

EDUCATION REPORTER

NUMBER 306

THE NEWSPAPER OF EDUCATION RIGHTS

JULY 2011

California Passes 'Gay' History Law

California students rank in the bottom 10% nationally in reading and math, (based on 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress Test scores), but Governor Jerry Brown just signed a bill into law to ensure they know more about gay historical figures than kids from any other state. The Assembly passed the measure on a 49-25 party line vote after it passed the Senate, 23-14; Democrats control both chambers.

Written by openly gay Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive and Respectful (FAIR) Education Act makes California the first state to mandate that students study "the role and contributions of . . . gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans . . . to the de-

velopment of California and the United States." The law also forbids the adoption of any textbook or other instructional materials that reflect "adversely" on gays.

In effect, says Randy Thomasson of Save California, the new law means that public school children will be taught to admire homosexuality, same-sex marriages, bisexuality, cross-dressing, and even sex change operations. Kids will also be taught to support LGBT political activism because of the law's emphasis on "portraying the role of these groups in contemporary society."

Thomasson also predicted that teachers will have no choice but to positively portray LGBT lifestyles, lest they be accused of "reflecting adversely" or "promot-

ing a discriminatory bias." He also pointed out that parents will not be notified, nor will they be able to exempt their children, because the alternative lifestyle lessons will be part of the core curriculum.

Advocates of the law say it's only fair to give homosexuals their historical due, and that teaching about gays' contributions will curb anti-gay stereotypes that make gay youth vulnerable to bullying and suicide.

Focus on the Family education analyst Candi Cushman countered by saying that FAIR is unnecessary as an anti-discrimination measure because California already has some of the strongest laws on the books. She added that people should not be singled out for honor in his-



tory books because of their sexual behavior, but should be included based on the merits of their historical contributions.

Significantly, the legislation does not specify a grade in which instruction should begin, leaving many opponents concerned that gay history could be taught as early as first grade. Dr. Miriam Grossman, a specialist in pediatrics and psychiatry, testified during committee hearings that the law could do psychological harm to young children who cannot assimilate certain facts. For example, she said, young children cannot process transgenderism and might be confused or even frightened if made to grapple with the concept.

Critics also say the law will force taxpayers to replace textbooks and other instructional materials at a time when California is facing a massive fiscal crisis. FAIR sponsor Leno said schools won't have to buy new textbooks right away, but must ensure future editions comply with the mandate. The California Department of Education has said it does not expect to adopt new texts until 2015, though teachers could use supplemental materials until then. The textbook revisions could have an impact beyond California, because national publishers tailor books for California's large market that smaller states end up using, too.

Save California and other traditional values organizations urged citizens to express their disapproval of the bill to Governor Brown. "Impressionable children are already being sexually indoctrinated, but [this bill] would be the most in-your-face-brainwashing yet," said Thomasson. "True history focuses on the accomplishments of people — it doesn't talk about what they did in the bedroom."

It's not surprising that Brown signed FAIR, because historically he has supported homosexual groups on most issues, including gay marriage. Still, Karen England of Capitol Resource Family Impact expressed frustration that Brown did not listen to the "thousands and thousands" of phone calls asking him to veto the bill. "He has ignored over half of the people in our state to implement a controversial, objectionable, and poor public school policy measure into California's classrooms," she said.

The California law stands in stark contrast to Tennessee's so-called "don't say gay" bill, which prohibits discussion of homosexuality before high school. The measure has yet to pass in the state's House of Representatives, however. (Associated Press, 7-6-11; bpnews.net, 7-6-11; redcounty.com, 4-11-11)

Maryland Students Must be 'Green' to Graduate

Maryland students entering high school this fall will be the first class required to prove they are "environmentally literate" in order to graduate. Governor Martin O'Malley said the policy adopted by the state board of education (SBOE) last month makes Maryland the first state to enact such a requirement, and called the measure "a defining moment for education."

