

# EDUCATION REPORTER

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## Common Core? No Thank You

Common Core opponents are surfacing in more states as lawmakers, teachers, and parents become more vocal in protest of the standards that were forced on schools, often without legislative approval. Some states question why there was a switch to Common Core (CC) standards when previous standards were clearly superior. Others are concerned about the focus on testing and the negative effect it has on actual student learning. Concerns over student privacy due to federal government demands for personally identifiable information collection and requirements to share that information is a focal issue in some states. Many are also experiencing sticker shock, as they face costs of new curriculum, testing fees and increased technology demands because students will take computerized tests; some are realizing that in every case a proponent of CC profits from those expenditures.

There are grassroots movements to stop Common Core in every state where it was enacted. Some 20 states have begun legislative activity to slow down, change, or stop Common Core implementation or funding.

The largest state teachers union has withdrawn its support of Common Core. The board of New York State United Teachers, which is affiliated with both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers

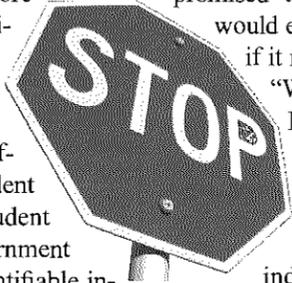
unions, voted unanimously that support of CC is unjustifiable unless there are "major course corrections." The union president said, "We'll have to be the first to say it's failed." (Politico, 1-26-14)

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley promised to sign Senate Bill 300 that would end Common Core in that state if it makes it to her desk. She said, "We are telling the legislature: Roll back Common Core. Let's take it back to South Carolina standards." (*Education Week*, 1-17-14)

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence indicated in his State of the State speech that the current Common Core slowdown in his state could become a dead stop for CC. He said academic standards in his state "will be written by Hoosiers, for Hoosiers, and will be among the best in the nation." (*Education Week*, 1-15-14)

Referring to the sneaky and cajoling manner in which Common Core was foisted upon states, political commentator George Will wrote in the *Washington Post* (1-15-14):

Political dishonesty has swift, radiating, and condign consequences. Opposition to the Common Core is surging because Washington, hoping to mollify opponents, is saying, in effect: 'If you like your local control of education, you can keep it. Period.' To which a burgeoning movement is responding: 'No. Period.'



## Recent Radical Union Activities

The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) honored Rev. Jeremiah Wright as a guest speaker at its celebration of the birthday of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. in January. Rev. Wright is famous for replacing the word "bless" in "God Bless America" with the word "damn" in a sermon at the Chicago church that President Barack Obama attended

for 20 years. At the recent CTU union gathering Rev. Wright claimed that Western society is based on "racism, militarism, and capitalism" and called capitalism part of a "three-headed demon" that should be rejected. He also attacked President Abraham Lincoln as a racist.

Karen Lewis, the union president who led the disruptive Chicago teachers' union strike in the fall of 2012, defended Wright's attacks on America and on Lincoln, who fought the Civil War and helped to end slavery. Lewis said, "The issue is, how do we put those things in context so we can get to the point where we can have a world that's healed and perfected, where we don't have war?" Her convoluted statement confused many.

In a show of support for gay mar-

riage, the Albuquerque Teachers Federation union "unanimously passed a resolution to support New Mexico Unites for Marriage," according to the Human Rights Campaign, an organization that promotes the normalization of lesbi-

an, gay, bisexual, and transgender individual choices. New Mexico Unites for Marriage is organizing groups and individuals to fight

against a constitutional amendment proposed by the state legislature that would define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. The Albuquerque Teachers Federation represents 3,800 members and is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers union.

The Pennsylvania State Education Association union president Michael J. Crossey wrote in a December 2013 online newsletter to fellow union members:

Next year, we will face one of our biggest challenges as an Association. We've been preparing for this fight for the past three years. It's time to go All In. It's time to vote Gov. Tom Corbett out of office. (MediaTrackers.org, 1-6-14)

Crossey also asked union members

(See *Union Activities*, page 4)

## Homeschoolers Under Attack

Trevor and Christina Tutt are a Texas family with five biological and three adopted children. They were licensed through Child Protective Services as foster parents who could accept children with special needs into their home. In the past six months they have faced forcible removal of their biological, adopted, and foster children and increased scrutiny and punitive actions from government and law enforcement officials because they homeschool the children.

