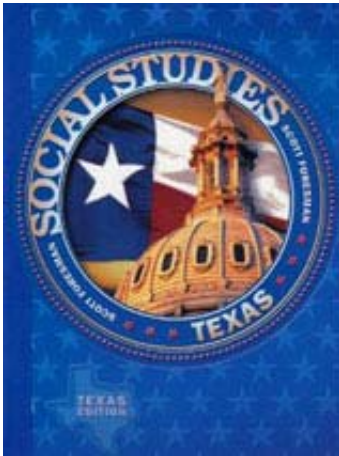


Matt Yglesias

May 23rd, 2010 at 12:43 pm

What happened to local control of education?



By Ali Frick

On behalf of those [horrified](#) — or at least mystified (“[the Atlantic triangular trade](#)“? Really?) — by the Texas Board of Education’s [assault](#) on, well, education, a California state legislator recently introduced a bill [seeking to prevent these changes](#) from reaching California students. The bill requires the California Education Board to “look out for any of the Texas content” in its own textbooks and “then report any findings to the legislature and the secretary of education.”

Since California is the largest school textbook market (with Texas in at second), I had a moment of hope that such a measure could prevent textbook companies from going through with Texas-mandated distortions. [Until I read this part](#):

California education officials say they aren’t worried about any spillover. Tom Adams, director of the state Education Department’s standards and curriculum division, was quoted by the Associated Press as **saying that the Texas standards could make their way into national editions of textbooks, but that California uses its own.**

Thus the only state with enough clout to actually counter the Texas changes already has cocooned itself with its own separate textbook standards. That other states could coordinate sufficiently to outweigh the Texas megamarket seems an unrealistic hope. Which means that one state can effectively mandate changes that will reach the entire non-California nation.

So where is the conservative outrage on this? Cato tells us that the federal government has no place in education because the “Founders wanted most aspects of life [managed by those who were closest to them](#), either by state or local government or by families, businesses, and other elements of civil society.” The 2008 GOP platform lamented the [diminishing local control](#) over education; its nominee had once publicly [called for the elimination](#) of the Department of Education. The current [darling](#) of the right rejects federal education assistance because

[“competition breeds excellence.”](#)

But so far, silence from the Right on this usurpation of local control. And it’s hard for me to think of really anything so antithetical to the Founding principles than for one state to mandate radical changes that all the other states are forced to swallow. Indeed, avoiding such an outcome was in large part [the purpose of the Senate](#), not to mention the [Supremacy Clause](#) of the Constitution — really, the scrapping of the Articles of Confederation altogether.

- [Comments](#)
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52 Responses to “What happened to local control of education?”

1. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 12:49 pm](#)

The adventuristic policy of the forced busing harmed the race relations and destroyed urban working class, which is the base of left-wing movements in every industrialized society. That paved the way for the right-wing takeover (ongoing right-wing takeover), and, ironically, re-segregation. And for Rand Paul, of course.

2. [StevenAttewell](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:00 pm](#)

I see Yee’s bill as a good first step to getting California to recognize that its hyper-specificity is actually having a net reactionary impact on the nation’s education system, and that California needs to put its weight behind progressive education beyond its state boundaries.

3. *Anon* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:01 pm](#)

Local control? In the age of Internet?

This is a debate taking place between 1950s progressives and liberals.

4. *Zach* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:05 pm](#)

This post seems a little confused. Texas is able to control the content of textbooks nationwide for market reasons, not because of any kind of federal mandate. Publishers are catering to their largest and most demanding customer base, and lacking any real demand for an alternative, they offer everyone else the same thing. I’m not especially happy about it, but it is entirely consistent with conservative free-market principles.

5. [suntzu](#) says:
[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:12 pm](#)

Pretty sure Cato's actual argument (and probably Paul's, I haven't studied his record since he's not from my state) is that schools should set their own standards and that the state governments should not determine what books they will have to use to meet them. At best, state/federal government's role on education here would be to set standards of what needs to be studied for a modest rate (and presumably to collect the tax revenues to be redistributed through school tax credits). And even there, this is fungible. There could be independent testing companies like the SAT or AP college boards instead of state set standards that could satisfy some outcome based result far better than letting state governments fudge what standards they must meet (as often happens now).

