

Is Common Core Immortal?: It Survives in Oklahoma

'My state, Oklahoma, was one of the first and only to repeal Common Core. It took years of work, and ultimately accomplished just about nothing.'

Jenni White is known as one of the "Common Core Four." She published an article in *The Federalist* on January 3, 2018, titled "How Common Core Taught Me Bureaucrats Will Always Win Unless We Slash Big Government."

From 2011 to 2014, White and other founders of Restore Oklahoma Public Education "logged hours and hours of travel across the state and country, showing up anywhere we were invited" to speak about the flaws in the set of standards then sweeping the nation. The former science teacher detailed the negative impact their implementation would have on students.

White and her grassroots group, along with state Senator Josh Brecheen and Representative Jason Nelson, helped pass a bill repealing Common Core, which Governor Mary Fallin signed into law in June of 2014.

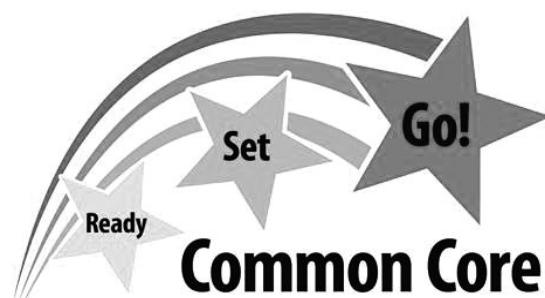
When school started in the fall, parents found out Common Core was still being used in Oklahoma schools. It seemed at first this was simply because many textbooks were Common Core aligned. But the problem was deeper than that.

No Enforcement Mechanism

It turned out that Oklahoma's Com-

mon Core repeal bill "was little more than a suggestion" because it lacked "punitive action for continued use of Common Core."

Replacement standards were still in the process of being written. White and others formed Reclaim Oklahoma Parent Empowerment (ROPE) and attempted to keep an eye on the process. They asked experts to examine the new standards,



revise and improve them, make them better than Common Core and different than the state's previous standards. The belief was that once the new, better standards were in place, teachers would use them.

But the revised Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) were very similar to Common Core, as several experts testified in front of the Standards Process Steering Committee. Jenni White and others in the grassroots organization ROPE asked for more time in order to correct and improve the new standards.

Attacked by the Establishment

That's when the attacks began. As White says, "The Oklahoma education establishment engaged in a series of social media attacks against ROPE, and me personally, to marginalize us as 'tinfoil hats' for suggesting any overlap between OAS and Common Core, and me as a hater of public education."

White says, "Rather than stand their ground against a vocal, largely uncivil, minority of Oklahoma teachers, the Oklahoma senate gavled out of session rather than vote on Oklahoma's new 'Oklahoma Academic Standards.'" White Reports that in March of 2016, OAS became law, "leaving Oklahomans who fought desperately for better education standards with nothing for all our years of citizen advocacy."

Jenni White said then and still says today that, "I'd come to believe Common Core had beaten us despite Oklahoma's repeal."

Teachers, a Senator, and Professor React

White was recently told by an Oklahoma math teacher, "Common Core is not gone from Oklahoma classrooms." The teacher says the new OAS mandates

are "unclear." Teachers rely on Common-Core aligned resources because it's all they have available.

That Common Core is still in Oklahoma classrooms was confirmed by a Hechinger Report article referenced by White. The author interviewed several Oklahoma teachers, "including 2009 Oklahoma teacher of the year Heather Sparks, who admits that not only does she use Common Core-aligned teaching materials, she also writes Common Core-aligned lesson plans for a teaching website." This has happened in several states because non-CC-aligned materials aren't available.

Josh Brecheen, the Oklahoma state senator who helped with the repeal, told White, "It's a teacher by teacher decision as to whether they are bringing Common Core-aligned curriculum into the classroom." He says he hopes that "teachers continue to honor the wish of Oklahomans who voiced their opposition to the Common Core State Standards through their elected officials."

This is greatly in doubt. The state superintendent plans for every high school junior to take the ACT, the college entrance exam aligned with Common Core.

(See Common Core, page 4)

Reliable College Choices

As indoctrination and activism become the norm on some American campuses, families wonder if college is worth the time, cost, and effort. Many ask, "Are colleges today places families should aspire to send young people?"