As described by the *Washington Times* (1-9-14):

According to a report by the Texas Home School Coalition (THSC), a

homeschool advocacy group, the catalyst for the eventual removal came on September 11 when a four-year-old child with autism who was temporarily in their care wandered away from home. The Tutt's eight-year-old child followed and stayed with the four-year-old. Both children were found and returned to the home by a police officer, who voiced concerns about the number of children in the home as well as the fact that the four-year-old had soiled himself during the incident, according to THSC. The officer reported the family to Child Protective Services, which then launched an investigation.

During the September 2013 incident Trevor Tutt, the father, was aware that the children were out of the house and was looking for them when the officer found them first.

### "So Many Children"

An investigating Child Protective Services caseworker, while documenting that there was no problem in the home, remarked that, "Nobody in their right mind would want to stay home all day with so many children!" As a result, Christina Tutt had to undergo psychological examinations and enroll in parenting classes. Although documentation of her stable mental health and certificates of completion of parenting classes were presented, they were deemed insufficient.

In November 2013 armed law enforcement officers seized all children from the home and they remained in state custody until January 2014.

Christina and Trevor Tutt were in family court for eight hours in November. As described by Tim Lambert of the Texas Home School Coalition:

The hearing quickly devolved into a relentless attack on this family's religious beliefs, community service, and right to homeschool their children — with no legal basis at all. Child Protective Service attor-

neys berated Mrs. Tutt for not using a 'state-certified home school curriculum,' in spite of the fact that there is no such thing in Texas. The guardian *ad litem* denigrated her for not submitting documentation of her homeschooling to the state on a regular basis, including state-mandated tests. This, of course, is not only not required, but there is no way for someone to do so in Texas (Christian News Network, 1-9-14).

After the November hearing, family court Judge Graciela Olvera ordered the children to remain in foster care and that the parents undergo "counseling, psychi-

atric evaluations, drug and alcohol testing, and [attend] parenting classes."

On January 7, a different judge held a hearing solely about the issue of the children's removal from the Tutt home. Having found

there was no abuse or neglect, four of the children were returned to the Tutt family home but the two children whose adoptions were pending were not returned to the family. While officials further evaluate the quality of education the family provides, the court is forcing the children to attend public school.

It is important to note that according to Texas law children may only be removed from a family home in instances of abuse or neglect. For courts to have become involved in or have opinions about a family's educational choices is beyond their scope and is illegal.

Tim Lambert of the Texas Home School Coalition states: "This case exemplifies the new attack against parental rights and homeschooling in which a family court judge who has a low view of parental rights believes he/she has the authority to decide what is 'in the best interest' of the children in question." Lambert described the court procedure as "a massive beat down of homeschooling" and told *Christian News Network* that the Tutt family's situation should be of concern to all homeschooling families.

### Ignorance About Homeschooled Children

A Florida judge overstepped his bounds while supposedly helping settle a divorced couple's visitation issue. The children have long been homeschooled by the mother. Although the couple's divorce agreement mandates that the children be raised Catholic and the father had expressed no problem with his ex-wife continuing to homeschool them, the judge unexpectedly ruled that the children must immediately attend public school. A court-appointed psychologist testified that "the children were all doing well academically." But a guardian *ad litem* testified that her "gut reaction"

(See *Homeschoolers*, page 4)



## EDUCATION BRIEFS

Trail Life USA launched in January 2014 with 500 new troops in 42 states, offering outdoor adventure, along with character and leadership programs in a Christian environment to boys in grades K-12. It serves as a replacement for the Boy Scouts of America, which kowtowed to special interest groups and now allows members to be openly gay.

