

Coming Soon: Probable Anti-Male Caps in Math and Science

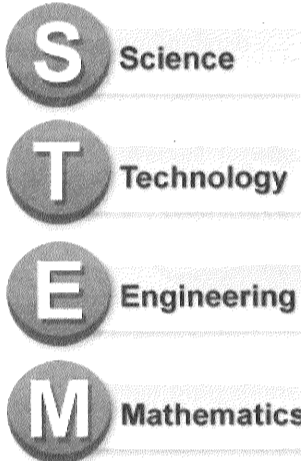
Feminists intent on limiting opportunities for men and boys have long abused Title IX when it comes to school athletics. Now we can expect the same assault against men who are interested in math and science.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 requires that schools and colleges receiving federal funding not discriminate “on the basis of sex.” The law is traditionally associated with school sports programs, where radical feminists have used it to forcefully eliminate hundreds of men’s sports teams in the name of “proportionality.”

The White House has announced a new set of policies that would step up enforcement of Title IX, explicitly applying the rule to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Title IX has always applied to all federally funded education programs, but

the Department of Education’s new enforcement efforts will “develop consistent and consolidated technical assistance” on Title IX in STEM.

Just as enforcement of Title IX has meant gender quotas on school sports teams, increased enforcement in STEM education will likely lead to artificial enrollment caps aimed at keeping men out of math and science classes. “Title IX isn’t just about sports,” President Obama wrote in



Newsweek earlier this year. It’s also about “addressing inequality in math and science education” and “a much broader range of fields, including engineering and technology. I’ve said that women will shape the destiny of this country, and I mean it.”

“To Obama, gender disparities are only bad when they disfavor women,” wrote the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Hans Bader. “Under his strange idea of equality, equality means men losing out to women. . . . The result could be a substantial reduction in the number of scientists graduating from America’s colleges and universities.”

Fewer women major in subjects like science and engineering because they choose to study other things, not because anyone discriminates against them. Charlotte Allen of *Minding the Campus* noted in a July blog post:

When college women study science, they tend to gravitate toward biology — about 58 percent of all bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees in bi-

ology go to women. In contrast, women earn some 17 percent of bachelor’s degrees in engineering and computer science and just over 40 percent of bachelor’s degrees in physical sciences and mathematics. The likely reason for this . . . is that women tend to be drawn to “organic”

fields involving people and living things, whereas men are more interested in the objects and abstractions that are the focus of STEM majors.

Yet the Obama administration sticks closely to the hard-line feminist argument that the problem is bias: women are somehow being denied access to

STEM courses.

These new policies come at a time when women frequently outnumber men in classes of all subjects. 25 percent fewer men than women now graduate from college. Title IX was passed to correct a much smaller gender disparity in the days when 17 percent fewer women attended than men. So many more women than

(See *Anti-Male Caps*, page 4)



Schools to Dispense Discipline Based on Race, Not Merely Behavior

Schools should be free to discipline all students when their behavior demands it, not when the color of their skin allows for it. A new government panel is working to help change that.

President Obama’s July 26 executive order, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, calls for “a positive school climate that does not rely on methods that result in disparate use of disciplinary tools” and aims to correct the fact that “over a third of African American students do not graduate from high school on time with a regular high school diploma.”

The executive order created the “President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans” to help ensure that students of all races are disciplined equally in schools, regardless of their behavior.

There’s no evidence that individual African-American students are disciplined any differently than their classmates of other races, but liberals argue that black students are at a disadvantage because they are disciplined more often than their peers.

Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and chief executive officer of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said in a statement that the new initiative would correct problems that had long been ignored:

For too long, the experience of far too many African American students in far too many places has been

marred by school districts whose ongoing practices have failed our children. . . . If fully implemented, we are convinced the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans will make sure school discipline is fair, special education assignments are based on needs not race, and all of our nation’s most motivated students have fair access to advanced placement classes.

