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Study: Michigan Universities Provide Inadequate Preparation

University Officials Take Center Recommendations Seriously

Declining academic standards and questionable teaching methods at Michigan public universities produce poorly prepared K-12 teachers and graduates in other fields, according to a new study released by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy on October 31 at Michigan State University. Based on employer surveys, K-12 student test scores, teacher training studies, and an analysis of over 300 course syllabi from all fifteen state university campuses, the study found that graduates lack many basic skills that employers require, and that aspiring K-12 teachers do not get the training necessary to prepare their students for college or work.

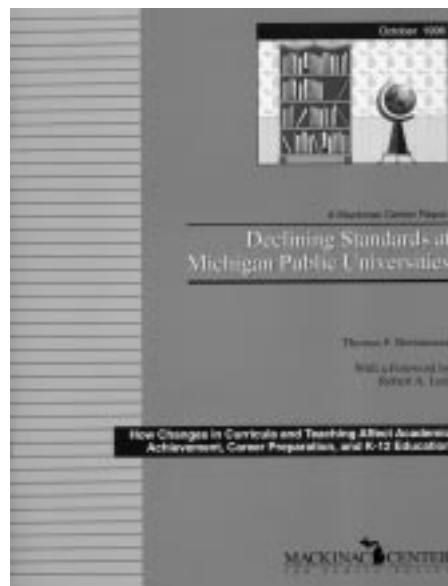
Study author Dr. Thomas Bertonneau, a Mackinac Center Senior Policy Analyst and an English instructor in Central Michigan University's (CMU's) Extended Degree Program, traces the failure to the general demise of the core curriculum and the widespread replacement of traditional methods of teaching English composition courses with the "process approach."

The core curriculum is a set of courses including history,

literature, language, and the sciences, that all students once took to gain a broad education. The "process approach" to English composition places less emphasis on formal grammar and study of classical literature than the traditional approach to the

Poor instruction in this course adversely affects a student's entire education and life."

The study recommends ways to help universities better equip new teachers and other professionals to compete in the global marketplace. They include



- Conduct a public trial to determine which method of teaching English composition—the traditional or process approach—produces the highest student achievement. Bertonneau said, "Let each method prove its worth and give students a chance to benefit from the better method."
- Re-establish core curricula and the study of books important to Western civilization.
- Offer aspiring teachers a more meaningful curriculum by requiring fewer education courses and more courses in their specialty discipline, such as math or history.
- Alumni, parents, and

employers should hold university governing boards more accountable for producing well-prepared graduates.

The study stresses that these improvements can be made without legislative action. "If the legislature or governor must get

See "**Study...**" on page 8

course. Bertonneau said, "The process approach fails to produce students well-grounded in formal grammar and classical literature. Proper instruction in English composition is critical because that course, more than any other, should teach students how to communicate clearly, how to interpret complex concepts, and how to separate fact from fallacy.

"I cannot find any authority in the Constitution for making the Federal Government the great almoner of public charity. . . ."

—U. S. President Franklin Pierce, in an 1854 veto message. See page 9 for related article.

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Patrick Henry Associates



Lawrence Reed,
President

Our Success Is Reason for Optimism

As our supporters well know, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy seeks to advance sound economic policy and greater appreciation of private property, entrepreneurship, limited government, and individual responsibility.

These ideas are certainly not new. They are, indeed, the foundations of a free society, the principles upon which Americans built a strong, prosperous and compassionate nation. It's a timeless, inspirational message but I am often approached by doubting friends who ask, "Are we really making progress in getting this message across today?"

I could, of course, preface my response with any number of wishy-washy qualifiers: "Well, we just have to keep at it and hope for the best;" or "You know, nothing worthwhile comes easily." But that wouldn't do justice to what I genuinely believe. So when someone asks me if we're making headway, I say without a moment's hesitation, "Yes!"

If you measure progress against where we were a few days ago, or before the last election, or prior to a particular recent debate in the legislature, you can always come up with reasons for pessimism. But progress ought to be considered in a broader, longer-term context. Are we better off today than we were, say, thirty years ago?

The term "privatization" was not even an entry in Webster's dictionary thirty years ago. "School choice" was a fanciful concept discussed by a mere handful of people. Faith in government spending as a cure-all was widespread. Few people were challenging the prevailing orthodoxy that called for higher taxes, more regulation, and the false and ineffective compassion of government welfare programs.

In Michigan thirty years ago, we didn't have a Headlee Amendment to constitutionally limit state spending. We didn't have a lively, informed debate about the proper role of government. And we didn't have a Mackinac Center to provide economic education to teachers and students and problem-solving ideas to the media, legislature, and the governor. The public debate today is fundamentally different and profoundly improved over where it was then.

