

November 18, 1991

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Education Reporter
C-SPAN
Hall of States
400 East Capitol Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Correspondent:

I want to offer the enclosed analysis of President Bush's education plan, AMERICA 2000, and the U.S. Department of Education. It may be food for thought in covering Secretary Alexander and the issue of education generally.

In particular, the Democrat's alternative to the President's education reform bill will probably be voted on in the next few weeks. This would effectively kill the President's entire AMERICA 2000 plan, since it will set up a different framework for school reform that will stay in place for the next 10 years. The implications for the 1992 Presidential Campaign are great, because taking credit for education reform will be a key element of the Democrat's strategy to depict President Bush as having no domestic agenda.

Some of this analysis is based on somewhat inside information and/or inside perspectives from people within the agency. They are frustrated and want to pass along their perspectives. Sensitivity to those sources would be appreciated if one is speaking about this. I am employed in the Department of Education myself, but obviously I am speaking as a private individual.

Although this might not be immediately newsworthy, I hope it may help you to later develop suitable stories and give some background "flavor" of what is happening within the Department. It had been written as the first of a series, assuming that other issues would be raised in later releases.

I prefer to remain anonymous for personal reasons. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A friend.

SHADOW CABINET
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ED)
and AMERICA 2000 Activities

On April 18, 1991, President Bush and Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander launched a four-track plan for achieving genuine education reform, called AMERICA 2000. The President's AMERICA 2000 plan is a wonderful and much-needed public relations crusade, designed to motivate the nation in improving our failing educational system. The President believes that: "There will be no renaissance without revolution."

In this, Bush is acting as a leader in the truest sense of the word, rather than an autocrat. The reality of local control of schools leaves no authority for the Federal Government -- even the President -- to do much more than inspire, encourage, cheer, and promote educational reform. This is as it should be. AMERICA 2000 is truly an excellent strategy, seen against the necessity of State and local control of schools.

But as a concrete program, AMERICA 2000 might not be what people expect. Among the inspirational rhetoric and buzzwords, it contains only a few strong proposals for clear action in the immediate future. Much of it is a plan for developing a plan. There are a battery of individual proposals, all of which will undoubtedly have positive results. The bulk of hope, though rests on long-range research and innovation efforts over the next decade.

- o AMERICA 2000 is a plan with great promise, if implemented vigorously to completion. However, Alexander's plan is currently in trouble. The plan attracted good publicity at first. But now it is floundering. Having communities just make AMERICA 2000 declarations is not real progress. President Bush said in April that it is time to stop talking about education reform and time to start doing something about it. Alexander's team needs to do precisely that.

Alexander must move quickly to demonstrate visible, concrete accomplishments to the country. He must define AMERICA 2000 clearly in the public's mind, or it will continue to seem only "warm and fuzzy," though the plan is actually quite substantial. Alexander's team needs to practice some "street smart" public relations to explain the plan to the voters and publicize interim successes along the way.

The Democrats will be sorely tempted to distort and discredit his plan, as a key element of their '92 campaign against Bush, unless he swiftly brings AMERICA 2000 into clear focus. They have an enormous incentive to block the necessary legislation in Congress, then depict the President as having no domestic agenda. If AMERICA 2000 continues to flounder, it may lose credibility. Within one year, AMERICA 2000 could be politically dead.

- o A wide variety of AMERICA 2000 proposals, especially those from "Track I" needed for near-term school improvement, are all on hold, stalled, awaiting legislation from Congress. But in an embarrassing and total upset for Bush and Alexander, both the Senate and the House have replaced AMERICA 2000 with an entirely different program for school reform. Once adopted (within a few weeks), this different program would remain in place for the next 10 years. The House would hand \$700 million to States in block grants with 'no strings attached' in HR 3320; while Senate bill S 2 would increase it to \$800 million. The new State and local panels that would control these funds would be stacked heavily in favor of the teachers' unions and school bureaucracy. Those who like the American school debacle so far will love watching how the same people spend an extra \$10-30 million per State. The Democrats have neatly transformed the AMERICA 2000 initiative into a political 'payback' to the teachers' unions. Further, HR 3320 is so vague, without any control over the money, that schools could even fund on-site health clinics to distribute condoms and promote abortion (the bill specifically mentions clinics.)

