

Elephant Talk

Plano Republican Women

TFRW Region No: 3 Senate District No: 8

April 2018

President's Byline : What Happened to Free Speech in the United States



Last Monday evening I attended the Plano City Council meeting because I wanted to be there to support Councilman Tom Harrison, who, in my opinion, has been unjustly vilified by a group of Muslims, Democrats and moderate Republicans who want him off the Plano City Council. Let's look at the time line on this:

It's Tuesday evening, February 13, 2018 around 10:00 p.m. when Tom shares a post that reads "Share if you think Trump should ban Islam in American Schools."

Wednesday morning Tom went to his ophthalmologist appointment around 10 a.m., to a Bible Study at noon and from there to an appointment with his vascular surgeon to check his remaining leg. He had his cell phone turned off during that time.

Wednesday afternoon at 2 p.m. the Mayor of Plano, Harry LaRosiliere, had a press conference covered by all 4 major television stations calling for Tom to resign over the post.

Tom learns about the press conference after it was already over. He sees that he had voicemail messages from the Mayor. Tom also read an email from David Glasscock, the City Manager wanting to know where he was.

From 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. is 16 hours, of which during at least 8 of those 16 hours, folks are normally sleeping. If we assume that the Mayor found out about this early Wednesday morning, he made a couple of phone calls starting at around 10:00 a.m. to Tom and instead of giving him a chance to tell his side of this story, he arranges a press conference with all 4 TV stations (it helps that Steve Stolar, formerly of Channel 8 News, works for the City of Plano) and demands his resignation! Would the world have come to an end if Harry had waited until he had a chance to speak to Tom before demanding his resignation or did that not fit into this carefully crafted "show" and the ambitions of others inside and outside of Plano??

After this, the Mayor called for a special meeting of the City Council on Sunday morning February 19th at a time when many people would normally be in church. I attended this "setup" and that is when the additional postings that were attributed to Tom were brought out and blindsided Tom, Rick Smith and Anthony Ricciardelli. Since that time, people from inside and outside of Plano have been calling for Tom to resign and getting signatures on the petitions which were presented to the City and approved by Page Mims. Last Monday night was just a formality to let Tom respond and another opportunity for those who want him gone to spew their venom. I urge you to watch this episode of the City Council meetings. You can fast forward to 7:20 p.m. as that is when Tom presents his side and then 52 speakers had their say. Twenty-six spoke for the recall (5 of those were not citizens of Plano) and 26 spoke against the recall.

One of the speakers at the Monday meeting was Shep Stahl, former City Councilman, and he "hit the nail His looking for a way to be "offended" (this was also a sentiment of one of the speakers against the recall). You either have the right to speak your mind or you don't. Politically correctness, along with the politics of personal destruction, is destroying free speech – at least if you are a conservative and a Christian. The double standard is apparent and appalling. Just look at Fresno State Professor Randa Jarrar who tweeted the most disgusting things regarding the death of Barbara Bush.

Catherine Gibb

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Calendar of Events

Board Meeting 5/1
Celebrity Bakery
Plano

Coupon Cutting notice
By email

The Most Demanding Volunteer Job in All of America

By Lisa Babb, Americanism Chair

Excerpt from the White House statement on the passing of former First Lady Barbara Bush:

"... As a wife, mother, grandmother, military spouse, and former First Lady, Mrs. Bush was an advocate of the American family. Amongst her greatest achievements was recognizing the importance of literacy as a fundamental family value that requires nurturing and protection. She will be long remembered for her strong devotion to country and family, both of which she served unfailingly well. ..."

Embedded in this statement is a profound reminder of the uniqueness of the role of the First Lady. This is the most demanding volunteer job in all of America. The Constitution does not mention the First Lady, nor does it assign her any role or salary. She is not elected, she is legally responsible to no one, and nothing binds her into the role except her marriage vows. Not even the title is official. Martha Washington was known as Lady Washington, while Mrs. President, Presidentress, and even Republican or Democratic Queen or Queen of Washington were used variously for other wives.

Zachary Taylor is credited with first using the phrase "First Lady" when he eulogized Dolley Madison in 1849: "She will never be forgotten, because she was truly our first lady for a half century." Miss Harriet Lane, the niece of James Buchanan, who acted as White House Hostess for her bachelor uncle, was also sometimes referred to as the First Lady, for lack of a more specific designation. In 1877, however, journalist Mary C. Ames, who covered the inauguration of Rutherford B. Hayes, referred to Lucy Hayes as the new First Lady and the title crept into more common parlance. In 1911, Charles Nirdlinger's play about Dolley Madison, "The First Lady in the Land", debuted, and cemented the use of the term as customary reference to the wife of the President.

The role of Martha Washington was worrying to early Americans since it was important that European courts recognize the dignity of the new nation, even though it had been decided that European court manners were not to be adopted. The president's constitutional role as both head of state and head of government meant that the president's wife must be both the wife of a chief executive and the equal of a queen. Ceremonial, social and family duties, as well as acting as a role model for American women were unquestionably the primary responsibilities. Less acceptable, however, were any attempts to "meddle" in politics, a charge leveled against Abigail Adams. Presidents' wives were expected to be apolitical and never assume any other public office. This tone lasted into the latter part of the 19th century.