The new regulation requires districts to integrate lessons on conservation, so-called "smart growth," and "the health of our natural world" into core subjects like science, social studies, math and language arts. ("Smart growth" has numerous meanings, but often translates into restrictions on private land development and disincentives to drive personal automobiles.) Local school systems will determine how to infuse the state environmental literacy standards into their curriculums and how to assess student mastery of the material, but they must report to the state every five years on what they are doing to meet the requirements.

Observers note that this isn't Maryland's first green education mandate; in 1989 the state education code was amended to require "a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary program of environmental education within current curricular offerings at least once in the early, middle, and high school learning years." What is different this time, said Donald R. Baugh, vice president for education at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, is that

instruction, but there was no mandate for every student to take those courses.

Education or Indoctrination?

But what exactly is "environmental literacy" anyway? The SBOE says all content is left up to local school boards, but State Senator J.B. Jennings is concerned that the measure leaves too much room for ideological indoctrination.

"What kind of education is it going to be?" asked Jennings. "Is it going to be fact-based? Or is it going to be . . . politically driven? And you can think, is it going to be about global warming or climate change?"

Ed Reform is Sweeping the Nation

The elections last November greatly changed the political climate of many states. Republicans took over 21 previously Democratic state legislative chambers and now hold a majority in 57 of the 98 chambers. This change in party control, coupled with tight state budgets, set the stage for sweeping education reform. This spring, a majority of states passed some form of legislation attempting to improve education and cut costs at the same time. Teachers' unions bore the brunt of this reform, having their powers stripped to make room for budget cuts and new employment standards.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin was the first state to draw big crowds of union protesters with its restrictions on the power of teachers' unions to impose their employment standards. But the law has withstood the opposition and was upheld by the Wisconsin Supreme Court on June 9th.

Local school boards won't get any extra money to integrate the environmental literacy standards into existing curriculum or to provide the required professional development to assist teachers in meeting the new mandates. So where can local districts and teachers turn for ready-made instructional materials?

Here is a sampling of the kinds of sources eager to provide content to schools: The Department of Energy (DOE), under the leadership of Energy Secretary Steven Chu, has produced lesson plans to persuade kids to use less As-

(See 'Green' to Graduate, page 4)

Indiana

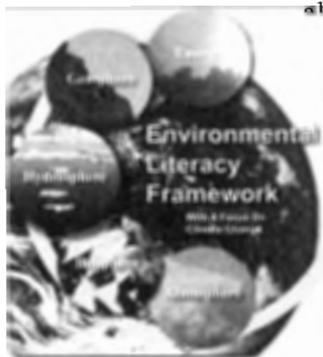
Indiana's Governor, Mitch Daniels, signed into law an unprecedented expansion in school choice. The new law will make vouchers available to middle income families earning as much as \$62,000 a year. Depending on income level, students will be eligible to receive from 50% to 90% of per-child public school funding. The number of available vouchers will grow from 7,500 this year to 15,000 next year, and will be unlimited in three years. Indiana has already passed legislation limiting collective bargaining and

now has teachers' unions fired up again. The new education reform will bring the "last in, first out" policy to an end, using a new evaluation system based on student performance instead of teacher seniority.

Idaho

Teachers' unions are suing Idaho Governor, C. L. "Butch" Otter, the state, and State Superintendent Tom Luna over the constitutionality of Idaho education

(See Ed Reform, page 4)



students must participate. Previously, schools were supposed to offer environmental in-

EDUCATION BRIEFS

In a time of recession, the public school system hired almost as many new employees as it lost students. According to the most recent Census Bureau report, the number of students in public school dropped by 157,114 between the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. During that time, the number of teachers grew by 81,426, while the total number of newly hired public school employees including principals, administrators, and support workers increased by 137,000. (www.eiaonline.com, 5-31-11)

A Virginia school reversed gross misapplication of its zero tolerance policy in favor of common sense. Seventh-grader Adam Grass was initially given a ten-day suspension for possessing a plastic bag of oregano. Constitutional attorneys from the Rutherford Institute convinced the school that, in this instance, oregano was not "an imitation controlled substance." Adam will return to school without going on record as a drug offender. (www.rutherford.org, 3-17-11)