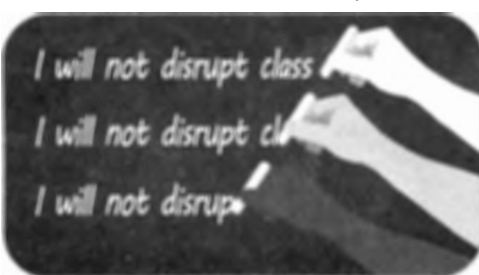
The new committee’s conservative critics disagree. “What this means is that whites and Asians will get suspended for things that blacks don’t get suspended for,” Hans Bader of the Competitive Enterprise Institute told *The Daily Caller*.

The White House report states that African American students lag behind because they “lack equal access to highly effective teachers and principals, safe schools, and challenging college-preparatory classes, and they disproportionately

experience school discipline.” But David Rettig, head of the National Character Education Foundation, told *The Daily Caller* that school discipline practices can simply

reflect local crime reports: “Outside the walls of the school, how many of these kids are coming from not just dysfunctional homes, but homes that are not supportive of children?”

Roger Clegg, the president of the Center for Equal Opportunity, wrote in a blog post at *NationalReview.com*, “Too bad that the president has chosen to set up a new bureaucracy with a focus on one particular racial group, to the exclusion of all others.”



Obama: Put Teachers on Federal Payroll

President Obama has announced plans to form a national corps of “Master Teachers” who would be paid by the federal government. This is the first proposal that would put federal tax dollars directly into local teachers’ hands.

“If America is going to compete for the jobs and industries of tomorrow,” said President Obama, “we need to make sure our children are getting the best education possible. Teachers matter, and great teachers deserve our support.”

If the proposed plan goes into effect, \$1 billion in federal funds would go to reward top-performing educators with bonuses of up to \$20,000 annually in an attempt to boost student achievement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) classes. 50 of these teachers would be placed in 50 sites in order to “recognize and help retain America’s most talented STEM teachers, build a community of practice among them, raise the profile of the STEM teaching profession, and leverage excellent teachers to collaborate with their peers to strengthen STEM education in America’s public schools.”

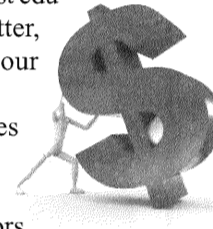
Teachers would be selected based on “demonstrated effectiveness in teaching one or more STEM subjects” and their “contributions to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning.” Teacher effectiveness criteria would be determined at the local level. It’s not clear what these criteria will be; the White House defined “Master teachers” as those who “know and are

deeply interested in their subject, care about improving their craft, and inspire both their students and fellow teachers.”

The Heritage Foundation wrote of this:

The only robust and reliable predictor of a teacher’s effectiveness is his or her past performance in the classroom. Licenses, certifications, advanced degrees, and hours of professional development have little to no impact on what students actually learn from their teachers. Paying for more of these qualifications would not lead to better student outcomes. But even if the “Master Teacher Corps” program does reward objective classroom performance . . . the new money will come on top of existing teacher contracts that often have gym teachers on the same pay scale as STEM teachers. More federal dollars for teachers will either exacerbate our existing irrational teacher pay system or — at best — postpone fundamental reforms at the local level.

It’s unlikely that Congress will approve the initiative’s \$1 billion price tag. That cost is just for 2013, and we can expect it to rise: the White House already has plans to expand the program to include 10,000 teachers in four years. An aide to Rep. John Kline (R-MN), chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, told the Associated Press that the federal government already has more than 80 teacher quality programs, noting that it would be foolish to pay for duplicative or unproductive programs.



EDUCATION BRIEFS

Millions of children already eat breakfast and lunch at school each day. Now, thanks to a federally subsidized school dinner program, children in all 50 states can also eat dinner at school. The Child and Adult Care Food Program serves more than 3.2 million children a day. "I am stunned here, because if we're going to feed kids supper at school . . . why go home?" commented Rush Limbaugh. "All they do at home is sleep!"

The Common Core state education standards already dictate what must be taught in math and language arts classes in 45 states. Next to be enveloped by the Common Core are state science standards. *School Reform News* editor Joy Pullman wrote in the *Washington Times* that the new science standards, which 26 states are already working to develop, "integrate global warming and other overlaid worries about human impacts on the planet, starting in kindergarten."