Naturally a system like that cannot work unless there are actual school choice programs, such as those it sounds like the UK is thinking of adopting. Really it sounds like you're expecting "us" to get outraged about a few idiots in Texas having overwhelming influence over a marketplace largely because federal and state governments already have overwhelming influence over what should be market functions. If a few parents really want to send their kids to be indoctrinated by conservative right-wing nutcases, so long as that school can turn out kids that can pass whatever the market decides is a fair outcome tested result of their education (and thus presumably get into colleges or otherwise get reasonable jobs/job training), I could care less.

6. [suntzu](#) says:
[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:14 pm](#)

And actually if you want a market based solution, in a few years, it will be a helluva lot easier to publish any textbook you want and have kids read it, make notes, etc with something like an iPad. That will probably be a lot harder on textbook publishing cartels. Every kid could maybe even use whatever textbook they wanted, much less every school, every classroom, etc.

7. [abb1](#) says:
[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:21 pm](#)

Forced busing affected (and devastated), for the most part, urban working class communities, not suburbs.

8. [Glaivester](#) says:
[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:25 pm](#)

Boy, this post is a stinker.

First, why should those who believe in local control be outraged about a state using its market clout to make certain that its textbooks reflect the values it wants taught? That is local control. You seem to feel that because it has a spillover effect on other states, it amounts to federalizing education.

And yet, you don't seem to offer any alternative that increases local control. You seem to suggest that any mandates by any large states should be seen as a usurpation of local control. But then, pray tell, how do you propose to create local control? You seem to imply that we need federal standards, but that would be antithetical to "local control."

Thus the only state with enough clout to actually counter the Texas changes already has cocooned itself with its own separate textbook standards. That other states could coordinate sufficiently to outweigh the Texas megamarket seems an unrealistic hope.

Couldn't states that disagree with Texas, uh, order their textbooks from California's publishers? Yes, that still limits their choices, but less so than a federal mandate.

You're only upset that someone is standing up to California's standards.

And it's hard for me to think of really anything so antithetical to the Founding principles than for one state to mandate radical changes that all the other states are forced to swallow.

As I just pointed out, they aren't, unless there is some reason why they can't order their textbooks from California's publishers rather than from Texas's.

Indeed, avoiding such an outcome was in large part the purpose of the Senate, not to mention the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution — really, the scrapping of the Articles of Confederation altogether.

The supremacy clause does not give the federal government the power to do things that it was not empowered to do. Although I understand that liberals believe that the tenth amendment to the Constitution doesn't really mean anything.

9. [Glaivester](#) says:
[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:31 pm](#)

But so far, silence from the Right on this usurpation of local control.

Most of these types of arguments are ridiculous anyway.

These type of arguments that "the effect is the same, so what does it matter if it is done by the government," usually ignore the fact that there is a difference between not being able to do something because you cannot get another involved party to agree and not being able to do something because a third party won't let you.

For example, let's take this scenario: Will, who is white, wants to marry Ann, who is black.

Scenario A: Will can't marry Ann because she doesn't want to marry him.

Scenario B: Will can't marry Ann because of an antimiscegenation law.

Would anyone argue that the two situations are exactly the same or that B is only an injustice if A is also an injustice?

10. [Don Williams](#) says:
[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:35 pm](#)

Re "And it's hard for me to think of really anything so antithetical to the Founding principles than for one state to mandate radical changes that all the other states are forced to swallow. Indeed, avoiding such an

outcome was in large part the purpose of the Senate, not to mention the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution — really, the scrapping of the Articles of Confederation altogether.”

1) This is really an enormous crock of shit. If the school systems of other states let the Texas morons dictate the content of their curriculum then those schools systems should be destroyed and replaced with something better.

2) I have a friend in Argentina called Ferfal who speaks English as a second language –but who published a book here in the USA which has rated within the top 1000 sellers on Amazon for MONTHS. It has been on sale for almost a year is still ranked at 2240. Ferfal couldn't interest book companies here in the USA in the book so he typed it up himself and self-published it using print-on-demand Lulu.com. Amazon itself has contacted him trying to figure out what the hell is going on with his sales.