A study found that special training for math teachers did not improve student test scores. Of the 100 seventh-grade math teachers given two years of professional development in the fundamentals of math, only one showed gains in subject knowledge. Even though the teacher training was specifically designed to be more intensive and effective than average and was expected to drive statistically significant educational outcomes, there was no measurable improvement in student achievement. (blogs.edweek.org, 5-26-11)

The eight-year-old daughter of North Carolina Republican Representative Mike Stone was given an assignment at her Lee County school to write her dad urging him not to cut education funding from the budget. Superintendent Jeffrey Moss said that the assignment "was not budget-specific except to say that they support funding public education." But Stone insists, "It was totally inappropriate for an eight-year-old to be used as a lobbyist in Raleigh." (www.carolinajournal.com, 6-06-11)

Education Reporter (ISSN 0887-0608) is published monthly by Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund with editorial offices at 7800 Bonhomme Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105, (314) 721-1213, fax (314) 721-3373. Editor: Kim Andrews; Staff Writer: C. Lauren Keel. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the persons quoted and should not be attributed to Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund. Annual subscription \$25. Back issues available @ \$2. Periodicals postage paid at Alton, Illinois.

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Recess Is Back In Chicago Schools

Most Chicago schools have not scheduled recess since 1973. Only 15% have outdoor playtime for students while 27% have only indoor recess. Most schools, after they were given the option in the 70s, decided to opt out of recess to extend class time and hopefully improve student test scores. There were also concerns about the safety of outdoor recess in some areas of Chicago. Although each school is technically under contract with the Chicago Teachers' Union to have an annual vote on whether or not to have recess, the vote is never actually taken.

Now, with support from concerned parents, playtime may again be scheduled into Chicago students' school days. In May, Chicago Public Schools released a guide to implementing recess. The new guide is the result of a two-year effort by the parent-led Recess Task Force and other grassroots organizations, and is

backed by the Chicago Teachers' Union president, the Mayor, the schools chief, and even Michelle Obama.

Though the new guide doesn't mandate that all schools have recess, it will require schools to form a recess committee every year to decide whether to have recess the next year. One suggestion is that teachers take a 45-minute lunch break while their students have recess. This would not cost schools anything and would give teachers a break, too.

In some schools, safety and logistical concerns remain. Recess would lengthen the school day and some schools no longer have playgrounds or equipment. But proponents agree that the benefits of recess outweigh these hurdles, and that schools should look for ways to implement a time in which children can run and play, expel energy, and renew their ability to pay attention in class. (Chicago Sun-Times, 5-07-11; www.huffingtonpost.com, 5-24-11)



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



States Plan to Defy NCLB Law

So far, three states — Montana, Idaho and South Dakota — have told the U.S. Department of Education they will not follow the nine-year-old No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law for the upcoming school year, but will instead freeze their accountability targets at 2009-2010 levels.

NCLB calls for schools to bring all students to proficiency in math and language arts by 2014. Though states set their own targets for how much they must improve each year, many left the biggest leaps for the final years, assuming that the law would change before then. Now schools are increasingly failing to meet what NCLB calls "adequate yearly progress," and are subject to escalating sanctions, including firing teachers and closing schools. Now many states are growing desperate for a change in the law or a waiver from the Education Department.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan told Congress that 82% of schools will be labeled failing this year, though some education experts dispute that figure. Duncan has issued more than 300 NCLB waivers to school districts around the nation, but thus far has stopped short of allowing schools to flout the 2014 proficiency deadline.

Duncan drew the ire of House Education Committee chair John Kline (R-MN) by announcing his office is preparing new

regulations that will offer NCLB waivers to states that commit to certain education reforms if Congress doesn't pass a rewrite of NCLB in time for the new school year.