Not everyone was thrilled to have the role thrust on them. Some were frightened by the extent of the social duties while others felt limited by the cultural restrictions. Some saw themselves as victims of politics and felt deprived of the peaceful last years that they had looked forward to. Many were unprepared to deal with the extent of the accusations that were hurled at their husbands by their opponents and many dreaded losing their husbands through stress, trauma or assassination.

Martha Washington: "I live a very dull life here and know nothing that passes in town – I never go to any public place, indeed I think that I am more like a state prisoner than anything else"

Margaret Taylor (referring to her husband's nomination): "A plot to deprive me of his society and shorten his life by unnecessary care and responsibility.

Jane Pierce: "Oh, how I wish he was out of political life! How much better it would be for him on every account."

Eliza McCardle Johnson: "I do not like this public life at all. I often wish the time would come when we could return to where I feel we best belong."

Edith Kermit Roosevelt: "One hates to feel that all one's life is public property."

In the late 19th century, Francis Cleveland quietly assisted the causes of working women and women's' education. Later Ellen Wilson, Grace Coolidge and Lou Hoover more openly promoted their projects of slum clearance, education of the deaf and the Girl Scouts, respectively. By the 20th century, sponsoring a specific cause that benefits the nation had become the norm, and with Eleanor Roosevelt, the era of the retiring First Lady ended completely. The misgivings, however, remained for both the job and the ceremonial title.

Eleanor Roosevelt: "I never wanted to be the President's wife, and I don't want it now. You don't quite believe me, do you? Very likely no one would – except possibly some woman who had had the job"

Jacqueline Kennedy (when forbidding her staff to address her as First Lady): "It always reminded me of a saddle horse."

Today, our First Lady is also expected to endure an unprecedented level of media scrutiny and intrusiveness into every aspect of her personal and family life. Social and ceremonial duties have continued to multiply. Communications of all sorts demand responses. Businesses hope that she will advertise their products by using and wearing them. The First Lady is now expected to campaign for her husband and other candidates, to represent him and to travel with or without him. All must be done cheerfully, pleasantly, often while enduring malicious criticism.

We are profoundly thankful for all of the women who have taken on this daunting challenge. Our knowledge of them all is sadly not as complete as we would like. The detail of the record has evolved through the years, as the role of the First Lady has broadened, but for some of the First Ladies, very little is known. Some wrote no letters, a traditional source of historical material, while some, like Bess Truman, ensured that all their own and their husband's letters were destroyed. Elizabeth Monroe's papers were also destroyed. In the case of one first lady, the only item in her own hand that has survived is a shopping list.

What we do know is that each woman brought with her a unique viewpoint and using her own background and training, made her own distinct contribution to the heritage of the United States. We thank them all for this. They keep us conscious of the fact that "When Women Work We Win." God Bless America.

Presidents Article / Second Amendment Article

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I won't repeat them here, but you can probably find them on the internet. These tweets were beyond the pale, but under our Constitution she has the right to say them, within reason. She did not lose her job (having read some of her rantings, I find it hard to believe she was ever hired, much less attained tenure, but this is California). Tom did nothing wrong here and his post was not "anti-Muslim". But the Muslims chose to be offended and despite the fact that there is nothing in our Constitution that gives one the right to never be offended, our Mayor also chose this opportunity to grandstand and in doing further divided Plano.

As I said back in February, a true statesman would have heard what Tom had to say, brought the two sides together to heal the rift and been done with it quietly. No religion can be taught in public schools but schools can teach about the different religions. What we have to be concerned about here is whether what is being taught is accurate regarding the various religions and whether one religion is being demonized and the other praised because that crosses the line. We should be able to have an open honest discussion about that. And that is what Tom has said he was pointing out: that all religions are being discriminated against. And for that Harry wanted his "head on a platter." And pray tell what had been on the front page of the Plano Star Courier just days before all this started: The Mayor was called out by some of the members of the Plano City Council for not attending the meeting on infrastructure in the White House while he was there for the Mayors Conference. Now we all know Harry loves the front page of the PSC, but only when he is being praised. As Rham Emanuel said "Never let a good crisis go to waste." Harry certainly didn't!!

