



The Phyllis Schlafly Report



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The Cure for the Problem of the Schools

The Senseless Double Standard

Do you know that, if you put your child in a child-care center or in a nursery school, you may deduct up to \$4,800 on your federal income tax, but if you send your child to a private school, you are not permitted to deduct even one dollar? The 1975 Tax Act allows this generous tax deduction of up to \$4,800 to working parents who put their young children in some kind of pre-school or baby-sitting facility, but it denies equal treatment to parents who care for their own children for the first five years of their lives, and then send them to schools and colleges that cost tuition.

Incidentally, it cannot be argued that the tax deduction for child-care out of the home is designed to benefit the poor. A deduction is allowed for working parents who have income up to \$44,600 a year, and a couple with that kind of income is not poor by any standard.

Present law thus forces all American taxpayers to subsidize a public policy which provides cash incentives to lure children out of the home when they are under age five, but forces them out of private schools and into public schools when they are over age five. This discriminatory policy rewards parents who do not take care of their own children, while putting a double financial burden on parents who voluntarily relieve the state of the burden of providing schooling for their children.

Senator James Buckley and Congressman James Delaney have proposed a solution to remedy this unfair treatment -- a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code by allowing taxpayers, for each person whose tuition they pay, an income tax deduction of up to \$1,000. This bill will eliminate the present irrational discrimination between nursery schools and real schools.

What's Wrong With Public Schools?

All over the country, pupils, parents and teachers, are concerned but frustrated about the problems they face in the public schools. Not all public schools have all the following problems, and some fortunate schools have none of them. But all these problems are so widespread as to be a matter of urgent national concern.

1. Crime inside the schools is the fastest-growing part of our current breakdown in law and order. Big cities have experienced a steady rise in violent crime

among young teenagers: 13-, 14-, and 15-year-olds. Knifings, shootings, beatings, and rapes take place inside public high schools. Stealing is so common that it is seldom reported. Girls in some areas are even afraid to go alone to the girls' restrooms. Additional security guards do not solve these problems.

2. The drug situation in the schools is a national scandal. Narcotics of all varieties (hard and soft, stimulants and depressants) are available in and near our schools, and peddled even to grade school children. The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse reports that 28 percent of the nation's teenagers are problem drinkers.

3. Immorality among high schoolers and even junior high schoolers has become a way of life. Illegitimate pregnancies and abortions among high school girls occur at a shocking rate. Venereal disease has climbed to epidemic levels and is now one of the most common illnesses in the country. Court decisions and HEW Regulations are making it difficult or even impossible to fire teachers who are homosexuals, lesbians, or pregnant but unmarried.

4. In the face of all this immorality and illegality, the schools have completely abandoned the teaching of the fourth "R" -- right or wrong. Public schools do not instruct or inspire students to obey the laws of God and country, and do not maintain discipline within the school itself. The U.S. Supreme Court has forbidden voluntary prayer. It is no wonder that young people fail to develop a right conscience about the life and property of others when the schools fail to teach morality while at the same time permit a prevalence of temptation in the form of sex, drugs, and unpunished crime.

Decline in Learning

5. The steady decline in academic standards proves that public school education is the most dishonest consumer product on the market today. College entrance examination scores have declined for twelve straight years and conclusively confirm what parents, colleges, and employers have known for some time, namely, that our schools are failing to teach students the essential verbal and math skills, including reading, writing, spelling, adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing. Schools have replaced proven teaching techniques (such as phonics and the multiplication tables) with

experimental methods ("look-and-say reading" and "new math") that do not work. They divert money and time into frills, field trips, and social experimentation rather than equipping our children with the skills essential to daily living, such as rapid reading and comprehension of the daily newspaper, writing out a job application, applying sales tax percentages to purchases, or balancing a check book. As President Bunzel of San Jose University pointed out, "I agree with George Orwell, 'If people cannot write well, they cannot think well; and if they cannot think well, others can do their thinking for them.'"

6. By a censored selection of textbooks, supplementary reading and visiting lecturers, grade schools, high schools and colleges have deprived our young people of knowledge and familiarity with the great books that have stood the test of time, and replaced them with books and ideas preaching profanity, obscenities, and a calculated attack on the moral values of most Americans, their family orientation, and their patriotism. MACOS is only one example of alien and unacceptable tax-financed programs forced on pupils despite parental objections.

7. In many areas, the whole fabric of harmonious inter-personal relationships and peaceful academic atmosphere has been torn asunder by court-ordered or HEW-ordered forced busing. The learning process will not function in the face of bayonets, smouldering resentment, and fear of violence.

