

Big Brother Wants to Be “Engaged” with Your Family. Here’s How . . . “Prenatal” policy? “Constant monitoring”?

By Jane Robbins on February 13, 2016

As the pro-Common Core Republican candidates get winnowed out, the remaining combatants should be quizzed in greater detail about federal education policy — particularly, the many troubling provisions of the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

We’ve recently written about the Big Brother aspects of ESSA, including “21st-century community learning centers” and “full-service community schools.” Part of the intrusion into parental rights is cloaked under the benign term “family engagement.” If you think that means encouraging parents to attend PTA meetings, think again.

The family-engagement provisions of ESSA begin on p. 580 of the 1,061-page “conservative” bill (as an aside, any bill that has 1,061 pages is by definition not conservative). The goal is to fund “systemic and effective family engagement policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvements in student development and academic achievement” (pp. 580-81). State plans should coordinate federal, state, and local services so

that families can be subject to one mammoth bureaucracy rather than just a piddling local busybody.

This bureaucracy is to take the form of a “statewide infrastructure for family engagement in



Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building in Washington D.C.

education” (p. 584). The first task for this infrastructure is to “determine parental needs and the best means for delivery of services to address such needs” (p. 587). Apparently, it didn’t occur to Congress that parents’ primary need may be for government to go away and leave them alone.

Although ESSA allows parents to decline these government ministrations if they want to (pp.

589-90), bureaucrats will certainly enroll as many parents as possible to make the “services and programs” look good and to justify their own existence. Among these programs should be those to “assist parents in partnering effectively in their children’s education and to help their children meet the challenging State academic standards [Common Core]” (p. 588). Government should train clueless parents to plan activities at home that support school lessons, to “communicate effectively” with their children since bureaucrats are better at this than parents are, and to use the technology that’s replacing literacy in the schools (pp. 588-89).

Our personal favorite is the mandate for “training programs to improve adult literacy, including financial literacy” (p. 587). Is anyone on the planet less qualified to teach financial literacy than the federal government?

To see how these government interventions might work in practice, consider a draft policy statement recently released by the U.S. Departments of Education

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(USED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) to address family-engagement strategies for young children. Although released before ESSA was rammed through, this statement warns parents what they can expect now that the Republican Congress has blessed the family-engagement endeavor.

A particularly objectionable aspect of this joint statement is its description of a child's education as an "equal partnership" between professionals and families. Well, no. The government is in no way the "equal" of parents when it comes to controlling a child's education — the parents are sovereign. But the statement drips with elite condescension toward parents, who apparently should be grateful they're being included in the discussion at all. As long as they don't overstep their bounds .

The statement also notes that a good family-engagement policy "begins prenatally and continues across settings and throughout a child's developmental and educational experiences." How, exactly, will this work? Maybe HHS functionaries with access to patient data through Obamacare will alert USED whenever they log a positive pregnancy test.

According to the statement, the government programs should "prioritize engagement around children's social-emotional and behavioral health." In fact, the government should "ensure constant monitoring and communication" about whether the child is developing government-approved

attitudes and behaviors. Even if bureaucrats were qualified to assess anything at all about young children's psychological development, the very idea that this is an appropriate role of government is abhorrent in a free society.

And how would this "constant monitoring" be achieved? One way would be through home visits: "Programs and schools should conduct periodic home visits so that teachers and families can get to know each other and communicate about children's goals, strengths, challenges, and progress." Even if teachers had the time or the courage to venture into unknown territory, no government official should ever be sent to invade a family absent evidence of abuse or other criminal activity. Period.

Dr. Karen Effrem of Education Liberty Watch offers another reason home visits should not be undertaken — government research itself shows that such programs are "extraordinarily ineffective" in preventing child maltreatment and furthering child development and school readiness. But as with other research that conflicts with the progressive agenda (see the multiple studies demonstrating the uselessness of Head Start), this research is ignored in the quest for bigger and ever-more intrusive government.

