



The

# Phyllis Schlafly Report



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## Growing Rejection of Common Core

The most controversial current issue in education today is clearly Common Core. It's being more hotly debated than bullying, zero tolerance, sex ed, abortion, or even school lunches.

Common Core is the title of a new set of standards that the Obama Administration has been trying to force the states to use. Even before the standards were written, 45 states and the District of Columbia signed on, encouraged by inducements of federal funds. The principal outliers are Texas, Alaska, Nebraska, and Virginia.

Now that parents and teachers are finding out what is commanded by Common Core standards and what is being taught by "Common Core-aligned" materials, moms and teachers are raising a ruckus to try to get their states to repeal their state's involvement. Many are demanding that their state withdraw altogether from Common Core, principally because they believe it is a takeover by the Obama Administration of all that kids are taught and not taught.

The backlash against Common Core has developed into a potent political force. About 100 bills have been introduced into various state legislatures to cancel, stop or slow down Common Core requirements.

Indiana broke the ice on March 23, becoming the first state to pass an anti-Common Core law. It strikes out references to Common Core in the law and requires the state board of education to maintain Indiana's sovereignty while complying with federal standards.

When Indiana Governor Mike Pence signed this legislation that opted his state out of Common Core standards, he said, "I believe our students are best served when decisions about education are made at the state and local level."

The Indiana bill was introduced as a straight repeal of Common Core, but it ended up keeping so many Common Core requirements that the original sponsor of the bill, Senator Scott Schneider, pulled his name off the bill.

The game of some people, obviously, is to pass standards that are nearly identical to Common Core but under a different name, because the name itself has become toxic. And states are always solicitous to maintain their flow of federal funds, which the Obama Administration uses as bribes or threats.

The second state that went public against Common Core was South Carolina. On May 30, Governor Nikki Haley signed a bill abolishing Common Core standards in that state beginning in 2015.

Legislators were responding to constituent complaints that Common Core introduces frivolous and illogical teaching techniques to no apparent purpose, while imposing new standards that are not meaningful improvements, and ends up being a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach.

Parents won a remarkable victory when the Oklahoma Legislature repealed use of Common Core by the overwhelming bipartisan vote of 71 to 18 in the House and 31 to 10 in the Senate, and replaced it with academic standards written by Oklahoma. After receiving an estimated 20,000 phone calls in support of the repeal, Governor Mary Fallin signed the repeal into law on June 5.

This law directs the State Board of Education to create new more rigorous standards by August of next year. The State Regents for Higher Education, the State Board of Career and Technology Education, and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce will evaluate the newly written standards to make sure they truly make students "college and career ready."

Governor Fallin's message in signing the repeal of Common Core was blunt in explaining what is wrong with Common Core. She wrote, "President Obama and Washington bureaucrats have usurped Common Core in an attempt to influence state education standards. Common Core is now widely regarded as the President's plan to establish federal control of curricula, testing and teaching strategies."

Governor Fallin's message reminded us that "Citizens, parents, educators and legislators . . . have expressed fear that adopting Common Core gives up local control of Oklahoma's public schools." We congratulate Oklahoma's Governor for having the courage to stop the well-financed plan to railroad Oklahoma's public schools into kowtowing to federal control.

From the start, Common Core has been ballyhooed as a state-led (not federal) initiative that each state could choose to voluntarily adopt. But, as the Governor wrote, "The words 'Common Core' in Oklahoma are now so di-

visive that they have become a distraction that interferes with our mission of providing the best education possible for our children.”

Like most leftwingers, when Education Secretary Arne Duncan was besieged on all sides by Common Core critics, he played the race card, for which he later had to apologize. He accused opponents of Common Core of just being “white suburban moms.”

Duncan should have read the *New York Times*, which published a picture of both white and African-American moms protesting Common Core, wearing signs that said “My child is not common.” Parents nationwide are saying No to Common Core.