8. The new HEW Regulation on the Schools and Colleges is bringing a whole new set of problems, including compulsory coed sports, lack of privacy for female students, reverse discrimination to fulfill arbitrary teacher and student quotas, forcing school medical plans to finance abortions for teachers and students, and the prohibition against designating women as "Miss" or "Mrs." Brigham Young University has already stated an intent to challenge the new HEW Regulation because it would prevent the college from taking action about violations of standards of sexual behavior, and is therefore "an attack on one of the most important and unique values of our school, a part of our religious philosophy and theory of learning."

Is There a Way Out?

If your child is in a public school with some or all of these problems, you have *no* right to transfer to another public school where the policies, practices and textbooks are more in accord with your needs and values. Your child is compelled to attend the school to which he is assigned, no matter how intolerable the conditions or how long the bus ride. The twin pillars of our present system are compulsion and conformity: pay your taxes and do what you are told.

The elimination of all competition in choice of public schools is a major factor in the reduction in the quality of the world's most expensive school system. The regimentation in our public school system is comparable to having a bureaucrat in charge of automobile sales who would assign new car purchasers to specific dealers, instead of letting the consumer freely choose a dealer who gives the best value for the best price.

What is the alternative available to the concerned parent? You can take your child out of the public school and put him in a private school. But look at the discriminatory financial burden that this imposes. After having already paid high taxes to build and maintain public schools that have failed to do the job, you now must pay private school tuition *which you are forbidden to deduct from your taxable income!*

This double and discriminatory financial burden means that (a) only the rich have any realistic alternative, and (b) middle-class, poor, and minority Americans are trapped.

There is something fundamentally wrong with a system that forces a student to remain in a school where his life or property are not safe from crime, where teachers and textbooks insult and ridicule his religious beliefs or moral values, where he is exposed to temptations and situations he cannot cope with, or where he is not getting the academic instruction he is paying for. A system which effectively *compels* (through economic sanctions) a student to remain in an environment he finds morally offensive, socially disruptive, or intellectually sterile, *cannot* be just.

Middle-class, poor, and minority Americans -- just as much as rich Americans -- love their children and want to give them the best education and opportunities they can. They, too, want to give their children the opportunities afforded by private schools. (For example, of 40 Merit Scholarship winners in the District of Columbia last year, 25 came from among the relatively few students in private schools.) It is a grievous injustice to saddle them with a discriminatory tax burden which deprives them of the same freedom to choose a private school that rich people have. The present system deprives these parents of the great constitutional guarantees of freedom of association and equal protection of the laws.

Real Freedom of Choice

There are some narrow-minded people who argue: "Our public policy is to maintain public schools and, if you don't like them, too bad for you. If you choose a private school, we will make you pay *twice* -- once for the public school you left, and again in full for the private school."

There was a time in Puritan New England when the people were granted "freedom of religion" and the right to support their own church -- but only *after* they had paid their taxes to support the established church. Such bigotry has long since been eliminated from America. Today we recognize that such a climate of compulsion is not true freedom of choice in the matter of religion.

Likewise, it is not freedom of choice in education to force parents to pay taxes to support schools that don't do the job, and then on top of that to deny them income tax exemption for tuition at schools that do the job.

The Buckley-Delaney Bill is the remedy for this injustice. It will restore equity to education and equal justice to pupils and parents. It will end the discriminatory financial penalties imposed by the present system. It does this by the simple device of amending the tax law to provide a \$1,000 deduction for tuition to any school or college of the taxpayers' choice. It will

give middle-class, poor, and minority Americans the educational alternatives that only the rich enjoy now. It will make it financially practical to choose a modest-priced private school.

The Fringe Benefits

While the basic objective of the Buckley-Delaney Bill is to remedy the unjust discrimination and financial penalties now imposed on those who seek an alternative to compulsory attendance at an inferior public school, there will be many additional advantages.

1. The Buckley-Delaney Bill means tax reduction and tax reform. Surely everyone is for less taxes! It will also provide a long overdue tax reform by giving relief to those who merit it the most -- the students and parents who are investing their own money in a better America. Progress depends on better education and improved skills of all kinds. Those who invest in better-educated and better-trained citizens are far more entitled to income-tax deductions than those who spend money on thousands of other business, educational, or charitable items currently permitted to be deducted.

2. The Buckley-Delaney Bill will rescue private schools and colleges from their present desperate financial straits. Various economic factors are presently endangering the very existence of private schools and colleges, many with a long tradition of academic excellence. The maintenance of viable private schools and colleges is necessary to any society which professes a belief in individual choice and academic freedom.