And of course, the statement restates the constant, insatiable demand for data. "States should collect data about the extent to

which early childhood programs and schools are engaging families, the strategies they are using, and their effectiveness." To show effectiveness, this data should measure "the effects of family engagement activities on children's development, learning and wellness." This can only mean that children's psychological and behavioral development will be tracked and tied to the family-engagement strategies. But don't worry — such highly personal information will be kept absolutely secure, except when the government decides to give it away to someone or leaves it open to a hacker. Other than that, parents can rest assured their child's data is safe.

The progressive roots of the family-engagement movement are fascinating and will be addressed in separate posts. For now, just be aware the Republican Congress has created yet another statist monster that Obama's USED will gleefully feed and release on an unsuspecting public. Maybe in the future, someone should read the bill.

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<http://thepulse2016.com/jane-robbins/2016/02/13/14021/>

Votes of Alabama's Congressmen and Senators on ESSA:

Yea—Sen. Sessions, Reps. Aderholt, Byrne, Roby, and Sewell

Nay—Sen. Shelby, Reps. Palmer, Brooks, and Rogers

Tennessee Challenges *Obergefell* SCOTUS ruling

Recently Chief Justice Roy Moore issued an administrative order to the courts of Alabama that said they were not to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples until challenges to *the Obergefell* decision were resolved in the courts. And, we await the Alabama Supreme Court rulings on the lawsuits before it.

Now, as reported by Tennessee Eagle Forum on Feb. 9, 2016, David Fowler, an attorney with the Constitutional Government Defense Fund and President of Family Action Council of TN, has filed a lawsuit in the Chancery Court of Williamson County, Tennessee on behalf of a number of ministers and concerned citizens over purely legal, constitutional issues created by the United States Supreme Court's decision on marriage June 26, 2015 in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Mr. Fowler issued the following statement:

"The legal question is really very straightforward: If Tennessee's current marriage license law, passed in 1995, is unconstitutional, which is what the *Obergefell* Court actually held, then who passed the new law to replace the old one? Courts can't pass laws, and the legislature has not passed a new law since last June. So it stands to reason that there is no marriage licensure law in Tennessee, unless the Supreme Court now thinks, for the first time in history, that it has the power to enact a new law for a state.

"These courageous citizens have asked our state court system to 'declare' what the law is after *Obergefell*. These ministers need to know if the marriage ceremonies they have performed or will be performing are actually of any legal effect. They are merely trying to protect the rights and interests of the couples who come to them thinking that they are getting married when maybe they are not.

"The lawsuit calls attention to the fact that if everyone continues to pretend that the Supreme Court can 'pass' a law to replace an existing law that the Court rules invalid, then we will no longer be living under the rule of law but under pretend laws made by judges who pretend to be legislators."

Fowler went on to say that if the Supreme Court declares a law to be invalid, and there is no new law passed by the state legislature to replace the "invalid" one, then there is NO marriage law in Tennessee, therefore it is unlawful for a county to issue a marriage license to anyone.

Since the first lawsuit has been filed, another has been filed in Bradley County, TN, on behalf of a minister and commissioner of that county. Regarding that lawsuit, Mr. Fowler has stated:

"Given the civil and criminal penalties to which those who can solemnize marriages are subject if they do not comply with the law, it is quite understandable that they would want to know if they are still authorized to solemnize marriages if the law is 'invalid', as the Supreme Court clearly held."

1.6 Million Immigrants from Predominantly Muslim Countries Since 9/11

Data collated from the DHS Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, by *Conservative Review*, show that the U. S. has issued 1,628,854 green cards to immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries. A large portion of this new wave of immigrations comes from countries such as Iraq, Iran, Bangladesh, and Pakistan as well as Somalia. Some of these very likely are not Muslim, but the great majority are Muslim.

If only 10% of these immigrants have radical Jihadist tendencies, that is 160,000 new threats to our security. But, there is likely a very large number who, while not a danger themselves, share the beliefs of Sharia law that can cultivate a climate of homegrown terror. There is also a rapid growth of mosques that promote extremist beliefs. A 2007 Pew survey found that 26% of young Muslims in America support suicide bombing in pursuit of Jihad. An article posted on *WorldNetDaily.com* reports that the taxpayer bill to resettle 35,000 Mideast refugees is \$2.3 million. That equates to nearly \$65,000 to resettle one Middle Eastern refugee over the first 5 years, which is 12 times what it would cost to care for them in a neighboring country.

