

The economic viewpoint

Business-school partnerships needed

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

Preparing the future workforce of the nation is an awesome responsibility and one which requires the involvement of as many citizens and officials as possible.

Recently a major Governor's Conference on Business-Education Partnerships was held in Harrisburg. As a result of the conference, a new statewide business education organization is being formed to serve as a clearinghouse for information and ideas relating to business-education partnerships; provide technical assistance, seed grants, training and information and other help to local efforts; and serve as an independent point of expertise and advocacy and issues of education reform and improvement of education quality.

In addition to this initiative, a number of reports issued by such organizations as the National Business Roundtable, the Pennsylvania Business Roundtable, Pennsylvania Economic Development Partnership Workforce Development Committee, and the newly released "America 2000, An Education Strategy" initiative by President Bush all called for increased collaboration between business and education if the nation is to be competitive with other nations into the 21st century.

Many recommendations have been made which are quite controversial, such as a national assessment of educational quality, placing more emphasis on ways in which non-educators can work within school districts, business advocating more reasonable disclosure requirements for school board members and a lengthening of the term in Pennsylvania to six years, business seeking representation on the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and participating in reworking state regulations (an action which is being implemented) business supporting diverse parental options through the development of alternative educational pathways and making them available as magnet programs in existing school systems and much more.

In tying together the needs of families, business and industry, and the educational community, radical proposals are being tested in various parts of the nation. For example, in a small community in Tennessee, it was found that school children were being left alone, in some cases, early in the morning prior to going to school or late in the afternoon after finishing school

since one or more parents had to arrive at work early and not come home for two or three hours after the child had arrived at home. To change these conditions, the local school board agreed to open the schools early and close them late so that students could stay in an environment which was monitored.

The question became how could this be financed. The solution was to charge families \$10 per week for the morning and \$20 for the afternoon and if both morning and afternoon were required the charge would be \$26 per week. The question then became could disadvantaged or poor families pay these fees. The school administration found the opportunity to utilize Chapter 1 reimbursement payments from the federal government to satisfy the needs of families who could not afford extra payments.

This system enables the investment in school construction to be substantially advanced by utilizing a building which otherwise would not be extensively used prior to and following normal school hours. It helps to solve a social condition which has been identified as the so-called latchkey child who had no alternative but to stay at home with no parental or adult supervision. It is an interesting and exciting way to resolve a major problem facing many parts of the nation.

Imagine if this opportunity presented itself in Pennsylvania in a variety of school districts. It would open up the opportunity to utilize school buildings and capitalize the investments which taxpayers have already made to accommodate the extensive use of buildings which otherwise were unoccupied at certain times.

While many studies and reports have been made and will continue to be made concerning the challenges to the American educational system, the strategy developed recently although not adequately addressed in a funding sense should be studied by all Americans, school boards and school administrators and faculty to determine ways in which the strategy

can be best implemented. The goals envisioned in the America 2000 Education Strategy document include the following:

- All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.
- American students will leave grades four, eight, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
- US students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
- Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Perhaps the most important issue of the 1990s in the United States is the question of educational reform. Preparing the future workforce of the nation is an awesome responsibility and one which requires the involvement of as many citizens and officials as possible. It is not solely a question of revenues and expenditures, although these issues are extremely important. It is a question of initiatives, innovations, and the ability to bring together through a collaborative process all parties who can contribute to constructively changing how and in what matter the educational system can be modified and changed to meet the needs of 21st century America.

Howard Grossman is executive director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.



J.W.J.

Victims of belligerent benevolence

By J.W. JOHNSON

Congress has discovered in the Bureaucracy another way to remain pure and chaste for the voters, unsoiled by the acceptance of mandated responsibilities.

The absurdity of what you are about to read is self-evident, except perhaps to those who keep their jobs in perpetuation of that absurdity.

Among the legal ads in one of the Scranton papers recently was an advertisement for bids to construct handicap access at the Mayfield Borough building. It was a lengthy ad (almost by definition because it was Federal in origin), and it explained the procedures under which such access would be constructed.

Included in the ad was the following paragraph:

"A mandatory ration of apprentices and trainees to journeymen is required in each craft, and the contractor and his subcontractors are obligated to make a (sic) Diligent Effort to achieve these ratios. To the greatest extent feasible, opportunities for training and employment shall be given to lower-income residents of the project area. To the greatest extent feasible, project area businesses located in the project area or owned in substantial part by project area residents must be utilized. In addition to the equal employment requirements of executive order 11246, the contractor must establish a .06 goal for female participation and a 6.9 goal for minority participation in the aggregate on-site construction work force for contracts in excess of \$10,000. Whether or not part of that work on a federal or federally funded assisted construction contract or subcontract."

No kidding. That's what the ad said.

Several years ago this kind of absurdity was seen in action when a three-employee Pennsylvania construction firm, which failed to meet a federal affirmative action goal of hiring five per cent female laborers, was told by the Labor Department, in a 10-page "conciliation" agreement, to follow 43-count 'em—43 separate record keeping and compliance steps or lose the contract.

How did this country get to the point where a small businessman is required to hire .06 of a female, or where another small businessman must follow a 43 step program in order to keep his government contract?

The problem began long ago when compromise ultimately evolved from the debate of what our Constitution should and should not be. Representative government, within the framework of three separate branches, (Legislative, Judicial and Executive), seemed to be better than mob decision making. And out of this,

the Legislative branch (Congress) was given direct responsibility for making decisions on behalf of the people.

