

country's history. Before they reached the American Revolution, their work was torn asunder. Advocates for American Indians, for African-Americans, as well as Italian-Americans, and a host of other cultural interests, not to mention religious groups, screamed that their constituents' contributions were under represented. Scholars were vociferous in asserting their disagreements regarding the proper priority given geography versus economics, environment versus nationalism; human rights versus urbanization, etc. The end-product was an incoherent set of history standards which continues to be attacked to this day and not utilized! Whether the new panel of experts is to be selected by the Secretary of Education or a nonpartisan board is inconsequential; more troubling is the process that would be followed to create a consensus, to reduce criticism, and to advance the political correctness of our time.

The ineffectiveness of such a panel of experts is far less dangerous as compared to the possibility that the panel members have a preconceived agenda motivated by strong desires to change American education and society. Is it inconceivable that a certain group of ideologues—be it political or religious—will achieve a dominant position on this panel? And, is it inconceivable that they would then use the position to perniciously advance their deeply-held beliefs? And, what better way to effectuate a change in America than through its children's education? Consider the formulation of history standards, once again. A national history curriculum offers innumerable and immeasurable opportunities to inject one's biases into material related to world religions and cultures, political and economic systems, human and societal rights, etc. The dangers of curriculum intrusion are real in that many Americans feel that our schools are devoid of values. What better way to integrate values than through a uniform national curriculum?

A third reason to reject national curriculum is to prevent the bipartisan panel of experts from imposing a specific educational strategy upon all American students. We have had several examples over the past years of education "fads," products of university think tanks that often did little real-life research to support their conclusions. The 1960s saw the "new math" assume prominence in elementary and secondary math classrooms. Set theory was in vogue and replaced more traditional math computation and word problems, practically ousting them from the curriculum. In the 1970s "creative writing" was the emphasis in elementary and junior high school classrooms. Teachers were told to ignore spelling errors or sentence structure mishaps for fear of limiting students' creative energies. The result was obvious—students could not spell, punctuate, or clearly express themselves as they reached high school. In the 1980s, the purist version of "whole language" replaced the teaching of phonics, suggesting that all students would benefit from a literature-based curriculum devoid of phonics. (Recently, the National Institute of Health reported that a sizable percentage of American children need a strong phonetic foundation because they have significant learning problems which require a sound phonetic foundation if these children are to even learn how to read.) Until national testing, exposure to the fads of a particular university or school of thought could have been confined to a singular state or region of the country.

Though I've used history at the prime example because of our actual experience, President Clinton has suggested national testing for reading and math. Are the risks as great in these subjects? Yes. Whether it be the reading tests' focus being upon vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, or comprehen-

sion, choices will have to be made by the panel. Will calculators be permitted and, if so, in which parts of the math test? Should open-ended word problems be emphasized, and what role will math computation play? And, why would we believe that a national testing program would stop at reading and math?

Developing a national curriculum is subject to the same pressures as affects other public policy decisions—pressure to create a consensus among well-intentioned scholars; pressure from unrelenting ideologues and lobby groups; or pressure to be part of a larger school of thought (or educational fad). These same pressures exist, but to a lesser extent, in each of our State's departments of education. New York State, for example, has finally replaced its 13 year old Global Studies curriculum with one entitled Global History. The former Global Studies course applied a regional approach to the study of history: through the study of distinct regions of the world, students would learn to make connections, or linkages, between different economic systems, or the influence of geography on civilization, etc. Students were confounded by the approach. New York will now return to a chronological approach studying the linkages of major historical themes over time. Local educators have been suggesting the chronological approach for years; yet it took 13 years for us to convince the New York State Department of Education. One can only imagine how long it would take to change a national curriculum and how many millions of students would have suffered in the meantime. States have served well as the laboratories of education, allowing different strategies and practices to be tried, modified, and then expanded or discarded.

Through this rather lengthy letter, I have attempted to describe my concerns regarding a national curriculum and its potential for harm. In addition, there is a strong argument to be made that the Federal government has no right, under the Constitution, to impose a curriculum upon the States and their schools, but I leave that case to others better situated to respond to constitutional issues. Even though President Clinton's proposal is for "voluntary testing", most would agree that the monolithic educational textbook industry would not take very long to distribute to American schools the new curriculum needed to address these tests whether or not districts chose to utilize the test. And now I ask for your advice. Are the concerns expressed in this letter worthy of pursuit and, if so, in what way? Being a local superintendent of schools, I have had the opportunity to express my opinions and influence to some small degree educational policy matters in New York. But, clearly, the subject of national testing is quite different. I would appreciate any insights that you can provide me.

Sincerely,

MARC F. BERNSTEIN, ED.D.
Superintendent of Schools.