There are still institutions of higher learning that actually teach students, allow them to find their callings, and are quite worthwhile. They welcome homeschooled students and are unlikely to send home an unrecognizable individual, but instead the same person, more knowledgeable and better educated.

Needs of students vary, as do family preferences. Education choice is one of the most private, individual, and important decisions a family faces. In this and future editions, *Education Reporter* will feature some colleges that could suit families' needs. The following are in alphabetical order, not order of preference.

Christendom College is a Catholic liberal arts college located in the Shenandoah Valley, in Front Royal, Virginia. Current enrollment is fewer than 500 students who come from 45 states and five foreign countries. The school was founded in 1977, does not accept federal funding, and is endorsed by *The Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College*, published by the Cardinal Newman Society. Many who choose Christendom College previously attended its Experience Christendom Summer Program, and almost half of new students are siblings

of former or current students. The college awards B.A. degrees in Classics, English, History, Philosophy, Mathematics, Political Science and Economics, and Theology.

Harding University is a private Christian institution associated with the Churches of Christ and committed to liberal arts and the sciences. The main campus is located in Searcy, Arkansas, about 50 miles northeast of Little Rock. The school offers more than 100 majors and minors. About 96% of undergraduate students receive financial aid, which amounts to about \$60 million annually. Almost half of students at some point study abroad at one of the school's seven international campuses, which include Australia, Chile, Greece, and Zambia.

The King's College in New York City offers students "the chance to truly influence secular society in the world's most global city." All students study a core curriculum, and the school has eight academic majors and twelve minors. This liberal arts college has a Christian faculty that considers the Bible to be "God's infallible written Word." The college was founded more than 75 years ago and is currently located in the Wall Street financial district. King's offers a variety of internships in the city. The college website states: "We educate young leaders to seamlessly integrate their faith, ethics, and morality into their lives and careers."

Common Core Reading Scores Drop

While literacy continues to improve worldwide, the latest test results for American children showed a decline.

The 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) shows that scores of U.S. 4th graders dropped to 549 out of 1,000. The average score achieved by U.S. 4th graders in 2011, the last time the test was administered, was 556. These results indicate that American students dropped back to about the same level as they performed on the 2006 PIRLS exam.

Implementation of the English Language arts standards mandated by Common Core began in most states between 2010 and 2011.

According to *Education Week*, "PIRLS tests four different areas of literacy, and U.S. students performed significantly worse on tasks that called for them to read to find and use information than they did for 'literary experience.'" Their analysis continues to say that American students "were less skilled at making 'straightforward inferences' than at interpreting or evaluating texts."

The acting commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which oversees administration of the PIRLS exam in the United States says:

We seem to be declining as other sys-

tems improve. This is a trend we've seen on other assessments that the United States participates in. There is a lot to be concerned about.

The U.S. 4th-grade students' average score was higher than 30 of the participating 58 education systems and tied with 15 others.

Singapore, Russia, Ireland, Finland, Hong Kong, Poland, Norway, and Latvia — one of the poorest nations in Europe — are among the nations whose students performed better than those in the U.S.

Only 16% of American 4th graders performed at what qualifies as the advanced level.

This exam is given every five years and is only administered to 4th-grade-level students. It is taken by a representative cross-section of children.

Former George W. Bush U.S. Education Department senior policy adviser Ze'ev Wurman told Breitbart News, "What we see since the Common Core took over is that our educational achievement is actually deteriorating rather than just being unable to keep up." He says there has been a "massive deterioration of educational standards and expectations under Common Core."

(*Education Week*, 12-05-17) (Breitbart.com, 12-8-17)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

As of February, Washington State has a “nonbinary option” on birth certificates, meaning instead of choosing male or female, people can choose an “X.” Washington’s health department says the X indicates “a gender that is not exclusively male or female, including, but not limited to, intersex, agender, amalgagender, androgynous, bigender, demigender, female-to-male, genderfluid, genderqueer, male-to-female, neutrois, nonbinary, pangender, third sex, transgender, transsexual, Two Spirit, and unspecified.” Changing one’s sex on birth certificates has been legal there for a decade; adults can change their own and a parent or guardian can change a child’s by providing a statement from a health-care provider that the new designation is “consistent with the minor’s identity.” A health department official says the X will “provide people with options that match their living experience” and is “an opportunity to reduce risk of harassment and promote health equity.” Oregon also has the X option and California will institute it in the fall. (*Seattle Times*, 1-4-18)