### ***My Child Is Not Common***

“My Child Is Not Common” are the words on the attention-getting signs carried by a group of white and African-American mothers protesting the adoption of the aggressively promoted Common Core standards. Common Core is scheduled to take over the testing of all U.S. kids, pre-K to 12, but parents are saying “no way” in every way they can.

Common Core was rapidly adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia before any read the standards. Four states rejected it from the outset: Alaska, Nebraska, Texas and Virginia.

Those of us who have been speaking and writing against national control of education for years are amazed at the way parents are coming out of their kitchens to protest. None of the previous attempts by the progressives to nationalize public school curriculum created anything like this kind of grassroots uprising.

Bad education fads started some fifty years ago with Whole Language, which cheated generations of school kids out of learning how to read English by phonics. Call the roll of the fads that followed: Values Clarification, Goals 2000, Outcome-Based Education, School-Based Clinics, Sex Ed, Suicide Ed, Self-Esteem Ed, New Math, History Standards, School to Work, Race to the Top, and No Child Left Behind.

Our powerful and erudite articles against all those fads never aroused the angst caused by Common Core. Those of us who for years have been criticizing the mistaken courses that kept kids from learning are flabbergasted at what we see erupting among the grassroots.

Former Education Commissioner Robert Scott was the Texas official who articulated that state’s rejection of Common Core. He pointed out how the feds tried to bribe Texas into going along.

Scott said, “We said no to Common Core and they said, ‘you want Race to the Top money?’ That was \$700 million. They said, ‘do it.’ Well, we still said, no thanks.

The feds also asked if Texas wanted a No Child Left Behind waiver and again, Texas said no.”

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal recently came out with a strong statement against Common Core: “As we have seen in Obamacare, President Obama’s Washington believes it knows better than the peasants in the states. But centralized planning didn’t work in Russia, it’s not working with our health care system, and it won’t work in education.”

No wonder the grassroots have dubbed Common Core Obamacare. That’s a play on the Obamacare health plan that is so widely despised.

Indiana became the first state to opt out when its Senate voted 35-13 to withdraw Indiana from Common Core standards on March 12, 2014. But Indiana Governor Mike Pence appears to have backtracked and just renamed it, a bureaucratic trick that doesn’t fool either side, and is a disappointment to the Indiana moms who started the national revolt against Common Core.

Pence’s action is particularly baffling because pre-Common Core Indiana was known to have one of the



highest standards of all the fifty states. Hillsdale College professor Terrence Moore said that Common Core’s English standards deserve an “F” and even omits teaching phonics, and Stanford University math professor James Milgram, who served on the Common Core math validation committee, charged that the math standards are so “incomprehensible” and complicated that they should

be called “bizarre.”

As Common Core keeps plodding right ahead in most states, parents are finding plenty to criticize in the curriculum. Parents think that the math questions children bring home are incomprehensible and stupid. New York parents are objecting to the fact that Common Core social studies standards say America is founded on the democratic principles of equality, fairness and respect for authority but don’t mention liberty, and Alabama parents are objecting to the pornography in assigned readings.

There’s no mention of education in the U.S. Constitution because the Founding Fathers believed education is a parental and a state issue. Our laws still reflect that assumption, but that concept has been widely violated in recent years by the flow of federal money with strings attached.

Parents are also suspicious of the gigantic amount of money that is being spent to promote the use of Common Core-aligned books and teacher training. Emeritus Professor Jack Hassard of Georgia State University estimates that billionaire Bill Gates has spent \$2.3 billion on Common Core.

Some say Gates is a promoter of “global sameness of education as defined by UNESCO and the United Nations.” Gates has expressed agreement with UN policies that many Americans oppose such as Agenda 21, which promotes global governance at the expense of private property and national sovereignty.

## Window Into the Future

The problems with the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) giving inferior and delayed care to veterans is a good window into the future of Obamacare. Both the VA and Obamacare suffer the endemic problems of a government-run single-payer system (a.k.a. socialism) — no choice of doctors or hospitals, no insurance companies, broken promises, lengthy waits, and bureaucratic cover-ups.

