

5/8/91
Presclub.

LAST YEAR AT THIS TIME, THE DRIVE TO REFORM OUR SCHOOLS WAS MAKING HEADWAY, AND I TALKED TO ^{a similar group here} ~~MANY OF YOU~~ ABOUT HOW WE AT HERITAGE WERE ATTEMPTING TO DISPEL THE MYTHS SURROUNDING JUST HOW WE IMPROVE EDUCATION.

WELL, IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ONLY ONE SHORT YEAR HAS PASSED, BECAUSE SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED THAT HAS ENORMOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN. IT SEEMS THAT WE CANNOT PICK UP A NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OR NEWS MAGAZINE WITHOUT READING AN ARTICLE ABOUT A LONE LEGISLATOR, OR GROUP OF PARENTS THAT ARE SUCCEEDING IN FIGHTING THE ESTABLISHMENT.

hold up
pile →

NEVER BEFORE HAVE CONSERVATIVE VIEWS ABOUT EDUCATION, -- RESTORING CONTROL TO PARENTS, HOLDING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS UP TO HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND NOTIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS -- NEVER BEFORE HAVE THESE IDEAS HAD SUCH CURRENCY IN POPULAR CIRCLES.

AND YET, THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF REFORMERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, THIS LAST YEAR HAS SET US ON THE RIGHT COURSE FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE FAR TO GO, A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS LAST YEAR TRANSFORMED THE EDUCATION DEBATE IN THIS COUNTRY. ALONG THE WAY, WE HELPED PROMOTE THE PEOPLE AND THE IDEAS THAT MADE THIS HAPPEN.

I'D LIKE TO SHARE A COUPLE OF EXAMPLES.

LAST SPRING, A VERY UNIQUE AND VERY BOLD LEGISLATOR FROM WISCONSIN, NAMED POLLY WILLIAMS, PASSED THROUGH THE MOST SWEEPING EDUCATIONAL CHOICE LEGISLATION WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE. ALTHOUGH MODEST BY MOST OF OUR STANDARDS, IT IS THE FIRST PLAN TO ALLOW CHILDREN TO CHOOSE A PRIVATE SCHOOL, WITH STATE DOLLARS PAYING TUITION. THE MILWAUKEE VOUCHER PLAN ENABLED UP 450^{POOR} CHILDREN TO ATTEND ONE OF SEVEN PARTICIPATING NON-SECTARIAN PRIVATE SCHOOLS. \$2500 IN STATE DOLLARS FOLLOWS THE ~~LOW-INCOME~~ CHILD TO THE SCHOOL OF CHOICE; LESS THAN HALF OF WHAT IT COSTS TO EDUCATE THE SAME CHILD IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. NEWS ABOUT THE PLAN IMMEDIATELY SWEEPED THE COUNTRY, MAKING FRONT PAGE HEADLINES IN VIRTUALLY EVERY NEWSPAPER. MOST OF THE NEWS WAS POSITIVE -- AFTERALL, THE COMMON CRITICISMS OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICE NO LONGER APPLIED -- POLLY IS BLACK, AND SHE IS A LIBERAL, DISPELING THE MYTH THAT ONLY RIGHT-WING UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS WHITE PEOPLE WANT CHOICE. THIS FACTOR ALONE MADE AN ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE FOR THE TIDE OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICE -- FINALLY, WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR YEARS ABOUT EMPOWERING THE POOR, AND THE ABILITY OF ALMOST ANYONE TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS THAN THE SO-CALLED EXPERTS -- WAS PROVEN.

THE KIDS IN THE PROGRAM ARE THRIVING. PARENTS, MANY OF THEM SINGLE-PARENT WELFARE MOTHERS HAVE REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILDREN

HOP OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING, MORE ANXIOUS TO GO TO SCHOOL THEN TO CUT CLASS, AS USED TO BE THE CASE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BUT THE PROGRAM IS NOT WITHOUT ITS PROBLEMS. AS YOU MAY KNOW FROM OUR ^{materials} ~~COVERAGE~~, THE STATE WAS SUED BY OUR FRIENDS FROM THE NEA, THE ACLU AND THE LOCAL NAACP CHAPTER (OF WHICH POLLY WAS A MEMBER). IT IS SCHEDULED TO BE HEARD IN THE WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT THIS SUMMER -- AND ATTORNIES FOR THE CASE AT THE LANDMARK LEGAL CENTER FOR CIVIL RIGHTS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE TRUTH IS ON THEIR SIDE. IT WILL ALL DEPEND ON HOW THE COURTS TREAT THE ISSUE... RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS..., ETC.