A social media fad called the “Tide Pod Challenge” is endangering the lives of teens nationwide. There are many reports that teens are eating the pods “and posting videos of the results online.” These laundry detergent capsules contain “ethanol, hydrogen peroxide, and polymers — a highly-toxic mix of detergent meant to wipe out dirt and grime.” The fact that they look somewhat like candy made some worry that a young child might eat one. Ingesting the pod could prove deadly for persons of any age. (CBS News, 1-12-18)

A “Pyramid of White Supremacy” that aims to teach about “cultural competence” is presented in a class that many students and all elementary education majors must take at Salisbury University in Maryland. One student said of the one-credit course called “Diversity and the Self” that “instead of teaching diversity, this class taught us that being white was a bad thing.” At the top of the pyramid is “Genocide” and at the base is “Indifference,” which includes “remaining apolitical.” (CampusReform.org, 1-17-18)

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Group Think Activists

Many lament the lack of civics education in American public schools. The National Association of Scholars’ 2017 report *Making Citizens: How American Universities Teach Civics* showed that colleges are not teaching students traditional civics that would have them learn how and why our system of government works. Instead, many are being indoctrinated as social justice warriors, encouraged to engage in “progressive political activism.”

Much of this is done in group-learning settings, as part of the trend toward classroom participation promoted by Common Core in direct opposition to individual learning, when students learn independently. There are inherent problems when young adults are forced to work collaboratively. It is even more problematic when group learning is implemented in K-12 classrooms, where students’ confidence and critical-thinking skills are less fully developed.

The editors of *Education Week* wrote an article in the January 10, 2018 issue titled “Ten Game-Changing Ideas in Education.” They called these ideas academic “trends, disruptions, practices, or technologies that could help solve some of the field’s biggest challenges.” One of their named innovations is: “Civics education is no longer just happening in the classroom.”

The *Education Week* editors highlight the ideas of the Obama Foundation’s CEO, David Simas. The January 10 article quotes Simas, who says, “To solve some of our biggest challenges, young people must be inspired to act.”

In a linked commentary in the same issue of *Education Week*, Simas writes that he and former President Obama believe in “civic engagement.” He continues:

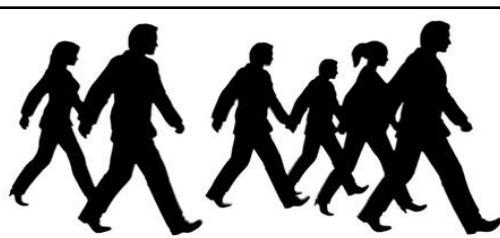
With that in mind, the foundation is now focused on inspiring and empowering the next generation of active citizens and leaders, together defining what it means to be a good citizen in the 21st century. We are training citizen leaders, giving them the tools necessary to create change in their communities and connecting them to their peers already working in this space.

Questions arise about the goals of Obama-inspired youthful “citizen leaders,” as well as the tactics they’ll be encouraged to use to create the “change” they seek. (Many still remember Obama

as the “community organizer in chief.”) It is fairly safe to assume that the Obama Foundation won’t be training young people to become Republican leaders, or to accept the validity of conservative ideas.

One particular program in the genre of civics education aimed especially at K-12 students is from the National Action Civics Collaborative. This alignment of organizations seeks to increase student involvement in communities. Their website says:

NACC is an expanding network of practitioners and researchers whose mission is to implement Action Civics in every school and youth organization throughout the country. Our guiding principles are: youth voice, youth expertise, collective action, and reflection. (ActionCivicsCollaborative.org)



Robert Holland writes at *Townhall*, “Some of the collaborating leaders might well intend to support constructive projects that open opportunities for students to put civic knowledge to work without being immersed in partisan politics or ideological crusades.” Holland, who is a Heartland Institute Senior Fellow in education policy, notes that an individual featured at the NACC website volunteered for the Obama campaign when he was just sixteen, in 2008. Holland says, “It is highly doubtful a young Republican would receive support and acclaim.”