Before Barack Obama was elected, we were assured by experts writing in the mainstream media that the VA was a U.S. health care leader and a model for the country. *The New York Times* oracle Paul Krugman wrote in 2011, “Yes, this is ‘socialized medicine,’ but it works, and suggests what it will take to solve the troubles of U.S. health care more broadly.”

Obama made a lot of big campaign promises about the VA to reassure veterans. The VA scandal is now embarrassing front-page news that he can’t ignore, but he continues to pretend that there is no systemic problem in the VA system.

Now we hear that the VA maintains hidden “wait lists” for at least seven veterans hospitals. That’s exactly what critics of Obamacare predicted will happen with a government-run health care system.

The length of the secret waiting list at the VA system in Arizona is a shocking 1,400 to 1,600 patients and at least 40 veterans have died at the Phoenix VA hospital waiting for a vital treatment. Some VA patients have waited as long as 21 months to see a physician, despite the VA claim that it was meeting its goal to allow a delay of only 14 to 30 days for a patient to be seen.

“Choice” is a favorite word with many liberals, but the VA problems are proving that our choices about medical care are rapidly narrowing. There are fewer plans, and fewer doctors and fewer hospitals in every approved plan.

Some assert that there are more than 344,000 claims for veterans’ care that are waiting to be processed, and it takes an average of 160 days for a veteran to be approved for health benefits. The system has deteriorated so badly that suicides by patients and by staff have become a problem.

We hear that some VA employees maintained secret lists and falsified data in order to conceal the

wait times and hide the long delays veterans faced before seeing doctors. Nevertheless, the organization called Openthebooks.com reports that 12,549 bonuses totaling over \$8.8 million at seven troubled facilities have been paid out to reward VA employees.

When Barack Obama was a candidate for President in 2008, he made the medical treatment of veterans a big, emotional campaign issue and promised that his administration would address the backlog, greatly improve care, cure “the broken bureaucracy of the VA,” and build “a 21st-century VA.” In fact, the real goal of Obama and Senator Harry Reid has always been to grease the way to impose a universal government-run single-payer health system for all Americans.

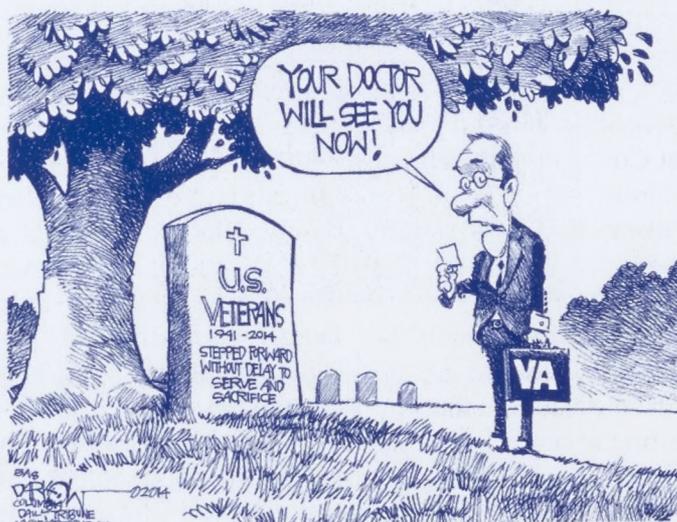
Millions of medical records at the Phoenix facility are apparently missing, and the system is reportedly 250,000 pages behind in processing new records. Patients are sometimes referred by the VA to another VA in a different state because of the unavailability of physicians and nurses, who have left the system in droves.

This problem is not limited to one VA hospital in Phoenix but has surfaced in at least 16 states, including Colorado, Florida, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia and Wyoming. As long as the Obama Ad-

ministration remains in cover-up mode, there is good reason to think that this denial of care is even more pervasive and worse than so far reported.

Meanwhile, the Obama Administration has refused access for state officials to inspect the records at VA hospitals, even though health care has traditionally been under the purview of state law. When the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration visited VA hospitals to examine records and investigate reports of big delays in care, the Obama Administration told them to get out.