Sometimes progress takes the course of "three steps forward, two steps backward," which can be a little discouraging at times if you don't maintain a long-term view or if you forget to "keep your eyes on the prize." Personally, I never take any setback as a reason to let up or feel glum. I take it as a reason to work harder and smarter, and so does the incredibly talented and dedicated staff I work with every day.

So let's celebrate the progress we've made, reaffirm our mission, and face the future knowing that good ideas on behalf of a noble ideal will ultimately prevail. We've come too far already to ever waste a second on self-defeating pessimism.!

"I never take any setback as a reason to let up or feel glum. I take it as a reason to work harder and smarter. . . ."

IMPACT!

Joseph Lehman
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Todd Crelly
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Congressman Hoekstra Explores Role of Ideas at Scholars Summit

Congressman Pete Hoekstra of Holland delighted an audience of over 60 scholars and guests at the annual Mackinac Center Scholars Summit at the Dearborn Inn in Dearborn on November 8. Hoekstra's keynote address was entitled "The Role of Ideas in Current Political Debate."

Hoekstra sought to both challenge and get advice from the scholars on how principles and ideas of sound economics and good government could best be communicated to opinion leaders and the public at large.

The evening event was followed by a full day of reviews of the past year's Mackinac Center-published research, and presentations by scholars in their



Congressman Pete Hoekstra discusses with the scholars the best way to convey sound economic concepts to the public.

specific disciplines. Presentations included

- Director of Labor Policy Robert Hunter on how to move Michigan toward a free market in labor

representation;

- Transportation Policy Analyst and Wayne State University Assistant Professor Dr. John Taylor on how to improve the repair and maintenance of Michigan roads;

- Adjunct Scholar and Strategic Innovations Corporation President Brian Barnier on how state-initiated

local taxing districts subvert the democratic process;

- Senior Policy Analyst and Hillsdale College Professor of Economics Dr. Gary Wolfram on

finding solutions to balancing the federal budget;

- Adjunct Scholar and Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal President Annette Kirk on the history and influence of the writings of the late Russell Kirk;

- Senior Policy Analyst Dr. Thomas Bertonneau on the restoration of university undergraduate core curricula and English composition instruction;

- Adjunct Scholar and Michigan Association of Scholars President Richard Cutler on how to reinvigorate and raise the quality of K-12 education;

- Senior Fellow in Economic Education Dr. Burton Folsom on the failures of 19th century state-run railroad and canal ventures

See "**Hoekstra...**" on page 10

Former U. S. Attorney General Edwin Meese III Calls for "Triage" Solution to Juvenile Crime

Former United States Attorney General Edwin Meese III was the featured guest at the Mackinac Center President's Council dinner on September 30



Edwin Meese III discusses his experience as U.S. attorney general with Mackinac Center board member and U.S. District Court Judge Paul Gadola

at the Amway Grand Hotel in Grand Rapids.

Meese told about 80 friends of the Center that juvenile crime would increase unless churches, schools, and law enforcement officials worked together in a "triage" system. As envisioned by Meese, these institutions would share information on youthful offenders to separate those who commit relatively minor offenses from those who are clearly headed for lives of crime. He cautioned against greater federal involvement in juvenile crime, calling it a local problem. He also endorsed privatization of correctional facilities as a viable, cost-saving option.

Before the dinner, Meese was interviewed live for fifteen

minutes by Grand Rapids TV-8 and also by the *Grand Rapids Press*. Mackinac Center Board of Advisors member Ginny Seyferth graciously coordinated the media coverage.

Meese's itinerary included an address to nearly 200 high school students at the Center's High School Debate Workshop at Grand Valley State University the following day. (See story page 6.)

Meese currently holds the Ronald Reagan Chair in Public Policy at the Heritage Foundation, a Washington, D. C.-based public policy think tank. Meese served as the 75th attorney general of the United States from 1985 until 1988. He was counselor to the president from 1981 until 1985. ■



Edwin Meese III told Mackinac Center supporters that local institutions are best suited to help juvenile offenders.

Center Research Amplified by Massive Media Exposure

Mackinac Center news media exposure has been dominated this fall by reports on a new study, *Declining Standards at Michigan Public Universities*. (See cover story.) Journalists sought out Center staff and scholars for expertise on many other policy topics as well. A few highlights of recent news coverage follow.

- The Mackinac Center released its study, *Declining Standards at Michigan Public Universities*, and called on the state's university system to adopt recommendations to improve undergraduate education. Every major news outlet was represented at the October 31 news conference at Michigan State University even though First Lady Hillary Clinton was speaking on campus at the same hour.
- Senior Policy Analyst Dr.