Political activism among those who are old enough to join the military or marry is one thing, although given the state of civics education some may wonder if even college-aged individuals are prepared to become “agents of change.” To encourage even younger students to change processes about which they haven’t yet had the chance to learn seems reckless. Training them to do so in group settings prone to pressure from within the group verges on dangerous.

As Holland says, today’s civics “isn’t about students spending hours studying the basics of how representative government works in our republic; or writing well-researched papers on the evolution of the secret ballot; or debating the workings of the Electoral College. Instead, the emphasis is placed on methods for putting civics into action, which mostly involves youngsters becoming activists for selected left-wing causes and working together to bring about social change.” (*Townhall.com*, 2-19-18)

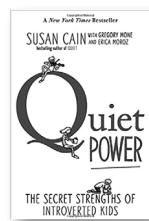
MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Book of the Month



Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverted Kids, Susan Cain, Puffin Books, 2017, \$9.99



Susan Cain’s first book, *Quiet*, called attention to introverts. She says one-third to one-half of the human population is introverted.

Cain says, “I was amazed at how many teachers nowadays assign constant group work.” That environment leads to “mental exhaustion” for introverts who gain energy from time alone, while extroverts thrive in groups.

As the title implies, this book is aimed at children ages ten and older, and the adults entrusted to help them succeed. It addresses school and family life, as well as extracurricular and various other activities.

Cain says, “Being introverted is not something to outgrow; it is something to accept and grow into — and even to cherish.” From that premise, she offers the personal experiences of everyday individuals, many of them students, and shows how recognizing a tendency toward introversion and the challenges it represents can eventually lead to successfully navigating a world that often favors extroverts.

Better understanding the differences between introverts and extroverts can draw school communities together. Cain tells the story of Drew, a New Hampshire student who is an ambivert, someone who fits in the middle area between introversion and extroversion. Seeking to help an introverted classmate, Drew did research and then posted a YouTube video about what it means to be an introvert. His “animated, graphics-intensive” work was eventually shown to his entire high school. Cain reports that “the response was overwhelming; even one of the teachers who was secretly introverted, expressed his gratitude.”

In classrooms, some teachers fail to recognize that introverted students know the material as well as their more boisterous classmates. Their grades are negatively impacted when teachers judge according to participation.

Cain and the students she uses as examples offer ways to speak up more confidently in class. Students address how they feel about group activities and social events. They explain their reasons for not wanting to talk in class. One common thread is fear of giving incorrect answers; they offer ways to stop letting that be a road block.

This book will help introverted children adapt, and that’s important. But educators and school systems should also recognize the significant number of students who suffer due to certain teaching methods. One section of the book suggests changes that would make school a more satisfactory place for introverts.

FOCUS: Appeasing Rioters is a Bad Strategy

...much of the social disruption we are seeing today is encouraged and even led by our political, educational, corporate and religious leaders.'

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After every riot, street protest, and violation of public order, we hear leaders — elected officials on the local and state levels, clergy, sports team owners, and corporate heads — expressing their deep understanding of why there is anger in their communities. We have come to expect sugar-coated explanations from our so-called leaders apologizing for violence. Most of these leaders lack the courage to declare that street thugs, acting under the guise of "social justice," should be put in jail when they break our laws.

We hear mealy-mouthed college presidents and administrators declaring themselves for "free speech" on campuses, but failing to enforce it by failing to expel students who disrupt a speaker. We see football players refusing to stand for the U.S. national anthem, while the super-wealthy team owners join hands with them in protest against racial injustice in America. Corporate leaders — the very group that should be most concerned about anti-corporate activism — donate money to the very groups and organizations calling for revolution.

It is mind-boggling to watch our political, religious, and financial leaders condoning, in effect, social disorder in our streets, in public life, and on campuses. Are they such fools that they don't understand who their adversaries are? Don't these leaders know that these enemies of order want their heads on a platter? Do they have any awareness that they have a social responsibility to maintain order and prevent social chaos?

The problem is more than limited vision on the part of these leaders. The bigger problem is that much of the social disruption we are seeing today is encouraged and even led by our political, educational, corporate, and religious leaders.

St. Louis, 2017

Recent riots in St. Louis, Missouri presented a microcosm of failed leadership. In September, St. Louis, still recovering from the destructive 2014 riots in its inner-ring suburb Ferguson, experienced three days of disruptive demonstrations following a "not guilty" verdict for a white former police officer, Jason Stockley, for first-degree murder. Stockley was brought to trial as a result of the outgoing city attorney Jennifer Joyce's decision to reopen a 2011 case involving the killing of Anthony Lamar Smith, an African American with a history of drug distribution, gun, and theft offenses.

