



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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NEA Disrespect for Home and Parents

The *Wall Street Journal* published a remarkable letter on July 25 from the 1991 New York State Teacher of the Year hurling a broadside attack against the entire public school system. Charging that government (public) schooling "kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents," he opposes a national curriculum and national testing and instead calls for "real free-market choices."

You can get a good look at the public (government) schools' disrespect for home and parents by reading the resolutions passed over the Fourth of July weekend in Miami Beach at the annual convention of the nation's largest teachers' union, the National Education Association.

Hostility to parental choice in education is paramount in the NEA's national and state legislative agenda. Labeling all choice plans "deleterious" and "detrimental," the NEA proclaims its bitter opposition to all "federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans" and instructs its members to "work for the defeat" of all plans for tuition tax credits or vouchers. (A-11, A-12, A-13, A-14)

So deep-seated is the bitterness of the NEA toward any schools not controlled by the teachers' unions that one NEA resolution warns that "closed public school buildings should be sold or leased only to those organizations that do not provide direct educational services to students and/or are not in direct competition with public schools." (A-25) The NEA cannot tolerate the competition of even one private school in an abandoned building in a community that may have scores of modern, fully-equipped tax-supported schools.

Of course, the NEA is adamantly opposed to home-schooling. The NEA demands that, if homeschooling is allowed, the parents must have teachers' certificates, be licensed by the state, and teach only a curriculum approved by the state bureaucrats. (C-39)

More teachers are seeking jobs today than there are jobs available, so the NEA has devised plans to create more jobs by forcing little children into public schools at younger ages. The NEA calls on its members "to seek legislation to ensure that early childhood developmental programs offered primarily through the public schools be fully funded and available on an equal basis and culminate in mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance." (C-3)

The NEA demands that Family Life Education (the code word for Sex Education) must include "birth control" and "diversity of sexual orientation." The NEA asserts that: "it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge, and wisdom about sexuality." (C-30) This means the NEA claims the right to teach children about contraceptives, homosexuality, incest, and sexual deviations without parental consent or interference.

The NEA demands that the schools teach "comprehensive" AIDS education programs "as an integral part of the school curriculum," including "all means of transmission." (C-46) "Integral part" is the code word for concealing it so that parents cannot remove their children from the AIDS class.

The NEA resolution demands that "every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health care." (C-9) The NEA calls on the schools to provide "every student" with "immediate, direct and confidential access to health, social, and psychological services," as well as "comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics." (C-10) "Confidential" is the code word meaning without parental knowledge or consent. "Comprehensive" is the code word for providing contraceptive devices. "School-based" is the code word for doing all of the above inside the school building.

The NEA demands that the public schools not only do "counseling" of all students "beginning at the prekindergarten level," but that this counseling "be integrated into the entire education system." "Integrated" is the code word for hiding it in various classroom subjects so parents will not be able to remove their children from this unwanted psychological manipulation. (C-12) This counseling includes all sorts of surprising areas: sexual orientation (C-13), stress (C-14), and suicide (C-15). And of course, the NEA has climbed on board the trendy move to be "politically correct" and demand the teaching of multiculturalism. (C-24)

The NEA's blatant feminist agenda includes abortion-on-demand (I-21), the Equal Rights Amendment (I-17), comparable worth (i.e., substituting government wage control for market value) (F-5), and "affirmative action" employment for women, minorities, homosexuals, and the disabled (F-22). The NEA is also trying to insinuate feminist ideology into textbooks and classroom materials by censoring out what it

calls "sex-stereotyped roles" (that means texts or pictures showing women as homemakers) and "sexist language" (that means using such words as mother or father instead of parent). (B-13) The NEA demands that "gender-free awareness" be "interwoven into the total educational system." (B-10)

The NEA has monopoly control over the government (public) school system, its administration, its personnel, its curriculum, and its money. No wonder the fastest growing movement in the country today is the demand to free children from this anti-parent monopoly.

How the Teachers Union Checkmates Parents

A bill considered by the Illinois State Legislature in 1991 provides a textbook example of how the lobbying apparatus of the powerful National Education Association swings into action when it perceives a threat to its special interests and privileges. Its Illinois branch, called the Illinois Education Association (IEA), pulled out all the stops to defeat a parents rights bill.

IEA lobbyists swarmed all over the Capitol, and school superintendents and teachers from all over the state phoned not only their own Senators, but many other Senators, to request a No vote. Many people were baffled at the extraordinary pressure and antagonism generated by a seemingly innocuous bill entitled the Parent and Student Civil Rights Act, SB-520.

- This bill would have allowed parents to withdraw their children from school activities that are contrary to the religious teachings of the family. Many states and school districts now have similar opt-out laws or regulations, and all states should have this right legally spelled out.

