

Congress Uses Bribery to Federalize Education

By John Richard Schrock

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Nowhere in the Constitution is the federal government given any jurisdiction over education. The 10th Amendment states: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."

Indeed, former President Reagan entered the White House intending to shut down the young Department of Education. Then his Secretary of Education issued the "Nation at Risk" report that concluded that American education was so abysmal that if it was the result of a foreign country's actions, we would consider it an act of war. This not only saved the Department of Education from elimination, it propelled education onto the national stage. Education has been a major campaign issue ever since.

If the federal government has no jurisdiction over state-run education, then how can it control education? By simple bribery and extortion.

While the bulk of school cost is underwritten by state taxes and local property taxes, more and more of your federal tax money has been going into education as well.

The revered Senator Everett Dirksen from Illinois used to say that a billion here and a billion there and soon you're into real money. And federal education money is getting to be "real money."

Kansas has roughly 1 percent of the population, pays 1 percent of the taxes, and serves 1 percent of the country's schoolchildren. If we want "our fair share" of the growing federal tax money going to education—our 1 percent—Kansas has to play by the federal rules.

If any state decides not to abide by the federal education rules, then that state forfeits the federal tax money which then goes to subsidize the other states. That is the extortion factor: follow the federal rules or we will give your money to others.

Those rules are permeating just about every aspect of public education. They dictate the curriculum that will be tested and marginalize any other schoolwork. They treat schools as factories with uniform raw materials (students) and penalizes schools that don't produce standardized products. They dictate the qualifications for paraprofessionals. They narrow university teacher training and teacher in-service to fit one federal mold; universities can't get funded for such programs unless they follow the federal education plan.

Across the country, local and state boards of

education are finding much of their jurisdiction and responsibility has been usurped: "We have to do this, or we lose the No Child Left Behind money."

To see the outcomes of federalized education, Kansas can simply look two states south where these regulations have now been in effect for nearly a decade. Many veteran Texas teachers took early retirement rather than adopt a scripted curriculum. Assembly-line lessons. Hourly testing.

We now know the identity of the foreign country that is committing an act of war on us through education. It is Texas.

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Added call-out:

If any state decides not to abide by the federal education rules, then that state forfeits the federal tax money.

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National education organizations, always the first to pander to power and politics, are helping to federalize education as well. The Educational Testing Service (ETS writes the content and pedagogy tests used countrywide) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education are conspiring to establish a single cutoff score for the teacher training tests. As reported in the June 11 *Education Week*, the goal is to "create a kind of interstate credential..." Another group, the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, has risen to counter the National Board certification system and will also use

nationwide exams.]