WHILE POLLY WAS MAKING NATIONAL HEADLINES, A COLLEAGUE OF OURS IN THE THINK TANK WORLD PUBLISHED A BOOK LAST JUNE THAT IS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE ^{assessment} OF EDUCATION REFORM EVER DONE. AFTER STUDYING AND SURVEYING OVER 500 SCHOOLS, 20,000 PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, BROOKINGS INSTITUTE SCHOLAR JOHN CHUBB CONCLUDED THAT YEARS OF EDUCATION REFORM HAVE FAILED, BECAUSE EVERY NEW PROGRAM ATTEMPTED IN THE LAST 15 YEARS HAS TREATED THE SYMPTONS, AND THE NOT THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM.

THE PROBLEM, ACCORDING TO THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE, IS THE SYSTEM - A SYSTEM WHICH REWARDS FAILURE, PROVIDES LITTLE OR NO AUTONOMY FOR TEACHERS, NO AUTHORITY FOR PRINCIPALS, AND WHICH REDUCES

STUDENT PROGRESS TO ONE'S ABILITY TO COMPLETE GOVERNMENT
MANDATES, AND NOT REAL LEARNING.

WE COULD GO ON ABOUT THE PROBLEMS WITH AMERICAN EDUCATION, BUT
SIMPLY PUT, IDEAS THAT WE HAVE FOR YEARS PROMOTED WERE NOW BEING
RESEARCHED FURTHER, ^{by people in liberal} ~~AND GAINING GREAT CURRENCY IN NON-~~
CONSERVATIVE CIRCLES. JOHN CHUBB'S CONCLUSION WAS THAT NOTHING
LESS THAN MARKET PLACE FORCES WILL ENABLE SCHOOLS TO DO WHAT THEY
WERE INTENDED TO DO -- AND UNTIL SCHOOLS ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE
CONSUMER -- THE PARENT, ALL THE TINKERING IN THE WORLD WILL ONLY
MAKE THINGS WORSE.

EVEN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL COMMENTED THAT WHEN HERITAGE AND
BROOKING AGREE, THE DEBATE ON SUBSTANCE IS OVER.

NATURALLY, THE BROOKINGS REPORT WAS MUSIC TO OUR EARS. IT
LAUNCHED US YEARS AHEAD OF WHERE WE WERE BEFORE ITS PUBLICATION.
BECAUSE IT IS A HEFTY DOCUMENT, WE PUBLISHED A SUMMARY OF CHUBB'S
FINDINGS, THAT IS WIDELY USED AND CONTINUALLY REQUESTED. THE
SUMMARY WAS ACTUALLY A BI-PRODUCT OF SEVERAL BRIEFING PAPERS WE
DID FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT, WHO BY LAST FALL, WAS CONVINCED THAT
THE ISSUE OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICE SHOULD BE THE PET ISSUE OF THE
BUSH ADMINISTRATION.

WITH OUR GUIDANCE, VICE PRESIDENT QUAYLE MADE SEVERAL VISITS TO
STATES THAT WERE WORKING TO IMPLEMENT CHOICE PLANS. HE VISITED

OREGON TWICE BEFORE THE NOVEMBER ELECTION, BECAUSE THERE AN EDUCATIONAL CHOICE INITIATIVE WAS ON THE BALLOT. DESPITE ITS FAILURE, IT GAVE LEVERAGE TO CHOICE SUPPORTERS ON THE WEST COAST WHO REALIZED THAT 40% OF THE VOTE WAS A LOT MORE THAN ANYONE HAD DREAMED THEY COULD GET. THE PLANS AUTHORS ARE PLANNING TO TRY AGAIN IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. IN THE MEANTIME THEY HAVE SET UP A THINK TANK TO HELP SHAKE UP THE COMPLACENCY OF OREGONIANS WHO DO NOT THINK THEY NEED RADICAL CHANGES IN THEIR SCHOOLS.