Thomas Bertonneau and Director of Communications Joseph Lehman gave editors and reporters personal briefings on *Declining Standards* at the offices of the *Detroit Free Press*, *The Detroit News*, *The Oakland Press*, *Midland Daily News*, and *Mount Pleasant Morning Sun*.

- Major stories in nearly every daily newspaper in the state and many campus newspapers reported the impact of and reaction to *Declining Standards*. Letters to the editor affirming the study were published in many papers.

• Several newspapers to date have editorialized about *Declining Standards*. From the *Detroit Free Press*, "... there is good reason to hear out arguments by the Mackinac Center. . . ." From the *Lansing State Journal*, "... the Mackinac Center's study performs a valuable service. . . ." From *The Oakland Press*, "... the Mackinac Center for Public Policy has ridden to our rescue."



Joseph Lehman (right) explains to Saginaw Channel 12's Tony Miller (second from left) that K-12 teachers shouldn't be singled out for blame for poor student performance.

- *Declining Standards* author Bertonneau explained weaknesses in university core curricula and English composition courses in a *Michigan Public Radio* interview broadcast on more than a dozen public radio stations throughout the state.

• *WJRT* TV-12 in Saginaw carried a 95-second news story on *Declining Standards*. It said, in part, that the study was being taken seriously by Michigan universities and that the Mackinac Center defended teachers against unfair blame for failures in the K-12 school system. Channel 10 in Lansing also covered the story.

• Nationally syndicated columnist Walter Williams devoted an entire column to the Mackinac Center's Right To Know Payroll Form and how it helps workers better understand the cost of government. The column is syndicated in about 130 newspapers.

• Former United States Attorney General Edwin Meese III represented the Mackinac Center in a fifteen-minute live interview on Grand Rapids television (Channel 8) and in a *Grand Rapids Press* story on juvenile crime. (See story page 3.)

• Lawrence Reed described in a *Detroit News* op-ed the potential harm of a proposed Michigan law that would mandate insurance coverage of pre-existing health conditions.

• News reports describing the Center's educational High School Debate Workshops were printed in newspapers in Detroit (*Detroit Free Press*), Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Cadillac, Holland, Gaylord, Zeeland, Petoskey, and Blissfield.

• Adjunct Scholar Dr. David Janda described how medical savings accounts can save Medicare from bankruptcy in an op-ed which appeared in several newspapers.

• Adjunct Scholar Robert Bidinotto reviewed history, causes, and solutions to juvenile crime in an op-ed printed in newspapers around the state. Communications Director Lehman explained how income tax cuts have historically been followed by higher government revenue on the syndicated radio program *Michigan Business Beat*, which is broadcast on several stations. ■



Thomas Bertonneau describes his recommendations to improve undergraduate education to *Michigan Public Radio*'s Rick Pluta.

New Internet Services Answer Students' Questions Quickly

<http://www.mackinac.org>

Two new Mackinac Center Internet e-mail services provide college and high school students timely answers to tough questions on economics and the national high school debate topic, juvenile crime.

"Ask the Economist" helps college students who need sound

theory and solid evidence to buttress their understanding of economic principles, or to refute economic myths perpetuated in their classrooms. Research Assistant Michael LaFaive coordinates the program and organizes Mackinac Center economists to provide accurate, scholarly e-mail responses within 24 hours.

Chris Wells, a student at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, recently asked if there was a free market remedy to the problem of monopolists charging exorbitant prices for their products. The Mackinac Center provided Mr. Wells a reading list and a two-page

See "Web..." on page 11

Expert Speakers Educate Business, Community, and Policy Leaders

In addition to extensive media coverage, hundreds of scholarly studies and commentaries, and a host of educational programs, the Mackinac Center also influences public opinion toward appreciation of the free market by providing key groups with expert guest speakers. Three examples from this fall illustrate just some of the Center's impact.

On November 12, President Lawrence Reed updated over 230 members of the Traverse City Rotary Club on recent Mackinac Center successes. Reed told the group about the growing impact of student and teacher educational programs, the Center's expanding staff and budget, and ongoing assistance to officials who are privatizing to improve quality and reduce the cost of government services. Many of the attending business people and community leaders who belong to the Rotary Club are also Mackinac Center members.

Senior Fellow in Economic Education Burton Folsom described the

failures of 19th century state-run railroad and canal companies to 50 members of the Michigan Right of Way Association in Frankenmuth on November 7. This part of Michigan history is important, he explained, because the constitution was subsequently amended to prohibit such state ventures. This paved



Burton Folsom explains the development of Michigan's private enterprise successes in the timber, carriage, and auto industries.



Joseph Overton stresses the crucial role of strategic planning at the Mackinac Center.

the way for a more free-market economy which fueled the state's rise to world leadership in the lumber, carriage, and auto industries. Folsom also briefly reviewed for the group an April 1996 Mackinac Center study on protecting private property rights.