3. The Buckley-Delaney Bill will be the healthiest thing that could happen to the public schools and colleges. In a period when many people are calling for an end to public schools altogether, the Buckley-Delaney Bill will restore vitality to the public school system *because* the competition of the market place -- that is, the opportunity of the consumer to choose an alternative -- will require the public schools to shape up and do right, or face empty classrooms.

4. The Buckley-Delaney Bill will enable many deserving students to attend state universities who now are being frozen out of a college education because they (a) are not poor enough to qualify for financial assistance, but (b) at the same time cannot afford even the modest tuition and living costs.

Consumerism in Education

5. The Buckley-Delaney Bill will open up many new job opportunities for teachers who cannot stomach the low standards and lack of discipline in the public schools. Some of our best teachers are dropping out because they can't take it any longer. Private schools which emphasize basic education without social disruption or experimentation will attract many talented teachers with a real dedication to their profession.

6. The Buckley-Delaney Bill will be the most important benefit of the new emphasis on consumerism. Like the postal service, the public schools keep increasing

their costs but reducing the quality of their product. The schools provide conclusive evidence that spending more money does not solve the problems. When Detroit calls back hundreds of defective automobiles, we are rightly scandalized. When college applicants cannot write a literate letter, we should be equally outraged. Consumers should have an alternative to shoddy products and poor performance.

The solution is the healthy competition of the marketplace. The place to begin reforming the schools is in the pocketbooks of those who pay for them. Because the Buckley-Delaney Bill allows parents and students to keep and spend their own money, the Federal bureaucrats will never get their hands on it and will be unable to dictate how it is spent. The Buckley-Delaney Bill allows tax deductions for tuition to any school or college, public or private, religious or secular, traditional or experimental, all-purpose or designed for the talented or the handicapped. The Bill assures American students the right to independence and diversity in education -- as Thoreau would have put it, the right to march to a different drummer.

What You Can Do

The Buckley-Delaney Bill is an idea whose time has come. It represents the type of vision that can solve the problems confronting Americans today. You must act immediately if you want it included in this year's tax bill. Here is how you can help:

1. Write, wire, phone, or go to see your own U.S. Senators and Congressmen and ask them to join as co-sponsors of the Buckley-Delaney Bill.

In the Senate, the bill number is S. 2356. Co-sponsors already include Senators McClellan, Helms, Tower, Thurmond, Baker, Brock, and Schweiker. If your two Senators are not on this list, flood them with messages.

In the House, the bill number is H.R. 9865. Ask your Congressman to join as a co-sponsor.

2. Write, wire, phone, or go to see all the members on the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. (See page 4 for the lists.) Ask each Committee member (a) to co-sponsor the bill, (b) to hold hearings on the bill, and (c) to vote for the bill and include it in the 1976 tax law.

3. Write a short note to Senator James Buckley and to Congressman James Delaney and thank them for introducing this proposal. Do not expect a personal reply. Their offices are already flooded with mail. It is important that they have tangible evidence of your support. But we do not want their staff to spend time writing to us instead of working on passage of the bill.

4. After you have done all the above, tell all your friends to do likewise. Ask all the private schools in your area to distribute copies of this Report to their alumni, students, and parents. It will take hundreds of thousands of letters to counteract the powerful lobbies and vested interests opposing the Buckley-Delaney Bill. We can pass it *if* you do your part. Buy extra copies of this Report to give to your friends (8 copies for \$1.00; 50 copies for \$4.00; 100 copies for \$8.00; 500 copies for \$35.00; 1,000 copies for \$60.00.)

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Democrats in Roman
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Phyllis Schlafly taught all her six children to read at home by the phonics method, and then entered them in school in the second grade. Their subsequent records in schools and colleges testify to the success of her method.

Phyllis Schlafly earned a B.A. with Honors from Washington University in St. Louis in three years while holding a 48-hour a week job as a gunner and ballistics technician at the largest ammunition plant in the world. She received her M.A. from Harvard University, and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha.

In addition to her principal occupation as wife and mother, Mrs. Schlafly is the author of seven books, the publisher since 1967 of the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*, and a syndicated newspaper columnist. She broadcasts twice weekly on the CBS radio network. She has testified before 35 Congressional and State legislative committees, and is a frequent speaker on college campuses.

Mrs. Schlafly has received numerous awards including seven Honor Medals from Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge, Women of Achievement by the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, and the Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews of St. Louis. She is a member of the Illinois Commission on the Status of Women.

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