



## Soda Tax May Be Key to Unlock Education Shackles

Written by Robert Woodard

Saturday, January 21, 2017

Hats off to Mayor Jim Kenney, for bringing to fact that all children deserve a fair chance to become properly educated. Happy New Year to our Pre-K students, who deserve much more than questions about, why children so desperately need to learn to read before kindergarten. The mind of a child is at its peak in the early stages of life. The door of learning is wide open, just waiting for education to come in.

It is important to understand that most kids that receive the proper education live outside of the City of Philadelphia. This very fact is why in 2017, we as a City, are number one in poverty and we are highest in prison population in this country. Most of the larger inner-cities around this nation have similar problems, with an imbalance in the distribution of an equal opportunity for our children to become properly educated. The overwhelming majority of these inner-city students are of darker hue, particularly those who have the blood of former Slaves running through their veins. Can you imagine what it was like in the early stages of a Slave Child's life? Remember, the younger a child, the more likely they are to excel and grasp being educated.

Yes, we all as Americans must re-educate ourselves about the terrible horrors of Slavery and what it has done to our overall American society. The children of former Slaves living in this country today must be studied by educational institutions by Scientists, Professors and Psychological Analysts, concerning the harmful effects of the damages done by Chattel Slavery. This must be done if we're going to correct our mistakes as a growing Nation. One of the biggest mistakes in Human history was Chattel Slavery. The spirit of Chattel Slavery purposely taught the Black Slaves that they were less than Human Beings. It became lawful in many states that the children of former Slaves were only three fifths of a Human Being. The psychological damages in that kind of teaching, was disastrous to young Black Children to say the least.

My fellow Americans, remember that we as a Nation hold the title of being the greatest country on Earth. Don't you think it's about time that we lived up to that status? We must work together as Americans to bring everyone into a fair and just educational environment.

January 15, 1929 was the day of the birth of a true American icon. He was the late great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He stated that discrimination anywhere is an injustice everywhere. If we as a Nation are ever going to heal our ailing society, we have to first realize that we're sick. Only then can the healing process begin. By educating ourselves about our faults is the only way we can make our social wounds heal. Hence, like any wound, it must be brought out into light in order to heal.

"Educational Discrimination" is real in this country and we have to do something to control this sickness. Last year in this City, Strawberry Mansion High School graduated only thirty-three percent of its Senior class and in 2012 West Philadelphia High School had fifty-five percent non-graduates. These numbers are facts not fiction. I know that we as a Nation can fix this, but we have to work together as "One Human Race". The illusion of there being more than one Race, has to stop. It's time to teach and tell the truth to all American children in the early stages of their lives, what they already know and that is there's only "One Race" called "Human" with many cultures and there's only "One Color" called "Melanin" with many shades. My question becomes, "Why can't we as adults understand this?" I thank our Mayor Jim Kenney for making Philadelphia the first to bring a Soda Tax to support Pre-K. Now it's time to make Pre-K work for all children, regardless of the color of their skin. Then, we as a Nation will be able to see Race as a singular word not as a plural. Remember, "Educational Discrimination" equals poverty or prison, neither of which make for a better society.

Let's make January 4, 2017 not just the beginning of Pre-K here in Philadelphia, but the beginning of a new way of teaching our children the truth about Race, then give them an opportunity to receive an equal quality education. That way the truth will tell the whole story that will ultimately set us all as Americans free.

Have a Happy Healthy and Truthful New Year by taking the "RACE Test" today at [www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org](http://www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org).

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