

HOW THE GOVERNMENT INFLUENCES OUR CULTURE

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Government is the most powerful influence on our culture today because government spends about \$2.5 trillion a year, and every dollar carries the power to affect our culture and behavior through laws, regulations, grants, entitlements, and tax credits. More influential than all the laws and judicial decisions, and even the media, in directing our culture is the arm of government known as the public schools. The public schools are guiding the morals, attitudes, knowledge, and decisionmaking of eighty-nine percent of American children. They are financed by \$500 billion of our money each year, forcibly taken from us in taxes, federal, state and local, which the public school establishment spends under a thin veneer of accountability to school board members and government-run elections.

Prior to the 1960s, the public schools used a McGuffey Reader style curriculum,¹ where American kids learned not only the basics, but also values such as honesty, patriotism, and respect for elders, and immigrant children assimilated by learning our language, laws, and customs. For example, the *American Citizens Handbook* published for teachers by the National Education Association in 1951 proclaimed, and I quote, "It is important that people who are to live and work together shall have a common mind, a like heritage of purpose, religious ideals, love of country, duty, and wisdom to guide and inspire them."² The message of this civics handbook was fortified by selections suitable for memorization, such as Old and New Testament passages, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, the Boy Scout Oath, and patriotic songs. My, how the public schools have changed, and how the teachers unions have changed since 1951.

The turning point came in the 1960s with the great influence of the humanist John Dewey and his Columbia Teachers College acolytes who ar-

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¹ See generally McGuffey's Readers World, <http://www.mcguffeyreaders.com> (last visited Sept. 15, 2007).

² THE AMERICAN CITIZENS HANDBOOK 313 (Joy Elmer Morgan ed., Nat'l Educ. Ass'n of the U.S. 4th ed. 1951) (1941).

gued against objective truth, against authoritative notions of good and evil, against religion and tradition.³ And then Sidney Simon's 1970 book called *Values Clarification*,⁴ which sold nearly a million copies, was widely used to teach public school students to cast off their parents' values and make their own choices based on situation ethics. Then the public schools welcomed the Kinsey-trained⁵ "sexperts" to change the sexual morals of our society from favoring sex in marriage to sexual diversity. Concepts of right and wrong were banished, and the children were taught about varieties of sex without any reference to what was moral and good.

Since the 1950s, the public schools have rejected the *Meyer-Pierce* doctrine⁶ that parents have the fundamental right to control the upbringing of their children, and instead have adopted the view that the village—that is, the government—should guide the child. While tolerating massive illiteracy, the public schools are now powerfully impacting our culture by inculcating the values of situation ethics, diversity, and the easy acceptance of sex outside of marriage. American history and literature courses now teach the doctrines of U.S. guilt and multiculturalism instead of the greatness of our heroes and our successes. Public schools have become fortresses in which school administrators exercise near-absolute power to guide the students' values, morals, attitudes, and hopes, while parents are kept outside the barricades.

Federal courts confirm the monopoly power of the schools to affect our culture. The Ninth Circuit ruled last year that a public school can teach students "whatever information it wishes to provide, sexual or otherwise," and that parents' right to control the upbringing of their children "does not extend beyond the threshold of the school door."⁷ After heavy criticism in Congress, the Ninth Circuit tried to soften the word "threshold," but boldly reaffirmed the decision.⁸

In five circuits within the last two years, federal courts have handed down antiparent, pro-public school decisions. Federal courts upheld the right of public schools to indoctrinate students in Muslim tradition and practices;⁹ to force students to attend a program advocating homosexual

³ See generally John Dewey, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1B1-362639.html> (last visited Sept. 15, 2007).

⁴ SIDNEY B. SIMON ET AL., *VALUES CLARIFICATION: A HANDBOOK OF PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS* (1972).

⁵ See generally Alfred Charles Kinsey, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Kinsey-A.html> (last visited Sept. 15, 2007).

⁶ See *Pierce v. Soc'y of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925) (holding that parents have a right "to direct the upbringing and education" of their children); *Meyer v. Nebraska*, 262 U.S. 390 (1923) (recognizing a constitutional basis for parental rights).