3) Our goddamn lazy teachers unions need a foot up their ass.

4) If the computer profession could create Linux why the hell can't the history profession create a standard history textbook that would be cheap enough for poor school districts to afford? Besides, anyone who knows shit about history knows that the primary sources are the important things and many of those are available on the Internet for free.

Last time I checked, the history of 200 years ago doesn't change every year. Well, unless you are lying shithead revisionists. And how fucking hard is it to edit wordcopy these days?

11. *windshouter* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:36 pm](#)

Doesn't this actually say there are two editions of textbooks available, a Texas one and a California one? I'm not sure then why New York schools would not have in fact a choice. If a school district in New York is using a textbook with fantasy Texas content, the school board can be lobbied to order the California edition. The fault then is not with Texas or with schoolbook publishers, but with lazy school boards.

12. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:36 pm](#)

...Scenario B: Will can't marry Ann because of an antimiscegenation law.

The Swiss (the population of Switzerland) have a wide variety of complexions, from lily white to the darkest black, but the way they speak depends on their environment and not the complexion.

13. *Glaivester* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:37 pm](#)

Moreover, people tend to ignore the fact that the Texas decision is largely due to the fact that the left [has systematically gutted our textbooks of large amounts of important history](#) because it doesn't fit the multiculti narrative well enough.

Why is this not worth mentioning, but when Texas fires back, it's the world's biggest outrage?

14. [mikey](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:42 pm](#)

I'm very suspicious of the assumption that because Texas is such a large market, it isn't cost effective to print other textbooks for other markets. It is true that printing costs are deeply frontloaded, and if you're already printing and binding a million books the incremental cost of printing and binding another hundred thousand is small. But the printing process is all digital now, prepress and makeready costs are WAY lower than they used to be and I don't believe that New Mexico would have to pay more for a different book than if they just used the Texas book. That this entire line of argument, which forms the basis for the whole discussion about Texas textbook standards has gone so utterly unquestioned concerns me a lot.

Using technology, the web, electronic prepress and local digital print on demand, along with traditional large-run offset methodologies, any state that was interested could solve the problem without acquiescing to the Texas standards. This is simply NOT an intractable problem, but rather one quite amenable to a technological solution set, and to ignore the fundamental problem seems disingenuous at best...

mikey

15. [abb1](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:46 pm](#)

...because it doesn't fit the multiculti narrative well enough.

It seems quite obvious that Harry Reid (or anyone else for that matter) don't even imagine to hear a US politician to speak ebonics, that's 100% out of the question. What Reid was talking about (what he say Obama doesn't have) is merely stylistic and intonational hints of the ghetto.

16. [Sam Hutcheson](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:48 pm](#)

For the record, renaming the slave trade as the Atlantic "triangular trade" is an attempt to offload some of the historical moral weight of American slavery from the former Confederacy. It is also part of the on-going neo-Confederate attempt to re-write history such that the Civil War "was about states' rights, not slavery."

17. [Glaivester](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:49 pm](#)

abb1 #12: The Swiss (the population of Switzerland) have a wide variety of complexions, from lily white to the darkest black, but the way they speak depends on their environment and not the complexion.

So? My point has to do with the difference between not being able to do something because no one wants to join you and not being able to do something because you are legally prohibited from doing so. Whether or not you define "antimiscegenation" by race, by social class, etc. really is irrelevant to the point I was making.

winshouter #11: Doesn't this actually say there are two editions of textbooks available, a Texas one and a California one?

That solution is so obvious that apparently you and I are the only ones to notice it.

mikey #14: *I'm very suspicious of the assumption that because Texas is such a large market, it isn't cost effective to print other textbooks for other markets.*

And even if that is the case, they already have the California alternative to choose from.

18. *brandon* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:50 pm](#)

Every comment I have read online from people who work in the textbook industry suggests that the Texas textbook bullshit is an issue mostly confined to Texas.

The short version is that a great deal of textbook customization happens for a variety of different markets, aided by modern computer software & printing that drives the costs of customization down enough to be worthwhile; the state of affairs where California and Texas defined textbooks for the whole of the country was true ten years ago or so, but is not longer really the case.

19. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:51 pm](#)

So? My point has to do with the difference between not being able to do something because no one wants to join you and not being able to do something because you are legally prohibited from doing so. Whether or not you define "antimiscegenation" by race, by social class, etc. really is irrelevant to the point I was making.

The underclass certainly doesn't have means to segregate. Good god.

20. *Glaivester* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 1:55 pm](#)

To #16:

On the other hand, Hutcheson, much of the modern liberal narrative on the Civil War tends to be "the War was about slavery, so obviously anyone who fought for the South did so because he loved slavery." They then try to work out elaborate reasons why non-slaveholders would want to defend slavery.

(A more obvious reading would be, (a) a lot of the ppor who fought for the South were drafted and had no choice, (b) being a soldier was a way to make money and to travel, and (c) a lot of people who were not personally affected by the issues involved fought out of feelings of regional solidarity [why are we fightin' you? Because you are *here*]. In particular we give (c) short shrift, because we ignore that a lot of people at the time thought of their states as their country, and of the federal government as an alliance (much like people think of the EU now), so they figured that taking up the side of their state was the patriotic decision. They didn't think of their actions as treason to the US anymore than England thinks of not joining the Euro as treason to the EU. Also, our inability to grasp concept (c) explains a lot of the problems with our foreign policy, where we can't understand why anyone in a foreign country would have any objection to us ruling over them as long as we are more benevolent than whomever we displaced).

21. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:01 pm](#)

... (a) a lot of the ppor who fought for the South were drafted and had no choice,

Like the forced busing.

22. *Jaye* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:03 pm](#)

What exactly is stopping states from buying the California version of textbooks rather than the Texas version? The outcome in Texas was odious, but there's no reason it **has** to spill over elsewhere.

23. *james Robertson* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:11 pm](#)

You make a very, very simple mistake: thinking that the Federal Government will make better calls than an individual state (Texas, in this case). There's simply no way to keep ideology out of this kind of thing – any effort by the dept of education would swing left (even more so under Obama).

Life isn't fair, and there's no real way to make it fair. Large population areas (Texas, California) will have more sway than lower population ones (Arkansas, etc).

24. *soullite* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:15 pm](#)

I'd hate to be any northern school board member sitting when these books first get cracked open on their states. These standards will not go over well among parents in northern states. I doubt there will be a school board member left standing in the first election that follows, and it's likely the schools will be forced to buy other school books or go back to using outdated ones.

25. *Elemenope* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:17 pm](#)

What exactly is stopping states from buying the California version of textbooks rather than the Texas version? The outcome in Texas was odious, but there's no reason it has to spill over elsewhere.

I was wondering the same. Why do states feel compelled to buy from companies that provide the Texas books, when they could be patronizing the ones that provide the California books?

On the "Atlantic Triangle Trade" thing, when I was in high school they called it the Triangle Trade, but were explicit that one arm of the triangle was the slave trade. I see nothing wrong with situating the slave trade in the wider trade system so that student can understand why it happened, so is the complaint that they are no longer going to be referring to slaves at all or minimizing the moral and historical impact of the salve trade?

26. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:20 pm](#)

...I doubt there will be a school board member left standing in the first election that follows...

Because of the forced busing, and the dialect is a characteristic of a socio-economic environment, as opposed to genetically-defined "race": doctor in Lexington, MA has a different dialect than social worker in Lowell, MA, which is also different from gangster in Roxbury; whatever the ancestry of these people is coincidental and unimportant.

27. *Not as Stupid as Will Allen* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:28 pm](#)

James, being a dumbass, when looking at an issue where the state of Texas (which has its textbooks designed by dumbass redneck apologists for slavery) has done something appalling and implies it is unlikely the Federal Government would do better.

Only a total fucking moron could get that from these circumstances.

28. *Cal* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:28 pm](#)

If the Democrats in Congress had any guts, they would pass a measure that cuts off all Federal Funding for the State of Texas, its localities, agencies and agents until such time as they stop this revisionism. This would be pay back by the other 49 states for what hath Texas wrought unto this nation through BushCo, Cheney, Halliburton, Enron, the Cowboys and the demise of the Southwestern Conference.

