



Opposition Slams GOP-Obama “Education” Agenda

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Education activists and conservatives are outraged about the latest GOP surrender to Obama. After voters elected Republican majorities in both houses of Congress to stop the Obama administration, the GOP establishment is again preparing to stab its base in the back, this time on education. Indeed, instead of stopping Obama's radical education agenda — Common Core, a federal testing regime to enforce compliance, increased federal control over everything from pre-K to university, and more — Republicans are raising the white flag and handing the White House everything it wants and more on a silver platter. Doing the bidding of lobbyists from Big Labor, Big Business, and Big Government, the latest “education” bill, in a conference committee this week, will re-authorize almost every unconstitutional usurpation over schooling in America going back decades, all while adding new insults. Critics, though, are urging lawmakers to kill the bill and instead strip the federal education bureaucracy of its funding and power over schools entirely.

As The New American reported on November 18, multiple sources have confirmed that Congress is sending a pair of massive pseudo-education bills — one from the House, the other from the Senate — to be reconciled in a conference committee this week. Both versions are packed with unconstitutional measures, including taxpayer-funded handouts to cronies, more powers over education for the lawless Obama administration, more federal testing schemes, and much more. In the conference committee, lawmakers are expected to iron out the differences between the two bills before voting on the “compromise” again in the full Congress and sending it to Obama to be signed into law. The White House has already signaled its support for the legislation, so if activists cannot stop it in Congress, analysts say the monster bill will likely be enacted. Media reports said lawmakers may hold a vote on the final product as soon as this month.

Outside of Obama, Big Business, Big Government, and Big Labor circles — all of those forces are lobbying hard for the schemes, as The New American has documented — education experts

and activists were not amused by the latest GOP betrayal of the voters who put them in office. In a series of blog posts, for example, Charlotte Iserbyt, author of *Deliberate Dumbing Down of America* and a senior policy advisor at the U.S. Department of Education in the Reagan administration, urged Americans to flood congressional phone lines demanding a “no” vote on the “compromise” legislation. “Your globalist UN-loving elected officials, in both parties, are counting on you to put off calling 202-224-3121 to demand they vote NO on whatever comes out of Conference Committee,” wrote Iserbyt, who leaked a broad range of subversive and incriminating documents from the Education Department during her tenure there. She also said lawmakers were counting on Americans to be too busy with the holidays to stop the plot — and that the public must prove them wrong and stop the “brainwashing” legislation that will change education forever.

Iserbyt took special aim at the agenda to expand “community schools,” dubbed parental replacement centers by critics, as well as federally compliant “charter” schools with unelected boards, Bible bans, and mandatory dumbed-down Common Core standards. “This legislation is a 'game changer' for America as we have known her,” the prominent education activist continued on her widely read blog. If the legislation passes, she said, America's children will be lost to the radical education establishment and its totalitarian schemes, ranging from “universal design for living” and “community learning” to Soviet-style “workforce training” enforced by federally mandated assessments and Orwellian data collection. “In other words, your child [will be turned into] the assembly-line automaton,” Iserbyt concluded. “Children's brains virtually put in Petri dishes, dissected, and re-constituted through behavioral and mental manipulation employing Marxist and behavioral mind-control techniques to create the 'new soviet man'.” If that all sounds a bit over the top, take a brief look at the evidence compiled in Iserbyt's books and the documents she leaked while working in the education bureaucracy. The rabbit hole goes deep.

Joy Pullmann, a research fellow on education policy for The Heartland Institute, also slammed the ongoing efforts. “It contains contradictory language on student testing opt-outs, continuing to require states to get 95 percent of kids to take federal tests that will remain mandatory in grades 3-8 in reading and math. It will also mandate that states collect even more personal data about minority and poor children,” she wrote in an analysis of the legislation. “In other words, this agreement is a major missed opportunity for folks on the right side of the aisle. It perpetuates policies that have proven to have massively bad unintended consequences — such as mandates that turn schools into testing mills — and does nothing about the core problems plaguing federal education policy, starting with the fact that federal involvement has done nothing to improve student achievement while objectively bloating bureaucracy and preventing teachers from addressing students’ needs.”

In a scathing critique of what has been reported so far on the “compromise” scheme, Director Neal McCluskey with Cato Institute’s Center for Educational Freedom said it was “looking pretty bad.” The former high-school teacher highlighted three provisions that are especially troubling. First, McCluskey pointed to the bills' focus on expanding and controlling pre-K

“education.” “Is pre-kindergarten part of elementary and secondary education? By definition, no,” he wrote. “But according to preliminary reports about what is in a compromise to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] — really, the latest iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) — a preschool 'competitive grant' program will be added to the law.”

“And that’s just one of several troubling items that will reportedly be in the final legislation,” McCluskey continued, blasting existing federal programs aimed at the youngest Americans as useless or worse. “One hallmark of good lawmaking are laws that are easily understood by the people, and larding on lots of items not germane to the topic of a law is one way to move away from that democratic ideal. Adding pre-k to the ESEA lards on, though as I’ll discuss in a moment, apparently the preschool addition isn’t all that will heavily complicate the legislation.” The second “major strike” against the scheming, McCluskey said, is that the bill will be “very complex,” inaccessible to the public, and therefore, ripe for exploitation by bureaucrats and the Obama administration, who will be empowered to “essentially write law through regulation.” As the entire Obama term has shown, the last thing in the universe that the White House needs is more blank checks to impose its “fundamental transformation” of America on outraged citizens — much less on children.

Third, McCluskey added, is that the compromise legislation will purport to coerce states into various measures on schools based on test scores gleaned from the federally funded, federally mandated, deeply controversial Common Core-linked assessment regime. “That sounds like NCLB-lite: not as many schools and districts directly subject to state and federal control, but still quite a few,” he said. “Finally — at least until more information comes out — there is no evidence that the compromise eschews the back-door veto over state plans that both the House and Senate bills would give the Secretary of Education. This would continue to keep great power in the hands of the executive branch, albeit more shadowy by requiring that the Secretary keep saying 'no' to things he doesn’t like rather than just saying what he wants. But that’s what telephones and visits to states are for, right?”

“Oh, one more thing: This is all unconstitutional,” McCluskey concluded.

And that, in and of itself, should be more than enough reason to kill the bill — especially since every member of Congress took an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution, most of them with their hand on the Bible. At the state and local level, officials must interpose between the out-of-control federal government and their constituents, even if it means rejecting federal bribes and angering lobbyists from Big Labor, Big Business, and Big Government. Americans of all political persuasions should work to educate their elected representatives on the Constitution. And if necessary, officials who refuse to adhere to their oath of office must be replaced at the earliest possible opportunity.