Senior Vice President Joseph Overton explained the methods, necessity, and benefits of

strategic planning to leaders of over 25 state and national policy research institutes at a strategy planning conference in Wichita, Kansas, on October 4-5. The Mackinac Center is nationally recognized as a leader in effective management and execution of projects that influence public policy and shift public opinion toward a better understanding of sound economic principles. ■

Officials Learn For-Profit Hospitals Are Nothing to Fear

The Mackinac Center assembled over 50 policy experts to learn about for-profit hospitals at its November Issues and Ideas luncheon forum in Lansing. Jay Grinney, president of Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corporation's Eastern Group described his firm's plan to establish itself in Michigan and its vision for providing quality health care services.

Among the attending state officials were Michigan Department of Community Health Director James Haveman, State Representative Lingg Brewer, Department of Labor Deputy Director Kalmin Smith, and policy professionals from the governor's office, legislature, and executive branch.

Grinney explained Columbia/HCA's corporate strategy and its success in lowering health care costs. He also dispelled many myths surrounding the firm's for-profit network, such as reduced charity care and lack of cooperation with other health agencies. Grinney noted that no state has erected more difficult

barriers to entering the marketplace than Michigan.

Columbia/HCA has 340 for-profit hospitals operating in 36 states with \$19 billion in annual revenue. Its first acquisition target in this state is Michigan Capital Healthcare in Lansing. Attorney General Frank Kelley blocked the 50-50 joint venture proposal of Columbia/HCA and Michigan Capital. But a circuit court ruling found that a sale of the entire hospital to Columbia/HCA would be acceptable. Michigan Capital announced it will appeal the circuit court decision to the state supreme court, if necessary. Michigan Capital also said it is negotiating for the complete sale of the hospital to Columbia/HCA.

The Mackinac Center hosts regular Issues and Ideas luncheons in the state capital to expose policy experts and government officials to theoretical and philosophical aspects of current public policy debates. The forums help equip officials to enact policies which incorporate the best understanding of legal, economic, psychological, moral, and scientific principles. ■



Lawrence Reed describes the Center's growing staff, budget, and accomplishments to over 230 friends in Traverse City.

EDUCATION IMPACT

For Once, Good News about Juvenile Crime

Most stories about kids and crime are tragic. But education and bright potential are what you get when the Mackinac Center for Public Policy combines nearly 700 students and teachers from 49 high schools, five county and federal judges, and a former United States attorney general to examine the history, causes, and remedies of juvenile crime.

On September 23 through October 2, five Mackinac

Center High School Debate Workshops in Southfield, Grand Rapids, Jackson, Midland, and Boyne Falls helped debate team members and their coaches hone skills and build cases for and against increased federal involvement in the juvenile crime problem. Juvenile crime was selected as this year's national debate topic by representatives of state high school associations.

Juvenile crime experts and practicing judges from Michigan and around the nation shared insights from their diverse

experiences and provided evidence the students will use in a tough season of debate competition.

Educational presentations were given by former United States Attorney General Edwin Meese III; David Beers, a program officer at the Free Enterprise Institute in Houston, Texas; Robert James Bidinotto, an award-winning investigative journalist; Dr. Burton Folsom, Mackinac Center Senior Fellow in Economic Education; and Gregory Rehmke, Free Enterprise Institute Director of Educational Programs.

Michigan judges also shared with the students their professional knowledge of juvenile crime. They included U. S. District Court Judge Paul Gadola, Jackson County Probate Judge Susan Vandercook, Oakland County Probate Judge Joan Young, Midland County Probate Judge Donna Morris, and Antrim County Probate Judge John Unger.

Past participants, including teams from (Detroit) Southwest High



Former U. S. Attorney General Edwin Meese III delighted nearly 200 high school students debate at the Grand Rapids workshop.



Nick Grassman of Grand Rapids' South Christian High School debates the merits of federal juvenile crime programs while his opponents huddle on strategy.



David Beers helps the students understand a key economic concept: "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch."



Students at the workshops often heard free-market economic ideas for the first time.



Debaters learned the important role of economics in juvenile crime.



Rohin Verghese of Midland's H.H. Dow High School answers arguments for less federal involvement in juvenile crime.



School and (Midland) Calvary Baptist Academy won championships using ideas they learned at the educational workshops.

The full-day workshops do more than just help students win competitions. Carefully structured sessions teach a systematic approach to persuasive free-market economic arguments that many students have never before heard. Since debaters tend to be among the brightest students and those who pursue leadership positions in society, this exposure to sound economics has decades-long impact.