A high school principal in Wolcott, Connecticut ordered Seth Groody, a Junior, to remove a T-shirt expressing support for traditional marriage. Groody had worn the shirt during a school-wide "Day of Silence" designed to promote acceptance of homosexuality. The shirt depicted a rainbow with a slash through it, and male and female stick figures holding hands above the phrase, "Excessive Speech Day." The American Civil Liberties Union defended Groody in a letter to Principal Joseph Monroe, saying, "The ACLU has fought hard for same-sex marriage and we couldn't agree with Seth less on that issue, but he is absolutely correct about his right to express his opinion."

Teachers in Waterloo, Iowa spent more than \$30,000 in federal dollars on steaks, meals at a Hooters restaurant, hotel rooms, and airfare during trips to Las Vegas and St. Louis for teacher training seminars. The federal grant money was awarded to help boost achievement at two of Waterloo's poorest performing schools.

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Pennsylvania Parents Fight Taxes with Common Sense

A Pennsylvania group saved two local school districts \$900,000 and prevented a tax increase with just a calculator and a little common sense — and they're working to teach others how to do the same.

Leadership for Liberty (LfL), a non-partisan conservative activist group, worked with school board members in Pennsylvania's Catasauqua and Upper Perkiomen school districts to find ways to save money without hurting students. The group carefully examined Pennsylvania Department of Education budget documents line by line and drafted alternate budgets that saved the department hundreds of thousands of dollars — all without compromising student programs.

In the Catasauqua district, for example, LfL found that changing worker's compensation insurance carriers would save the district \$40,000. They also suggested having parents sell concessions during sports events, rather than paying teachers overtime to do it. "Instead of just complaining that taxes and spending are too high," said LfL vice-chair Kim Schmidtner in a statement, "we assisted school board members in developing tangible, specific, and responsible solutions to the fiscal challenges facing their school districts that preserve a high quality of education for the children."

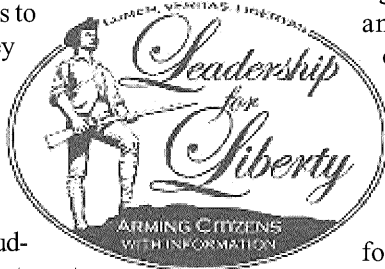
LfL plans to present alternate budgets

to 19 Pennsylvania school districts this year, and will expand its efforts into all 500 of the state's districts next year. EAGnews.org reported that the group is working on a "how to" booklet for citizens to duplicate LfL's efforts in their own districts.

LfL Chair Joe Hillard said:

We help take the mystery out of understanding school district budgets and compare ideas with other school districts to determine the best solutions to common problems. The first step is simply to learn what to ask for and what to look for. We hear far too often that school board members and the public are told that detailed budgets don't exist or that there is no need to look at them. Such attitudes are irresponsible and we applaud the handful of dedicated and motivated school board members . . . who are setting new expectations. . . . Hopefully the gold standard for next year will be responsible tax cut Alternate Budgets in many school districts in the region.

Hillard thinks LfL's approach could work in school districts all over the country. "Any state will have similar budget reporting practices," he told eagnews.org. "If you can use a calculator and have common sense, you can do this. You don't need special skills. You just have to learn the system."