- SB-520 would have prohibited schools from showing movies rated R, X or NC-17 in the classroom. It comes as a shock to most parents when they discover that many public schools are asserting the authority to show children movies which they would not be permitted to see at their local theaters.

- SB-520 would have required schools to make all instructional materials available for public inspection. Of course, parents should have the right to inspect any materials used by or for their children! Yet in case after case, parents have been stonewalled when they simply ask to see the teachers' guides.

- SB-520 would have required that one-third of the members of a curriculum advisory committee be parents of children within the school district. The schools have been saying they want parental input, and this would be a great way to encourage it.

State legislators hadn't been the target of so much pressure in many years and were stunned at the hostile and ridiculous accusations hurled against parents. IEA lobbyists argued that the schools are the "professionals" and that parents should have nothing to say about curriculum. Parents were accused of "trying to evangelize the schools" and of being consumed with "fear that their children would get a well-rounded education."

So SB-520 was defeated, 25-to-29.

The effort to pass SB-520 started because of controversies in various Chicago suburbs over the 15-book elementary reading curriculum for grades K-5 called *Impressions*, published by Holt Rinehart and Winston. Four school districts all had rejected parental complaints and decided to

retain use of the books.

Many parents object to *Impressions* because the stories and poems display a morbid preoccupation with violence, the occult, witchcraft, spells, dismemberment, suicide, monsters, and other themes frightening to little children and contrary to family values and beliefs. Parents say that the pictures in the readers are even more offensive than the text.

The schools argue that *Impressions* simply exposes children to different beliefs and cultures, as well as both positive and negative behavior. Presenting "negative behavior" in a favorable light, without moral judgment, is one of the main reasons parents object to these readers.

The schools say that many of the stories in *Impressions* were written by "award-winning authors." Actually, only 7 out of 267 stories in the readers for grades 1-3 were written by those so-called award-winning authors.

Parents also objected to the fact that, when the school board appointed a committee to look into parental complaints and report back to the board, eight of the ten members were on the payroll of the school district. When that's the way complaints are "investigated," no wonder the teachers union fought tooth and nail to defeat a bill that would give one-third of the slots on a curriculum committee to parents.

The teachers union won this round. But their victory just adds more fuel to the fire of citizen alienation from the once highly-respected public school system.

Schools Launch Offensive Against Parents

The elementary school readers called *Impressions*, which started the demand for a parental rights law in Illinois, has caused similar disputes in many states and at least one lawsuit has been filed. Indeed, the *Impressions* readers are the most controversial textbooks used in public schools today.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (HBJ), which through its Holt Rinehart and Winston subsidiary publishes these Kindergarten-through-6th-grade-readers, is fighting back. HBJ has prepared a confidential defense kit, consisting of 359 unnumbered pages, to help schools battle parental objections.

A major reason why parents object to *Impressions* is that so many of the stories are too frightening and morbid for little children, and the illustrations are too bizarre. Typical examples are a monster fastening its teeth into a head and tearing it off and a demon who sits on a child's head.

The HBJ defense kit makes a contradictory reply: (a) the scary themes are "not predominant," but anyway (b) scary stories actually have a "positive, developmental" effect because they provide "bibliotherapy, whereby children can confront and resolve their fears in a fictional setting."

The revelation that elementary schoolchildren are subjected to "bibliotherapy" in the classroom will be quite shocking to those who had not realized that the public schools have been taken over by pseudo-psychologists trying to mold the psyches of captive audiences of little children.

The HBJ defense kit also has a two-part contradictory reply to parental charges that *Impressions* promotes New Age religious practices, witchcraft, and the occult. HBJ protests that there never was "any intent" to promote any religious belief, but that humanism and existentialism "have never been considered as religions," implying that their use in the classroom is acceptable.

The kit claims that "the literature in *Impressions* is quality

literature." HBJ's criteria for "quality literature" includes: "A balance of rural versus urban settings, multicultural and multiracial diversity, female and male protagonists, positive portrayals of seniors, Canadian and International authors, men and women writers, classic and contemporary selections, positive portrayals of people with disabilities, and a variety of genres." In other words, HBJ has adopted the guidelines of the Politically Correct movement. Under this P.C. movement, which is currently sweeping the college campuses, everything must be judged first of all by its political content, even first-grade readers.

Another reason parents object to *Impressions* is that the Kindergarten-through-6th-grade series uses the "whole language" methodology of teaching reading instead of phonics. All research shows that phonics is the best way to teach a child to read the English language. "Whole language" is just the trendy new name for the discredited word-guessing system known as "whole word" or "look-say."

