



Elites vs. The People: How to dismantle Common Core

Rebecca Downs

March 6, 2016

A Saturday morning CPAC panel, Common Core: The States Fight Back, helpfully explained what common core is, and what can be done, particularly, as the title suggests, at the state level.

Emmett McGroarty is with the American Principles Project. As he expressed it, “common core exposes rift between political elitists and the people.” This actually included those in the Republican Party. A few themes of the panel became then how those in power deal with the issue, and what common core and the standards are.

Part of the problem is that the Republican establishment listened to the media. McGroarty, and his co-presenter, Neil McCluskey, of the Cato Institute, emphasized that that is particularly because the media has not focused on the quality issues associated with common core.

Presidential candidates who had served as president, Scott Walker, John Kasich, Chris Christie, and Jeb Bush had been criticized for their failure to truly address common core.

Part of the problem involves that common core may be and has been rebranded. But, some of the problematic standards are still in place. Another issue is that presidents can’t actually deliver on promises to get rid of common core; such standards came from the stimulus.

On the note of getting rid of common core, McCluskey spoke of an Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The bill will not actually get rid of common core, but, it does say that states cannot be coerced into using common core standards. Nevertheless, McCluskey did caution attendees to be aware of regulations from the Department of Education, even if ESSA were to be in place.

One of the most emphasized points during the discussion was that there needs to be powerful action at state level. McCluskey also said to pay attention to what’s going on not only at the state, but in writing regulations.

McCluskey also reminded attendees that top down accountability is always the second or third best options. It has to be school choice as the best option, since students are all different,

otherwise fights will constantly occur. It is also too early to decide if common core has been going well or poorly, though there is a slight suggestion it's not going too well.

Red Alert Politics spoke with McGroaty after the panel, and discussed what millennials may do with their own children's education. It is too soon to tell if the status of standards will look the same at that time. As it stands now though, parents and students are not necessarily safe in private schools, or even Catholic schools.

As McCluskey had emphasized, it's all about school choice, and letting states and local governments have the power with education.