Common Core Standards Dumbing Down the SAT

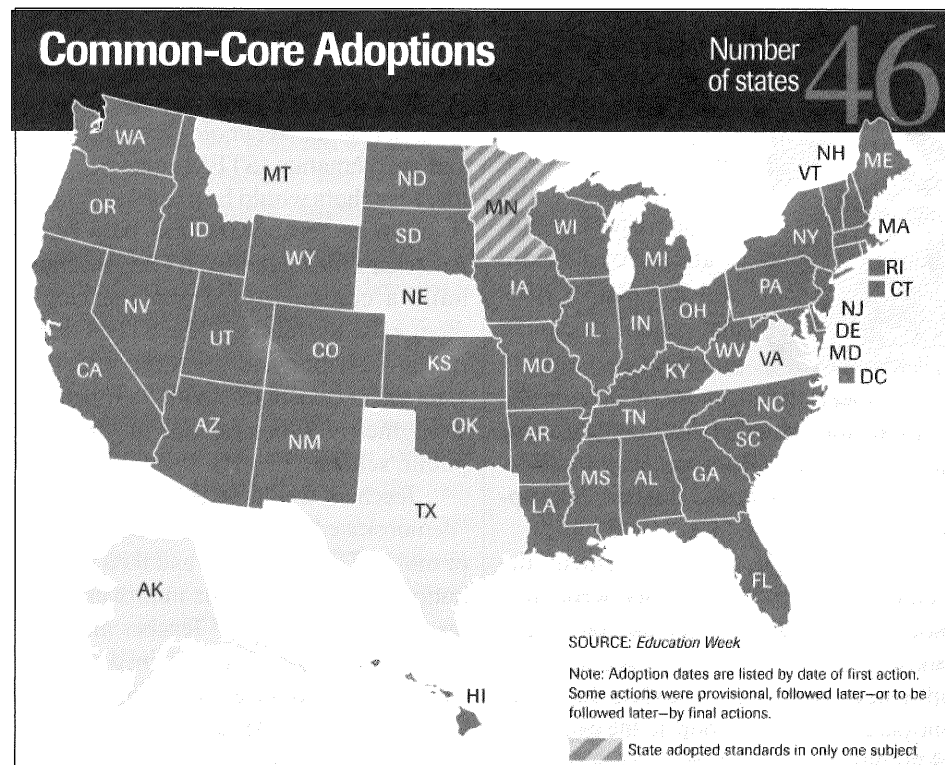
The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) dictate what K-12 students in 46 states and the District of Columbia will learn in math and language arts beginning in 2014. If the new president of the College Board gets his way, they may also help lower college admissions standards.

David Coleman, one of the chief architects of the CCSS, will take over as the College Board's president on October

15. He told *Education Week* that he hopes to rework the SAT college admissions test to reflect CCSS:

The common core provides substantial opportunity to make the SAT even more reflective of what higher education wants. The real value here is that if the SAT aligns more to the common

(See *Common Core*, page 4)



Book of the Month



Woodrow for President: A Tail of Voting, Campaigns, and Elections (\$16.95) and **Liberty Lee's Tail of Independence** (\$16.95), Peter W. Barnes and Cheryl Shaw Barnes, Little Patriot Press, 2012.



Thomas Jefferson once wrote that "wherever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government." He believed that children all over the United States ought to have access to a good education, because "No one more sincerely wishes the spread of information among mankind than I do, and none has greater confidence in its effect towards supporting free and good government."

Sadly, today's public education system is a far cry from what Jefferson envisioned. Rather than "supporting free and good government," today's public school children grow up on a steady diet of progressive propaganda that follows them into the liberal-dominated university system. It has never been more important for parents to introduce their children to good books and to the principles of democracy from an early age.

Peter W. Barnes and his wife, Cheryl Shaw Barnes, have written two new books that are a good place to start. *Liberty Lee's Tail of Independence* tells the story of a mouse who witnessed the Revolutionary War. The mouse, Liberty Lee, will appeal to very young children as he describes the events and players that led up to a 4th of July celebration he attends with his friend Thomas Jefferson. Children will be fascinated and entertained by this first introduction to the history of the nation they call home — and they will love the charming illustrations.

In *Woodrow for President*, children learn about our political system by watching a mouse run for president from the state of "Moussouri." This book is best for very young children, who will find the introduction helpful when they learn more about democracy when they are older. *Woodrow* offers a good introduction to the campaign process, political parties, voting, primaries, national conventions, the electoral college, debates, and the general election. Children will enjoy searching for the hidden "secret service mouse" hidden in each picture, and the book is written with a rhyme scheme that will help them memorize key explanations easily.

Both books include resources for parents and teachers, with further simple explanations of the concepts introduced in each story, and ideas for teaching those concepts in more detail. *Woodrow for President*, for example, includes a "contract to vote" at the end of the book. Parents and children are encouraged to sign the contract together, stating that the adults will vote at the proper time, and that the children will vote when they are of age.

FOCUS: Federal Student Aid and the Law of Unintended Consequences

by Richard Vedder

The following is adapted from a speech delivered on May 10, 2012, at Hillsdale College's Allan P. Kirby, Jr. Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship in Washington, D.C.

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FEDERAL STUDENT financial assistance programs are costly, inefficient, byzantine, and fail to serve their desired objectives. In a word, they are dysfunctional, among the worst of many bad federal programs.