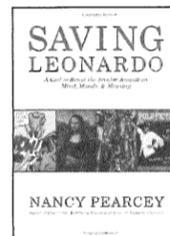
Kline has repeatedly stated that there is "no chance" of meeting the Obama administration's August deadline, and that his committee is focused on "thoughtful reforms" rather than "timelines and rhetoric." Kline sent a letter asking Duncan to cough up details on the waiver plan by July 1st and questioning the Department's legal authority to grant waivers "in exchange for reforms not authorized by Congress." As of July 5th, Secretary Duncan had not responded.

Meanwhile, Kentucky has asked the Department for permission to substitute its own accountability model even as Montana, Idaho and South Dakota have taken the ask-for-forgiveness-instead-of-permission approach. Additionally, the Council of Chief State School Officers, representing every state but Texas, plans to lead an effort to overwhelm the Ed Department with waiver requests that would allow states to use an alternative accountability framework. (blogs.edweek.org, 6-23-11 and 7-5-11)

Book of the Month



Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, & Meaning, Nancy Pearcey, B&H Publishing Group 2010, 328 pages, \$27.



Are your kids an easy mark for the secular worldview that is so pervasive in our culture? Are you? Some may be offended by those blunt questions, but before you dismiss them, here's a quick test: Have you or your teen ever agreed that something *can be true for you but not for me*?

If so, you or your child may be among the many Christians who attend church and study their Bibles, yet still absorb a secular view of truth from our culture. In this view, there are two distinct types of truth. The first category includes objective, scientific facts that are empirically verifiable and universally valid.

The second category includes things like morality, theology and aesthetics — personal values and arbitrary preferences considered "true" for some people but not for others. In other words, facts are true, but values are merely opinion. Since religion is typically placed in the personal preference category, even many Christians think it is disrespectful and bigoted to "impose" the Bible's comprehensive truth claims on a Buddhist or atheist.

The author's goal is to equip readers to "detect, decipher, and defeat the monolithic secularism" that so easily renders Christians culturally impotent. She does this in part by tracing the historical development of the fact/value dichotomy and showing how it has permeated politics, media and the arts (including music and movies). Learning to recognize non-biblical thinking in culture and in ourselves is important because, as Pearcey warns us, "Worldviews do not come neatly labeled. They do not ask permission before invading our mental space."

The book also illustrates how the secular dualistic view of the human body as biochemical machine and human person as autonomous self have led to greater acceptance of abortion, assisted suicide and anything-goes sexuality. For example, the hook-up culture is based on the idea that it is possible to have a physical relationship that is disconnected from the mind and emotions.

Recognizing the ways in which our culture and thought patterns are steeped in secularism goes a long way toward cultivating a robust biblical worldview, but the discussion would not be complete without tips and tools for convincing others that a secular worldview can't adequately explain human nature or the world. The book delivers on this count as well, demonstrating that people can't live consistently by a secular creed for even one day.

FOCUS: Fat City:

Thank you, Illinois taxpayers, for my cushy life.

By David Rubinstein

After 34 years of teaching sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I recently retired at age 64 at 80% of my pay for life. This calculation was based on a salary spiked by summer teaching, and since I no longer pay into the retirement fund, I now receive significantly more than when I “worked.” But that’s not all: There’s a generous health insurance plan, a guaranteed 3% annual cost of living increase, and a few other perquisites. Having overinvested in my retirement annuity, I received a fat refund and — when it rains, it pours — another for unused sick leave. I was also offered the opportunity to teach as an emeritus for three years, receiving \$8,000 per course, double the pay for adjuncts, which works out to over \$200 an hour. Another going-away present was summer pay, one ninth of my salary, with no teaching obligation.

I haven’t done the math but I suspect that, given a normal life span, these benefits nearly doubled my salary. And in Illinois these benefits are constitutionally guaranteed, up there with freedom of religion and speech.

Why do I put “worked” in quotation marks? Because my main task as a university professor was self-cultivation: reading and writing about topics that interested me. Maybe this counts as work. But here I am today — like many of my retired colleagues — doing pretty much what I have done since the day I began graduate school, albeit with less intensity.