[From the New York Times, Oct. 2, 1997]

THE TYRANNY OF TESTS
(By Marc F. Bernstein)

North Merrick, N.Y.—The debate over President Clinton's proposal for voluntary national testing in reading and math has paid too little attention to whether a national curriculum benefits American children.

I know that the President has not recommended a national curriculum, only national testing, but educators know all too well that "what is tested will be taught." Teachers and administrators will pore over sample test questions to determine what ma-

terial must be taught so that students—and therefore teachers and schools—do well.

STANDARD EXAMS WILL NATIONALIZE SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Without doubt, there are benefits to focusing the public's attention on academic results. It fosters healthy competition among schools and keeps them accountable for teaching children properly.

There is the risk, however, that even the best-intentioned test makers will create a misguided national standard, even though the Senate has stipulated that a bipartisan board independent of the Federal Department of Education be responsible for designing the tests. Who creates the test is less troubling than the process that we in the United States follow to create a consensus, to reduce criticism and to advance the political correctness of our time. One has only to remember the recent debate over history standards to shudder at the prospect of national tests. Plus, national tests would be the battle-ground for proponents of the latest educational trends.

Past movements, like "new math" (and perhaps the more recent "new-new math") or the purists' version of "whole language," were products of university think tanks that often did little real-life research to support their conclusions.

Until now, exposure to the fads of a particular university or school of thought could be confined to a state or to one region of the country. Imagine the risks of applying a little-tested theory to the design of a test given to all American students, a national examination that would in turn determine curriculums and standards.

States have served well as the laboratories of education, allowing different strategies and practices to be tried, modified and then expanded or discarded. Almost every state now has a statewide testing program that permits parents to evaluate their schools and to compare them with similar districts nearby.

A national report card, on the other hand, would be of little use. Is there any validity in having parents in New York compare the state's scores on an eighth-grade math test with those of a more homogeneous state like New Hampshire or Vermont? Most parents can already tell whether their children are getting a good education. Yes, we must continue to strive for higher standards for our children's education, but we can do it without national tests.

H.R. 2964, THE OLDER AND DISABLED AMERICANS PROTECTION ACT OF 1997

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a bill I introduced to provide for the review of criminal records of individuals who wish to enter into shared housing arrangements with senior citizens and disabled persons. H.R. 2964, the Older and Disabled Americans Protection Act of 1997, will empower placement organizations with the authority to run FBI background checks on potential shared housing participants. Many seniors and disabled persons enter into shared housing programs which is a popular option for those who wish to remain at home, but need that little extra care and comfort to live on their own. Shared housing is a nonfee

homefinder referral service that matches seniors and disabled persons with others who wish to share a house, apartment, or mobile home at affordable rates. There are more than 350 programs throughout the country. Usually, a participant lives in the home of a senior or disabled person and provides care in lieu of rent.

Abuse in shared housing arrangements is on the rise. Most Americans do not know that senior citizens and disabled persons are all too often being manipulated and abused within the privacy of their own homes. A recent article on August 31, 1997, from the Orange County Register noted that 4 to 10 percent of Orange County's 350,000 seniors are victims of some sort of abuse. During the past 6 months, Adult Protective Services in Orange County, CA received 300 calls about financial abuse, compared with 70 calls for a similar period a year ago. These numbers ring true throughout the county, where abuse reports have risen to 2,173 in 1995 from a low of 903 in 1987. Most of these acts of abuse are either physical or financial, and unfortunately, many more cases often go unreported due to shame and reluctance on the part of the victims to report problems.

I believe that solving this problem of abuse can be done through proactive prevention. Currently, there is no national or statewide standard operating procedure available to screen shared housing participants. Shared housing referral services and senior advocates have informed me of their desire to perform criminal background checks on those who wish to live with and care for the elderly and disabled persons. H.R. 2964 will give these agencies the means necessary to protect their clients from abuse. In addition, it would exempt services using background checks from any civil liability, so they can focus strictly on providing safe living arrangements for seniors. I believe this bill will help ensure that our Nation's seniors and disabled persons can lead secure, healthy, and dignified lives. I encourage my colleagues in Congress to join me in making sure that seniors and disabled persons do not become victims.

HAITIAN REFUGEE IMMIGRATION FAIRNESS ACT OF 1997

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House passed the D.C. appropriations bill which included the Victims of Communism Relief Act, giving Nicaraguans, Cubans, and refugees immigration amnesty; and Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and certain Eastern European refugees the opportunity to apply for suspension of deportation under the standards set forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act prior to its amendment last Congress. Unfortunately, the bill did not include any relief for similarly situated Haitian refugees who fled persecution in their country and received protection in the United States. I am introducing the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act of 1997 to resolve this inequity.