These programs are commonly rationalized on three grounds: on the grounds that assuring more young people a higher education has positive spillover effects for the country; on the grounds that higher education promotes equal economic opportunity (or, as the politicians say, that it is "a ticket to achieving the American Dream"); or on the grounds that too few students would go to college in the absence of federal loan programs, since private markets for loans to college students are defective.

All three of these arguments are dubious at best. The alleged positive spillover effects of sending more and more Americans to college are very difficult to measure. And as the late Milton Friedman suggested to me shortly before his death, they may be

more than offset by negative spillover effects. Consider, for instance, the relationship between spending by state governments on higher education and their rate of economic growth. Controlling for other factors important in growth determination, the relationship between education spending and economic growth is negative or, at best, non-existent.

What about higher education being a vehicle for equal economic opportunity or income equality? Over the last four decades, a period in which the proportion of adults with four-year college degrees tripled, income equality has declined. (As a side note, I do not know the socially optimal level of economic inequality, and the tacit assumption that more such equality is always desirable is suspect; my point here is simply that, in reality, higher education today does not promote income equality.)

Finally, in regards to the argument that capital markets for student loans are defective, if financial institutions can lend to college students on credit cards and make car loans to college students in large numbers — which they do — there is no reason why they can't also make student educational loans.

Despite the fact that the rationales for federal student financial assistance pro-

grams are very weak, these programs are growing rapidly. The Pell Grant program did much more than double in size between 2007 and 2010. Although it was designed to help poor people, it is now becoming a middle class entitlement. Student loans have been growing eight to ten percent a year for at least two decades, and, as is well publicized, now aggregate to one trillion dollars of debt outstanding — roughly \$25,000 on average for the 40,000,000 holders of the debt. Astoundingly, student loan debt now exceeds credit card debt.

Nor is it correct to assume that most of this debt is held by young people in their twenties and early thirties. The median age of those with loan obligations

perfect example of the fundamental problem facing our nation today: politicians pushing programs whose benefits are visible and immediate (even if illusory, as suggested above), while their extraordinarily high costs are less visible and more distant in time.

2) In the real world, interest rates vary with the prospects that the borrower will repay the loan. In the surreal world of student loans, the brilliant student completing an electrical engineering degree at M.I.T. pays the same interest rate as the student majoring in ethnic studies at a state university who has a GPA below 2.0. The former student will almost certainly graduate and get a job paying

private financial service firms, adding an element of competition in terms of quality of service, if not price. But the Obama administration, with its strong hostility to private enterprise, moved to establish a complete monopoly. One would think the example of the U.S. Postal Service today, losing taxpayer money hand over fist and incapable of making even the most obviously needed reforms, would be enough proof against the prudence of such a move. And remember: because of highly irresponsible fiscal policies, the federal government borrows 30 or 40 percent of the money it currently spends, much of that from overseas.

Thus we are incurring long-term obligations to foreigners to finance loans to largely middle class Americans to go to college. This is not an appropriate use of public funds at a time of dangerously high federal budget deficits.

5) Those applying for student loans or Pell Grants are compelled to complete the FAFSA form, which is extremely complex, involves more than 100 questions, and is used by colleges to administer scholarships (or, more accurately, tuition discounts). Thus colleges are given all sorts of highly personal and private information on incomes, wealth, debts, child support, and so forth. A car dealer who demanded such

information so that he could see how badly he could gouge you would either be out of business or in jail within days or weeks. But it is commonplace in higher education because of federal student financial assistance programs.

6) As federal programs have increased the number of students who enroll in college, the number of new college graduates now far exceeds the number of new managerial, technical and professional jobs — positions that college graduates have traditionally taken. A survey by Northeastern University estimates that 54 percent of recent college graduates are underemployed or unemployed. Thus we currently have 107,000 janitors and 16,000 parking lot attendants with bachelor's degrees, not to mention bartenders, hair dressers, mail carriers, and so on. And many of those in these limited-income occupations are struggling to pay off student loan obligations.