Relative to the actions of Justice Roy Moore of the Alabama Supreme Court and the *Obergefell* opinion on same sex marriage, Eunie Smith, President of Eagle Forum of Alabama, issued the following statement: "Eagle Forum of Alabama finds that the majority opinion in *Obergefell* lacked any sound legal basis. The *Obergefell* opinion failed in two important ways. First it violated the proper role of the judiciary and principles of Federalism which are vital to the American structure of government as outlined in the United States Constitution. The Justices on the United States Supreme Court allowed recent changes in their personal worldview to override sound legal judgment. The issue of marriage is a matter for the states, not the Federal Government. The DOMA decision from the current United States Supreme Court conflicts directly with the reasoning in *Obergefell*. To be fair, those who criticize Justice Moore must equally criticize the actions of Justice Kennedy who wrote the *Obergefell* majority opinion. A Pandora's Box of litigation was opened when the United States Supreme Court in *Obergefell* violated the Constitution it swore to uphold."

NARAL (Natl. Abortion Rights Action League) is upset about the Doritos ad during the Super Bowl because as they said, it "humanized" the baby during an ultrasound screening. Thanks to Doritos for showing that an ultrasound shows that a "fetus" is a human baby and that abortion supporters will do anything to try to hide that fact from young women by calling it "tissue."

Even as Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, which increases academic training for pre-school children, an important study was released showing that waiting an additional year to start kindergarten is more developmentally appropriate. The Stanford University Center for Education Policy Analysis studied tens of thousands of students and reported: "We find that a one-year delay in the start of school dramatically reduces (73%) inattention/hyperactivity at age 7, a measure of self regulation with strong negative links to student achievement." The study says that the effects of postponing academic focus are still evident at age 11.

We need to keep this study in mind as our state continues to push for universal pre-K.

Education Reporter, Jan. 2016

Every single Republican member of the Senate Judiciary Committee signed a letter agreeing to **no hearings, no votes** on any potential Supreme Court nominee put forward by President Obama. While this is encouraging news, more work remains to be done. Members of the U.S. Senate have the ability to discharge a judicial nominee out of committee with 60 votes (14 Republicans would need to defect). The fight now turns to the rest of the Senate Republicans who must stand firm and block any hearings or votes on Obama's nominee.

Heritage Action Feb 29, 2016

"On every question of construction carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the debates and instead of trying what meaning may be squeezed out of the text or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed." —Thomas Jefferson, 1823

"The Budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest Rome will become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance." - Cicero, 55 BC

"How can we condemn ISIS and not even defund Planned Parenthood? How can we demand the world rid itself of ISIS while paying Planned Parenthood to do the same? How is what ISIS doing evil—but what Planned Parenthood does, a service?" Joseph Parker, "Selective Outrage" as quoted in *News and Notes*, 2/5/2016

"Evil is powerless if the good are unafraid. That's why the Marxist vision of man without God must eventually be seen as an empty and a false faith - the second oldest in the world - first proclaimed in the Garden of Eden with whispered words...'Ye shall be as gods.' Ronald Reagan 1981 at the Conservative Action Conference in Washington D. C.

What Paris Climate Agreement Means to Us

The Obama Administration has signed a U. N. climate change agreement in Paris to limit carbon dioxide emissions called COP21. Many were pleased that the agreement as finally signed is not actually a legally binding one. However, as the Cornwall Alliance stated in a report on December 30, 2015, "...if the agreement were, in fact, a legally binding one, it unquestionably would have been a treaty, requiring a 2/3 consent by the U. S. Senate. This is unlikely to have ever happened. This gives the Obama Administration and other proponents the opportunity to insist that it needs no Senate approval."