The 2014 federal budget includes \$8.6 billion for Head Start, which is a \$1 billion increase over its current funding, although it has proven to be a failed program. Research has shown that any early benefit to students is gone by third grade and there's evidence the program is detrimental to some children. A 1,582-page spending bill providing the federal government \$1.1 trillion was rushed through both houses of Congress in January. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) commented: "These large omnibus bills are the wrong way to legislate and lead to last-minute, haphazard bills."

Arne Duncan insulted American parents (again) in a speech at the National Assessment Governing Board Education Summit for Parent Leaders, stating: "[I wish] our biggest challenge here in the U.S. was too many parents demanding excellent schools." With an audience including the heads of the National Council of La Raza, the National Urban League, and The Education Trust, Duncan stated that even the poorest Korean parents are "relentless and [have] the highest of expectations — insisting their children receive an excellent education." Proving just how out of touch he is, Duncan continued, "We love going to our kids' games and seeing them perform on stage in a play or in a concert," but complained that parents don't care if their children are challenged academically. Duncan plugged Common Core standards, about which parents around the nation are protesting because it is not rigorous, not tested, and will not challenge students. (Dept. of Education, 1-13-14)

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## Say It Isn't So On Campus

The National Association of Scholars' list of the top ten higher education stories of 2013 includes a recounting of hoaxes perpetrated by students at four universities. Observers are left wondering why students would deliberately try to create incidents; was it ill will between student factions or did they simply have too much time on their hands? The hoaxes caused fear among students and parents, resulted in cancelled classes, and exposed one college that purposely engaged in fear mongering.

Oberlin College canceled classes in March after several incidents in which racist and anti-gay epithets were scrawled on campus walls, although administrators knew from the outset that the graffiti was the work of "leftist provocateurs." A reporter for the *Daily Caller* discovered police reports indicating that college leaders knew all along that the incidents were a hoax. Oberlin College chose not to admit the truth but instead to whip up controversy.

At the University of Wyoming, a student sent herself fake rape threats, referring to herself as "that chick that runs her liberal mouth all the time." When it was discovered that the feminist student had created the threats, she pled no contest to a misdemeanor charge of interfering with a police officer, was given a small fine, and no jail time. The student is now enrolled in law school in another state.

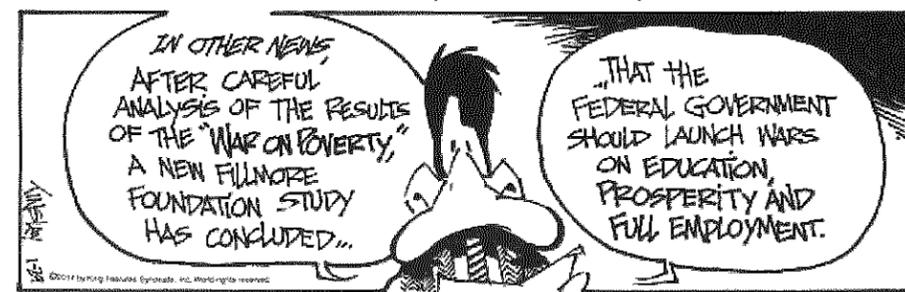
After Vassar students reported epithets targeting blacks, women, and transsexuals written on doors of student residences and in public areas on campus, administrators sent out a campus-wide email decrying the incident. "This is unacceptable and members of our community should be able to learn and work in environments that are free of hurtful expressions and behaviors," stated the head of the Bias Incident Response Team that is

charged with preventing and addressing such incidents. In an odd turn of events, the only student member of the Bias Incident Response Team was one of two students found to be responsible for the graffiti. This transgendered student, who was also the vice president of student government, withdrew from Vassar. The other unidentified perpetrator also withdrew from the college. (DailyCaller.com, 11-27-13)

A University of California, Santa Barbara student attending a lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender conference on the campus of the University of California, Santa Cruz, staged a fake rape. The female student ran an ad on Craigslist seeking a man who would beat her up. After making arrangements with the man who injured her and compensating him with sexual intercourse, the twenty-year-old student called 911 to claim that she had been raped on campus. "Law enforcement arrived on

(See Campus, page 4)

### MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



## Anti-Bullying Campaigns May Not Work

As reported in the *Education Reporter* in December, research by a University of Texas professor, published in the *Journal of Criminology* shows that school bullying-prevention programs often do not work and may actually increase children's inclination to bully. Prof. S. Jeong studied 7,000 students from 195 schools in 50 states and found that bullying-prevention programs expose students "to what a bully is" and that students may actually be learning bullying skills from prevention programs.