Catherine Gibb

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The Most Demanding Volunteer Job in All of America

By Lisa Babb, Americanism Chair

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References and Further Reading (available through the Plano Public Library):

"Upstairs at the White House" by J.B. West

"Secret Lives of the First Ladies" by Cormac O'Brien

"First Ladies" by Susan Swain and C-Span

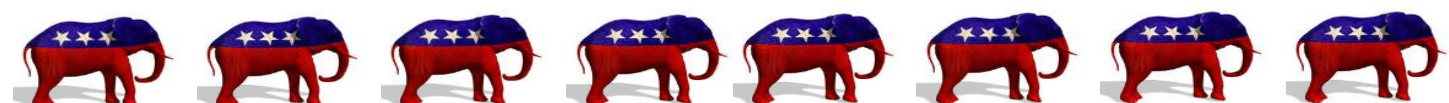
"The First Ladies – From Martha Washington to Mamie Eisenhower" by Feather Schwartz Foster

"America's First Ladies" edited by Bill Adler

"The Presidents, First Ladies and Vice Presidents" by Deborah Kalb, C. Diller, Stephen L. Robertson

"First Ladies – A Biographical Dictionary" by Dorothy Schneider & Carl J. Schneider

"First Ladies of the White House" written and compiled by Nancy Skarmear (presented to the Plano Library by the Plano Republican's Women's Club in Honor of Former First Ladies Barbara Bush and Mamie D. Eisenhower)



April Plano Republican Women Meeting



**Next PRW Meeting:
Tuesday, May April 15, 2018**

Speaker: Christi Craddick
Texas Railroad Commission Chairman

Christi Craddick will share news from the Texas Railroad Commission
and tell us about Connecting Conservative Women an organization to engage conservative women in local, state and national leadership through collaboration and mentorship

Christi Craddick is in the forefront of the newest wave of pragmatic conservatives in leadership roles across Texas. Raised in a strong conservative household, retained as legal counsel by prominent Texas firms, and shaped by more than a decade as a trusted political adviser, Christi has set a clear standard of integrity, self-reliance and innovation in her role as Chairman at the Railroad Commission of Texas.

Since her tenure on the Commission began in November 2012, Craddick has pushed to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of an energy industry that is driving the state's unparalleled economic success. In the process, she has repeatedly proven that sensible regulations, careful listening and plain talk can foster innovation that has solidified Texas leadership in the energy sector.

Making it a top priority, Christi has worked to educate the public about the oil and gas industry and its impact in Texas. She has fought against Washington's one-size-fits-all environmental policies that would kill jobs and stifle energy production growth. Christi has advocated for recycling in the oilfields, helping to drive the percentage of reclaimed water upwards, an essential achievement in a state enduring a multi-year drought.

As part of her efforts to modernize the agency, Christi has championed an Information Technology overhaul for the Commission, seeking improvements that would upgrade the Geographic Information System, increase public access to the agency's data, and speed up inspections and permitting times.

A native of Midland, Christi earned both her Bachelor's Degree as a Plan II graduate and her Doctorate of Jurisprudence from The University of Texas at Austin. During her career as an attorney, she specialized in oil and gas, water, tax issues, electric deregulation and environmental policy.

Following the example of her father and mother, Craddick has been drawn to public service and politics. As president of a grassroots advocacy firm, she took the lead on work in coalition building in the public policy arena and development and implementation of issue strategies. Christi serves her community as an active member of organizations including the State Bar of Texas, University of Texas Liberal Arts Alumni Advisory Council, and Dell Children's Medical Center Foundation. Christi resides in Austin with her daughter, Catherine, and is an active member of St. John Neumann Catholic Church.

Location: Reflections on Spring Creek
1901 East Spring Creek Parkway

Time: **11:15 am:** Arrive and check-in
11:30 am: Meeting, Lunch & Program

PRW membership is not required to attend our meeting Lunch is available with RSVP for \$20 in cash or check payable to PRW

RSVPs for lunch must be made by 5 pm the Friday before the meeting

RSVPs to attend without lunch may be made up to 5pm the Monday before the Tuesday meeting

To RSVP send an email to: rsvp@planorepublicanwomen.org

Include your name in your email and say if you will/will not be having lunch



Education Expert: Removing Bible, Prayer from Public Schools Has Caused Decline

By Penny Starr, August 15, 2014

(CNSNews.com) – Education expert William Jeynes said on Wednesday that there is a correlation between the decline of U.S. public schools and the U.S. Supreme Court's 1962 and 1963 decision that school-sponsored Bible reading was unconstitutional.

"One can argue, and some have, that the decision by the Supreme Court – in a series of three decisions back in 1962 and 1963 – to remove Bible and prayer from our public schools, may be the most spiritually significant event in our nation's history over the course of the last 55 years," Jeynes said.

On June 25, 1962, the United States Supreme Court decided in *Engel v. Vitale* that a prayer approved by the New York Board of Regents for use in schools violated the First Amendment because it represented establishment of religion. In 1963, in *Abington School District v. Schempp*, the court decided against Bible readings in public schools along the same lines.

Since 1963, Jeynes said there have been five negative developments in the nation's public schools:

- Academic achievement has plummeted, including SAT scores.
- Increased rate of out-of-wedlock births
- Increase in illegal drug use
- Increase in juvenile crime
- Deterioration of school behavior

"So we need to realize that these actions do have consequences," said Jeynes, professor at California State College in Long Beach and senior fellow at the Witherspoon Institute in Princeton, N.J., "When we remove that moral fiber -- that moral emphasis -- this is what can result."

Other facts included a comparison between the top five complaints of teachers from 1940-1962 -- talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls and getting out of turn in line -- to rape, robbery, assault, burglary and arson from 1963 to present.