Connected to this is the fact that more and more kids are going to college who lack the cognitive skills, the

(See Federal Student Aid, page 4)

FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROGRAMS 2012-2013

LOANS: MUST BE REPAID WITH INTEREST

- FEDERAL PERKINS LOANS**
 - Up to \$5,500 for undergraduate students
 - Up to \$8,000 for graduate & professional students
 - Repay loan to school that made loan at 5% rate
- DIRECT SUBSIDIZED LOAN**
 - For undergraduates: \$3,500-\$5,500 at 6.8% rate (depending on grade level)
 - NO Interest while in school & grace/deferment periods
 - Must attend at least half-time and have financial need
- DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN**
 - \$5,500-\$20,500 for undergraduate & graduates at 6.8% rate (less any subsidized amounts, depending on grade level and dependency status)
 - You pay all interest & must be enrolled at least half-time
 - Financial need not required
- DIRECT PLUS LOAN**
 - For parents of dependent undergraduate students & for graduate and professional students enrolled at least half-time
 - Unsubsidized: You are responsible for all interest: 7.9% rate
 - Financial need is NOT required
 - Maximum amount is cost of attendance minus any other financial aid you receive; no minimum amount

GRANTS: DO NOT HAVE TO BE REPAID

- FEDERAL PELL GRANT**
 - Almost exclusively for undergraduates
 - Up to \$5,500 in 2011-2012 (2012-2013 amount TBD)
- FSEOG (FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT)**
 - \$100-\$4,000
 - Undergraduates with exceptional financial need
 - Federal Pell Grant recipients take priority;
 - Funds depend on availability at school
- IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN SERVICE GRANT**
 - For students who are not Pell-eligible due only to having less financial need than is required to receive Pell funds;
 - Parent/guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after the events of 9/11;
 - At time of the parent/guardian's death, were less than 24 years old or enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education
 - Same as Pell maximum; adjusted for less-than-full-time study
- TEACH GRANT**
 - For undergraduate, postbaccalaureate, and graduate students who are or will become elementary or secondary teacher
 - Recipient must teach full-time in teacher shortage area for 4 complete years
 - Up to \$4,000 a year; total amount may not exceed \$16,000
 - Graduate student: Total amount may not exceed \$8,000
- FEDERAL WORK-STUDY**
 - Money earned while attending school; does NOT have to be repaid
 - For undergraduate & graduate students;
 - Jobs can be on or off campus; students are paid at least federal minimum wage
 - No annual minimum or maximum amounts

Source: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/attachments/sitesources/doyouneedmoney.pdf>

today is around 33, and approximately 40 percent of the debt is held by people 40 years of age or older. So when politicians talk about maintaining low interest loans to help kids in college, more often than not the help is going to middle-aged individuals long gone from the halls of academia.

With this as an introduction, let me outline eight problems with federal student grant and loan programs. The list is not exclusive.

1) Student loan interest rates are not set by the forces of supply and demand, but by the political process. Normally, interest rates are a price used to allocate scarce resources; but when that price is manipulated by politicians, it leads to distortions in the use of resources. Since student loan interest rates are always set at below-market rates, too much money is borrowed for college. Currently those interest rates are extremely low, with a key rate of 3.4 percent — which, after adjusting for inflation, is approximately zero. Moreover, both the president and Governor Romney say they want to continue that low interest rate after July 1, when it is supposed to double. This aggravates an already bad situation, and provides a

Related to this problem, colleges themselves have no "skin in the game." They are responsible for allowing loan commitments to occur, but they face no penalties or negative consequences when defaults are extremely high, imposing costs on taxpayers.

3) Perhaps most importantly, federal student grant and loan programs have contributed to the tuition price explosion. When third parties pay a large part of the bill, at least temporarily, the customer's demand for the service rises and he is not as sensitive to price as he would be if he were paying himself. Colleges and universities take advantage of that and raise their prices to capture the funds that ostensibly are designed to help students. This is what happened previously in health care, and is what is currently happening in higher education.

4) The federal government now has a monopoly in providing student loans. Until recently, at least it farmed out the servicing of loans to a variety of

Anti-Male Caps (Continued from page 1)

men now attend college that the *Richmond-Times Dispatch* asked in March whether colleges ought to begin considering affirmative action for men:

In every other academic realm, the existence of a statistical disparity . . . is taken as definitive proof of gender discrimination. . . . We look forward to a robust debate on how institutions of higher learning can correct the discriminatory circumstances that are leading them to graduate nearly three women for every two men.