⁷ *Fields v. Palmdale Sch. Dist.*, 427 F.3d 1197, 1206 (9th Cir. 2005), *aff'd per curiam*, 447 F.3d 1187 (9th Cir. 2006).

⁸ *Fields*, 447 F.3d 1187.

⁹ See *Eklund v. Byron Union Sch. Dist.*, 154 F. App'x 648 (9th Cir. 2005).

conduct that used minors in sexually suggestive skits;¹⁰ to force students to watch a one-hour prohomosexual video;¹¹ to censor any mention of Intelligent Design;¹² to use classroom materials that parents considered pornographic;¹³ to force students to answer nosy questionnaires with suggestive questions about sex, drugs, and suicide;¹⁴ and to deny a divorced father's right to get his own son's school records.¹⁵

This is not only a culture issue; it is a free speech issue. The schools are censoring views that do not conform to the diversity and multiculturalism culture they are determined to teach. The courts upheld a public school in prohibiting an antigay T-shirt but ordered a school to permit an extremely offensive anti-Bush T-shirt.¹⁶ The free speech issue has now expanded beyond the schools as the gays try to get people fired who criticize the gay agenda.¹⁷ The courts have upheld the constitutional right of any schoolchild to refuse to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.¹⁸ But neither school nor court offered any child or parent the right to opt out of any one of these programs that I listed.

To sum up, it is not a question of whether or if the government will or should define our culture. Government schools are, every day, powerfully defining the culture of the nation our children will live in by inculcating the values of diversity, multiculturalism, American guilt, situation ethics, and the easy acceptance of sex acts outside of marriage. There is no proof that the American people have democratically chosen this definition of our culture. It has been done with the power of government employees spending the people's money. And since there is no prospect that either the public

¹⁰ See *Brown v. Hot, Sexy and Safer Prods., Inc.*, 68 F.3d 525 (1st Cir. 1995); *Parker v. Hurley*, 474 F. Supp. 2d 261 (D. Mass. 2007) (applying *Brown*).

¹¹ See *Morrison v. Bd. of Educ.*, 419 F. Supp. 2d 937, 939–40 (E.D. Ky. 2006), *rev'd on other grounds*, Nos. 06-5380/5406/5407, 2007 U.S. App. LEXIS 25133, at *5–6 (6th Cir. Oct. 26, 2007) (noting that the school created two training videos to satisfy the consent decree's antiharassment training provisions aimed at preventing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation).

¹² See *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area Sch. Dist.*, 400 F. Supp. 2d 707 (M.D. Pa. 2005).

¹³ See *Evans-Marshall v. Bd. of Educ. of the Tipp City Exempted Vill. Sch. Dist.*, 428 F.3d 223 (6th Cir. 2005).

¹⁴ See *C.N. v. Ridgewood Bd. of Educ.*, 430 F.3d 159 (3d Cir. 2005).

¹⁵ See *Crowley v. McKinney*, 400 F.3d 965 (7th Cir. 2005).

¹⁶ Compare *Harper v. Poway Unified Sch. Dist.*, 445 F.3d 1166 (9th Cir. 2006), with *Guiles v. Marineau*, 461 F.3d 320 (2d Cir. 2006).

¹⁷ In 2006, gay-rights advocates obtained three highly publicized terminations of opponents: Luis Padilla was initially fired from a large Virginia corporation for having a sign supporting traditional marriage in his car window, State Brief, *Man Fired in Dispute Tied to Marriage Issue*, RICH. TIMES DISPATCH, Oct. 20, 2006, at B2; Robert J. Smith was fired from the Washington Metro transit board for expressing his personal, religious views on a cable television program, Lena H. Sun & Matthew Mosk, *Metro Board Member Fired for Comment on Gays*, WASH. POST, June 16, 2006, at A1; and Michael Campion was not rehired by the Minneapolis Police Department because of his prior affiliation with a group critical of the homosexual lifestyle, Rochelle Olson, *Illinois Consulting Firm Suing Minneapolis*, STAR TRIBUNE, Sept. 12, 2007, at 2B.

¹⁸ *W. Va. State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).

schools or taxes will be abolished anytime soon, our task is to stop governmental institutions from directing our culture in ways that the American people do not want to go.