"Now the question is, given that there is a movement to put the Bible as literature back in the public schools and a moment of silence and so forth, can we recapture the moral fiber -- the foundation that used to exist among many of our youth?" Jeynes asked rhetorically.

To that end, Jeynes said, there is a movement across the country to reinstate the Bible as literature in the public schools, with 440 school districts in 43 states currently teaching this type of course.

Ten states have passed a law or resolution to bring the Bible as literature in the public schools statewide.

The movement, however, is secular in nature, with the Bible being taught as literature rather than the word of God. And rather than prayer, a "moment of silence" is established that "can be used as the students choose," Jeynes said.

When CNSNews.com asked about the secular nature of this approach, Jeynes said data from nationwide surveys show that both students of faith and those with no faith both respond positively to the Bible as literature curriculum -- the former said they learned more about the Bible in class than in church and the latter said they have an increased interest in the Christian religions.

"The effects are very, very positive," Jeynes said.

Jeynes said the data he used in his presentation comes from the federal government (Departments of Education, Justice, Health and Human Services and the U.S. Census Bureau), and research by the advocacy groups Bibleasliterature.org, the Bible Literacy Project, the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, and California educator and researcher Nader Twal.

*William Jeynes, a professor at California State College in Long Beach and a senior fellow at the Witherspoon Institute in Princeton, N.J., spoke at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 13, 2014 about putting the **Bible** and prayer back into U.S. **public schools**. (Penny Starr/CNSNews.com).*

PRW April Meeting Photos



Religion In The Public Schools: A Joint Statement Of Current Law

The Constitution permits much private religious activity in and about the public schools. Unfortunately, this aspect of constitutional law is not as well known as it should be. Some say that the Supreme Court has declared the public schools "religion-free zones" or that the law is so murky that school officials cannot know what is legally permissible. The former claim is simply wrong. And as to the latter, while there are some difficult issues, much has been settled. It is also unfortunately true that public school officials, due to their busy schedules, may not be as fully aware of this body of law as they could be. As a result, in some school districts some of these rights are not being observed.

The organizations whose names appear below span the ideological, religious and political spectrum. They nevertheless share a commitment both to the freedom of religious practice and to the separation of church and state such freedom requires. In that spirit, we offer this statement of consensus on current law as an aid to parents, educators and students.

Many of the organizations listed below are actively involved in litigation about religion in the schools. On some of the issues discussed in this summary, some of the organizations have urged the courts to reach positions different than they did. Though there are signatories on both sides which have and will press for different constitutional treatments of some of the topics discussed below, they all agree that the following is an accurate statement of what the law currently is.

Student Prayers

Students have the right to pray individually or in groups or to discuss their religious views with their peers so long as they are not disruptive. Because the Establishment Clause does not apply to purely private speech, students enjoy the right to read their Bibles or other scriptures, say grace before meals, pray before tests, and discuss religion with other willing student listeners. In the classroom students have the right to pray quietly except when required to be actively engaged in school activities (e.g., students may not decide to pray just as a teacher calls on them). In informal settings, such as the cafeteria or in the halls, students may pray either audibly or silently, subject to the same rules of order as apply to other speech in these locations. However, the right to engage in voluntary prayer does not include, for example, the right to have a captive audience listen or to compel other students to participate.

Graduation Prayer and Baccalaureates

2. School officials may not mandate or organize prayer at graduation, nor may they organize a religious baccalaureate ceremony. If the school generally rents out its facilities to private groups, it must rent them out on the same terms, and on a first-come first-served basis, to organizers of privately sponsored religious baccalaureate services, provided that the school does not extend preferential treatment to the baccalaureate ceremony and the school disclaims official endorsement of the program.

3. The courts have reached conflicting conclusions under the federal Constitution on student-initiated prayer at graduation. Until the issue is authoritatively resolved, schools should ask their lawyers what rules apply in their area.

Official Participation or Encouragement of Religious Activity

4. Teachers and school administrators, when acting in those capacities, are representatives of the state, and, in those capacities, are themselves prohibited from encouraging or soliciting student religious or anti-religious activity. Similarly, when acting in their official capacities, teachers may not engage in religious activities with their students. However, teachers may engage in private religious activity in faculty lounges.

Teaching About Religion

5. Students may be taught about religion, but public schools may not teach religion. As the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly said, "[i]t might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion, or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization." It would be difficult to teach art, music, literature and most social studies without considering religious influences.

The history of religion, comparative religion, the Bible (or other scripture)-as-literature (either as a separate course or within some other existing course), are all permissible public school subjects. It is both permissible and desirable to teach objectively about the role of religion in the history of the United States and other countries. One can teach that the Pilgrims came to this country with a particular religious vision, that Catholics and others have been subject to persecution or that many of those participating in the abolitionist, women's suffrage and civil rights movements had religious motivations.