Two students from different states committed suicide within days of each other after viewing anti-bullying videos that end with a bullied student committing suicide.

A 15-year-old sophomore at Carterville High School in Illinois killed himself on Oct. 17 by shooting himself in the chest. His father criticized the bullying video his son had watched that ends with a student taking his own life, saying, "You're dealing with kids. Kids don't look at the long-term situation — they

look at the short term, they look at the pain they feel now, how can they end that pain."

In Sparks, Nevada a 12-year-old student brought a gun to school, shot two classmates, then killed a teacher before killing himself on October 21, 2013. This occurred shortly after all Sparks Middle School students viewed the anti-bullying documentary "Bully." Students report that the film tells two stories "in which bullying drove one student to commit suicide by hanging and another to bring a gun on a school bus."

Parents are troubled by the events. One Sparks Middle School mother whose daughters are in 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade said, "I don't understand why that would be shown in the schools. They are trying to be very proactive [about bullying], but I don't know if it's coming across to the

(See Anti-Bullying, page 4)

## Book of the Month



*Getting to Excellence: What Every Educator Should Know about Consequences of Beliefs, Values, Attitudes, and Paradigms for the Reconstruction of an Academically Unacceptable Middle School*, by James A. Johnson, Jr., Ph.D., et al, AuthorHouse, 2013, \$19.95



*Getting to Excellence* presents the perceptions of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members regarding education in general and conditions at one specific school — Willie Ray Smith, Sr. Science & Medical Technology Magnet Middle School — both before and during a turnaround year.

Willie Ray Smith, Sr. Middle School was a failing urban school in the Beaumont, Texas Independent School district. A new principal was brought in to improve the morale and abilities of teachers and to increase the academic success and behavior of the mainly minority and underprivileged students. The school moved from Academically Unacceptable to Academically Acceptable according to the Texas school ranking system in a process that is described as "much like repairing an airplane in flight."

The book indicates that some worry that schools catering to "workforce development" may proceed with "rigor and momentum of instruction that caters to standardized testing [that] may irritate [students] to the extent of dropping out of school. . . ." There is also concern that teachers who teach to the test led to stress for teachers and students and a decreased focus on subjects that are not tested.

*Getting to Excellence* suggests that the benefits of locally controlled school boards include their proximity to constituents and supports the concept that decision making about teaching must involve those who "practice the craft in the schools."

Strong leadership was an overarching reason for improved morale among teachers and increased academic success of Willie Ray Smith, Sr. Middle School students. The principal supported teachers and provided training; he roamed the halls addressing the students by name and was not afraid to discipline them when needed.

It must be noted that the influence of the Center for Strategic Alliances in Education for School and District Improvement contributed to the success at this school. Processes and strategies were also supported by a variety of grants that may not be available to every school in need of improvement. But identifying what works can go a long way toward having this school indicate changes needed at other failing schools.

Improved parental involvement, individualized instruction, a positive environment, and mentoring of teachers by their more effective colleagues were other reasons for this school's successful turnaround.

# FOCUS: Pot-Smoking and the Schizophrenia Connection

by Samuel T. Wilkinson

This Opinion article appeared in the Wall Street Journal on July 1, 2013 and is reprinted with permission.

Recent legislation has permitted the recreational use of marijuana in Colorado and Washington state. Those who support legalization often tout the lack of serious medical consequences associated with the drug. Most of us know people who used marijuana in high school or college and seem to have suffered no significant medical consequences. As the medical and scientific literature continues to accumulate, however, it is becoming clearer that the claim that marijuana is medically harmless is false.