None of this would be possible without the foresight and commitment of Mackinac Center members. Special gifts, such as the Patricia Rodney High School Debate Workshop Scholarship Fund, help thousands of students learn free market economic concepts at debate workshops. Some of their thank you notes are shown here. ❗



Debaters take notes to add to their research on juvenile crime.

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Dear Contributor,
Thank - you
for your support of
the Mackinac Center.
It's a positive and
productive way to
encourage young people
to become involved
in social and cultural
issues in our society.

Sincerely,
Elissa Allen
debate coach
Napoleon High

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Dear Contributor,
I am very impressed with the
Mackinac Center. It is educational
and fun, and teaches us first hand. I
learned more today than a Semester
of class.

Robert Gordon
H.H. Dow High School (Midland)

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Dear Contributor,
Thank you for benefiting my education
with this debate workshop I learned a
lot of information and worked up some good
strategies.

Kyle Villberg
East Grand Rapids High School

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Dear Mr. Shale,
Thank you for taking
time to prepare this workshop
for us. It really was informative
and we did very quickly the
presentation and Mr. Shale was
especially helpful in
offering alternative arguments
that I might not have
otherwise thought of. I am
also glad that I got to
hear Judge Morris here
it had never met him
before and I am glad
I got the chance to
talk to him again. In
a wonderful day.
Sincerely,
Shatcher Patterson
Midland High School

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Dear Contributor,
I would like to
make you aware of
the fact that you
have helped many
teens to get involved
in academic debate.
It's greatly appreciated.
You are helping to
build problem solving
& real life skills.

Thanks
Again
Erin
Tanner

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Thank you for your contribution
to the Mackinac Center. It
allowed for our school to participate
in a workshop for debate.
These provide timely information
on issues that face all of us.
It also supports debate which
fosters self confidence, awareness
and provides research and speaking
skills for a life time.

Thank you very much
Heather A. Anderson
St. Regis High School
Debate Captain

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Dear Contributor,
Thank you for making this workshop possible.
I found it really informative in terms of debate
and also in several other areas. The speakers were
very interesting and informative.
It is programs like these that allow school students
like myself to really excel in all areas - not just the
limited area of debate. It helps or motivates for ourselves.
Thank you again for your support.

John O'Brien
Midland High School

O'Neil Helps Thousands Learn about Sound Economics

Omer O'Neil is president of the Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce, a business organization which works with over 6,000 job providers to improve the competitiveness and workplace quality of southern Wayne county. He has been a member of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy since 1994.

O'Neil provides his members and directors with Mackinac Center reports and commentaries on specific issues to help them better understand how government economic policies affect their businesses and livelihood.

As president, O'Neil believes his members, many of whom own their own businesses, should learn as much as they can about sound economic policy so they

make well-informed decisions in the political process. "I want my members to understand how free markets and individual liberty lead to more prosperity for their families, suppliers, customers,



Omer O'Neil

and communities. Mackinac Center literature is a great teaching tool and that's why I provide it to Chamber members."

O'Neil and his wife, Theresa, live in Allen Park and have twelve children, most of them grown. He has held various professional positions with Production Finishing Corporation in Wyandotte and Seco Safety Products. He served in the U. S. Navy in World War II. He studied at University of Detroit Mercy, Walsh College, and Wayne State University.

The Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce serves 21 communities with 400,000 residents and 10,000 businesses.!

Study, continued from page 1

involved, there is more risk of politicization," Bertonneau said. Chrysler Corporation President and Chief Operating Officer Robert A. Lutz writes in the study's foreword that the success of universities directly affects our nation's economic success.

Print and broadcast media reported widely on the study and official reaction to it. (See page 4.) Bertonneau and Mackinac Center officials met personally to discuss the study's findings with Michigan State University President Peter McPherson and CMU President Leonard Plachta.

Several universities ordered multiple copies of the document. CMU has ordered fifty in preparation for what published reports say is the creation of a special panel to consider implementing the document's recommendations at the school. CMU Provost Richard Davenport said, "Nobody is taking the report lightly. . . .!"

Setting Standards, Changing Opinions, and Getting Results

Politicians come and go, but the Mackinac Center for Public Policy is here to stay. The Mackinac Center raises the public standards for good policy and blows the whistle on the bad.

The month after the national elections is a good time for reflection and analysis. Are you satisfied with the election outcome? Did your candidates win? Did you contribute financially to campaigns? Did you do everything you could to help your candidates win? And if they were elected, are you confident that they will do what they promised to do to earn your support?

It's frustrating to be a voter, but a



James E. Kostrava, Vice President for Development

politician's challenge is not much easier. Elected officials are expected to be high-minded people of principle, knowledgeable on current issues, and full of thoughtful solutions to problems facing their constituency. Even

if a politician is all these things, there is still pressure to make big campaign promises calculated to appeal to voters. Once elected, there is more pressure to keep voters "happy" to gain re-election. Is this good representative government?