Bush and Alexander need to hold Congress politically accountable for bottling up and killing the AMERICA 2000 legislation in committee. Bush and Alexander must seize the initiative, go to the people, and say: "If Congress truly cared about education they wouldn't be stalling and gutting the AMERICA 2000 plan. The President asked for action way back in April, and what has Congress done to help? Nothing. Dysfunctional as usual, Congress is incapable of being a part of the solution."

But soon, Congress will pass their alternative bill, trumpeting the "Education Boondoggle Bill" to great fanfare. The chorus in the media will join in, singing the harmony. Then the window of opportunity will be closed. It will be hard for Bush to deflect charges of being cheap with our nation's schools. If Bush vetos their liberal bill, the Democrats will steal the education issue away from him, charging that he is a miser with our schools. If he signs it, they will claim credit as the authors of school reform. Either way, it's a

LOSE-LOSE for Bush and Alexander. Of course, Congress will try to show that -- dollar for dollar -- they care more about our schools than the "Education President" does.

- o Alexander needs to mobilize the extensive network of business lobbyists on behalf of the AMERICA 2000 legislation. Business understands both the importance of excellence in education for America's futures and also the dangers of a Democratic alternative that would waste large sums.
- o Bush and Alexander need to undertake a national campaign to urge State legislatures to adopt legislation to make education reform a reality in every State. For AMERICA 2000 to succeed, Alexander must break the myth that the Federal Department of Education has any control whatsoever over local schools. Otherwise, parents and citizens will not pressure their local politicians to make the changes needed. People really do believe that change in their schools must come from Washington -- which is entirely false. Therefore, local politicians are getting a free ride on education reform and little is happening in many States and local communities. While they definitely should not micro-manage local affairs, a high-profile campaign from the Secretary and President is needed to generate awareness of State and local inaction on school reform and also to inspire citizen involvement at the local level.
- o Parental Choice is a crucial part of education reform. However, Choice has been effectively abandoned by the Congress. Also, the White House has taken a weak posture and has virtually conceded the issue. Parental Choice is all but lost in the current Congress. Private school participation and Choice in Federal programs like Compensatory Education (Chapter 1) were decisively and explicitly excluded from the bills.

Instead, to implement comprehensive Parental Choice, Alexander should actively campaign for State laws to pay tuition reimbursement to parents who opt-out of the public school system, with an actual reimbursement check being paid to the parent. Then, the parent can enroll the child in any school, religious or not, using that money, without the government jeopardizing separation of church and State. Parents, however, should not have to pay twice for their child's education, just because they choose an independent school.

- o The New American Schools Development Corporation, Track II of AMERICA 2000, raises troubling concerns: First, how much research do we need? Former Secretary William Bennett found hundreds of millions of dollars of research piling up within the Department and launched the "What Works" series of booklets to start disseminating the results of that accumulating research. Don't we already know "What Works?" Is this the best use for \$150 million in private contributions by business or should we build on the research we have already paid for?

Secondly, the research effort lacks direction. Guiding principles are needed for how the \$150 million of research will be targeted. Much stricter controls will be needed to produce meaningful research. NASDC Chairman Thomas Kean must target funds on proven methods, with demonstrated success in the classroom. But if "progressive" educational theorists are selected for the R & D teams, the research "results" will be a knee-jerk endorsement of every foolish and irresponsible idea the NEA and their radical friends have ever put forward. The proposed curricula will be crammed full of every "-ism" known, steeped in political indoctrination, and very short on academics.

At the moment, educational researchers with the most accepted credentials happen to be the same theorists who undermined our schools in the first place by replacing sound educational practice with pop psychology and Carl Roger's non-directive methods. (Those were later repudiated by Rogers himself before his death as producing a disaster for schools, and are being exposed by his protege, Dr. William Coulson. But they are still fervently pursued by educational theorists.) Alexander should not hand another \$150 million to the same charlatans who are the problem.

Also, early reports are that the selection panels may be mostly confirmed liberals. Two board members appointed to select research projects are already raising eyebrows. One launched a "condoms in the classroom, on demand" program in New York and the other a homosexual activist project in San Francisco. Given a free hand to "reinvent the American school," one can only imagine what they would come up with.

A third concern is that there is no need to "break the mold" and design schools from scratch. Educators "broke the mold" in the 1960's -- when they destroyed public education in America. "Progressive" educational theory finally captured America's schools, research journals, and teachers' colleges, and the result has been disastrous. As William McGurn said in National

Review, it would be a tremendous accomplishment for Lamar Alexander if the New American Schools of the year 2000 looked like the schools of the 1950s.