There is a significant and consistent relationship between marijuana use and the development of schizophrenia and related disorders. Schizophrenia is considered by psychiatrists to be the most devastating of mental illnesses. Patients who suffer from it often experience auditory or visual hallucinations, severe social withdrawal, and cognitive impairment. Many require frequent and prolonged hospitalization in psychiatric wards.

Schizophrenia affects almost three

million Americans — more than six times the number of people with multiple sclerosis, two and a half times the number of people with Parkinson's disease, and more than twice the number of people with HIV/AIDS. Less than one-third of patients with schizophrenia can hold a steady job or live independently. A large portion (about one-third) of homeless people in the U.S. suffer from the disease.

Though they receive little attention in the legalization debate, the scientific studies showing an association between marijuana use and schizophrenia and other disorders are alarming. A 2004 article in the highly respected *British Journal of Psychiatry* reviewed four large studies, all of which showed a significant and consistent association between consumption of marijuana (mostly during teenage years or early 20s) and the later development of schizophrenia. The review concluded that marijuana is a "causal component."

A 2007 study in *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, concludes that using marijuana increases the risk of young people developing a psychotic illness, such as schizophrenia. This risk is great-

est — up to a 200% increase — among those who use marijuana heavily and who start using at a younger age.

Those not familiar with epidemiological causation may wonder how cannabis could "cause" schizophrenia if so many people who smoke marijuana or hashish don't develop the disease.

As an example, medical researchers have known for several decades that smoking causes lung cancer, yet over 80% of smokers do not develop lung cancer.

As research accumulates, the emerging picture is that marijuana precipitates schizophrenia or related psychotic disorders in people whose brains are inherently vulnerable to psychosis. All of us who do not regularly experience hallucinations or delusions reside on what may be called a "cliff of sanity." Some of us, for reasons still unclear (thought possibly to be genetic), are closer to the edge of the cliff than others.

Marijuana may push everyone a few feet closer to that cliff. For those who were already close to the cliff, the drug pushes them over the edge into the chasm of insanity, hence precipitating the development of schizophrenia.

The association between schizophrenia and marijuana is not the only issue at play in the debate over marijuana legalization. If legalization is certain to decrease the power of drug lords in Mexico and other countries, then this is certainly a favorable outcome. However, if the trade-off is that more people suffer from schizophrenia — and thus more Americans are homeless and debilitated — then this must be recognized and discussed by the general public. This association between marijuana and serious and devastating psychotic disorders has been absent or under-recognized in the public debate.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the unwarranted stigma that surrounds their illness, individuals with schizophrenia are vulnerable and in need of advocacy. We owe it to them, and to society in general, to consider all the facts, risks, and potential benefits before we embark on this drastic social experiment. If the end of Prohibition offers any historical precedent, once marijuana is legalized it will be all but impossible to undo.

Dr. Wilkinson is a resident physician in the Department of Psychiatry at The Yale School of Medicine. He received his M.D. from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

## Marijuana Endangers Children

When recreational use of marijuana became legal in Colorado on January 1, eight shops opened in Denver on the first day. A customer at one paid "\$30 cash and walked out with 1/8 ounce of 'Larry OG,' a potent strain of marijuana that connoisseurs like for its euphoric rush," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. (1-1-14) Colorado residents may buy up to an ounce of marijuana at each shop; out-of-state customers can buy one-quarter of an ounce. While it is not illegal to go from one shop to another to buy more pot, there are laws against possession of more than an ounce. Entrepreneurs will open legal recreational marijuana shops in Washington later this year.

In Colorado and Washington legalization of the recreational use of pot was attained because of voter referendums passed in November 2012. In January 2014 the New Hampshire House of Representatives became the first U.S. legislative body to approve legalization of recreational marijuana. It is doubtful that the more conservative New Hampshire Senate will move the bill forward. Democrat Gov. Maggie Hassan has promised to veto such a bill if it reaches her desk, stating, "We have some challenges in our state when it comes to substance abuse. We need to be focusing on that, and I just think it's the wrong message to send to young people." (WMUR.com, 1-13-14)

Twenty states, plus the District of Columbia, already allow the use of medical marijuana. As some states loosen marijuana laws, the battle over the pro-

dence of legalizing recreational marijuana churns. There are many reasons not to legalize marijuana. There is a connection between schizophrenia and marijuana (see Focus in this issue of *Education Report*). There are numerous other negative outcomes, including declining intelligence and increased addiction, particularly among young people.