The episode began when Stockley and his police partner witnessed Smith's involvement in what appeared to be a drug deal in northwest St. Louis. When

approached, Smith took off in his car, ramming the police vehicle twice and hitting Stockley's hand. After a wild high-speed chase ending in a crash, Stockley and his partner approached the car. According to Stockley's account, Smith was ordered to keep his hands up, but when he appeared to be reaching for something, he was shot five times and killed by Stockley. A handgun was subsequently found in the front seat of Smith's car. Heroin was also found in the car, with Smith's DNA on it. The entire incident after the stop took 15 seconds. A recording made in the police car showed Stockley saying during the chase that he was "going to kill this mother****." After internal police, city, and federal investigations, city attorney Joyce and the U.S. attorney concluded that there was insufficient evidence to prosecute Stockley for Smith's death.

In 2016 — some four years later — Joyce decided to reopen the case, claiming there was "new evidence." A grand jury indicted Stockley. After a bench trial, during which the prosecution alleged that Stockley planted the gun found in Smith's car, St. Louis Circuit Judge Timothy Wilson ruled that the state had not proved beyond a reasonable doubt that Stockley had not acted in self-defense.

DNA experts for the defense testified that Stockley's DNA on the weapon and the absence of the victim's DNA did not prove anything. DNA could have been transferred to the gun from the evidence bag, and guns often do not reveal the DNA of persons who have touched them. A dashcam video showed Shockley wearing a light summer uniform which would have revealed any hidden weapon. A gunshot wound on Smith's lower left abdomen lent credence to Stockley's assertion that Smith was turning rightward and reaching for a gun when Stockley shot him.

In a courageous and well-thought-out 30-page decision, the trial judge laid out the weakness of the prosecution's case. The judge found that the 15 seconds in which Stockley stood at the door of Smith's car, ordering him to show his hands, offered no proof that this was a police execution.

Following the verdict, Stockley told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*:

The taking of someone's life is the most significant thing one can do, and it's not done lightly.... Every resisting [arrest] looks bad, it never looks good. So what you have to separate are the optics from the facts, and if a person is unwilling to do that, then they've already made up their mind and the facts just don't matter. To those people, there's nothing that I can do to change their minds.

After the not-guilty verdict, three days of demonstrations ensued as peaceful marches turned into mob violence. Windows were smashed, car windshields broken, bottles and rocks thrown at police. Rioting occurred in downtown St. Louis, the upscale Central West End where the mayor's house was surrounded by about 1,000 protesters, and the inner-ring suburb University City. University City prides itself on its racial diversity and the revitalization of its business district called "The Loop," which had been revived by business leaders to attract a younger crowd of restaurant, pub, and shop patrons. By the end of three days of demonstrations, more than 80 people were arrested, at least ten police officers were injured, and there was tens of thousands of dollars of property damaged.

Spineless Leaders

Coming on the heels of the 2014 Ferguson riots, these demonstrations reinforced a view that St. Louis is a city in decline. What is most outrageous about

the decision, Mayor Lyda Krewson had observed that the citizens of St. Louis do not trust the criminal justice system. Immediately after the acquittal, she told the press, "My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Anthony Lamar Smith, our police, judge, prosecutor, our citizens who find no comfort or justice, and everyone involved in this difficult case." She added, "I am appalled at what happened to Anthony Lamar Smith. I am sobered by this outcome. Frustration, anger, hurt, pain, hope, and love all intermingled."

These empathetic words did not prevent a mob from throwing stones and bottles through windows at Mayor Krewson's home in the Central West End. Her statement after the trial did not spark the riots, but her words suggested that the acquittal of Stockley, a decorated war veteran and graduate of West Point, was an injustice. Instead of a stern warning that any violence following the trial would be punished, she issued platitudes.

As for her lament for Anthony Lamar Smith, a convicted drug offender found with heroin in his car, she might have used Smith's death as a lesson about the tragedy of drugs in St. Louis. Immediately after the St. Louis Board of Aldermen unanimously passed a resolution honoring Smith, Mayor Krewson and the board president hugged Smith's mother. A subsequent proposed board resolution to thank the police for their response to the protests went nowhere.

