

## Legislation that still haunts American Education

Attention in Washington has turned to the No Child Left Behind Act and the future of federal aid to public schools. Almost everyone seems to agree "No Child," the offspring of former President George W. Bush, needs to go, but here we are, more than four years into the next administration, and the specter of this ill-conceived law still haunts American education.

On the  
Prairie Dog  
Steve Haynes



No Child, which amounted to a massive federal intrusion into education standards, always seemed more like something the Democrats would have come up with than the GOP. The current Republican leadership seems to agree.

House Republicans voted overwhelmingly to ditch the law and its controversial standards for school "success" last month. Decisions about evaluating students should be returned to the states and local school boards, members said.

In the Senate, where liberal Democrats hold sway, such libertarian nonsense probably won't play. The Senate bill would give states more flexibility, but retain the secretary of education's authority to approve state plans.

House sponsors named their bill the Student Success Act, while Democrats dubbed it the Letting Students Down Act. It passed 221-207 with all Democrats and 12 Republicans voting no.

And while almost everyone agrees that No Child, while showing some success, is not realistic in assuming that every child will be able to achieve the same level of success in school. We all know kids aren't made the same; they have different abilities and different problems, and each one deserves to be treated as an individual.

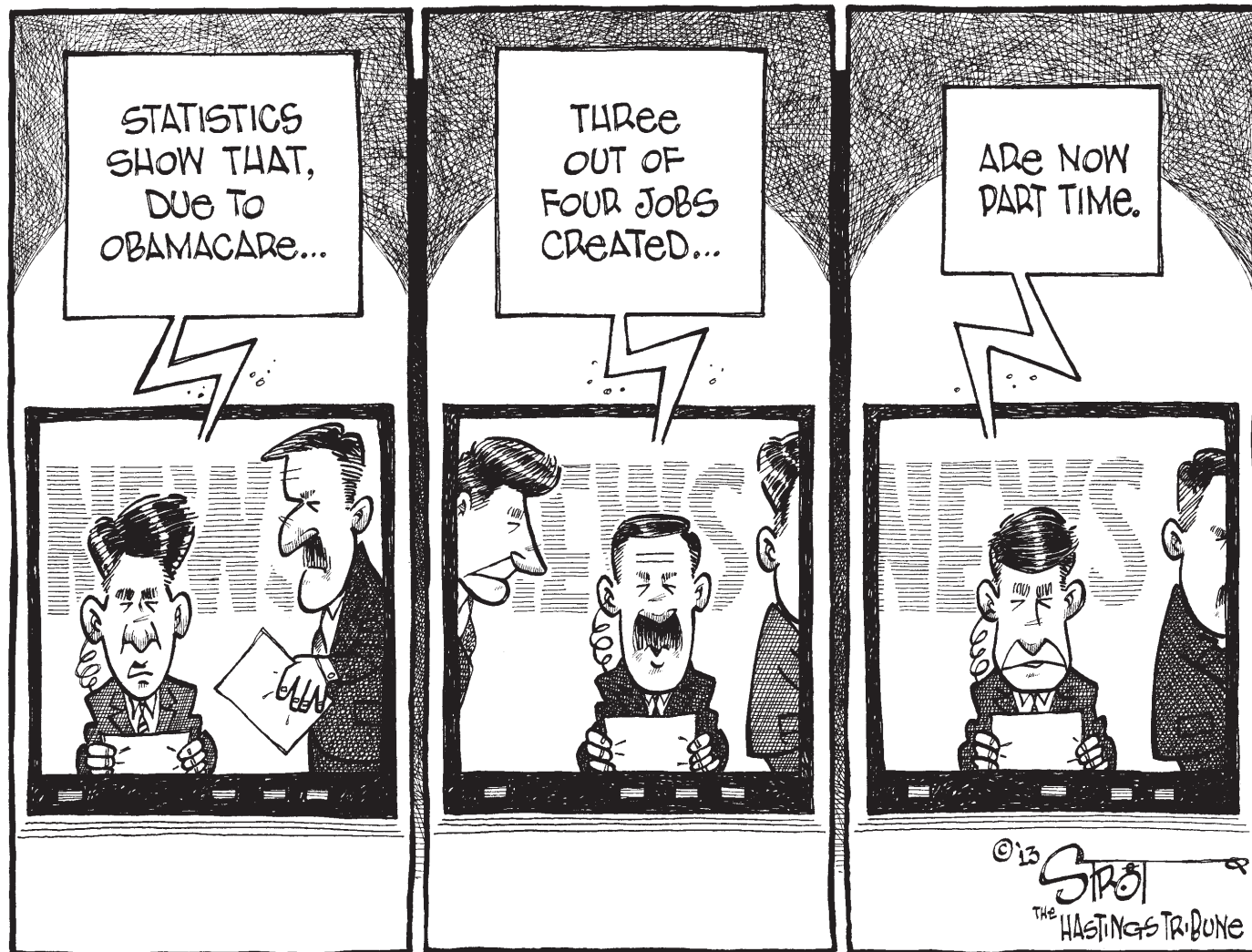
Not everyone is capable of earning a doctorate, and not everyone needs a college degree. American schools need to be focused on preparing students for what each one can achieve, for what each one aspires to and for what each is capable of.