Before retiring, I carried a teaching load of two courses per semester: six hours of lecture a week. I usually scheduled classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays: The rest of the week was mine. Colleagues who pursued grants taught less, some rarely seeing a classroom. The gaps this left in the department’s course offerings were filled by adjuncts hired with little scrutiny, subject to little supervision, and paid little.

Sometimes my teaching began at 9:30 a.m., but this was hardship duty. A night owl, I preferred to start my courses at 11 or 12. With an hour or so in my office to see an occasional student, I was at the (free) gym by 4 p.m. Department heads sometimes pleaded with faculty to alter their schedules to suit departmental needs, but rarely. Because most professors insist on selected hours, to avoid rush hour and to retain days at home, universities must build extra classroom space that stands empty much of the day.

The occasional seminars were opportunities for professors to kick back and let graduate students do the talking. Committee meetings were tedious but, except for the few good departmental citizens, most of us were able to avoid undue burdens.

Another perquisite of the job was a

remarkable degree of personal freedom. Some professors came to class unshaven, wearing T-shirts and jeans. One of the deans scolded the faculty for looking like urban guerrillas. He was ridiculed as an authoritarian prig.

This schedule held for 30 weeks of the year, leaving free three months in summer, a month in December, and a week in spring, plus all the usual holidays. Every six years, there was sabbatical leave: a semester off at full pay to do research, which sometimes actually got done.

Most faculty attended academic conferences at taxpayer expense. Some of these were serious events, but always allowed ample time for schmoozing and sightseeing. A group of professors who shared my interests applied for a grant to fund a conference at Lake Como. It was denied because we had failed to include any women and so we settled for an all-expenses-paid week at Cambridge, England.

The grandest prize of all is, of course, tenure. The tenured live in a different world than ordinary mortals, a world in which fears of unemployment are banished, futures can be confidently planned, and retirement is secure.

All of this at a university without union representation!

To be fair, the first years of a newly hired assistant professor can be harrowing. Writing lecture notes to cover a semester takes effort. But soon I had abundant material which could be reused indefinitely and took maybe 20 minutes of review before class. Adding new material required hardly more effort than the time to read what I would have read anyway.

The only really arduous part of teaching was grading exams and papers. But for most of my classes I had teaching assistants to do this, graduate students who usually knew little more about the topic than the undergraduates.

My colleagues, to their credit, promoted me to full professor knowing my ideological heterodoxy. I fear that a young Ph.D. looking for work today who challenged the increasingly rigid political orthodoxies would have a hard time. But the discipline of sociology is so ideologically homogenous — a herd, as Harold Rosenberg put it, of independent minds — that this problem is rare. Universities cherish diversity in everything except where it counts most: ideas.

According to data from the Center for Responsive Politics, Harvard, donating 4 to 1 in favor of Democrats in 2008, was one of the more politically diverse major American universities. Ninety-two percent of employees at the University of Chicago donated to Democrats. The University of California favored Democrats over Republicans, 90% to 10%. And William and Mary employees preferred Democrats to the GOP by a margin of 99% to

1%. Neil Gross of Harvard found that 87.6% of social scientists voted for Kerry, 6.2% for Bush. Gross also found that 25% of sociologists characterize themselves as Marxists, likely a higher percentage than members of the Chinese Communist party. I would guess that if Lenin were around today he would be teaching sociology and seeking grants to fund the revolution.

The research requirements to achieve tenure and promotion are rigorous. The top journals reject as much as 90% of the work submitted, so accumulating the half-dozen or so articles usually required to be tenured took sustained effort.

But it is not clear what value this work has to those who pay the salaries. As Thomas Sowell has argued, building a scholarly reputation requires finding a niche that no one else has explored — often for good reason. I am hard pressed to explain why sometimes exquisitely esoteric interests should be supported by taxpayers: This expertise certainly does not match the educational needs of students. (Full disclosure: The book that established my scholarly reputation is titled *Marx and Wittgenstein: Social Science and Social Praxis*.)