Fortunately, the problem of poor policy resulting from attempts to satisfy voter demands has a solution. The answer lies in changing public opinion. If citizens understand basic issues and economic principles such as "there is no such thing as a free lunch," they will ask candidates tough questions and support politicians who are honest enough to give tough answers and enact sound policy accordingly.

The Mackinac Center's role is to

shift public opinion to an appreciation of sound policy—free markets, limited government, personal responsibility, and respect for private property—which voters will demand at the polls, and then get from elected leaders.

Each fall we ask you to support the Mackinac Center Annual Fund with a year-end contribution. These funds help the Center shift public opinion toward sound policy that the politicians then have a strong incentive to enact. There is no more effective way to change opinion and policy toward free market solutions than investing in the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Please give generously.!

The Politics of Compassion

by William B. Irvine

Editor's note: It is appropriate this holiday season to consider what it means to be compassionate. May you experience the joy of both giving and receiving.—JGL

Not long ago a colleague and I were discussing my article on Federal disaster relief that appeared in the March 1990 *Freeman*. In the article I argued, among other things, that the government should not spend money to help rebuild the homes and businesses of the victims of the 1989 San Francisco earthquake. I pointed out that someone who could own a home in San Francisco would be wealthier than most Americans, and would therefore hardly be in need of a Federal bailout; that the homeowner could and should have bought earthquake insurance; and that by "bailing out" those who failed to buy earthquake insurance, the government was inadvertently encouraging people to go without insurance.

My colleague reacted to my article not by attempting to refute its claims, but by commenting on my lack of compassion. According to him, my views on the San Francisco earthquake showed an incredible degree of "professional detachment." This, of course, was just a socially acceptable way of calling me heartless. This is a charge I have run into before, and it is a charge that anyone who opposes Big Government must learn to live with, since by opposing Big Government one must simultaneously oppose most of the things our government does to "help people."

Indeed, a case can be made that many individuals develop modern liberal political leanings—and come to advocate a variety of government aid programs—because they think

that to do otherwise is to abandon compassion. Before we follow in their footsteps, though, we would do well to think about the nature of compassion.

There are, I think, two competing "theories of compassion"—i.e., two different ways in which we can measure how caring an individual is. There is, to begin



with, what might be called the Mother Teresa Theory of Compassion. According to this theory, when A feels sorry for B, what A should do is expend personal effort and/or personal finances on B's behalf. This theory used to be popular, but in America it has been supplanted by what might be called the Modern Liberal Theory of Compassion. According to this theory, when A feels sorry for B, what A should do is cause C to be taxed so that B can benefit from the revenues thus raised.

The Modern Liberal Theory may sound odd, but it has some obvious advantages over the competing theory. In the first place, it requires nowhere near the level of personal commitment that the Mother Teresa Theory requires. In the second place, it is far easier to spend

someone else's money than your own. In short, the Modern Liberal Theory of Compassion allows you to create the appearance that you are a caring person without simultaneously putting a dent in your lifestyle.

These two theories of compassion will, of course, differ in the "compassion rating" they assign

of the Mother Teresa Theory.

It is indeed puzzling that anyone would take a person's willingness to spend government funds on aid programs as evidence that the person is himself compassionate. By way of analogy, it would be absurd to take a person's willingness to increase Federal defense spending as evidence that the person is himself brave, or to take a person's willingness to spend government money on athletic programs as evidence that the person is himself physically fit. In the same way as it is possible for a "couch potato" to favor government funding of athletic teams, it is possible for a person who lacks compassion to favor various government aid programs; and conversely, it is possible for a compassionate person to oppose these programs.

In general, it is a mistake to use a person's political beliefs as the litmus test of his compassion. If you want to determine how compassionate an individual is, you are wasting your time if you ask for whom he voted; instead, you should ask what charitable contributions he has made and whether he has done any volunteer work lately. You might also inquire into how he responds to the trials and tribulations of his relatives, friends, and neighbors.

Politically speaking, there are three important reasons why we should favor private acts of charity over governmental aid programs. In the first place, government aid programs tend to be destructive of Americans' spirit of charity. Many Americans do not make charitable contributions and do not play a personal role in relief efforts because they feel that they have already given—not "at the office,"

to various individuals. Mother Teresa, for example, rates a perfect 10 under the Mother Teresa Theory (which is why I named it after her), but would rate perhaps a 2 under the Modern Liberal Theory; someone like Senator Edward Kennedy, on the other hand, would presumably fare better under the Modern Liberal theory than he would under the Mother Teresa Theory.