Effects of Social-Justice Education

Politicians and clergy were not the only leaders eager to show sympathy for the dead criminal suspect and for protesters. Classes were dismissed at Saint Louis University, the local Jesuit college, which has become an epicenter for social-justice education, as well as at local high schools. At Webster Groves High School, in the affluent suburb of Webster Groves, students marched out of classes to hold a protest against the verdict. Superintendent John Simpson wrote to parents of the students, "It is our hope that students who participated today learned the value of peaceful assembly." Students at University City High and Kirkwood High cut classes to march, chanting, "No justice, no peace." The same morning, University of Missouri-St. Louis students marched, chanting, "The whole damn system is guilty as hell."

These college and high school administrators and educators could have used the court decision to discuss why the judge acquitted Stockley, or how heroin is devastating St. Louis and other cities across the nation. They might even have told students that if they cut classes they would be penalized because they were in school to be educated and not to learn how to "peacefully protest."

And, maybe the grownups could
(See Rioters, page 4)



Rioters (Continued from page 3)

have pointed out that fleeing from police and resisting arrest are not good ideas.

Capitulation on Campuses

The St. Louis college and high school administrators followed the same approach that administrators have used when faced with student protesters at Middlebury College, University of California at Berkeley, Claremont College, Columbia University, Evergreen State College, Yale University, University of Missouri-Columbia, Auburn University, and many more: that is, they typically coddle the left-wing demonstrators.

Numerous colleges have allowed students to shut down or intimidate speakers or professors. (See *Mindszenty Report*, May 2017.)

Meanwhile, many college professors remain inexplicably upbeat about the state of free speech on campuses. For example, Julian Zelizer, an historian at Princeton University and a regular on CNN, stated, "My view is that, generally, the state of college campuses is pretty good. When I hear laments about the demise of free speech at universities and colleges, and certainly about the new fascism in university life, my instinct is that these commentators are taking some examples of outlandish protest and crass behavior to paint an inaccurate picture of the majority of students."

Yet free speech is not alive and well on college campuses. Professor Zelizer might be correct that these protesters are only a minority, but protesters have been violent and have disrupted speakers on many campuses. He ignores the larger ramifications of violent protests in that they intimidate faculty and student groups from inviting speakers who are controversial. Any student group or fac-

ulty member who invites a controversial speaker will inevitably be charged with being racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic, or white supremacist. Many decide it's not worth it. And, they know they won't be backed by the administration in most cases.

These college administrators are not just cowards; they kowtow to the protesters because they too often share the sentiment that indeed their institutions reflect "white privilege." These administrators are fellow travelers in the movement for "social justice" in America. This is evident in general education curriculum requirements that classes have a social justice component, and in the huge bureaucracy of diversity officers who oversee faculty hires, academic programs, and student life. Concerns about the First Amendment, the right of free speech, religious conscience, and freedom of assembly are ignored.

University administrations should look of all places to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, at which the Board of Regents recently enacted a policy that students found to have twice engaged in violence or disorderly conduct that disrupts others' free speech will be suspended. Actually, the new policy is rather mild in that it takes two instances of disorderly conduct, and then the punishment is suspension, not expulsion.

Toleration of Violence

The failure of leaders to stick up

for the police and public safety has consequences. The "Ferguson effect," as Manhattan Institute fellow Heather Mac Donald observes, is evident in the increase in homicides in the 56 largest cities in the United States. Those cities closed 2015 with a 17% increase in homicides over 2014, the year of the Ferguson riots. Twelve cities with large black

activist organizations, the vanguard of the "anti-fascist" — Antifa — movement that has been directly involved in riots in Berkeley, Seattle, Portland, Baltimore, Charlottesville, and an array of other cities.

The Center for Community Change received funding to the tune of \$3 million from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, \$2.3 million from the Ford Foundation, and \$1.7 million from George Soros's Open Society Foundation. In addition, the Ford Foundation and the Borealis Foundation announced the formation of a Black-Led Movement Fund, a six-year pooled donor campaign aimed at raising \$100 million for the Movement for Black Lives coalition. Black Lives Matter had earlier

received a \$30 million grant from George Soros's Open Society Foundation.