The work done by most of my colleagues did bear on issues of wider relevance and not all of it was so ideologically compromised as to be useless. But the readership of academic journals is tiny, and most of this work had no impact beyond a small circle of interested academics — for understandable reasons. Philip Tetlock, a research psychologist at Berkeley, tested the accuracy of 82,361 predictions made by 284 experts including psychologists, economists, political scientists, and area and foreign policy specialists, 96% with post-graduate training. He found that their prognostications did not beat chance. The increasingly ideological nature of social science will not improve this record.

To be sure, some of my colleagues were prodigious researchers, devoted teachers, and outstanding departmental, university, and professional citizens. But sociologists like to talk about what they call the “structural” constraints on behavior. While character and professional ethics can withstand the incentives to coast, the privileged position of a tenured professor guarantees that there will be slackers.

An argument can be made that, compared with professionals in the private sector, college professors are underpaid, though according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “by rank, the average [salary] was \$108,749 for full professors.” It is difficult to compare the overall goodness of different lives, but there is a back of the envelope shortcut. In my 34 years, just one professor in the sociology department resigned to take a nonacademic job. For open positions, there were always over 100 applicants, several of them outstanding. The rarity of quits and the abundance of applications is good evidence that the life of the college profes-

sor is indeed enviable.

The life of a professor is far more attractive than that of most government employees, but elements of professorial privilege can be found in the lives of other public sector workers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the quit rate for government workers is less than one-third that of the private sector. Applications for federal jobs exceed those for the private sector by at least 25 percent, and when workers move from private to federal employment their earnings, according to Princeton’s Alan Krueger, increase by 12%.

And then there are the public schools. Because K-12 education is local, generalizations are difficult. But there are many egregious cases. Less than 2% of teachers in Los Angeles are denied tenure. In the last decade, according to *LA Weekly*, the city “spent \$3.5 million trying to fire just seven of the district’s 33,000 teachers for poor classroom performance.” Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, a Democrat, liberal, and former union organizer, described union leadership as an “unwavering roadblock to reform.” Teachers in Florida gain tenure after three years of “satisfactory” evaluations and, in 2009, 99.7% received this evaluation. Michelle Rhee said that when she took over the D.C. school system in 2007, 95% of the teachers were rated excellent and none was terminated. Just 0.1% of Chicago teachers were fired for poor performance between 2005 and 2008.

This circumstance has attracted the attention of public officials. Illinois, with the support of some prominent Democrats, is desperate to cut back a public employee pension system that, even with recent reforms, will go broke within ten years. John Kasich, Republican governor of Ohio, has proposed that the teaching load of college professors be increased by one course every two years.

Such efforts at restraint are routinely met with Wisconsin-like howls of outrage. One of my colleagues, whose retirement benefits exceed the \$77,900 household income average for retired government employees in Illinois, was indignant that the state had managed to require an additional \$17 a month for his dental insurance. How dare they!

Protests against efforts to reform pay scales, teaching loads, and retirement benefits employ a “solidarity forever, the union makes us strong” rhetoric. What these professors and other government workers do not understand is that they are not demanding a share of the profits from the fat-cat bourgeoisie. They are squeezing taxpayers — for whom the professors purport to advocate — whose lives are in most cases far harsher than their own.

David Rubinstein is professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. This piece first appeared in the 5-30-11 edition of The Weekly Standard, and is reprinted here by permission.



States Abandon Common Core Standards

A majority of states have adopted the Common Core State Standards Initiative for nationally standardized math and English language arts curriculum. But now several states are re-thinking their commitment to Common Core and rejecting the idea that education should follow national rather than state standards.

The New Hampshire House of Representatives recently passed a bill that would ban all Common Core standards that do not have prior approval from the state legislature. Even the standards that were adopted last summer would have to have to be re-approved. Now the bill is on its way to New Hampshire's Republican controlled Senate.