29. *Vake* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:34 pm](#)

This post makes no sense. Texas' impact on the market for textbooks by virtue of its size is not the same as Texas FORCING other states to accept their textbook mandates.

30. *Seth* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:38 pm](#)

Local control isn't really the point. The point is deregulation for its own sake, even when it clearly doesn't enhance local control.

You see the same thing in the conservative push for selling health insurance across state lines without any national minimum standards set at the federal level. If that leads to everyone being sold insurance by companies headquartered in the state with the laxest regulation, well that's just the way the free market wants it. Bad outcomes for most citizens, but you've reduced the role of the federal government, so your job is done.

31. *JHE* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:44 pm](#)

I was wondering the same. Why do states feel compelled to buy from companies that provide the Texas books, when they could be patronizing the ones that provide the California books?

Maybe the other states find the Texas books to be more accurate? In any case, can someone point out what is factually wrong in the Texas versions?

32. *LosGatosCA* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:47 pm](#)

And it's hard for me to think of really anything so antithetical to the Founding principles than for one state to mandate radical changes that all the other states are forced to swallow.

I think the Founding Fathers had great insight into human nature along many different dimensions – selfishness, etc. – but they missed one big one. Laziness. A Congress too lazy to do it's job. A president too lazy to do his job. People too lazy to care about educating their children.

In their view the public forums would be vigorous, the competition fierce, and the ambition to lead would be great, but tyrannical if uncurbed. They depended upon the the vigor and competition to offset the prospects of tyranny.

What has happened is that the people are lazy, the press is lazy, Congress is lazier, there is no intellectual competition and ambitions of tyranny in many forms are going unchecked.

Torture, domestic spying, too big to fail, less education in Gen X than the boomers, the failures are much bigger than text books and oil spills.

The first chapters of the Decline and Fall of the US Empire are being written in our lifetime.

33. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:48 pm](#)

Why do states feel compelled to buy from companies that provide the Texas books

It sounds like there's something called "national edition", which states have to use, unless they opt out and develop their own. And Texas has a big influence over that "national edition".

34. [Matthew Yglesias » In 1787, I'm Told...](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 2:55 pm](#)

[...] my way through the text of the new Texas social-studies curricula for middle and high school. As Ali mentioned, they're pretty bad, and some of the elements that upset me most have flown under the radar [...]

35. *Midland* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 3:18 pm](#)

the fact that the left has systematically gutted our textbooks of large amounts of important history because it doesn't fit the multiculti narrative well enough.

. . . And all the article you linked to has to say is that there isn't enough detail in the military history sections. Could you be a little more coherent in your criticism?

Is the complaint that they are no longer going to be referring to slaves at all or minimizing the moral and historical impact of the slave trade?

Yes, about the slave trade. No, about the slave trade. Neosporin wasn't invented until after World War II.

36. *James Robertson* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 3:22 pm](#)

#27 – nice use of swear words and personal attack there. Actual facts? Not so much. At the local schools, union propaganda hangs on the bulletin boards in some classrooms. That's the same kind of bias, from a different end of the spectrum. It happens everywhere.

Not to mention the fact that – as others have mentioned – states are also free to buy the CA textbooks. The only problem being, those are probably just as biased in the opposite direction.

As to the Feds, I'm pretty sure they could do worse. Their track record on anything beyond purely military matters pretty much sucks, and it's hardly stellar in that arena, either.

37. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 3:33 pm](#)

Torture, domestic spying, too big to fail, less education in Gen X than the boomers, the failures are much bigger than text books and oil spills.

What do the books say about the forced busing? The forced busing is much worse than the oil, spill and the torture and the big banks.

38. *Midland* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 3:43 pm](#)

On the other hand, Hutcheson, much of the modern liberal narrative on the Civil War tends to be “the War was about slavery, so obviously anyone who fought for the South did so because he loved slavery.”

Yes, that's pretty much it, although “loved” is a sloppy, strawman word to use. As anyone who has read the original documents from the 1850s and 1860s could tell you, the distinctively culture that pushed secession, the culture that had been deliberately created after the cotton boom, was based on the virtues of slavery and the importance to every white in the south of keeping the negro in his place.