- o The American Achievement Tests, one of the best proposals of AMERICA 2000, will shift the focus onto actual results and away from the current obsession with spending money. Communities may use any test they like, while all tests will be convertible into a nation-wide scoring system. However, AMERICA 2000 should be modified to have third party evaluations of the schools, so results will be meaningful. Schools should have independent "Academic Audits." It is a conflict of interest for educators running a school to also evaluate themselves. No other organization in America evaluates itself; businesses are audited by independent accountants.
- o To gain publicity showing tangible results by the "Education President," the Department must not delay any longer on convening the "Nation of Students" National Conference. (Track III focuses on improving the education of adults already in the workforce. American workers are facing global competition with a deficient education, victims of our public schools.) Later on, State-level conferences should also be held, involving State government, business, and Members of Congress. All of these conferences should be high-profile events to attract wide media attention, demonstrating visible progress by Alexander and Bush.
- o AMERICA 2000 proposes "Governors' Academies" in each State to upgrade the teaching skills of teachers and the leadership skills for school administrators. Alexander should invite representatives from all the State Governments to a national conference, with Bush speaking, to publicly demonstrate real action. Then, the conferees should plan to practically inaugurate these Academies quickly in every State. Governors should nominate educational success stories to be highlighted at the Academies. Educators responsible for real-life successes should share what they did right that worked. Only methods proven to work in actual experience should be taught in these Academies. The Department has already made the serious mistake of funding 11 of the same teachers' colleges who have been failing to train teachers for decades. So-called "experts" who advocate questionable teaching methods and social tinkering will try to take over the Academies. The Governors' Academies must avoid all speculative, unproven educational hypotheses.



Hard Corps Report

Report No. 45 to the Firearms Coalition • Neal Knox Associates, Box 6537, Silver Spring, MD 20906 • Nov. 6, 1991

HOUSE REJECTS MAG, SEMI-AUTO BANS

* When the U.S. House rejected an "assault weapon" ban by a whopping 247-177 Oct. 17, it not only cleaned out the last of the House Crime bill's numerous anti-gun provisions, it demolished the myth that the gun lobby in general, and the NRA in particular, was dead and buried.

The victory came even as ghoulish

anti-gunners danced in the fresh blood of 42 victims of the Killeen, Texas, massacre — a tragedy which both sides thought would defeat the Harold Volkmer (D-Mo.)-James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.) amendment to H.R. 3371.

Handgun Control Inc. Chair Sarah Brady declared the outcome "dis-

gusting" and said "Some of them are trying to make up for" votes supporting the "Brady" 7-day handgun waiting period, H.R. 7, last May.

While some Congressmen were trying to straddle the fence on "gun control," the truth of the "assault weapon" nonsense was beginning to trickle out: that a very low percentage of military-style guns are used in crime, that they are indistinguishable from "ordinary" guns, and that they are, indeed, used for purposes other than shooting up schoolyards.

And while we had fruitlessly argued two years ago that Patrick Purdey could have done just as much damage with a more-conventional-appearing gun and multiple, smaller-capacity magazines, George Hennard had done even worse with two 9mm pistols — a Ruger P-89 and Glock 17 — and six magazines in Killeen.

Nevertheless, Crime Subcommittee Chairman Charles Schumer spread lies without flinching, including the biggest lie of all: "they are used in 10 percent of crimes." (*Federal Register*, p. H8024, Oct. 17, 1991)

Schumer knew he had bitten off more than he could chew soon after his subcommittee approved the gun sections. His staunch allies with more knowledge of firearms — and of what would touch off masses of gun owners — objected to the transparently broad "catch-all" definition and inclusion of popular guns like the M1 Carbine and Armscorps M14 match rifle.

Those guns were miraculously dropped from the specifically prohibited list, and the "catch-all" definition was made less obvious, after subcommittee approval and before the bill reached the full Judiciary Committee. That's not the way the civics books say government works, but that's how it sometimes works in Washington.

Schumer told the committee that the Armscorps FAL was "inadvertently deleted when we changed the list" and wanted it restored. Rep. Steve Schiff (R-N.M.) asked how many crimes had been committed with that gun.