### Legalizing Damage

Eden Evins, M.D., an associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and director of the Center for Addiction Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, states in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Regular cannabis use has been associated with an 8- to 10-point drop in I.Q. over the course of 20 years, a change that would bring one from the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile to just over the 30<sup>th</sup>," and that those who "started regular use in adolescence experienced greater I.Q. decline than those who started as adults." She recommends that, "The public must be educated that cannabis is both potentially addictive and harmful to the brain, with a greater effect on the most vulnerable among us, kids. Where it has been legalized, its use has increased, particularly among young people who are at greatest risk from exposure." (5-22-13)

In the journal *Addiction Biology*, researchers present evidence that marijuana use by pregnant mothers damages children. They state that, "Fetal exposure to marijuana may delay maturation of the visual system and impair memory and

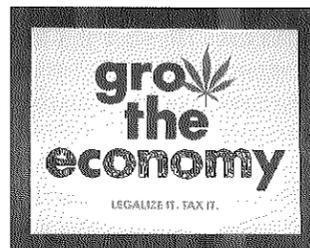
verbal performance at 2 years of age." They suggest that society must educate the public about the dangers to unborn children. (6-9-2006)

An article in the journal *Neuron* indicates a connection between marijuana use and autism in offspring through chromosome damage (4-11-13). Bradley Alger, a neuroscientist at the University of Maryland School of Medicine commented on that research, stating, "We're really just starting to understand how this works." He says, "In terms of autism, we'll have to refer to future research." (*The Scientist*, 4-11-13)

### Illogical Logic

Those who support legalization of marijuana often exhibit flawed reasoning. The argument that it should be legalized because tobacco and alcohol are harmful and are legal is illogical. It is somewhat like saying that skydiving is unsafe but legal so we should do away with all laws requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets.

Some say that legalization of marijuana will decrease the use of other illegal drugs. Purchasing illegal marijuana puts buyers in contact with drug dealers who sell other dangerous drugs, giving marijuana buyers the opportunity to buy those drugs. But the legalization of one drug does not decrease the availability of other illicit substances. This can be demonstrated by a walk through the streets of



Amsterdam where shops offer legal purchase and a place to smoke marijuana with impunity; on exiting the legal shop one is often approached by pushers who are selling heroin and other illegal drugs.

Proponents of legalization state that illegal marijuana is often combined with harmful substances in order to increase its potency or to stretch it further to increase profits. They say that legalization would make pot conform to standards of purity and regulate the potency. The Food and Drug Administration is already struggling to ensure the safety of our food and drugs; it may be frivolous spending to ask the agency to watchdog recreational drugs.

Some proponents of legalization state that children would have no more access to marijuana if it were legal than they do to alcohol and cigarettes, as if children have no access to those substances. One can only assume these individuals are unaware of the easy access teens have to alcohol and cigarettes.

One of the most specious arguments offered is that the government can tax marijuana if it is legal. Increasing government coffers through taxation of a product that decreases adults' ability to think, causes irreversible harm to the brains of children, and results in a tuned-out and lazy citizenry is the height of ridiculous solutions to fiscal shortfalls. But in Colorado officials are thrilled, stating, "Retail pot will come with a hefty 25% state tax on top of the usual

(See Marijuana, page 4)

## Homeschoolers (Continued from page 1)

was that the children should attend public school, for “socialization,” according to the Home School Legal Defense Association. The guardian also criticized what was referred to as the mother’s “ultra Catholic” beliefs. The HSLDA contends that “if the mother had received warning that homeschooling would be at issue, she could have presented a substantial body of evidence that homeschoolers are well-socialized. [An *amicus* brief filed by HSLDA] points to a number of academic studies that show homeschool graduates to be successful college students and adults.”