"The fact that engineering departments are filled mostly with men does not mean they discriminate against women," notes Bader, "anymore than the fact that English departments are filled mostly with women proves that English departments discriminate against men. . . . Deep down, the Obama administration knows this, since it is planning to impose its gender-proportionality rules only on STEM fields . . . not other fields that have similarly large gender disparities in the opposite direction."

Charlotte Allen pointed out that applying gender quotas to STEM is not merely bad policy:

The use of Title IX to force universities to restructure their curricula and alter the composition of their hard-science and engineering departments in order to achieve a supposed gender equity that matches neither the aptitudes nor the interests of many women isn't just heavy-handed and totalitarian. As study after study indicates, it's bad science as well.

The *Washington Post's* Christina Hoff Sommers warned in 2009 that the sciences would become radical feminism's next favorite target:

The idea of imposing Title IX on the sciences began gaining momentum around 2002. Then, women were already earning nearly 60 percent of all bachelor's degrees and at least half of the Ph.D.s in the humanities, social sciences, life sciences and education. Meanwhile, men retained majorities in fields such as physics, computer science and engineering. Badly in need of an advocacy cause just as women were beginning to outnumber men on college campuses, well-funded academic women's groups alerted their followers that American science education was "hostile" to women. Soon there were conferences, retreats, summits, a massive "Left Out, Left Behind" letter-writing campaign, dozens of studies and a series of congressional hearings.

The Department of Education says that it has "not expanded the jurisdiction of Title IX, nor has the department issued new Title IX regulations or guidance regarding the fields of science, tech-

nology, engineering, and math (STEM)," but has instead created a new multi-agency initiative "to develop consistent and consolidated technical assistance" on Title IX as it relates to STEM:

The goal of this coordinated multi-agency collaboration is to reduce the burden on schools and institutions, who may benefit from common guidance about their Title IX responsibilities and way to improve access and outreach to women and girls in STEM fields. There is no truth to claims that the Department plans to impose STEM quotas or caps.

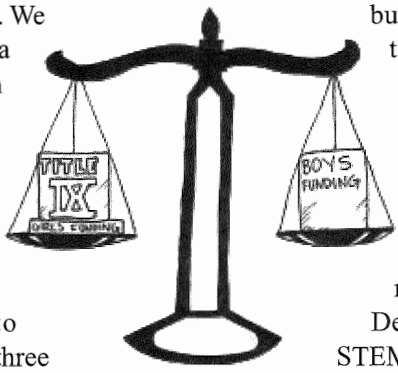
But, as the Heritage Foundation noted:

The heart of the matter remains the same: Title IX has a track record of measuring "opportunity" in athletics on the basis of whether participation is proportional to enrollment. This shifts the focus from equality of opportunity to equality of results, substituting policymakers' desired outcomes for students' own preferences. . . . Will this new collaboration result in quotas, substituting policymakers' predetermined outcomes for the preferences of students, and diminished opportunities for men in STEM fields? If implementation of Title IX in the intercollegiate athletics context is a reliable indicator, there is strong evidence that it might.

Legal precedents have made it very difficult for school sports teams to comply with Title IX without imposing gender quotas, and it's unlikely that STEM education will be different. Bader explains:

The first way (and only permanent way) to comply is to adopt a quota that artificially caps male participation. The second and third ways, which are only short-term fixes, involve continuous expansion of participation by, or satisfaction of all desire to compete by, the "underrepresented" sex. In a world of finite resources, these latter two ways can only work for a short period of time. In light of this fact, courts have rejected lawsuits by men's teams cut by colleges to achieve proportionality (that is, quotas), concluding that such quotas are required by Title IX, which thus overrides any rights the men's teams might otherwise enjoy.

Bader, who used to work in the Office for Civil Rights, which administers Title IX, believes that gender caps are just as unwise as they are unconstitutional: "I think that it would be a grave mistake to apply its standards, which were designed for allocating resources among all-male and all-female sports teams, to the very different context of math and science classes, which are coed." Math and science classes, he noted, "are open to all students, regardless of gender, and are supposed to be gender-blind, not gender-specific or gender-based." Applying gender quotas to STEM classes "is simply unconstitutional."