Which theory of compassion is correct? In answering this question, it is useful to ask a second question: Who, in your opinion, is a better example of a truly compassionate person, Mother Teresa or Edward Kennedy? If you think that Mother Teresa really is the more compassionate person, you will reject the Modern Liberal Theory of Compassion in favor

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"Politics..." continued from page 9

but on April 15th on their 1040 tax forms. In the second place, a case can be made that private acts of charity are more "cost effective" than government aid programs. People are unlikely to give their hard-earned money to an unworthy recipient or to a charitable organization that will waste it. Those who administer government aid programs, on the other hand, often lack the same motivation to make sure that the money they are spending is spent wisely. In the third place, private acts of charity are voluntary: No one forces anyone to give money. The same cannot be said of government aid programs, which are funded by tax dollars.

It may be true, then, that we opponents of governmental largess lack compassion—as measured by the Modern Liberal Theory of Compassion, at any rate. Fortunately for us, there is another way to measure compassion, and I trust that we fare somewhat better under this alternative yardstick.!

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"Hoekstra..." continued from page 3

and how subsequent revisions of Michigan's constitution set the stage for the state's world industrial leadership; and

• Adjunct Scholar and Patrick Henry Associates President George Leef on positive alternatives to the barriers of occupational licensure.!

Viewpoint Commentaries

Exploring Medicaid Options

September 1996 VP 96-25

Michigan's Medicaid program has ballooned into a \$4.5 billion giant. Medical savings accounts are a promising way to treat poor, disabled, and elderly people fairly and relieve Medicaid of the burden of providing long-term care for the middle class.

Let's Get Moving on the Roads

September 1996 VP 96-26

Everyone agrees that Michigan's crumbling roads need to be fixed. The state needs to make road repair a higher priority, continue recent cost-saving and efficiency measures, and adopt other recommendations that apply market forces and sound economics to road funding.

Can Michigan Keep Its Status as a Leader in Education Reform?

September 1996 VP 96-27

In Michigan, the same constitution that reads the "means of education shall forever be encouraged" is also the nation's strictest in forcing parents who choose an alternative to the public school system to pay twice for education. A tuition tax credit plan would provide some relief and address some of the flaws of a voucher system.

More Juvenile Justice, Fewer Excuses

October 1996 VP 96-28

Our 97-year-old juvenile justice system sends the message to young criminals that the law has no teeth. Until young people are held responsible for their actions, the rebounding teen

population will be accompanied by another surge in violent youth crime.

Union "Salt" Poisons the Well

October 1996 VP 96-29

Some unions "salt" non-union firms by forcing them to hire union sympathizers or even paid union organizers in an attempt to force them to unionize. This abuse means higher prices for consumers and loss of freedom for non-union firms and their workers.

Cutting Taxes to Raise Revenue

October 1996 VP 96-30

Are income tax cuts voodoo economics or an economic jump-start? History tells us what Coolidge, Kennedy, and Reagan learned when they slashed income taxes.

High Time to Reverse Low Standards in Higher Education

November 1996 VP 96-31

Blame for the decline in literacy is often hung on K-12 public education. However, the university system that teaches the teachers should be made accountable for its contribution to K-12 educational problems.

New Energy Tax Is Bad Economics and Faulty Science

November 1996 VP 96-32

One of President Clinton's first actions was to propose an energy tax. This destructive tax could be back in 1997, but it is based on unsound economics and dubious science.

What Is Corporate Responsibility?

November 1996 VP 96-33

What does it mean for a firm to be a good corporate citizen? Are generous benefits, family-friendly policies, and earth-friendly practices enough, or are there also responsibilities to customers and shareholders?

Pre-Existing Condition Mandate Is Unhealthy Policy

November 1996 VP 96-34

By forcing insurance companies to cover pre-existing conditions, a proposed Michigan law may make health insurance harder to get, not easier.

Journals

Michigan Privatization Report

Summer 1996

MPR 96-03 \$3.00

This issue frames privatization's big picture: an AFSCME labor union chief who embraces privatization, private prison successes, the role of private business in fostering civil society, an interview with a public school superintendent whose district is



contracting with The Edison Project, and the regulatory extermination of America's jitney bus industry. 20 pages.

offered to university presidents, faculty, alumni, employers, and elected officials. 88 pages.