But, many say that even if it is not "legally binding" it is "politically binding" and therefore is grounds for us to abide by it. If this is true, it is indeed a treaty. Marlo Lewis of the Competitive Enterprise Institute has said:

"The treaty's core purpose is not to impose legal obligations but to establish the multi-decade framework for a global

political pressure campaign. The pressure will be directed chiefly at those who oppose EPA's unlawful Clean Power Plan and other elements of the President's climate agenda." (good news below)

The agreement stressed that each country's commitments were self-chosen or "nationally determined." But constitutionally there is only one way to conclude that an international commitment is nationally determined. This is by Senate ratification of the agreement.

Lewis further contends that the agreement meets all of the conditions routinely used by the State department to define a treaty.

In order to protect its constitutional powers, the Senate needs to pass a resolution that states that it has not and will not ratify this "treaty that is not a treaty" and will not recognize it.

Common Core Math Ignores Brain Science

A report was published by *Truth in Education* on December 15, 2015, that was written by Wendy Lecker in the *Stamford Advocate*. Lecker is a columnist for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group and senior attorney at the Education Law Center. She points out that the Common Core math standards are developmentally inappropriate because the writers ignored good brain science and that what students are being forced to do in the classroom may actually be harmful to their ability to do more complicated math work if they are not taught certain rote skills early on.

She referenced a study by Stanford Medical School that examined the role of a part of the brain, the hippocampus, in the development of math skills in children. It was noted that a shift to memory-based problem solving is "a hallmark of children's cognitive development in arithmetic as well as other domains." They found that the hippocampus plays a critical but time limited role in the development of memory-based problem solving skills.

The hippocampus helps the brain encode memories in children that as adults they can later retrieve efficiently. Once the children pass a certain age, the processes change.

In other words, they reported that rote repetition, shunned by Common Core math, helps the development of this critical brain system so essential to later more complicated math work.

Supreme Court Halts Obama's Clean Power Plan

In a major setback to the Obama administration's climate agenda, the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5-4 vote blocked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Clean Power Plan from taking effect until the legal challenges from states and industry groups fully play out. As you likely recall, 26 states, including Alabama, and dozens of industry groups challenged the Clean Power Plan, which Obama was trying to implement as part of our "obligation" under the U. N. Climate Agreement called COP21. The plan, which was finalized in October, 2015 would have required most states to meet individual carbon dioxide emissions reduction goals for existing power plants by 2022 and again in 2030.

The lawsuits are expected to continue into 2017 at the earliest, with the Supreme Court likely to be the final arbiter of the regulation.

Source: Heritage Foundation report by researcher Nicholas Loris

The Importance of Writing over Keyboarding and Cursive Writing in Particular

A report posted on the website cursivelogic.com/why-cursive, states what many of us know intuitively: there are intrinsic values to learning and using cursive writing over block printing or relying on keyboard typing. In excerpts from the article we find the following: They state that while there is an “element of convenience to using the electronic devices we are coming to depend upon, researchers have found ties between writing by hand and everything from language skills to memory to critical thinking.”

In a study entitled “The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard,” researchers found that “students who take notes by hand perform better on conceptual questions than students who take notes on laptops. They concluded that students who type their notes transcribe the lecture and thus process the lecture on only a shallow level. Students who take notes by hand actually digest the information and reframe it in their own words, processing it in a way that increases understanding and recall.”

Researchers Steve Graham and Tanya Santangelo found that

“teaching handwriting is strongly correlated to improvement in the quality of writing (not just the legibility of the handwriting, but the quality of the composition).

The report says that the writing process involves a number of ‘low-level’ skills---such as hand-



writing, spelling, and grammar---along with a number of ‘high-level’ skills---organization, strategy, considering the parameters of the topic and the needs of the reader, etc. When students aren't proficient at the low-level skills and have to work hard just to get words onto the paper, they don't have enough brain power left to execute the high-level skills. But when students have fluent handwriting, they are free to concentrate on the high-level skills we associate with good writing. As Graham and Santangelo point out, even with the presence of computers, much of the writing done in primary school will necessarily be done with pencil and paper, so students who fail to

develop fluent handwriting will suffer.”