Common Core (Continued from page 2)

core, we won't be giving an assessment at the end of K-12 that's out of kilter with what we demand at the end of the day. All that does is encourage last-minute test preparation and sudden adaptation. The instrument should measure the steady practice of the work you've been doing.

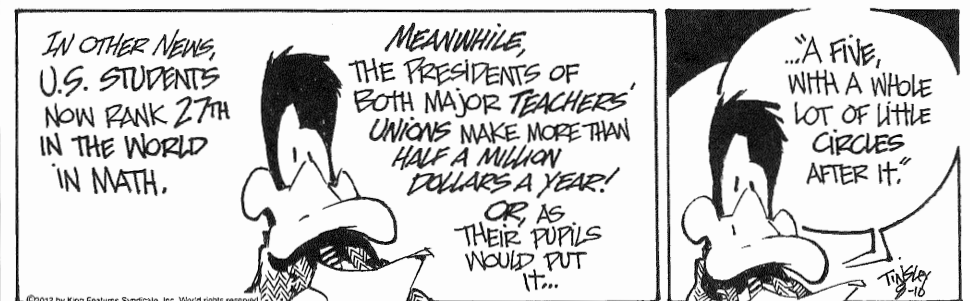
National Center for Fair & Open Testing spokesman Robert Schaeffer cautioned that the level of uniformity Coleman suggests would consolidate too much power with the College Board. He told *Education Week* that Coleman's aims represent "the next logical step toward the College Board becoming the nation's unelected school board." "Who elected the College Board?" he asked. "Where I

live, we vote for our school board, and there are vigorous, contested issues around school policy. Who is the College Board accountable to?"

James Milgram, professor emeritus of mathematics at Stanford University, told a committee of the Texas Legislature the CCSS "do not even cover all the topics that are required for admission to any of the state universities around the country, except possibly those in Arizona, since the minimal expectations at these schools are three years of mathematics, including at least two years of algebra and one of geometry."

Aligning the SAT with common core will likely make the college admissions test less strenuous, and would, in turn, lead to lower academic standards in college.

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Federal Student Aid (Continued from page 3)

discipline, the academic preparation, or the ambition to succeed academically. They simply cannot or do not master well much of the rather complex materials that college students are expected to learn. As a result, many students either do not graduate or fail to graduate on time. I have estimated that only 40 percent or less of Pell Grant recipients get degrees within six years — an extremely high dropout or failure rate. No one has seriously questioned that statistic — a number, by the way, that the federal government does not publish, no doubt because it is embarrassingly low.

Also related is the fact that, in an attempt to minimize this problem, colleges have lowered standards, expecting students to read and write less while giving higher grades for lesser amounts of work. Surveys show that students spend on average less than 30 hours per week on academic work — less than they spend on recreation. As Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa show in their book *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, critical thinking skills among college seniors on average are little more than among freshmen.

- 7) As suggested to me a couple of days ago by a North Carolina judge, based on a case in his courtroom, with so many funds so readily available there is a temptation and opportunity for persons to acquire low interest student loans with the intention of dropping out of school quickly to use the proceeds for other purposes. (In the North Carolina student loan fraud case, it was to start up a t-shirt business.)
- 8) Lazy or mediocre students can get greater subsidies than hard-working and industrious ones. Take Pell Grants. A student who works extra hard and graduates with top grades

after three years will receive only half as much money as a student who flunks several courses and takes six years to finish or doesn't obtain a degree at all. In other words, for recipients of federal aid there are disincentives to excel.

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If the Law of Unintended Consequences ever applied, it is in federal student financial assistance. Programs created with the noblest of intentions have failed to serve either their customers or the nation well. In the 1950s and 1960s, before these programs were large, American higher education enjoyed a Golden Age. Enrollments were rising, lower-income student access was growing, and American leadership in higher education was becoming well established. In other words, the system flourished without these programs. Subsequently, massive growth in federal spending and involvement in higher education has proved counterproductive.

With the ratio of debt to GDP rising nationally, and the federal government continuing to spend more and more taxpayer money on higher education at an unsustainable long-term pace, a rethinking of federal student financial aid policies is a good place to start in meeting America's economic crisis.

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