So, look through the window into the future and see the government-run health care that is called Obamacare. The VA problems are exactly where Obamacare is taking Americans because the Democrats’ goal in passing Obamacare was always to take us all into a single-payer system controlled by the federal government, and the VA is precisely the model.



## *Semicentennial of LBJ's War on Poverty*

This year, the cheerleaders for big government are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the launching of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. This should be an occasion for mourning, not celebration, because that was the most expensive legislative failure in our history.

Yes, failure. Today we have four million Americans who have been unemployed for more than six months, 49 million Americans living below the poverty line, and 100 million people receiving some form of food aid from the federal government.

Johnson came into power in 1964 on the biggest landslide in U.S. history, and then he brought about the largest expansion of government in our history, surpassing even the expansion of government initiated by Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s. Instead of lifting Americans out of poverty, LBJ's 40 federal programs trapped millions of Americans in poverty and permanent dependency.

Today's legislative battles — raising the minimum wage, expanding and perpetuating government-financed health care for seniors and the poor, extending long-term unemployment benefits, and big appropriations to the education establishment are all about extending government spending for Johnson's programs.

LBJ announced his War on Poverty in his 1964 State of the Union address. He then expanded his goal to the Great Society, using the "great" concept 16 times in his commencement speech in May before a crowd of 70,000 at the University of Michigan.

With his insufferable ego, LBJ declared that he planned "to move us not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society." Johnson summoned his young speechwriter, Richard N. Goodwin, and told him to use the unfinished John F. Kennedy program "as a springboard to take on Congress" and turn it into an "aggressive Johnson program."

With a super majority of Democrats in Congress and using his famous bullying tactics known as the "Johnson treatment," LBJ pushed Congress to pass 200 expensive new laws. Key pieces of Great Society legislation were enacted by 1968 and Joseph A. Califano Jr. boasted that "This country is more the country of Lyndon Johnson than any other president."

These new spending bills included the start of Medicare, Medicaid, direct federal aid to public schools, bilingual education, Head Start, food stamps, vocational education through the Job Corps, urban renewal programs, new spending for the arts and humanities, a giant expansion of immigration, public housing, aid to college students, and handouts to non-commercial TV and radio including PBS and NPR.

LBJ's pie-in-the sky promises, followed by expansion

of the taxpayer spending he rammed through Congress, gave us a dozen years of what we, with hindsight, can see was a massive change in the role of government.

Charles Murray's influential book *Losing Ground* showed that the Great Society's changes actually made the problems of the poor and the disadvantaged worse, not better. The policy of channeling all welfare money to mothers made the father family-provider unnecessary, and thereby broke up millions of intact families.

Unfortunately, most of LBJ's spending programs survive to this day and continue to rise. The federal government is now five times as big in real dollars as it was in 1964.

LBJ's Great Society spending was not merely an Obama-style strategy to redistribute the wealth. Johnson's purpose was to shift power from the states to the federal government, from Congress to executive-branch regulators, and from big-city political machines to Alinsky-style community groups so they could organize and make demands to increase federal control.

For example, federal meddling in public school education, encrusted with lavish federal spending, started with LBJ's Great Society. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Higher Education Act were both born in 1965.

Prior to that, the federal powers-that-be never presumed to tell schools what to teach or to bribe them with federal money. The only pre-LBJ money that went to education was the GI bill to help World War II veterans attend college.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 scrapped our immigration system that had been in place since 1924 and replaced it with admitting large numbers of Latin Americans, Africans and Asians instead of Western Europeans. This greatly increased the number of immigrants with welfare and public education costs.

When LBJ started to hand out the tax-paid goodies, polls reported that a big majority of Americans trusted the federal government to do what is right. But by 1966 the favorable view of Washington declined and kept going down. Reagan wrote in his diary: "I'm trying to undo the 'Great Society.' It was LBJ's war on poverty that led to our present mess."

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<http://www.eagleforum.org>

[eagle@eagleforum.org](mailto:eagle@eagleforum.org)