"We've asked for that information," Schumer dodged. In fact, we've never heard of a crime committed with that large, heavy rifle. But it was put back on the list by an 18-16 vote.

The bill banned future production of over-7 magazines and their parts — for all action types, gauges and calibers (except tubular magazine .22 rimfires). Existing magazines could have been kept or transferred, provided their owners could prove they predated the law.

The so-called "assault weapon" ban struck at all firearms "by whatever name known ... which em-

Crime Bill Future Uncertain

Because the House passed the "Brady" 7-day handgun waiting period in May, and the Senate passed a hybrid version in June, the House-Senate conference committee's compromise will include some form of waiting period and/or background check. But that legislation is still a long way from becoming law.

The complicated Senate bill, S. 1241, calls for a five working-day waiting period for 30 to 60 months, followed by a "sometimes instant" check on the purchase of *all* firearms. It proposes to appropriate \$100 million per year for improving state criminal and mental records, and to operate the system — which would almost certainly be reimbursed by "user fees" on gun purchases.

But the House's overwhelming rejection of the "assault weapons" section makes it unlikely that the conference bill will include the Senate-passed DeConcini ban on 14 named guns (which supposedly would last only three years, but don't bet on it).

Whatever the eventual conference committee approves — assuming there will be a conference — both Houses will have to approve the compromise before it goes to the President. The gun issue alone won't reverse what the House or Senate has already done, but pro-gun votes in combination with opponents of other provisions of the bill could block passage.

There's a reasonable chance that Congress will get wrapped around the axle over the compromises on the death penalty, "exclusionary rule," and *habeas corpus* provisions in the significantly different crime bills. And there's at least an equal chance that President Bush will wind up vetoing the bill if it includes provisions — particularly the House *habeas corpus* section — which he and the Justice Department oppose.

Though Congress is talking about adjourning before Thanksgiving, conferees have not yet been appointed. The chances of a compromise being worked out, voted upon by both Houses and sent to the President this year are thin.

If the compromises result in a

crime bill clearly satisfactory to the President, Democrats — particularly in the House — are likely to block it. They don't want to give George Bush a domestic policy victory in an election year.

The stalling has already started over a Congressional turf issue. The House sent the Senate-passed S. 1241 back to the Senate because it includes taxes and fees, revenue matters which the Constitution says may be initiated only by the House. But that could be cleared up in a day — if the Democratic leadership wants to clear it.

What we expect is that the President will eventually get a bill that he will not want to sign, given to him as late as Labor Day. Democrats would like nothing better than forcing the President to veto a politically popular death penalty bill that he wants, to avoid *habeas corpus* language that would make capital punishment even less likely — which he doesn't want.

As is evident by the nonsensical drive to eliminate military-style guns that are rarely used in crime, the crime bill has little to do with crime and everything to do with politics.

California, New York Laws Enacted

Gov. Pete Wilson has signed a revised "more enforceable" version of California's overwhelmingly ignored Roberti-Roos "assault weapon" ban and registration law.

He also signed a law requiring training prior to purchase of a handgun, but vetoed a trigger lock bill.

In New York City, which passed a semi-auto ban in August, the Police Department has issued a press release warning that "those in possession of such (listed) assault weapons must either surrender such weapons to the Police Department or dispose of them in accordance with the law within 90 days of the (late November) effective date."

A total of 2,156 listed rifles and shotguns are registered in the city, and will clearly be confiscated if they are not surrendered — in fulfillment of the long-denied purpose of gun registration laws.

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A GUEST PERHAPS? AH, NO.

Call

HOW ABOUT A COUNTER TO COLMAN MCCARTHY? AH, NO.

Gun Bill Defeated

(Continued)

body the same configuration" (whatever that means) as 13 military-style rifles, pistols and shotguns. Existing owners could have kept them, and they could be transferred once — but only once — through a BATF-designed transfer system with 30-day waiting period and background check.

The week before the floor vote, Schumer offered pro-gun Congressmen a deal in which all other firearms provisions would be stricken in exchange for acceptance of the "assault weapon" ban. They — and gun lobbyists led by NRA — told him to buzz off.

Then Schumer voluntarily removed all but the gun and magazine bans, trying to salvage those key portions. He asked the Rules Committee, which establishes the voting procedures, to allow separate votes. He lost.

The provisions he gave away included giving local police an unappealable veto over issuance and renewals of firearms dealer licenses, and a requirement for dealers to notify local police and BATF when anyone purchased more than two handguns within 30 days.

