

Free Press Viewpoint

'No child' program must be left behind

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.

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

Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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"WE'RE DESTROYING BIG GOVERNMENT."

Turkish toilets a cultural experience

Let's talk about a ticklish topic - Turkish toilets.

Yep, that's right. Restrooms, bathrooms, lavatories or WC's (water closets) as they are more commonly called in the land of the Turks.

We were warned before leaving the safety of the Omaha airport that Turkish facilities would be somewhat different from what we were used to.

That is true, and it started a long time ago, we discovered.

We were taken through ruins at Ephesus, once the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and besides the statues, pillars and baths, we got to tour their public toilet.

Now when I was young, my mother taught in a county school where sometimes the out-houses were two holers. The citizens of Ephesus outdid those by a long shot.

In an open-air courtyard, a large U-shaped marble bench contained holes in this public "latrina." A water system under the bench provided for the removal of waste and bad smells.

Our guide noted that rich people probably had a slave sit on the marble seat to warm it up in cold weather. We could have used that back in Kansas when we had to use those two holers in the winter.

It was an ingenious system, if not very private, but then the Roman baths were anything but private, so I imagined nobody complained about this comfort station.

Modern Turkish bathrooms are somewhat different from ours, also.

"Slit" toilets are common, we were warned,



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

but toilet paper is not, and you might have to pay a toll to go.

This all turned out to be true, but the facilities were almost always clean and in many cases, surprisingly modern.

Let's start with the slit toilets. These are porcelain basins set in the floor with a large oblong hole in them. Next to the toilet is a pail of water or a faucet so that you can "flush" them.

Almost every restroom the women encountered in Turkey had slit toilets, but most of them also had the European style as well. We learned to check all the stalls before settling for the next available.

The wild thing about these toilets is that I saw many Turkish women choose them over the seat kind. I suspect they felt that the slit or squat toilets in public places are more sanitary because you don't actually touch anything.

I can't remember a public restroom in Turkey that didn't have sinks with soap and paper towels. Most often, the towel dispenser was one that automatically rolled out a fresh towel when you waved your hand in front of it.

Most places had toilet paper, but we all carried our little package of tissues, and these were sold for 50 cents a package on every

street corner in the tourist areas.

To find what I considered a primitive toilet and modern washing facilities in the same restroom was the norm. However, I only saw one on our tour that was marked handicapped accessible, and we stopped at tourist traps, a college, parliament, foundation offices, a couple of newspapers, a television station and several airports.

The one handicapped restroom was at a large newspaper in Istanbul.

It was obvious that there is no Turks with Disabilities Act.

At the college, we ran into something else interesting - lavatories.

Needing to use the facilities before a luncheon meeting, I headed for a sign with a figure in a dress marked "Lavatori." It was a washroom with a long row of sinks and the ever-present automatic paper towel dispensers. The WC was down the hall and around the corner.

Washing is a very important part of Turkish culture and the Islamic religion. Men can be seen outside any mosque ritually washing their head, hands and feet before entering these sacred places to pray.

While washing facilities always seem to be free, you occasionally need a Turkish lira (about 50 cents) to use the WC. (We had to pay just twice in 10 days, however.)

So, if you plan to visit this beautiful and fascinating country, keep a package of tissues and a Turkish lira in your pocket. You may never need them, but it's always best to be prepared.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief finan-

Sheriffs refuse to enforce gun control

Fifty-five of 64 Colorado county elected sheriffs, together with a sizable coalition of grassroots groups, are plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the state of Colorado and until resolved by the courts will not enforce what they consider a violation of the Bill of Rights, which they have sworn to preserve.

The elected sheriffs, both Democrats and Republicans, not only believe the laws to be unconstitutional but also unenforceable.

The suit cites public safety and the Second and 14th Amendments of the Constitution as major concerns. Sheriffs were especially angered by a tweet from the Colorado Senate Democrats referring to them as criminals, which read: "2day co sheriffs stood in opposition of co's new gun laws, but not w/law-abiding citizens, but with criminals."

A county sheriff is the only elected law enforcement agent in the nation and as such has more constitutional authority than the FBI or ATF. Their election to stand by their oath to protect and defend the Constitution is serious and a big deal. Unfortunately the national media is largely silent on this story.

The same situation exists in New York where 52 of 58 elected sheriffs signed a letter asking for changes to the New York gun control laws, known as the SAFE Act, shoved through the legislature "just hours after the text became public."

The sheriffs were invited to a meeting where they expected to share their reasons for opposition but instead were threatened by Gov. Andrew Cuomo with removal from office. Who would he use to enforce removal, the six sheriffs who had not signed? Numerous New York counties have passed non-binding resolutions

Other Opinions

• Harold Pease Liberty Under Fire

to these laws in open support for the Second Amendment and those defending it. Schoharie County even denied money for enforcement.

Opponents claim that the Safe Act is unenforceable and criminalizes law-abiding citizens. Sheriffs argue in their friend-of-the-court brief: "Law enforcement's work is made more difficult attempting to enforce unclear laws that harm, rather than promote, public safety. The laws appear willfully blind to legitimate safety interests, and ... impact law-abiding firearm owners.... The Second Amendment protects arms typically possessed by law-abiding citizens, and identified that the right of self-defense is 'core' protected conduct...."

Similar opposition by elected sheriffs is rising in Maryland to a new law scheduled to go into effect this Oct. 1. ("Battleground Colorado: Sheriffs Resist," by Frank Miniter, *America's 1st Freedom*, August 2013).

Fortunately, strong support of the Constitution by law enforcement is nothing new. In January and February, angry sheriffs rose up putting the federal government on notice, vowing to defend their citizens from the federal government if agents began enforcing gun laws outside the limits of the Constitution. Those states refusing to comply were, as

they came on board: Utah, Florida, Georgia, Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska, Wyoming, Indiana, and Illinois.

With respect to the Second Amendment, Utah's Sheriffs' Association went as far as to say, "We are prepared to trade our lives for the preservation of its traditional interpretation."

Wyoming's new "Firearm Protection Act," threatens federal officials with up to five years in prison and \$5,000 in fines if convicted of attempting to enforce unconstitutional statutes infringing on the gun rights of Wyoming citizens.

Even the California State Sheriffs' Association's letter to Vice President Joe Biden, signed by 17 elected county sheriffs, was stronger than had been expected, putting him, and the federal government, on notice. "It is the position of CSSA, in accordance with the Constitution ... that law-abiding persons who meet the established requirements have the right to acquire, own, possess, use, keep and bear firearms. This right shall not be infringed."

What makes the efforts of Colorado, New York, and Maryland different is that previous resistance was aimed at the federal government taking their Second Amendment rights. This time it is their own state governments attempting to do the same thing. The sheriffs, and the populace, say no.

Those who understand history and freedom know an armed populace is critical to liberty. Thank goodness our sheriffs understand this and honor their sacred oath. If only our legislators and governors would as well.

Dr. Harold Pease teaches history and political science at Taft College. To read more of his articles, go to www.LibertyUnderFire.org.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