6. These same rules apply to the recurring controversy surrounding theories of evolution. Schools may teach about explanations of life on earth, including religious ones (such as "creationism"), in comparative religion or social studies classes. In science class, however, they may present only genuinely scientific critiques of, or evidence for, any explanation of life on earth, but not religious critiques (beliefs unverifiable by scientific methodology). Schools may not refuse to teach evolutionary theory in order to avoid giving offense to religion nor may they circumvent these rules by labeling as science an article of religious faith. Public schools must not teach as scientific fact or theory any religious doctrine, including "creationism," although any genuinely scientific evidence for or against any explanation of life may be taught. Just as they may neither advance nor inhibit any religious doctrine, teachers should not ridicule, for example, a student's religious explanation for life on earth.

Religion In The Public Schools: A Joint Statement Of Current Law

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Student Assignments and Religion

7. Students may express their religious beliefs in the form of reports, homework and artwork, and such expressions are constitutionally protected. Teachers may not reject or correct such submissions simply because they include a religious symbol or address religious themes. Likewise, teachers may not require students to modify, include or excise religious views in their assignments, if germane. These assignments should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance, relevance, appearance and grammar.

8. Somewhat more problematic from a legal point of view are other public expressions of religious views in the classroom. Unfortunately for school officials, there are traps on either side of this issue, and it is possible that litigation will result no matter what course is taken. It is easier to describe the settled cases than to state clear rules of law. Schools must carefully steer between the claims of student speakers who assert a right to express themselves on religious subjects and the asserted rights of student listeners to be free of unwelcome religious persuasion in a public school classroom.

a. Religious or anti-religious remarks made in the ordinary course of classroom discussion or student presentations are permissible and constitute a protected right. If in a sex education class a student remarks that abortion should be illegal because God has prohibited it, a teacher should not silence the remark, ridicule it, rule it out of bounds or endorse it, any more than a teacher may silence a student's religiously-based comment in favor of choice.

b. If a class assignment calls for an oral presentation on a subject of the student's choosing, and, for example, the student responds by conducting a religious service, the school has the right -- as well as the duty -- to prevent itself from being used as a church. Other students are not voluntarily in attendance and cannot be forced to become an unwilling congregation.

c. Teachers may rule out-of-order religious remarks that are irrelevant to the subject at hand. In a discussion of Hamlet's sanity, for example, a student may not interject views on creationism.

Distribution of Religious Literature

9. Students have the right to distribute religious literature to their schoolmates, subject to those reasonable time, place, and manner or other constitutionally- acceptable restrictions imposed on the distribution of all non-school literature. Thus, a school may confine distribution of all literature to a particular table at particular times. It may not single out religious literature for burdensome regulation.

10. Outsiders may not be given access to the classroom to distribute religious or anti-religious literature. No court has yet considered whether, if all other community groups are permitted to distribute literature in common areas of public schools, religious groups must be allowed to do so on equal terms subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions.

"See You at the Pole"

11. Student participation in before- or after-school events, such as "see you at the pole," is permissible. School officials, acting in an official capacity, may neither discourage nor encourage participation in such an event.

Religious Persuasion Versus Religious Harassment

12. Students have the right to speak to, and attempt to persuade, their peers about religious topics just as they do with regard to political topics. But school officials should intercede to stop student religious speech if it turns into religious harassment aimed at a student or a small group of students. While it is constitutionally permissible for a student to approach another and issue an invitation to attend church, repeated invitations in the face of a request to stop constitute harassment. Where this line is to be drawn in particular cases will depend on the age of the students and other circumstances.

Equal Access Act

13. Student religious clubs in secondary schools must be permitted to meet and to have equal access to campus media to announce their meetings, if a school receives federal funds and permits any student non-curricular club to meet during non-instructional time. This is the command of the Equal Access Act. A non-curricular club is any club not related directly to a subject taught or soon-to-be taught in the school. Although schools have the right to ban all non-curriculum clubs, they may not dodge the law's requirement by the expedient of declaring all clubs curriculum-related. On the other hand, teachers may not actively participate in club activities and "non-school persons" may not control or regularly attend club meeting.

The Act's constitutionality has been upheld by the Supreme Court, rejecting claims that the Act violates the Establishment Clause. The Act's requirements are described in more detail in The Equal Access Act and the Public Schools: Questions and Answers on the Equal Access Act*, a pamphlet published by a broad spectrum of religious and civil liberties groups.

Religion In The Public Schools: A Joint Statement Of Current Law

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Religious Holidays

14. Generally, public schools may teach about religious holidays, and may celebrate the secular aspects of the holiday and objectively teach about their religious aspects. They may not observe the holidays as religious events. Schools should generally excuse students who do not wish to participate in holiday events. Those interested in further details should see Religious Holidays in the Public Schools: Questions and Answers*, a pamphlet published by a broad spectrum of religious and civil liberties groups.

Excusal From Religiously-Objectionable Lessons

15. Schools enjoy substantial discretion to excuse individual students from lessons which are objectionable to that student or to his or her parent on the basis of religion. Schools can exercise that authority in ways which would defuse many conflicts over curriculum content. If it is proved that particular lessons substantially burden a student's free exercise of religion and if the school cannot prove a compelling interest in requiring attendance the school would be legally required to excuse the student.