They then try to work out elaborate reasons why non-slaveholders would want to defend slavery.

There isn't anything that elaborates about it. The entire culture of the slave-holding regions was based on a class system that put slaves on the bottom, slave-owners on the top, and non-slave owners in the middle, raised on a diet of vicious racist propaganda to believe that the end of slavery would mean the loss of everything they owned, wealth, safety, and status. That “werewolf” stereotype of Blacks as savage amoral animals who need to be beaten down and kept away from white women and white people's property is still with us today.

(A more obvious reading would be, (a) a lot of the poor who fought for the South were drafted and had no choice,

There was no Confederate draft until after secession had led to the end of Federal control of the south and two years of brutal warfare had dampened the enthusiasm of the half-million or so poor southerners who had freely volunteered to fight.

(b) being a soldier was a way to make money and to travel.

Southern soldiers were paid a pittance, if at all, were badly fed and equipped, and generally the loss of their presence and labor left their families much worse off than if they'd stayed. "Travel" meant walking and camping for months on end on awful roads in unspeakable weather conditions, eating badly, without adequate shelter or footwear. It wasn't like joining the navy and getting stationed in Hawaii.

(c) a lot of people who were not personally affected by the issues involved fought out of feelings of regional solidarity [why are we fightin' you? Because you are here].

Yeah, that's certainly a factor in southern motivation, and I'm pretty certain I've never read an account of the war that didn't mention it.

Also, our inability to grasp concept (c) explains a lot of the problems with our foreign policy, where we can't understand why anyone in a foreign country would have any objection to us ruling over them as long as we are more benevolent than whomever we displaced).

An interesting and valid point, and very ironic, since the people who are the most close-minded about understanding that other people don't always see us as the Good Guys are the same right-wingers who like to make excuses for slavery.

39. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 3:49 pm](#)

At the local schools, union propaganda hangs on the bulletin boards in some classrooms. That's the same kind of bias, from a different end of the spectrum. It happens everywhere.

The children who go to the same school (which, in the US, a good substitute for "socio-economic environment") will speak the same language. And, I imagine, except for some new-immigrant enclaves, the schools in the US do have at least some mixing of "races" (by your definition). The US is not a segregated country like, say, Jim Crow South or 1980s South Africa; even if there is some extent of de facto segregation.

40. *water balloon* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 4:50 pm](#)

This post makes it sound like there are two big states, Texas and California, and then a sea of tiny states that must adopt one or other of their textbooks. Texas really isn't all that much more populous than New York or Florida, let alone the moderately large states of Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio etc. Why would Texas' crazy standards affect the rest of the country if most of the other big states don't follow them?

41. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 4:59 pm](#)

You see that in Texas, Kennedy is getting shot, and then soon they force the busing, and then they force the books for the underclass schools.

42. *Anthony* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 5:52 pm](#)

nice use of swear words and personal attack there.

O noes...not swear words! Your points are stupid.

43. *abb1* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 6:41 pm](#)

In Nevada, the people are forced not to wear the suit of the chicken when they vote for the Senators. [I read this, here](#). Good god.

44. [Every Hug, Every Fuss: Scientists Record Families' Daily Lives - Medcates.com](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 7:03 pm](#)

[...] Matthew Yglesias » What happened to local control of education? [...]

45. *trillo* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 7:52 pm](#)

Please read Diane Ravitch's book *The Language Police*, for the best book yet on this subject. Texas may not be forcing its interpretation of history on the rest of the country by virtue of its political system, but it is certainly diluting the curricula in other states because of its buying power and weird system of picking texts. If Texans want to have their own version of history, I suppose they can (lots of people like to make up their own history, as George Orwell knew). I am sure glad I teach history here in Massachusetts and not Texas. Things get loopy enough as it is...

46. *wiley* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 9:36 pm](#)

While working for a woman who edited textbooks for the state of Texas, I was able to read a letter from a woman complaining about the bare breast in a painting of a jazz club scene that didn't even show any cleavage. The woman was a loon. Evidently a lot of loons get involved with the process of approving textbooks.