Studies

Declining Standards at Michigan Public Universities

October 1996

S96-04

\$10.00

Reflecting a national problem, Michigan public universities are producing graduates who are unprepared for K-12 teaching careers and the business world. The demise of the traditional core curriculum, indoctrination in the classroom, and questionable teaching methods that emphasize emotion and subjectivity over rigor and critical thinking are to blame. The study documents extensive evidence cited by employers that college graduates lack crucial communications and thinking skills, and it finds a link between poor training of aspiring teachers and declining K-12 student performance. Analysis of over 300 undergraduate course syllabi reveal the dominance of trendy, politicized course content. Eleven practical recommendations for improvement are

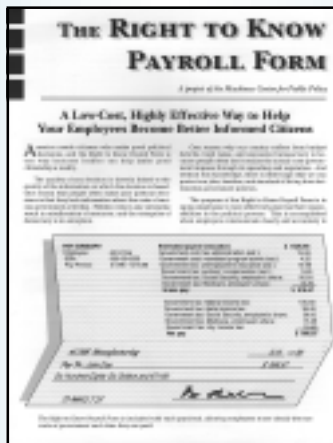


Special Items

The Right To Know Payroll Form Kit

#RTKPF Complimentary

Hundreds of companies are finding The Right To Know Payroll Form an easy, effective way for employers to show their workers the true cost of government with every paycheck. An informative four-page brochure explains how to modify pay stubs to show line-by-line the hidden government-mandated costs paid by the company on behalf of the worker. These



Freedom from Bad Labor Advice

#LABOR Complimentary

This informative resource gives workers straight answers to common questions about labor unions and employee rights and responsibilities. The question-and-answer format helps workers understand how federal labor law affects them directly on topics including mandatory union membership and payment of dues. Public employees, including teachers, will also benefit from this handy brochure.



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"Web..." continued from page 4

response that explained how free-market conditions such as free entry to the marketplace, competition of substitutes, and foreign competition all work to limit a monopolist's advantage and make it short-lived.

Mackinac Center scholars who have served as the "economist on call" include Dr. Gary Wolfram, Dr. Richard Ebeling, Dr. Martin Wing, and Dr. Lawrence Reed.

"Ask the Debate Coach" provides a 48-hour e-mail turnaround to high school students' questions on juvenile crime and debate techniques and tips. High School Debate Workshop Coordinator Kendra Shrode and Adjunct Scholar Gregory Rehmke work to answer questions such as the one asked by Milford, Michigan, high school debater Mark Laidlaw regarding the effectiveness of government youth employment programs in reducing juvenile crime. Rehmke provided evidence that specific government job programs have failed to produce many jobs or reduce crime, and that the tax burden created by these programs actually makes it more difficult for private job providers to employ young people.

Both "Ask the Economist" and "Ask the Debate Coach" are accessible through the Mackinac Center World Wide Web site at <http://www.mackinac.org>.

Please direct questions about the Web site to Manager of Information Systems Jeff Tucker at tucker@mackinac.org!

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

Reed Wins Prestigious Roe Award

Mackinac Center President Lawrence Reed has received a 1996 Roe Award in recognition of his leadership and innovation in state and local public policy research and education.

Reed was honored along with John Fund, editorial writer for *The Wall Street Journal*, and William Eggers, director of the Los Angeles-based Reason Foundation's Privatization Center.

The award is sponsored by the State Policy Network (SPN) and was given at the group's annual meeting last September in Minneapolis.

The Roe Award is named to honor Thomas A. Roe, a founding director of the South Carolina Policy Council and a founder and chairman emeritus of SPN.

Presenting the award, Roe noted that in addition to Reed's leadership in public policy, the Mackinac Center's willingness to mentor new state-focused research institutes is especially valuable.

Reed acknowledged the award with praise for the professional staff and scholars of the Mackinac Center, saying "This great honor is a tribute to the strategic planning, hard work, and results-oriented focus of my Mackinac Center colleagues."

Reed, a past president of SPN, was also elected to another term on its Board of Directors.

The State Policy Network is an organization serving and promoting the work of more than 35 independent, nonparti-

san public policy research institutes at state and local levels.!

Maze Begins Labor Policy Work

Recent Wayne State University law graduate William Maze is the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's new labor policy research assistant.

Maze is working with Director of Labor Policy Robert Hunter to help Michigan workers and employers better understand their legal rights and responsibilities.

Maze's projects include helping union members exercise their civil rights, analyzing the economic impact of labor laws, and educating workers and the public about labor representation in a free market.

Maze is a member of the state bar of Michigan. He received his Juris Doctor from Wayne State in 1996, where he was editor in chief of the school's law newsletter, *The Advocate*. In 1995, he was an intern at the National Labor Relations Board, Region 7 (Detroit). He earned a bachelor



William Maze

of arts degree from The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1992.

Hunter, a former NLRB member, said, "William has precisely the skills we need to help the Mackinac Center advance a free market in Michigan labor representation. His NLRB experience and desire to help people exercise their rights make him a great addition to the team."!



Lawrence Reed received this congratulatory letter from Byron Lamm, State Policy Network Executive Director.

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