. The hiring spree was part of a bilingual education thrust. In 2000, voters approved a measure stipulating English-only instruction, and bilingual teachers switched from Spanish to English in

the classroom. The imperative to teach in English was intensified in 2003 when No Child Left Behind legislation threatened to withhold federal funding if English teachers weren't thoroughly fluent.

At Creighton, a K-8 school where nearly half of the teachers are native Spanish speakers, state auditors reported numerous fluency problems to the district. Some teachers pronounce words such as violet as "biolet," think as "tink," and swallow the ending sounds of words as they sometimes do in Spanish. Even after completing classes to reduce accent and increase proficiency, some of the school's teachers were deemed unsuited to teaching English-language learners.

One out of eight of Arizona's 1.2 million public school students are classified as English language learners. Principals must determine whether to fire teachers deemed insufficiently fluent or reassign them to mainstream classes not designated for students still learning English. (*Wall Street Journal*, 4-30-10; Fox News, 5-22-10)

Ethnic Resentment (Cont. from page 1)

also read *Occupied America*, which approvingly quotes a speech José Ángel Gutiérrez gave in Texas calling on Chicanos to "kill the gringo."

Nonetheless, district officials deny that the program promotes resentment, and they believe it is in compliance with the new law. Furthermore, they say, the classes are a key part of a court-ordered desegregation program. "We don't do those things [we are accused of], so in that sense, I do not believe it directly affects us," asserted Arce.

A small group of students, faculty and others protested the bill both before and after Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed it. Superintendent Horne brought a picture printed in the *Los Angeles Times* (5-8-10) of protestors dressed in the revolutionary garb of Brown Berets in front of Tucson High Magnet School to one press conference. "[This is] a visual image that confirms what we've been told by teachers and ex-teachers that La Raza studies conveys a revolutionary message, a separatist message, a message that makes students hostile to the United States," he said.

Arce countered that those dressed as Brown Berets were not students, but adults from other communities. He did concede that students leaving their classrooms in protest were pumping their fists, similar to protestors on the cover of *Chicano!*, another textbook students read in Raza courses. The book also includes pictures of students walking out of school in protest, and demonstrators wearing brown berets inspired by Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara.

Arce would not admit that student protesters were inspired by their classes, however. "These [textbook accounts] are simply historical episodes," he argued. When asked by KGUN9 television reporters if there was any chance students were emulating what they saw in the textbook, Arce responded, "Not whatsoever." (KGUN9.com, 5-13-10)

Arizona Republic columnist Doug MacEachern said he doesn't think the new law will change anything being taught in the classes. "No one at TUSD — not the school district's activist school board, nor the pliant school administrators, nor, certainly, the confident, savvy political operatives masquerading as 'educators' in the classrooms — intends to abide by the new edict handed down from Phoenix. No one."

MacEachern said ethnic studies staff members are already "brazenly" flouting district policy by using the school's email system to organize rallies against the new bill. He also said the state would find it difficult to prove ethnic studies teachers are promoting racial division and hatred of America because "nearly everyone in the district is denying the program is what it is." (*Arizona Republic*, 5-22-10)

"What's more," MacEachern opined in an earlier column, "the ethnic studies zealots have convinced a good-hearted, if ill-informed, public that they seek merely to inculcate a sense of ethnic pride among the poor and downtrodden." He called the faculty and administrators of the program "masters of propaganda" and said the district's claim that ethnic studies students outperform other minorities is a "sham." (*Arizona Republic*, 5-4-10)

The TUSD ethnic studies program, which is the umbrella for Mexican American, African-American, Pan-Asian and Native American programs, has been in place for 14 years and has an annual budget exceeding \$2.5 million. Elementary and middle school students are also exposed to the curriculum in the 56% Hispanic district.

The bill gives the state school superintendent or the Board of Education the authority to determine whether a school's program violates the law. HB 2281 does not take effect until the end of the year; opponents have already promised legal challenges.

Principal Denies School Intended Boys to Cross-dress for Fashion Show

A New Jersey principal denied that boys at Maude M. Wilkins Elementary School were expected to dress as women for an assignment celebrating Women's History Month after parents complained and contacted Fox News. But to Janine Giandomenico's nine-year-old son, the expectation was all too clear. The boy came home in tears and begged his mother, "Please don't make me do this."