WHILE WE WORKING WITH SUCH GRASS ROOTS ACTIVISTS ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AND TRYING TO GET THE MESSAGE OF POLLY WILLIAMS AND THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE OUT, WE WERE ALSO FURIOUSLY PLANNING OUR EFFORTS TO FOCUS THE ATTENTION OF BUSINESS ON THESE IMPORTANT EVENTS. *Perhaps our most important endeavor yet is Heritage's efforts to mobilize American Business.*

A CONFERENCE WE HELD IN FEBRUARY OF 1989 FOR BUSINESS LEADERS CONVINCED US THAT WE NEEDED TO HELP ^{in form} ~~MOBILIZE~~ LOCAL SUPPORT FOR CHOICE, AND THAT BUSINESS WAS A NATURAL ALLY. TODAY IT IS FASHIONABLE TO TALK ABOUT BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS. BUT TWO YEARS AGO, IT WAS A LESS FAMILIAR CONCEPT. WHY BUSINESS?

WELL, WE LOOKED AT THE FACTS AND DISCOVERED THAT BUSINESS IS SPENDING OVER \$40 BILLION A YEAR TO FIX THE SO-CALLED RESULTS OF EDUCATION REFORM. BY DONATING TIME, MONEY AND EQUIPMENT TO THE SCHOOLS, AND HAVING DISCOVERED THAT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF THE

NATION'S GRADUATES LACK BASIC SKILLS, EDUCATION HAS BECOME BUSINESS' BUSINESS.

SECOND, BUSINESS IS A NATURAL -- IT HAS ENORMOUS POLITICAL MUSCLE AND LEVERAGE IN COMMUNITIES THAT CAN MAKE BUSINESS A POTENT FORCE FOR THE OPPOSITION, THE EDUCATION GROUPS.

BUSINESS MEN AND WOMEN ARE PARENTS, TOO. THEY ARE USUALLY THE LEADERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, THEY ARE INVOLVED IN CIVIC GROUPS, COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, AND ARE TAXED AT THE OFFICE AND AT HOME FOR FAILING SCHOOLS.

FINALLY, AMERICAN BUSINESS WILL RISE OR FALL DEPENDING UPON THE QUALITY OF OUR STUDENTS. AND RIGHT NOW IT IS FALLING BEHIND EVERY INTERNATIONAL COMPETITOR.

THUS WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO BRING BUSINESS ON BOARD FOR ^{education} OUR AGENDA ~~FOR THE SCHOOLS~~. AND WE HAVE FOUND THAT IN MOST CASES, IT IS NOT A TOUGH SELL.

ONCE WE CONVEY THE FACTS, NOT THE RHETORIC, TO COMMON SENSE ORIENTED BUSINESS PEOPLE, THEY IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTAND. BUT THERE ARE SO MANY MYTHS PERVAIDING THE WHOLE EDUCATION DEBATE, THAT WE HAVE TAKEN A THREE TIER APPROACH TO TRYING TO INFORM BUSINESS AND HELPING TO SPARK CHANGE.

FIRST, WE ARE PUBLISHING AN EXPANDED VERSION OF OUR BUSINESS/EDUCATION INSIDER MONTHLY. THE BEI EXPLORES CURRENT BUSINESS EFFORTS, ANALYZES THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AND REPORTS ON THEIR ACTIVITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CURRENT ONE...* *Hold-up*

SECONDLY, WE HAVE BEGUN PUBLISHING A SERIES OF PAPERS TARGETED TO BUSINESS PEOPLE TO HELP ARM THEM IN THEIR EFFORTS. THE BUSINESSMAN'S GUIDE TO EDUCATION REFORM, PUBLISHED LAST DECEMBER, HAS BEEN CIRCULATED TO OVER 10,000 BUSINESS LEADERS AND POLICY MAKERS -- SEVERAL GROUPS HAVE REPRINTED IT, AND WE ARE THRILLED THAT IT IS HAVING¹⁶ THE IMPACT THAT WE INTENDED. OUR NEXT IS PLANNED FOR LATER THIS MONTH, AND WILL HELP BUSINESS PEOPLE "ANSWER THE CHOICE CRITICS," AND PROVIDE THEM WITH THE HARD FACTS TO GO HEAD TO HEAD WITH THEIR ACCUSERS.