Teaching Values

16. Schools may teach civic virtues, including honesty, good citizenship, sportsmanship, courage, respect for the rights and freedoms of others, respect for persons and their property, civility, the dual virtues of moral conviction and tolerance and hard work. Subject to whatever rights of excusal exist (see #15 above) under the federal Constitution and state law, schools may teach sexual abstinence and contraception; whether and how schools teach these sensitive subjects is a matter of educational policy. However, these may not be taught as religious tenets. The mere fact that most, if not all, religions also teach these values does not make it unlawful to teach them.

Student Garb

17. Religious messages on T-shirts and the like may not be singled out for suppression. Students may wear religious attire, such as yarmulkes and head scarves, and they may not be forced to wear gym clothes that they regard, on religious grounds, as immodest.

Released Time

18. Schools have the discretion to dismiss students to off-premises religious instruction, provided that schools do not encourage or discourage participation or penalize those who do not attend. 20. Schools may not allow religious instruction by outsiders on premises during the school day.

Appendix

Organizational Signers of "Religion in the Public Schools: A Joint Statement of Current Law"

American Civil Liberties Union	Friends Committee on National Legislation
American Ethical Union	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
American Humanist Association	Guru Gobind Singh Foundation
American Jewish Committee	Interfaith Alliance
American Jewish Congress	Interfaith Impact for Justice and Peace
American Muslim Council	National Association of Evangelicals
Americans for Religious Liberty	National Council of Jewish Women
Americans United for Separation of Church and State	National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC)
Anti-Defamation League	National Ministries, American Baptist Churches, USA
Baptist Joint Committee	National Sikh Center
B'nai B'rith	North American Council for Muslim Women
Christian Legal Society	People for the American Way
Christian Science Church	Presbyterian Church (USA)
Church of Scientology International	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,	Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs	Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot	

Note: this was copied from the ACLU website. I thought it was worth noting what this particular organization had to say on the subject of religion in school and I have included the list of organizations who have signed off on this.

Political Cartoons



Copyright by Steve Kelley.

BURR
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH
ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

TAX CUTS EXPLAINED...

YOU GET TO KEEP MORE OF YOUR MONEY.



THIS IS
ARMAGEDDON!!!



Think we should do away with the Electoral College? Think again

By Red Jahncke, opinion contributor , The Hill



Ever since the photo-finish [presidential election in 2000](#), in which George Bush prevailed by a mere 5 electoral votes, despite losing by one-half-million votes in the national popular vote, there's been criticism of the Electoral College. Following the [2016 election](#) and Donald Trump's convincing win with a 77 electoral votes, despite [Hillary Clinton](#)'s run-up of almost 3 million more popular votes, the criticism has been intense. No surprise.

The anti-College fever, primarily of Democrats, has continued unabated. Last week Democrats in the Connecticut House [passed legislation](#) designed to work around the Electoral College and award Connecticut's seven electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote.

The [National Popular Vote](#) scheme would take effect once states with 270 electoral votes — the winning number — have approved it. The Nutmeg State would bring the tally to 172 (all in blue states). The state's senators should take heed: the scheme is not a good idea, especially for Connecticut.

First off, Houston, we do not have a problem. The 2000 and 2016 presidential elections are only the [fourth and fifth](#) where the winner lost the popular vote, out of 58 contests, with the other three being elections in the 19th century. That means the Electoral College is batting 53 for 58. Not bad. As Winston Churchill observed, "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others."

The anti-College frenzy focuses upon three broad criticisms. First, the College doesn't reflect one-man-one-vote. Well, it wasn't designed to. The College is a blend of the pure democracy of the U.S. House, with one elector per U.S. representative, each of whom represents about 750,000 Americans today, and our federal system, with one elector for each of the two U.S. senators from each state (plus three for the District of Columbia). We are both a democracy and a federation of states. The Electoral College was designed specifically to prevent the tyranny of big states over small states, as was the U.S. Senate, which affords all states, large and small, equal representation. If we do away with the Electoral College, we might as well do away with the Senate.

In 2016, the Electoral College worked precisely as intended. It prevented Hillary Clinton's 6-million-vote victory in California and New York from cancelling her 3-million-vote loss in the 48 other states.

The second knock on the Electoral College is that voters in most states feel their votes don't matter, that the entire contest is waged in a handful of swing or "battleground" states. Yet, if we did away with the Electoral College in favor of the national popular vote, the election would still be decided in a handful of states — populous states such as California and New York. Even though both of those states are deep blue, the GOP candidate would still fish in their waters, because swinging 1 or 2 percent into the red column would be worth more than swinging 1 to 2 percent in a smaller state. Voters in small states, such as Connecticut, would be permanently and completely disenfranchised.

Moreover, candidates would campaign in big media markets (which, of course, are in big states) in order to reach as many potential voters as efficiently as possible. This would favor media personalities and celluloid campaigns. Candidates would never have to meet voters one-on-one, as they do currently in small swing states.

The third rather trendy critique of the Electoral College is that it favors poor rural red states over prosperous populous urban blue states, suggesting, perhaps unintentionally, that poor peoples' votes should be worth less than wealthier peoples' votes. More importantly, this critique recasts current trends into timeless immutable facts. That most small rural states are Republican today reflects politics today. Democrats might do well to develop a rural agenda.