The advocates of whole language assert that the child should be taught to read whole paragraphs and stories without ever learning the sounds and syllables that make up the words. How is this possible?

Here is how the HBJ kit inadvertently reveals the answer: "A whole language curriculum uses *predictable materials* . . . which allow children to anticipate what is going to come next. . . . The children are able to use the pictures to help them figure out what the text might be likely to say." (emphasis in the original)

"Predicting" what a story is likely to say is another term for guessing. It certainly is NOT learning how to read. Predicting is made easy by the technique of having the teacher first read the story to the child who then, in combination with the pictures, can guess at the content of the printed page and pretend to be reading.

The HBJ defense kit is apparently part of a coordinated attack against the right of parents to review, supervise and veto curricula they find dangerous or objectionable. Other examples include the 200-page manual of strategies to attack parents called "What's Left After the Right?" which was funded by the National Education Association.

Another is an article in the February issue of the *American School Board Journal* which sharply attacks parents, calling them "censors" and "extremists" and deploring the "worrisome" trend of "many school boards" to implement "opt-out" policies under which parents can request alternative reading material.

Look For the Union Label

When the 2-million-member National Education Association held its annual convention in Miami Beach July 4-7, 1991, its officials bragged that its political action committee, NEA-PAC, had "outstanding success in the 1990 elections." The NEA claimed that 247 NEA-endorsed candidates for Congress won in the November 1990 elections, well over a majority of the 435 members. The NEA also claimed similar success in the election of Governors and state legislators and thereby "positioned the Association well for the redistricting process."

The NEA is powerful, but it is not invincible. The NEA lost the two candidates on which the union spent the largest, and the second largest, sums of its political money in 1990.

The NEA's number-one candidate in 1990 was Paul Hubbert, Democratic nominee for Governor of Alabama who was seeking to unseat Guy Hunt, the first Republican Governor in a century. As executive secretary of the Alabama Education Association, Paul Hubbert has run the state branch of the NEA for two decades and is well known as the most powerful lobbyist at the State Capitol in Montgomery. Some say he wields more influence than the Governor because of the votes in the State Legislature he can command.

Money was no problem for Hubbert's candidacy. The NEA national Political Action Committee gave him \$100,000. The political action committee of the Alabama teachers union, called AVOTE, gave him \$1,115,000, and political action committee of other state NEA affiliates joined in with lesser amounts. Another state employees union political action committee called SEAPAC gave Hubbert \$155,000. A political action committee called JOBPAC, funded primarily by gambling interests and trial lawyers, gave him \$560,000. The Alabama AFL-CIO gave him \$49,000, and individual trial lawyers gave him at least \$341,000.

In the stretch, Hubbert was predicted to win. But two weeks before the election, the grassroots went into action to tell the Alabama voters what a radical organization the NEA is. With a modest expenditure of \$500, a flier appeared all over the state entitled, "When the NEA talks, politicians listen, and Paul Hubbert received \$100,000 from their political fund. Let's ask Hubbert: does he support the NEA agenda, or does he just take their money and their orders?"

Then the flier spelled out the NEA's leftwing agenda: affirmative action, the right of homosexuals to teach in the classroom, tax funding of abortions, gun control, drafting women, socialized medicine, and decriminalizing marijuana. The flier stated that the NEA opposes competency tests for teachers, tuition tax credits, and voluntary prayer in the schools. Hubbert called those who distributed this flier "liars." But they had had the foresight to include the page numbers from NEA documentation where proof could be found.

Taking his cue from the grassroots in the final weeks of the campaign, Guy Hunt charged that Hubbert even opposes testing school bus drivers for alcohol and drugs. Hubbert credited Hunt's victory to "very devastating ads"; one linked Hubbert to radical NEA policies, and the other linked him to Jesse Jackson, with a voice-over saying that Hubbert would be "a great governor for Massachusetts."

A letter to the editor of an Alabama newspaper summed up how convincingly the "ultra-liberal" label was hung on Hubbert. It said, "Hubbert speaks of a New South, but he really means the Old North. We've already voted against the dead ideas of McGovern, Mondale and Dukakis, and now one of their clones is here among us running for governor."

Until the grassroots-initiated flier made the rounds, most Alabamians didn't know how leftwing the NEA is, or even that it is a union at all. Printed copies of the resolutions passed at the national convention are not easily available. The NEA's resolutions are not designed to inform its membership or the public. They are designed to empower NEA directors to spend the \$3.8 million in NEA-PAC funds to elect candidates who will vote for the NEA agenda, and to empower the NEA's professional lobbyists to spend the NEA's \$8.8 million lobbying fund to tell legislators how to vote.