The article goes on to say: “And, according to neurologist William Klemm, the neurological benefits of writing by hand are compounded with cursive writing.

‘Cursive writing, compared to printing, is even more beneficial because the movement tasks are more demanding, the letters are less stereotypical, and the visual recognition requirements create a broader repertoire of letter representation.’

Researcher Diane Montgomery posts that the connected letters and fluid motion of cursive handwriting are especially beneficial to students with disorders such as dyslexia and dysgraphia.

Yet many fail to recognize the value of cursive. The authors of the Common Core, regarding old-fashioned writing as antiquated in the modern age, leave little time for handwriting instruction, filling students' and teachers' time with other substantive subjects.

HB218 (Rep. Dickie Drake) requires the teaching of cursive writing by the end of the third grade.

Abortion Clinics Continue to Decline

According to a special report by Operation Rescue, 81% of abortion clinics have closed since 1991. In 2015, abortion clinics closed at a rate of more than one per week, with 53 clinics shutting down or halting all abortion services. Troy Newman, president of Operation Rescue, stated “After the release of the Center for Medical Progress videos, which showed Planned Parenthood’s involvement in the illegal trafficking of aborted baby organs, several states have launched investigations, which we hope will result in even further closures next year.”

“To allow the policy question of same-sex marriage to be considered and resolved by a select, patrician, highly unrepresentative panel of nine is to violate a principle even more fundamental than no taxation without representation: no social transformation without representation.”

Justice Antonin Scalia

Google Still Spying On Students

Google Chromebooks make up over half of all computers purchased for use in the nation's schools. About 50 million American students, teachers, and administrators use Google Apps for Education, free software that offers email, a calendar, word processing, and more.

Google, along with 200 other companies, signed the Student Privacy Pledge, a binding agreement that is supposed to stop data mining by private companies. But the nonprofit advocacy group Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has filed a complaint with the FTC accusing Google of data mining and of being in violation of the Student Privacy Pledge.

Google is supposed to refrain from collecting information from students' school computer browsing history for use in targeting ads. EFF says Google is holding to the agreement on

gathering and using data when students use peripheral applications like blogging sites, maps, photos, and Youtube.

EFF says Google should abide by its agreement to get permission from students and parents before collecting student browsing data. An EFF attorney says, "All we're saying is that Google promised to ask first and they failed to do so."



EFF filed "the complaint as part of a broader campaign called 'Spying on Students,'" which is an effort to strengthen student privacy laws. (NPR, 12-8-15)

Source: Education Reporter, January, 2016

"core" Google Apps for Education services but that Google is

Big Win for Pro-Life Movement in Alabama

Eagle Forum of Alabama Executive Director Deborah Love testified at a public hearing on an important abortion regulation before the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) on November 24, 2015. Only one other Pro-Life organization testified. Deborah also submitted a written statement asking for rejection of the new regulation and in support of the current one. The current regulation requires an abortionist to maintain hospital privileges. It protects women who suffer from abortion complications by requiring the abortionist to have access to treat complications in hospital settings.

Love's research found that West Alabama Women's Center was advertising their services with inaccurate information. As stated on the website for "The West Alabama Women's Center Staff" on 11/23/15, under subject head "Staff Qualifications", "The physician and Medical Director of West Alabama Women's Center is Louis T. Payne, M.D. Dr. Payne is a local, full time, Board Certified OBGYN physician and the only abortion provider in Alabama with hospital privileges." However, Dr. Payne had retired. West Alabama Women's Center was legally challenging the regulation because their clinic was forced to close since they were unable to find another abortionist with necessary qualifications. Judge Myron Thompson struck down the regulation citing *Casey*.

Love argued that the regulation was clearly constitutional and that the ADPH had a strong interest in protecting women's health. Love further argued that the ADPH should fight to uphold this regulation. By a vote of 8-5 the abortion regulation will stay in place. This decision will have a large impact on the abortion industry in Alabama as abortion clinics have difficulty in meeting basic health standards such as the hospital admitting privileges requirement. Without meeting these basic regulations, abortion clinics such as West Alabama Women's Center will likely be forced to close.



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