It's become clear, however, that legislators, both at the State and Federal level, have failed miserably in this constitutionally mandated responsibility.

The decline of Congressional fortitude has been mirrored for many years by a steady increase in the power of the Judiciary, through the effective establishment of law through court rulings. Perhaps this was no more apparent than in the mid 1800's Dred Scott slavery case where Congress avoided making a decision about slavery and the Judiciary stepped in, effectively setting legal policy for this country. The Judiciary has been parked out front ever since.

The question here is not the court's decision itself; rather the question is that, and because the Judiciary is largely removed from voter scrutiny, whether or not we, indeed, have representative government. Since the Dred Scott case, and a multitude of other Judicial decisions which have followed, the clear answer to that question is no. The congressional abdication of responsibility has thus left the Judiciary with the power to set national policy.

At the same time, there is no convincing evidence that the Judiciary sought the role of both maker and interpreter of the law. Fact is, the Judiciary has really acted out of default, and in an honest desire to deal with problems which obviously required remedies.

What's frightening about this is that it was not the people, through elected representation, who faced the problems; rather it was the Judiciary which is largely unaccountable to the people...and accountability is the cornerstone of the republican democracy process.

The second beneficiary of Congress failure to shoulder its constitutionally mandated responsibilities has really been the addition of an unconstitutional fourth branch of government: the Bureaucracy.

Congress has discovered in the Bureaucracy another way to remain pure and chaste for the voters, unsoiled by the acceptance of mandated responsibilities; Congress simply sloughs off those responsibilities to a faceless, nameless mob and says: "Who, us?"

What Congress does is pass a vaguely worded statute that simultaneously creates a rulemaking body... (the outgrowth of which is the legal ad you read earlier). In most cases the statute's goals are as proverbially worthy as baseball and apple pie (or yet another blind attempt to make this a classless society) so that no reasonable person (or those who want something for nothing) could oppose it. The crass political theory here is that the legislator whose name appears on this apple pie and baseball statute is thus assured re-election.

Then enter the Bureaucracy, the rulemaking body... that petty horde of bureaucrats whose knowledge and understanding of the problem addressed by the statute often cannot be said to rival even a common house plant. The Bureaucracy passes rules—the .06 female and 43 record keeping obligation cited earlier are examples—and the businessman and citizen are left to flounder on the bureaucratic beach, a victim of belligerent benevolence.

Does the citizen or businessman have recourse? It does no good to complain to the congressional aides who draft most of the legislation, or to the bureaucracy who set the rules. They have no constitutional responsibility to citizens.

An alternative course would be for citizens to demand of legislators that effective legislative authority be removed from the Bureaucracy, while shouldering the mandated responsibility of legislating themselves.

The Judiciary also should evolve a process whereby it would refer social policy decisions back to Congress. Perhaps shame could achieve what political expedience leaves begging.

And finally, it seems clear that what we ultimately need are principled legislators who are not afraid of their convictions, and whose time in office will be spent doing more than assuring re-election.

By the way, we the people have the right to expect a responsible Congress. And to assert a right is to preserve it. But if you abdicate that responsibility by failing to vote, or to educate yourself about self government, then you also give up the right to complain afterward. Myself, and others who accept the responsibility of self government, will decide what happens to you.

Four will be confirmed at Shavertown UMC

Four senior high young people will receive the rite of Confirmation at the 11 a.m. Worship Service on Sunday, March 29 at the Shavertown United Methodist Church, North Pioneer Avenue at West Center Street, Shavertown.

Dr. Deldra Kriewald, Professor

of Teaching Ministry, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., will be the homilist. Rev. Patricia D. Brown of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, New York City, mother of one of the confirmands, will assist in the liturgy, along with Pastors Harriet L. Santos and James A.

Wert. The confirmands are: Christian F.P. Goddy, Gregory J. Choi, Raymond J. Shynn and Kathy J. Delinsky.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated. The Festival Choir, directed by Prof. Ros E. Santos, will sing.

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Builders' Home Show will run March 27 to 29

The Builders Home Show, featuring nearly 170 exhibitors, will fill the inside and outside of the Coal Street Ice-A-Rama in Wilkes-Barre, Friday through Sunday, March 27 to 29.

The show, sponsored by the Building Industry Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania (BIA of NEPA), will represent every aspect of a home, both new and old.

The show's exhibits cover all phases of home ownership. The show also brings together the largest contingent of local building trades representatives to offer the public the chance to see the best

the building industry has to offer, as well as the latest and most innovative products and services available.

The BIA was organized in 1957 by George L. Ruckno to serve homebuilders, persons, firms and corporations engaged in allied trades, industries and professions in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The 1992 edition of the Builders Home Show will run from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., on Friday. On Saturday the hours are from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A \$2 admission fee for the show automatically registers patrons for drawings and door prizes. Children will be admitted free if they are accompanied by an adult.

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15th ANNUAL BUILDERS' HOME SHOW

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At The **ICE-A-RAMA**
Coal St. Recreational Complex
Coal St. & N. Sherman St.
Wilkes-Barre

HOURS
Friday, March 27.....5 P.M. to 9 P.M.
Saturday, March 28.....10 A.M. to 9 P.M.
Sunday, March 29.....10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

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