Nationally, teachers' unions spent nearly \$5.2 million to elect their candidates in the 1989-1990 election cycle. The second largest recipient of teachers unions' PAC funds was Harvey Gantt, the Democratic challenger to Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Gantt received a \$10,000 direct contribution and \$100,000 in independent expenditures from NEA-PAC, plus donations from other teachers union PACs.

It is encouraging, however, to know that, at least in Alabama, it has become a political liability to be labeled a member of the National Education Association.

GAO Report Proves Drug Courses Are a Cheat

Congress's watchdog agency, the General Accounting Office, recently released a report (GAO/HRD-91-27) to the Senate in 1991 on the impact of school-based drug education funded under the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986. Since the passage of this act, \$1.1 billion has flowed to the states in the form of grants.

So what have we got for our money? The result was summed up in two words used on the cover of the report: "Impact Unknown." Here is what the GAO concluded: "Little is known about the effectiveness of the various drug education programs or curricula in preventing or reducing drug and alcohol abuse among students. Program evaluations have provided little useful information on what actually reduces student drug or alcohol use."

In other words, more than a billion dollars, generously provided by the American taxpayers, have gone through the hands of the public schools earmarked for the specific purpose of drug prevention, and the General Accounting Office cannot uncover any evidence as to whether the "impact" is positive, negative, or a zero. All we get for our money is some pious hopes.

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act requires all public schools to teach that "the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol is wrong." The GAO report lists 21 classroom drug curricula commonly used in public schools today. The GAO descriptions of these 21 drug courses clearly show that they are all variations of the same theme: "Kid, make your own decision; the school is not going to tell you what is wrong; it's up to you to decide whether or not to use illegal drugs."

Again and again, the curriculum presents the student with a process of "decision-making" based on "nonjudgmental information" and considering the "alternatives." Although a couple of courses talk vaguely about "refusal skills," not a single course listed in the GAO report is described as stating that illegal drugs are *wrong*, or that the student may *not* consider the "alternative" of using illegal drugs.

The GAO description of the course called "Me-ology" is typical. It has 6th grade students spend 17 hours of class time "choosing actions that conform to personal beliefs after considering alternative choices." This means that alternative choices are presented to the child without telling him that any one is right or wrong; then he can choose whatever he wants according to his own "personal beliefs." So, if he chooses cocaine as the alternative that conforms to his personal beliefs, that would be OK because he made his own decision.

It's no wonder that classroom drug education does NOT reduce the use of illegal drugs.

The GAO descriptions of the 21 drug curricula show that

most of the courses spend most of their class time playing psychological games under the rubric of "enhancing students' self-awareness and self-esteem." We can discuss another day the pros and cons of "self-esteem" courses, but it certainly is a cheat on the taxpayer to spend Drug-Free Schools and Communities money for this purpose.

The Detroit school district used all of its Drug-Free Schools funds to buy a controversial course called the "Michigan Model" and train teachers in its use. Only one of its 10 segments pertains to drugs; the rest of it is on such items as safety, first aid, nutrition, personal health, and sex.

Likewise, the GAO found that the Los Angeles school district used its Drug-Free Schools funds to purchase "Second Step." This program "does not specifically mention drugs or alcohol, but covers empathy training, impulse control, and anger management."

The Cleveland school district used its funds to buy "Children Are People," a program that addresses drug and alcohol abuse in only 5 of 30 lessons. The other 25 lessons are spent on such topics as "self-image, decision-making, and family dynamics." This Cleveland course makes clear why the use of the term "drug abuse" has become so prevalent instead of "drug use." The course does not teach teenagers that the "use" of alcohol is wrong; instead it teaches what it calls the "responsible" use of alcohol. Since the use of alcohol by teenagers is illegal, there is no way it can be "responsible."

The GAO report states that "Districts and states should be held accountable for conducting the most effective programs possible." Indeed they should. But there isn't a shred of evidence in this 29-page GAO report, after a year's investigation, that the expenditure of \$1 billion produced an "effective" program.

Does Your School Encourage Children to Do Drugs?

This is the title of Eagle Forum's flier on school drug courses. It gives the shocking truth about the "drug education" taught in the public schools today. Get a copy of this flier so you will have the facts about (1) what is wrong with school drug courses, (2) how they fail to comply with the law, and (3) what you can do to save children from drugs and force the schools to obey the law. Single copies available for any contribution to Eagle Forum. Quantity price: \$10 per 100.

Phyllis Schlafly published her first issue of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* in August 1967. August 1991 marks the start of its 25th year of continuous publication. It has built up a consistent record of reliability, accuracy, timeliness, and newsworthiness on a variety of national topics: education, military defense, family and feminism, economics, politics and government, the culture, and the Constitution.

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