In South Carolina, a bill has been introduced in the Senate that would ban Common Core standards from being adopted or implemented. This bill would make the standards South Carolina adopted last year void.

Some states are attempting to ban only certain portions of the standards. Although Minnesota already approved Common Core

standards in language arts, the House and Senate passed a measure that would require their approval to adopt standards for math or other subjects. Governor Mark Dayton vetoed the bill at the end of session in May, but the issue is likely to come up again in a special session.

A preemptive bill will soon be presented to the South Dakota House of Representatives that would ban common standards in history.

Texas, one of the few states that has not adopted any part of the Common Core standards, is trying to make sure that national education standards are never imposed. That bill is making its way through the state House of Representatives now.

Although Common Core initially gained widespread support (in large part due to the Race to the Top grant competition), there is now a small but growing movement to oppose the standards as a step that would bring unwanted federal control over education. (www.blogs.edweek.org, 4-04-11, 4-26-11, and 5-05-11; www.scstatehouse.gov, 7-05-11; www.educationminnesota.org, 5-24-11; www.brighted.funeducation.com, 2-08-11)



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reform legislation. The new law will end tenure and retirement bonuses for teachers, and will vest power in elected school boards instead of teachers' unions. Another part of the plan is to take money from teacher salaries to create a merit-based payment plan and fund new technology for classrooms. Idaho teachers' unions plan to fight back in court, and are petitioning to have the law put to popular vote on the 2012 ballot with \$75,000 in funding from the NEA.

Ohio

As in Idaho, the NEA is hoping to overturn Ohio education reform laws by calling for a vote of the people. The new law will establish teacher seniority based on merit instead of tenure, and will restrict teachers' ability to contract for entitlements.

Maine

Maine authorized charter schools for the first time last month, becoming the 41st state to allow them. The law authorizes ten charter schools to start and operate over the next ten years, and allows funding to follow students from public schools.

Tennessee

The Republican dominated legislature in Tennessee has brought collective bargaining under the control of school boards. Using "collaborative conferencing" instead, teachers will meet with local school boards to express their wishes on salary and benefits. Tennessee has also replaced tenure with performance-based evaluations.

Florida

Florida's education reform legislation will extend vouchers of about \$3,100 to students, expand charter schools, allow students to transfer from failing schools, and make online schooling available. Another bill will replace teacher tenure with a merit-based plan.

Illinois

Democrat-controlled Illinois was able

to garner support for laws that will link teachers' benefits to their performance in the classroom. The law, though not supported by the Chicago Teachers' Union, did gain the approval of U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Massachusetts

Even in union-friendly Massachusetts, legislation is on its way to the governor's desk that would take certain privileges away from state employees. Unions would lose their power to control their healthcare benefits in an effort to curb state spending. Despite staunch opposition from unions, the measure passed overwhelmingly in both Houses. Unions are reeling at the betrayal by their Democratic representatives, but if the governor signs the bill, Massachusetts will save \$100 million in the next fiscal year.

Nevada

Under a new law, teachers will no longer be able to benefit from collective bargaining. Teachers will be rated according to objective evaluations of their skills and will enjoy continued employment based on performance rather than length of employment. Tenure will take longer for teachers to gain, and even then it will not ensure against probation.

Other states that passed school reform legislation this year include Arizona, Oklahoma, Minnesota, New Mexico, Utah, New York, Louisiana, Colorado, Georgia, and North Carolina. With the momentum created by last November's elections, many states have been able to cut spending and send students into the next school year with the hope of a better education. (www.wisconsinreporter.com, 6-14-11; *Wall Street Journal*, 5-06-11; Associated Press, 4-28-11; www.mpbn.net, 6-29-11; *National Review*, 5-23-11; www.blog.heritage.org, 6-30-11; www.articles.boston.com, 5-27-11; *Las Vegas Sun*, 7-01-11; *Education Week*, 5-25-11)

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energy. (Chu is a fervent believer in man-made global warming, and once said that average Americans don't have the know-how or will to do what it takes to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions without government mandates.)