The poor-prosperous characterization also sees unchangeable reality in what are only currently prevailing economic conditions. The idea that prosperous urban states are subsidizing poor rural states forgets that New York City would have gone bankrupt in 1975 but for a federal bailout and that Detroit did go bankrupt a few years ago. Moreover, 1975 may repeat itself with several more densely populated blue states in disastrous fiscal condition, including California, Illinois, New Jersey and, yes, Connecticut, with its last-place rankings on most measures of fiscal condition and its capital city teetering on the edge of bankruptcy today.

According to the continuing chorus of critics, the divergence of the popular vote and the Electoral College vote in 2016 proves conclusively that the Electoral College is an anti-democratic anachronism. The greater truth is that the critics don't like the anti-Democratic result of the election. While [President Trump](#) is a unique, once-in-a-century national leader, his victory as a Republican is wholly consistent with the overwhelming national GOP consensus. Republicans control the Senate, the House, 33 governorships and the vast majority of state legislatures nationwide.

Democrats should forget about changing the rules and start worrying about their performance.

Red Jahncke (@RedJahncke) is president of Townsend Group International, a business consultancy headquartered in Connecticut.

#Right2Speak

Our April Speaker, National Committeewoman Toni Anne Dashiell, shared with us some information about Right2Speak. Here is a bit more information about this organization.



About Us

We are #Right2Speak... a group of women who seek to serve as a gracious counter-balance to the extremist voices attempting to represent women in the media. We seek to counteract the angry, extreme liberal voice in the mainstream media and on social media on matters of policy and personal freedoms. Their messages do not represent all women and their bullying tactics do not work on us -- our story, our voice must be heard.

The founding purpose of RIGHT2SPEAK.org is to have a constructive response, filling the vacuum of the female protestors that were commanding the bulk of airtime and undermining our democracy in winter 2017. While these women insist on protesting and resisting, the majority of women in the real world are working and keeping their families safe.

On March 8, 2017, we proved this with our successful launch earning \$2.7M in traditional media along with a 25% share of conversation (consistent with celebrity level following) on Twitter for #WeShowUp. Today we continue to exercise our right to speak so that we can bring our nation back together with a [Common Sense - Common Ground agenda](#).

Mission

#Right2Speak is calling for a return to truly free speech and an atmosphere where we can debate our differences without fear or threats. We seek to Engage, Educate and Elevate the Debate at a level never attempted. Our country desperately needs this positive message and opportunity for liberty in all types of media, at all levels of engagement, across the nation, counteracting the angry mob-think on matters of policy and personal freedoms. We will work to bring people of differing voices from across the nation together on matters that concern them, and find common ground action, suggestions, and policy recommendations that we will then share avidly in social media, the traditional media, and those in power so that we are heard.

Our Cause

Freedom of speech is a pillar of our free nation. What has made our country great is the ability to come together in the public sphere and describe, discuss, debate our differences civilly. Yet there is a growing drumbeat in social media and in the street... a drumbeat that seeks to drown out all opposing voices.

With all the attention paid to the recent Women's March movement, there is a very important story that is not being told. It is the story of the women of this nation who have been cast-aside in the clamor and rhetoric of the extreme far-left. Our voice, it seems, is considered unworthy of participation in the public debate.

We are being silenced because we disagree. We are told we are not equal because we hold a different view.

This is not the American way.

We have the Right to Speak. Because we have something important to say. We are more than the protests, more than the mob-think. More than the stifling of free speech, more than the bullying with baseless claims. We are more. We are voices of reason and integrity. We are voices of liberty and love. We may not always agree with one another, but we will respect one another's voice. We will fight not just for our voice to be heard, but for the voices of all women who are being marginalized by the far left.



Legislative Report

Washington April 27, 2018 [Korean War Veteran Sam Johnson Statement on North Korea Peace Talks](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In response to the news that North and South Korea intend to work toward a formal end to the Korean War and dismantle the North Korean nuclear program, U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson (TX-03) – the last Korean War veteran in Congress – released the following statement:

As a veteran who fought in Korea and Vietnam, I have seen the horrors of war firsthand. And as a POW for nearly seven years, I have experienced living without individual liberty. I absolutely want peace and freedom for ALL Koreans, and I hope and pray that North Korea holds true to its promises, including denuclearization. At the same time, we must be mindful about the North Korean regime's two-faced track record and proceed with great caution. We owe this to the brave service members who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the Korean peninsula and all those who have helped defend South Korea in the decades since the Armistice. Above all, any deal should not make it harder to address future North Korean aggression if the regime fails to keep its word. We still have a long and uncertain road ahead to peace. If Kim Jong-un wants our trust, he will need to earn it. I will be watching North Korea closely over the coming weeks and months to see if his actions match his words.

Washington April 13, 2018 [Johnson, Larson Introduce Medical Debt Tax Relief Act](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday, U.S. Congressmen Sam Johnson (TX-03) and John Larson (CT-01) introduced the *Medical Debt Tax Relief Act* (H.R. 5493), which would ensure that the IRS cannot tax medical debt that has been forgiven.