HSLDA’s attorney says, “It is truly unfortunate that after decades of homeschooling parents are still fighting a battle against ignorance.” (HSLDA, 11-26-13) It is also unfortunate that the mother’s religious beliefs were attacked and that the rule of law was disregarded in favor of an individual’s “gut reaction.”

### German Families’ Parental Rights Trampled

The horrendous treatment of the Tut family and that of the divorced couple in Florida correlate with cases involving German homeschool families. The treatment of these families serves as a warning to the Americans who homeschool.

The Romeike family fled to the U.S. in 2008, seeking asylum after German authorities threatened to take their children away and put them in government schools and even to jail the parents simply because they chose to homeschool. *National Review* reports that although the Romeikes were originally granted asylum, “The Obama administration, which in other notable areas of immigration law has enacted a policy of ‘discretion’ regarding deportations, took the Romeike family to court to have its asylum protections revoked, and succeeded in doing so.” (1-13-14) The Romeikes remain in the U.S. while they appeal to the Supreme Court

with support from the Home School Legal Defense Association.

The Wunderlichs, another German family who chose to homeschool, had their children physically removed in August 2013 when 20 police officers and social workers raided their home in Germany. The children were observed and tested by German government officials who admit they are well-adjusted and show no signs of educational or other deficit. In part due to an international outcry, the children were returned to the family home by the government but must attend public schools. The parents are complying with the government order. The German government is prohibiting the family from leaving Germany because it fears they will escape the country and homeschool.

*National Review* points out that the horrific treatment of the Wunderlichs is the environment to which the Obama administration wishes to return the Romeike family. Mr. Wunderlich told the Home School Legal Defense Association:

I had really hoped the judge would just let us leave Germany peacefully. We don’t isolate our children. They are well adjusted and doing well academically. We are happy for them to be connected to society. We just prefer to homeschool because we believe it is better for them. It is so sad that my countrymen are not able to see that homeschooling should be allowed. It is legal in many other countries, and I believe it’s a human right.

In the *National Review* article the author states that: “Homeschooling terrifies the Left because the Left is at its core totalitarian, seeking to bring political discipline to every aspect of life — and control of education is essential to that project.” But most Americans believe parental rights should trump government power.

## Union Activities (Continued from page 1)

to contribute money to a campaign to defeat Republican Gov. Corbett. In 2012 the Pennsylvania state affiliate of the National Education Association union spent \$3.2 million in state elections to defeat those that they deemed enemies of the teachers union.

The union claims that Corbett cut \$1 billion in education spending. But this is untrue because much of the funding that Pennsylvania is now doing without was actually federal stimulus money that was a one-shot deal from the Obama administration.

Mike Antonucci reports at the Education Intelligence Agency (1-21-14) that a National Education Association union internal survey discovered that only 30% of union members had any contact with a Representational Assembly delegate in the previous year. The delegates are elected local union members that attend the annual convention or Representational Assembly to vote on policy. The rank-and-file members’ lack of contact

with their representatives shows they are unlikely to influence those who vote on union policy. Antonucci writes, “Ordinary teachers and rank-and-file members should not be criticized for the actions of their union, nor should they be expected to defend those actions. Chances are they haven’t a clue what the union above the local level is up to.”

But some would urge that union members should act more responsibly and know what local and national union activities their hard-earned cash supports. Only if teachers become aware of the radical beliefs of their leadership is there any chance of getting their union on track to support teachers and students, rather than attempting to influence political and social policy. Political lobbying and campaign spending, support for gay marriage and alternative lifestyles, and radical anti-Americans as guest speakers at union events show what teachers unions are all about. Quality education for students is not the priority.



## Campus (Continued from page 2)

the scene, interviewed [the student], found no suspects, and sent her to a nearby hospital for a sexual assault exam.” (Santa Barbara Independent, 5-8-13) Suspicions arose when the victim refused to let her clothing be collected and did not want specimens to be used for possible DNA matching.

But she agreed to work with a sketch artist, which resulted in several young men being detained and questioned. The student was charged with filing a false police report.