After a September 1991 coup toppled the democratically elected government in Haiti, the number of persons fleeing Haiti by boat for the

United States rose dramatically. During the Bush administration, over 40,000 Haitians were interviewed at Guantanamo Bay and approximately 10,000 Haitians met the "credible fear" asylum standard and were paroled into the United States by the Attorney General. Thus, these Haitians are in the United States legally, as parolees. The parolee status of Haitian refugees has been regularly extended but "parolee" is considered a temporary position in immigration law.

Specifically, the bill will adjust the immigration status of Guantanamo Bay Haitian parolees to legal permanent residents and permit Haitian asylees who are not otherwise covered by this act to seek equitable relief. In light of the amnesty the Nicaraguans and Cubans received, this legislation is the only solution to achieve equity and fairness for Haitian refugees.

The bill is a bipartisan and bicameral effort and is strongly supported by the administration. Senators GRAHAM, MACK, KENNEDY, ABRAHAM, MOSELEY-BRAUN, and MOYNIHAN have introduced companion legislation. Haitian refugees who are in this country legally deserve treatment equal to the Central Americans. This bill is the just and fair solution and I urge expeditious adoption of this measure next session.

MARIANO CONCEPCION CRUZ—
OCTOBER 17, 1932–NOVEMBER 3, 1997

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, the island of Guam lost one of its most dedicated public servants last week on November 3. Mr. Mariano Concepcion Cruz, a former officer in the Guam Police Department was called to his eternal rest at the age of 65. He dedicated almost three decades to the people of Guam and the police department, enlisting as a patrolman in 1955 until his retirement in 1989.

Dedication and professionalism is prominently exemplified by the illustrious career of Officer Cruz. However, he is best remembered for his honesty and fairness. He viewed the law as all inclusive; applicable to everyone, from the lowest ranking citizen to the President of the United States. Officer Cruz never discriminated when it came to the law. There were several occasions when he issued traffic tickets to then-Governor Ricardo Bordallo and several of Guam's legislators. Even his own brother was issued a citation.

For his services and dedication, Officer Cruz was awarded several citations including the Commanding Officer's Citation in 1985 and the Commendation and Service Award from the Director of the Guam Police Department in 1986. The 13th Guam Legislature also passed a resolution commending him for "exemplifying the qualities that are to be encouraged in a police officer." His passing is a great loss and his presence will surely be missed.

The late Mariano Concepcion Cruz left a legacy of service and devotion to the island of Guam and its people. He is remembered by many as a mentor, and an adviser. On behalf of the people of Guam, I offer my condolences and join his widow, Rita Untalan Cruz, and their children, Priscilla and Alan in mourning

the loss of a husband, a father, and fellow servant to the people of Guam.

THANKING RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR ORGAN DONOR EFFORTS

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate 10 Ridgewood High School students for their work to raise the awareness of the importance of organ donation in their community. These students, all sophomores, walked door to door this fall, asking residents to sign donor cards. At last count, the students distributed more than 24,000 pieces of literature and 10,000 Ridgewood residents had pledged their interest in learning more about organ donation and transplantation.

I wholeheartedly commend all of these students on this magnificent humanitarian effort. They have undertaken an effort that will save many lives. This project will undoubtedly bring new hope, better health and, indeed, life to many who otherwise would have had no hope.

This community project took place in conjunction with the New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network. I would like to thank each of these students—Alyson Cangemi, Kacey Burde, Jennifer Dlugasch, Meredith Grasso, Katie Henderson, Georgette Mitchel, Tara O'Neill, Krista Pouliot, Jessica Bheden, and Morgen Weiss—and the volunteer who coordinated their effort, Ridgewood resident Janet Cangemi.

The students' project came about as an entry in the New York Daily News "Make a Difference Day" contest, which challenges volunteers to make a difference in people's lives. There are approximately 1,100 New Jersey residents waiting for life-saving organs.

The New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network was formed in June 1987 when the State's three organ procurement organizations merged into one. And that year, the legislature passed legislation requiring New Jersey hospitals to ask families of deceased patients whether organs of the deceased may be donated. The Sharing Network operates an extensive outreach program to educate the public on the need for organs and the importance of donation. Since then, the Sharing Network has more than tripled the number of organs recovered in New Jersey for transplantation. An estimated 2,600 lives have been saved through transplants.

Major religions support organ donation. The Rabbinical Council of America has approved organ donation and Pope John Paul II referred to organ donations as an act of great love.

Organ and tissue donation saves lives. Thousands of people die each year for the lack of organs because not enough people choose to be organ donors. I wish to join these young people from my community in urging everyone to sign an organ donor card. These young people deserve the recognition and commendation of this Congress.