As part of its educational campaign, the DOE created an "Energy Awareness Quiz" and an accompanying activity for grades 9-12. A primary learning objective of these two resources appears to be producing guilt for living in the most productive and prosperous civilization of all time. For example, students learn that North Americans use about 50 times as much energy as people living in developing countries. Though developing nations aspire to have the standard of living most Americans have, the DOE wants us to be more like them.

The instructions for the student learning activity — called "How Much CO₂ Do You Spew?" — assert that the controversy over global warming is over because "many investigations" have proven it to be a "well-documented" fact. After students calculate their contribution to the supposedly dire greenhouse effect, they are told that each person's "rightful share of CO₂ emissions is about 1.5 metric tons annually." The activity guide then poses this question: "Do you think that some countries have the right to contribute more greenhouse gases than other countries?"

Lest some students miss the not-so-subtle message of this activity, the guide takes them by the scruff of the neck and wags a finger in their face with this pronouncement: "Your [calculated CO₂ emissions] may shock you, but it should help you to see that lowering your CO₂ quotient is necessary to your very survival." It seems that the DOE curriculum writers adopted fear as an educational methodology to assist the "average American" high school student who doesn't have the "know-how or will" to adopt third-world living standards by choice.

Another organization all too happy to provide Maryland teachers with help implementing the environmental literacy mandate is the U.S. Partnership for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The K-12 and teacher education sector of the U.S. Partnership describes "education for sustainability" as necessary so that students will make "sustainable choices" that will lead to sustainability's "triple bottom line of social equity, environmental health, and economic prosperity." Those in the know recognize these terms as code words for wealth redistribution, radical environmentalism, population control, and making private property subject to government control.

There is no indication that students will learn about "Climategate" or dissenting opinions about global warming from meteorologists and other scientists. It is also doubtful that social studies courses will examine the green conyism of gov-

ernment leaders and General Electric's Jeffrey Immelt.

National 'No Child Left Inside' Legislation Proposed

The Maryland initiative comes as advocates for environmental education continue to push federal legislation called "No Child Left Inside." The measure would authorize \$500 million over five years for environmental education as part of the overdue reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It has more than 120 co-sponsors in the House, and 19 in the Senate, most of whom are Democrats.

The core elements of No Child Left Inside are to provide funding for teacher training, offer financial incentives for states to develop environmental literacy plans, utilize the local habitat for learning activities (thus, the title "No Child Left Inside"), and to promote the integration of environmental education into core subject areas. Funds would go only to states with environmental literacy plans approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

The adoption of environmental literacy requirements gives Maryland an edge for federal funding if "No Child Left Inside" becomes law; this is not surprising since the lead sponsor of the House bill is Rep. John Sarbanes, a Maryland Democrat. Sarbanes introduced the Congressional bill as a way to "grow the next generation of scientists and innovators to solve our energy and environment challenges."

But Brian Newell, press secretary for Republicans on the House Education and Labor Committee, said it is a bad idea to create "yet another new government program that will compete with and drain resources from existing federal education priorities." He added, "With many schools struggling to raise student achievement in reading, writing, and math, spending half-a-billion dollars to prioritize a curriculum already taught in many classrooms is both costly and misguided."

Even the national coalition formed to advocate for "No Child Left Inside" boasts that most states are already implementing some sort of environmental education through gubernatorial executive orders, state laws, or other actions — without the need for federal laws or funding. Additionally, 48 other states are considering green education directives similar to Maryland's, according to the organization.

Myron Ebell, Director of the Center of Energy and Environment for the free market think tank Competitive Enterprise Institute, offered an even more blunt assessment of green literacy requirements than Maryland Senator J.B. Jennings. "That is not really education," he said. "It's propaganda and it's designed to raise up a new generation of easily led, poorly educated, and misinformed students." (foxnews.com, 6-27-11; edweek.org, 7-16-10,



No Child Left Inside
www.nclcoalition.org