“Medical debt can be financially crippling, and folks who have been fortunate to receive debt forgiveness should NOT be taxed by the IRS on that debt – it just adds insult to injury,” said Johnson. “The *Medical Debt Tax Relief Act* seeks to protect these vulnerable individuals, and I thank Congressman Larson for joining me in this important effort. I look forward to getting this bipartisan and commonsense bill passed into law.”

“I applaud Chairman Johnson for introducing the *Medical Debt Tax Relief Act* and standing up for people who are struggling with high medical bills. For those individuals who have had their medical debt forgiven, it is unconscionable to think that they would then be sent a tax bill. I urge Congress to take up this commonsense legislation,” said Larson.

Background: Currently, the tax code does not explicitly exempt the cancellation of medical debt from taxation. Therefore, it is possible for a taxpayer to have their medical debt cancelled, but then be required to pay taxes on that debt as if it were income. *The Medical Debt Tax Relief Act* would right this wrong by ensuring that the cancellation of medical debt is not a taxable event.

Washington April 13, 2018 [NOW LAW: Johnson, Larson Bill to Strengthen Social Security's Representative Payee Program](#)

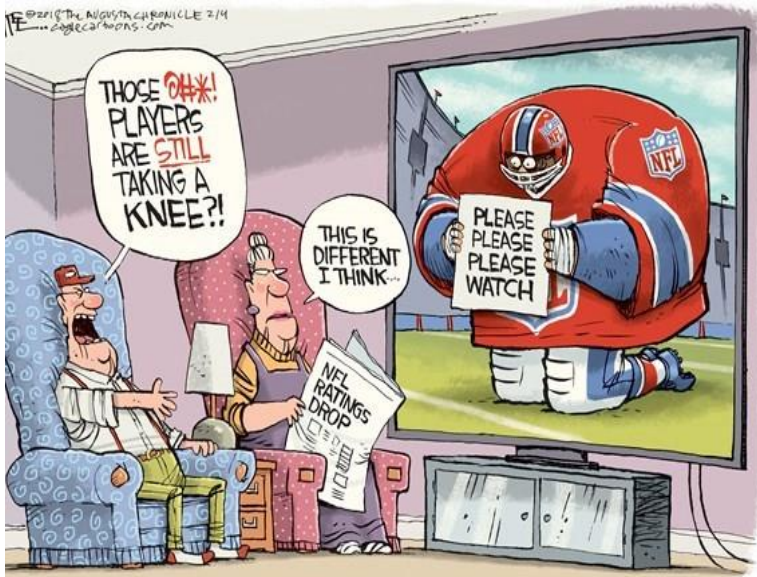
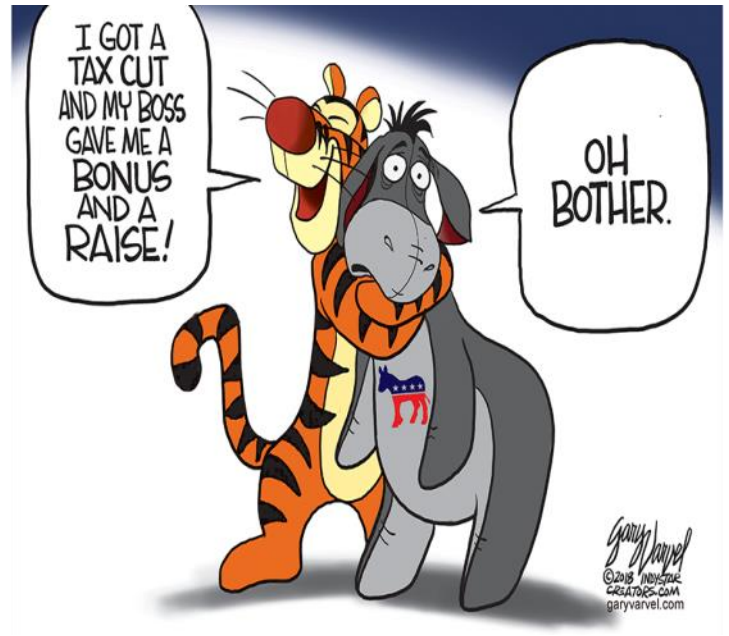
Today, President Trump signed into law the *Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018* (H.R. 4547). Introduced by Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Chairman Sam Johnson (R-TX) and Ranking Member John Larson (D-CT), this bipartisan legislation will modernize the representative payee program so that it will better protect Social Security beneficiaries who are unable to manage their own benefits.

Chairman Johnson said:

“This new law is great news for the millions of Social Security beneficiaries who rely on a representative payee to help them manage their benefits. Not only will it provide much-needed accountability for the representative payee program, but it also puts measures into place that ensure newly selected representative payees are qualified and trustworthy. I thank Congressman Larson for working with me on this important legislation that will ensure Americans—from children, seniors, to individuals with disabilities—will have more peace of mind when it comes to having a representative payee they can trust.”




Political Cartoons



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