But Schumer bluntly told the committee that he was only narrowing the bill in an effort to salvage a portion; he said he would have preferred to see an outright ban on all semi-automatics. He also said he didn't like the fact that the bill allowed present owners to keep their guns, although they could have been legally transferred only one time.

The morning before the vote, our counts indicated a narrow win, with three dozen members "undecided, leaning our way." Then came the reports of the killings at Killeen, and all bets were off.

But despite an unusual amount of skittishness, and greater than normal reluctance to vote, we appear to have lost only one vote — Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Tex.), who represents the Killeen area. The 70-vote margin (which moved from a 10-vote margin with just two minutes to go in the 15-minute voting period) included all those we had listed as "undecided" and several more.

Only two — Reps. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.) and Gus Yatron (D-Pa.) changed their initial votes to be on the winning side.

Armed Citizen Could Have Prevented Killeen

Three people in Luby's Cafeteria at Killeen — that we could name — had handguns in their cars, but because of Texas' prohibition against carrying firearms, didn't have them on their persons when George Hennard crashed his pickup into the restaurant and began shooting 42 people, killing 20 in ten long minutes.

One person who sometimes carried a gun, and said she futilely searched her purse as Hennard methodically shot his way through the room, is Dr. Suzanna Gratia, a chiropractic physician. Both her mother and father were killed.

Appearing on the syndicated "The Maury Povich Show," she said at one point she thought they were being attacked by terrorists. When four terrorists attacked a crowded cafe in Jerusalem in 1984, three of them were killed, and one captured, by armed citizens.

Povich asked Dr. Gratia if she would have shot the killer. "In a heartbeat," she replied.

"We were sitting ducks — and that makes me so blasted mad," she said.

A woman in the New York City audience wanted to know if she would "carry a more powerful gun now that this happened?"

Dr. Gratia coolly responded: "No, I don't feel any need to go out and get super-duper firepower. I just feel like having something that gives me a fighting chance!"

Revolver Choice

In Iowa Murders

A Chinese graduate student, angry over not being selected for an academic honor, methodically killed the student who won the award and the four faculty members who made the selection, then killed himself last week.

The wife of one of the victims has vowed to go to Capitol Hill demanding a gun ban. The gun used was a Taurus .38 Special snub revolver, purchased in late July in full compliance with the state's license to purchase and waiting period law.

Since it wasn't a semi-auto and didn't have a high-capacity magazine, looks like "Saturday Night Special" is about to return to the gun control lexicon.

Gunowners Do Well In Elections

Gunowners did well in most elections where firearms had been an issue Tuesday — including taking out the Virginia's anti-gun leader, Sen. Sonny Stallings, and hammering the supporters of New Jersey's "assault weapon" confiscation law.

There were only two federal races. In one, a solid pro-gunner, George Allen, defeated an anti-gun Democrat in Northern Virginia. He replaces a squishy Republican, French Slaughter, and may also replace him on the Judiciary Committee.

Former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, upset by appointed anti-gun incumbent Harris Wofford in the Pennsylvania U.S. Senate race, drew only lukewarm support from gunowners both because of his association with the Bush Administration firearms policies and his anti-gun position before he ran for governor.

In a Washington, D.C., referendum, voters re-established a law making manufacturers and dealers of broadly defined "assault weapons" civilly liable for criminal misuse of their products. NRA did not mount a campaign against the law, but will challenge it in the courts.

Also, Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), a member of the D.C. Committee, immediately introduced a bill to nullify the law.

The new Mississippi Governor, Kirk Fordice, is an NRA Life Member.

New Jersey Democrats who enacted Democratic Gov. Jim Florio's gun ban overwhelmingly lost both houses for the first time in decades — despite having passed a softening bill which was promptly vetoed. Republicans took better than two-to-one majorities in both houses.

While the major issue was a tax increase, gunowners had played key roles in organizing tax protest groups in order to take out their foes.

Pro-gunners became a clear majority in Virginia — winning 14 of 16 open seats and dominating in Northern Virginia and tidewater areas where "gun control" was a major issue. NRA ran an "independent expenditure" campaign against Stallings, who had declared his election a referendum on "gun control" in Virginia.

Dear Neal,

Enclosed is my retainer for your services as my Capitol Hill lobbyist:

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