Providing the Hanging Rope

Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin is reputed to have said that capitalists would sell revolutionaries the rope from which the Bolsheviks would hang them.

Today, our leaders are not just selling the rope; they are providing free rope. These corporate leaders, city officials, and university administrators are generally not revolutionaries themselves, although a few on the New York, Seattle, Berkeley, and other city councils are actually self-styled revolutionaries. Nevertheless, leaders should be held accountable for contributing to agents of disorder.

Across our nation, we are witnesses to capitulation of leaders to mobs. This surrender is seen in public officials, educators, clergy, and corporate and foundation heads. Their failure to respond to mob action expresses political opportunism, shared sentiment of injustice, and occasionally outright complicity in helping to sow disorder and violence.

We deserve better leaders.

The Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation is named after a saintly hero who refused to compromise with Nazism and Communism, and endured many years of persecution, suffering, and enforced isolation because of his dedication to his faith. Founded in 1958, it's a worldwide educational organization that provides reliable information on the secular attacks on faith and family values; upholds the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church; and exposes persecution and abuse of human rights around the globe.



populations saw murders rise, from 54% in the District of Columbia to 90% in Cleveland. Two years after the Freddie Gray riots, Baltimore by September had recorded 238 homicides in 2017. In our major cities, police are wary of making routine stops of black suspects because they will be vilified by the press and local community leaders as racists. These officers know they won't be supported by city officials.

Instead of standing for law and order, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio marched in a Puerto Rican Day parade in June honoring terrorist Oscar Lopez Rivera. Rivera was a leader in FALN, a nationalist Puerto Rican militant group that conducted a war of terror in the 1970s and 1980s, including two attacks in New York City that killed five people. Bryan Burrough in his magnificent history of American terrorism in this period, *Days of Rage* (2016), discovered that FALN conducted more terrorist bombings than did any other revolutionary group in this period. Yet, de Blasio decided to join a march intended to reconstruct Lopez Rivera into a hero.

Corporate leaders and foundations are providing funding to protest groups that organize demonstrations that sometimes turn violent. The *Washington Free Beacon*, using unredacted tax forms, discovered that millions of foundation dollars have been given to the Center for Community Change, a Washington community-organizing group that has been a leader in training and organizing "the resistance" to President Trump and to Republicans long before the November 2016 elections. Organizers for the Center for Community Change sit on many

Common Core (Continued from page 1)

White notes that although alignment was previously touted at the ACT website, all reference to that has been removed.

Sen. Brecheen says, "ACT is known to be aligned to the Common Core and if a teacher uses Common Core curriculum, rationalizing [that] it will prepare students for the ACT exam, this undermines HB3399 and ultimately, the voice of parents in our state." He also notes that ACT is a private company and that its use "puts private companies in charge of what is being taught in our state and not teachers and parents."

Oklahoma, like other states enacting the ACT mandate for juniors, are instituting a de facto national curriculum. Brecheen says, "National curriculum uniformity driven by company profits and a national marketplace for their goods and service offerings will stagnate educational improvement long term as well as threaten each state's traditional values."

White also spoke to a professor at Southeastern Oklahoma State University School of Education and Behavioral Sciences who was initially in favor of Common Core. She says that in 2011, she "began to have teacher candidates attempt to apply the new standards to the lesson plans they were required to write

for 1st-3rd grade students." But she and they discovered that the standards didn't align with the developmental levels of the students they were supposed to teach.

That professor also laments the testing that Common Core mandated. She now says, "Standards, in the end, lead to standardization, which is fine for widgets, but not for children."

From Activist to Mayor

What changes have the Common Core fight brought about for Jenni White? She is now the mayor of her small town. She homeschools her children and teaches at their homeschool co-op. She says she prays "that national public education will get better despite the near impossibility of parents and local voters to significantly affect it."

Many believe Common Core is immoral but it also seems to be immortal: even some of those who have struggled hard against it are beginning to believe it can't be killed. White takes heart that some good has come out of a fight that wasn't won in her state. Parents now tend to participate more actively in their children's education. Many have chosen to homeschool and others are at schools more often, asking questions of teachers and administrators.

IN THEIR OWN (GOOD) WORDS

It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wrack and ruin without fail.

— Albert Einstein
1879-1955