In a 16-page packet sent home with students, teacher Tonya Uibel informed parents that all students in her third grade class must participate in the fashion show, since it would be graded as an "end of unit assessment." The packet included pictures of women's fashions from different decades to give students ideas of how they might dress.

"If your child is a young man, he does not have to wear a dress or skirt, as there were many time periods where women wore jeans, pants and trousers," stated the letter in the packet. "However, each child must be able to express what time period their outfit is from."

Word about the assignment spread when Giandomenico posted a Facebook message. Some who read her post noted that the day the fashion show was scheduled coincided with an event organized by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. On the "Day of Silence," students are asked to protest bullying of gay students by remaining quiet all day. Giandomenico said she found the overlap of the two events "very odd."

Another parent, Stacy Bowen of Bucks County, PA heard about the assignment and said she also found it "ironic" that the event was scheduled on the "Day of Silence." She reasoned, "You're forcing boys to do this, yet you stand for anti-bullying. They [boys] may feel pressured to do it when they don't want to." Bullying was on Giandomenico's mind as well. She said her son has Aspergers's syn-

drome, a social interaction disorder, and she was concerned that he might be ridiculed if he participated in the show.

Maple Shade Township Superintendent Michael Livengood told FoxNews.com it was all a "misunderstanding." The fashion show was chosen to highlight how women's roles in society have changed over time, and how female clothing changed to suit those new roles, explained Livengood. "I wish the letter had been clearer and worded differently," he said. Livengood also said he was not aware that the gay rights protest was scheduled for the same day.

In the wake of media attention and complaints, school principal Beth Narcia sent a letter to parents apologizing for "any confusion or frustration" caused by the assignment. She informed parents the fashion show was canceled, and said students would draw a picture of a person dressed in period clothing as the final project instead. "I wanted to clear up any misconceptions about the clothing show," the principal wrote. "It was never our intention to have boys dress up as women. There are many different time periods that had women dressing in pants, suits, and even sweat suits. Students were just asked to dress up as a time period, not as a woman." An Associated Press article (4-14-10) implied that parents and others misinterpreted the school's intent and made a ruckus over nothing. Others responding via blogs and social media said the teacher's letter seemed pretty clear and was difficult to reconcile with the claims in the principal's follow-up letter.

A few little girls were disappointed they didn't get to dress up for school, but Giandomenico considered the cancellation a victory. "I'm positive my little boy was not the only one who felt uncomfortable doing this," she said. The last update on her Twitter account read, "We won — cancelled! Thanks 4 yr support!" (*Fox News*, 4-13-10)

Sex Ed Law (Cont. from page 1)

it was the legislature that acted irresponsibly in its passage of the law, and he feels he was ethically responsible to warn districts of the potential consequences.

Senator Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend) said the law infringes on the right of local officials to determine standards for their districts. He voted no on the bill, as did all his Republican colleagues. "This almost certainly requires school districts to teach in a way that would be offensive to Christian parents," he said.

Democratic Governor Jim Doyle disagreed, saying, "We wouldn't leave it to a school board to decide that they could

teach — to be absurd — that one plus one equals three. The real heart of this bill is to make sure that what's taught is medically accurate and is comprehensive."

The law took effect March 11th, but Southworth expects the legislature to revisit the measure as early as January of next year. Until the bill can be amended or repealed, the DA urged Juneau schools to suspend their sex ed programs and transfer any instruction on human physiology or anatomy into science classes, which are not subject to the bill's stipulations. (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 2-24-10 and 4-6-10; *Teacher Magazine*, 4-2-10)

Fewer Students (Cont. from page 2)

budgets. New York Governor David Paterson's proposal for \$1.4 billion cut in school spending could lead to the dismissal of more than 14,000 employees, according to the state's School Board Association. Despite vigorous protests, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is also enforcing significant education cuts.

In response to the potential loss of

union members, American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that allowing more than 275,000 teachers and staff nationwide to receive pink slips will cause class sizes to "swell." Weingarten wrote the opinion piece to ask Congress for a \$23 billion federal bailout to "avert educational and economic disaster." (*Wall Street Journal*, 4-12-10; 5-20-10)