47. [StevenAttewell](#) says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 10:51 pm](#)

Trillo's right – it's market power plus an unusual system of picking textbooks. Other states just go with "pick the lowest bidder, we don't care which," but textbook companies tend to go with their Texas versions as the national version because Texas is a huge bulk purchaser who actually makes decisions on content, and because there are actual fixed costs associated with printing a whole bunch of different versions.

Normally, California's position as a bulk purchaser would tend to counter-act. However, California has a really weird system that's so hyperspecific about particular details that the California texts don't transition as easily into national texts (as I understand it).

48. *yep* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 10:52 pm](#)

really, the scrapping of the Articles of Confederation altogether.

Well, no. The AOC was a failure of decentralization/local control. We improved that w/ the first Constitution, which promised some rights, against those people who didn't like rights so much (*ahemconservativescoughcough*) Then, our country fell apart because of southern conservatives and we used the 13-15th Amendments to re-conceive that earlier constitution to now prevent unconstitutional state/local mistreatment of their own citizens.

However, conservative judges ruined things like the Privileges or Immunities clause from the get-go, so it's been a long, hard road applying the rights of the new constitution to the states. So, we've slowly moved away from local control, thank God.

So while the Privileges *AND* Immunities clause of the original constitution does what you said — preventing “radical changes [by one state] that all the other states are forced to swallow” — it was our second founding — in the 14th's Privileges *OR* Immunities Clause — that prevented “local control” from being an excuse for denying constitutional rights.

49. *brooklynmatt* says:

[May 23rd, 2010 at 11:49 pm](#)

Seems to me like Texas isnt forcing this on the other states, so much as the other states are *allowing* it to be forced on them. I mean, it's just pathetic, frankly, for the other states to cry helplessness on this issue. They have the means to protect themselves, most obviously by banding together and telling the textbook publishers that they wont accept the Texas Treatment. If they cant, or wont, then frankly we deserve whatever we get.

50. *abb1* says:

[May 24th, 2010 at 2:50 am](#)

*...Seems to me like Texas isnt forcing this on the other states, so much as the other states are *allowing* it to be forced on them.*

The 1970s busing is very forced.

51. *fostert* says:

[May 24th, 2010 at 4:35 am](#)

I will agree to being eccentric, but I'd like you to agree to being either sociopathic or psychopathic. Which one is it? You obviously believe that humans should be routinely killed, so which disorder do you have? Your beliefs kill many people for your supposed theoretical reason. The theoretical reason is pure fantasy, but the deaths are real. Colonialism is a perfect example. Will you admit to those deaths and pay pennance for them? I think not. Libertarian philosophy says anyone can do anything. Things like owning slaves. So

let's put that to the test. Do you think I have a right to own you as a slave and treat you as I will? If your philosophy doesn't work there, why does it work somewhere else?

52. *B Myers* says:

[May 24th, 2010 at 12:18 pm](#)

The title of this article is "what happened to local control of education." My answer will be accurate, while Ali Frick is blowing smoke! The answer:

At least two decades ago (actually I would put it at about 40 years) liberal left-wing, socialist propagandists (some of whom belong(ed) to the now powerful hybrid socialist/communist/fascist network of transformation planners in America) posing as teachers (they actually had and do have teacher credentials, but were and are actually radical revolutionaries) agreed to convert the up-and-coming generations of our kids into socialist/communist-minded robots so that they could "fundamentally transform" America into a hybrid socialist/communist/fascist nation ruled and milked by the transformation elite. The brainwashing is still going on and as for where local control of education went...it is now in the hands of an international network of godless, amoral, self-serving, group of elitists who aim to control the orientation of what is taught in schools. And that orientation is to breed alienation of God-given liberties, the Constitution, the uniqueness of the American way of life, and generally to build hatred for our culture and system. Reason: no overthrow of a country can occur as long as its people have constitutional liberties, a sense of patriotism, and live by the rule of law. After those things are eradicated, the elitists can usher in an age of totalitarian control much like Cuba, former U.S.S.R. and Venezuela. This may sound like so much conspiracy theory, but all people need to do is look at what is happening around us. I salute Texas. Every state should outlaw unpatriotic, lying propaganda from the classroom.

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