FINALLY, BUT MOST IMPORTANT, WE BEGAN A SERIES OF STATE-BASED CONFERENCES LAST YEAR TO BRING THE MESSAGES THAT YOU'VE HEARD ME SPEAK ABOUT AND THE PEOPLE DIRECTLY TO BUSINESS LEADERS. WE HAVE CHOSEN OUR LOCATIONS BASED ON HOW MUCH ACTIVITY THERE IS IN THAT STATE, BUT ALSO, ON WHETHER THERE ARE STATE-GROUPS OR THINK TANKS THERE THAT CAN WORK CLOSELY WITH LOCAL LEADERS AFTER WE HAVE RETURNED TO WASHINGTON.

IN NOVEMBER, WE WENT TO DALLAS, AND BROUGHT JOHN CHUBB, CHECKER FINN, A FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY UNDER WILLIAM BENNETT, JERRY HUME, OF THE CAL. BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE AND OTHERS. THOUGH A SMALL

CROWD THERE, WE APPARENTLY CREATED ENOUGH STIRRING THAT TWO OF OUR CONFERENCE ATTENDEES HAVE GOTTEN BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE THAT ARE MODELED AFTER THE POLLY WILLIAMS EFFORT. ONE OF THE BILLS WAS INTRODUCED BY A BLACK DEMOCRAT - GIVING IT MORE POTENCY AMONG LEGISLATORS WHO ARE WRESTLING WITH THE OPPOSITION. *We are working closely w/ a ^{new} U of Texas based center on choice, and are in touch w/ local business leaders.*

JUST LAST MONTH, WE TOOK OUR SHOW TO PHILADELPHIA, WHERE OVER 200 *business leaders* ~~PEOPLE~~ GATHERED..... *even one of our speakers said...*

WORKING ON FOLLOW-UP -- TERRIFIC FEED BACK - IT IS CLEAR THAT WE ARE GAINING GROUND, AND THAT BUSINESS PEOPLE, "OUR SLEEPING GIANT" IS STARVED FOR THE FACTS, FOR REAL INFORMATION.

PENNSYLVANIA GROUPS JUST LAUNCHED EFFORT TO PROVIDE WIDESPREAD CHOICE....

WE HAVE PLANS TO GO TO DETROIT, WHERE A GROUP CALLED TEACH MICHIGAN HAS FORMED... BUSINESS LEADERS AND MINORITIES - THE POWERFUL POLITICAL COMBINATION NECESSARY TO SECURE CHOICE IN OUR URBAN CENTERS.

ELSEWHERE, INDIANA BUSINESS PEOPLE...

CALIFORNIA....

CHICAGO....

WE'LL CONTINUE TO KEEP YOU POSTED, AND HOPE THAT WE CAN BE A CATALYST AROUND THE COUNTRY. YOU'LL HEAR FROM LAMAR ALEXANDER THIS AFTERNOON - WE 'VE HAD MUCH INPUT INTO HIS PLANS, HE'LL BE TELLING YOU ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S MAJOR EDUCATION UNDERTAKING, AMERICA 2000 -- CHOICE ONE OF THE KEYS, BUT GOOD TO REMIND HIM HOW IMPORTANT YOU THINK IT IS ANYWAY. *National Leadership*

does help - but we must focus our attention on the states - and the communities where real change
PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP YOU, AND GIVE US FEEDBACK --
MEMBERS IDEA ARE IMPORTANT. *can occur.*

So as you can see, it's been a very full year. We have much to be grateful for, and you have helped make it possible.