That means abandoning the rather foolish idea of No Child that every kid can perform to a common standard by graduation and instead offering each child what he or she needs. That's not easy, of course, and writing some common federal standards for all students is nearly impossible.

Schools should be helping the brightest students to move along at the speeds they are capable of while bringing everyone up as much as possible. One goal of No Child that makes sense is to offer each child the best education he or she can handle. The practice, however, has been to bring everyone down to a lower, but more achievable, level.

Getting an agreement on how to do that may not be easy. We doubt the Senate will buy a plan where the federal government just gives out money with no strings attached, as the House majority might want. A compromise will be needed, but those have been tough to come by in Washington.

Instead of "teaching to the test," our schools should be teaching each child in the best way possible. Is that too much to ask? — Steve Haynes



## The trials and tribulations of parenthood

Being a parent is not an easy job. I remember my sister calling my mom about her three active toddlers and my mother saying, "Treasure this time, these are the best years."

My sister said she thought, "If these are the best, I can't imagine the worst." And then she had teenagers.

We have laughed over that many times, but probably none so much as now when we are parents to adult children. It is sometimes also a difficult and painful road. Quite frequently life and the people in it don't go the way you thought they would. When my children were young I imagined them coming to visit with their own families and taking up two or three pews when we attended church together. Now I don't even go to church.

I still believe God talks to me and I have always told the kids God talks to me about them until they are 18. He

Phase II  
Mary Kay  
Woodyard



then talks directly to them. He does, however, require me to interpret for Him sometimes! Not sure they believe that, but oh, well. Surely even God had times it was hard to step back and let Jesus follow His own path.

My mother's philosophy, one I wish I could adopt, was, "We made our own mistakes, let the kids make theirs." A belief she often had to remind my father of when he wanted to intervene. I often have to remind myself, just because I have been through something, I am not an expert on how to handle any given

situation or child. My mother also used to say she had gained all this wisdom and no one wanted it. Boy, is that ever the truth.

Our children grow up, and we, as parents, change as well. Recently I came the closest to depression I ever care to come. I had decided after several days that if it persisted for two weeks I would go for help. By the grace of God, just short of the two week mark it departed, not like an on/off switch, but rather like a crickety old roller coaster ride, ebbing and flowing with time.

As the new year begins, September 1st, (I'm still a school girl at heart), I have decided to treasure the past, live in the present and accept what is ahead, but more importantly to realize I am still working on becoming who I want to be. Not at all who I am right now, but hopefully a new, improved version. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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## Don't throw those away, early recycling

Everyone recycles, right?

In my childhood it was easy. We rarely had pop but those empties went back! You could get a little spending money. We saved bread sacks, grocery sacks and every glass jar. I don't quite remember when the use of plastic became so widespread but you never threw out a good margarine or whipped topping tub!

We didn't have a myriad of electronic gadgets (made of all matter of nasty toxic stuff) which are usually outdated by the time you get them out of the complicated packaging! Said packaging being a non-recyclable combination of metal, plastic, and paper melded together!

I recall dad hauling newspapers to Phillipsburg for the Royal Brand shingle factory in the late 60's. I think it started as my brother's Boy Scout project; though it may have been Lions or Masons or Men's Fellowship.

By the time my girls were in 4-H, recycling was reinforced by the club. When Norton County began recycling, the Lenora community was way ahead of the rest of the county, because of the efforts of Lenora Pride and 4-H.

When we moved to Smith County it was nice to find recycling trailers parked in town

Recycling is so instilled in my thought process I am amazed to find people who do not consider it or do it but feel it is a great inconvenience. My daughters (especially Patricia) are recycling nuts to the point it is almost annoying! She recently purchased a

This Too  
Shall Pass  
Nancy  
Hagman



new car; the deciding criteria? Nissan claims all the "plastic" parts are made of recycled material.

When we cleaned out the basement of our house there were 100's of old books. Not books you would want; I thumbed through one and discovered it was about Eugenics. Whoa--I do not want to know whose book that was. At least this isn't my family home.

Patricia knew books could be recycled if the covers were removed. She spent quite a bit of time tearing books apart. Then she got tired. She consulted her father-in-law (he works in a paper mill); they would take books.

"DONOTTHROWTHOSEAWAY!" She ordered. They haven't departed yet. I did see a news report on that paper mill showing how they recycle paper. It is an amazing process!

A friend worked in a paper mill in Lawrence during his college days in the 70's. He reported the post office once brought in a bunch of discontinued stamps. An enterprising employee picked as many as he could off the belt as they went into the sludge and sold them at a discounted price! Hmmm--I'd like to be there the day the old paper money comes in!

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Have a safe Labor Day Weekend!  
Look for your next paper on Wed. Sept. 4