The serious nature of fake crimes has been in the spotlight ever since the



Duke fiasco in which several members of that university’s lacrosse team were falsely accused of raping a black stripper at an off-campus party in 2006. The hoax resulted in the young men being arrested, indicted, and even condemned by 88 faculty members in an open, accusatory letter. All charges were eventually dismissed when the story was found to be fabricated.

A commenter at *American Thinker* wrote about hoaxes on college campuses: “This sort of fraud is even worse than actual incidents of hate crimes, because it gins up tensions and harms people of all stripes.” (AmericanThinker.com, 11-28-13)

## Anti-Bullying (Continued from page 2)

kids that way. Because at this age, children can be influenced by many things.”

The Sparks Nevada Police Department believes that the bullying film is evidence. “Detectives are reviewing the video to see if it has any bearing on the investigation,” said a police official.

The *Los Angeles Times* reports that some feel that anti-bullying campaigns work to decrease the problem. But they also mention the report in *The Journal of Criminology* which came to a different conclusion, stating: “Students attending schools with bullying-prevention programs were more likely to have experienced peer victimization, compared to those attending schools without bullying prevention programs.”

Parents from around the country

contacted Mr. Lewis, the father of the Illinois student who committed suicide. Some parents were concerned about the bullying videos. Lewis suggests that maybe parents should be notified before schools show such videos and allowed to see them before they are viewed by students. He said about such videos, which can be graphic, “it can affect people, especially kids that are in a dark place.” (*Los Angeles Times*, 10-28-13)

With increased focus on bullying, parents and school districts must carefully question whether anti-bullying campaigns are making the problem worse. They should take a critical look at campaigns offered to schools before they are presented to children.

## Marijuana (Continued from page 3)

sales tax of 2.9%. By some estimates it is expected to generate \$67 million a year, with \$27.5 million designated for schools.” (*Los Angeles Times*, 1-1-14)

In 2013 Hawaiian legislators stalled five bills that aimed to legalize recreational marijuana. The state constitution lacks the ballot initiative process that Washington and Colorado pot promoters used to make the drug legal there. But legalization is not dead in Hawaii. The Hawaii House Majority Floor Leader, Rida Cabanilla (D), and other legislators want to solve Hawaii’s financial problems by legalizing the drug. Saying she thinks it would be wonderful if the state that is known for producing marijuana legalized what is now done illegally, she said: “If that is what it takes for our state to be in the forefront where we can fix our roads, we can build more affordable housing, we can help the homeless — that is the route we should go.” (Watchdog.org, 1-24-14)

### Feds Shirk Responsibility

It had been hoped that state laws legalizing recreational use of marijuana would be halted by enforcement of federal laws that make such use unlawful, but the Obama Justice Department has chosen not to enforce federal law in this case. (Reuters, 8-29-13) The administration that has chosen to wield federal power over so many other issues has chosen to turn a blind eye to this one that will potentially affect many elementary-, middle-, high

school-, and college-aged students.

### Dangerous Marijuana Treats

A photograph accompanying a February 1, 2014 *New York Times* article shows marijuana-infused “gummy” candies that would attract most children. According to the newspaper, LoDo Wellness center in Denver sells “sparkling peach and mandarin elixirs, watermelon Dew Drops, and sleek silver bags of chocolate truffles, each one packed with marijuana’s potent punch.” Other shops offer “chocolate-peppermint Mile High Bars [and] peanut butter candies infused with hash oil.” It is not just teens that may choose to smoke marijuana or eat these sorts of candies that are at risk. Young children will be attracted to the candy aspect of what is being sold for recreational use. Although they are supposed to be sold in child-resistant packaging, the item shown in the *New York Times* article — Edi-Pure tropical fruit flavored gummy treats infused with THC, the active ingredient in marijuana — is in a zip-top plastic bag containing 25 pieces that look just like candy. The bag could easily be opened by a child. Attractive edible marijuana snacks are a health and safety risk to children.

Opponents of legalization suggest that we are kidding ourselves if we believe legalizing pot won’t have an impact on children and education.