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HOW TO ASSERT PARENTS' RIGHTS IN EDUCATION

The Maryland Coalition of Concerned Parents has just released a sample letter which anyone can use to assert parental rights under the new Hatch Amendment regulations. The Coalition was formed ten years ago to combat psychological probings, non-academic testing, and invasions of privacy of pupils and their families by public schools.

The Coalition is a strong supporter of the Hatch Amendment (officially called the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment) which became law in 1978, and of its regulations which went into effect last November. This letter should be very helpful to parents who want to assert their rights but don't know how to confront the education establishment.

Nobody is demanding the elimination or censorship of these curricula. The Maryland Coalition is simply insisting that the schools comply with the law and secure written parental consent before inflicting the children with psychological courses or materials.

We are printing this sample letter (slightly edited) here because it is such a good summary of what is wrong with most schools today. If what follows is "all Greek" to you, then you simply haven't kept up with what is going on in public school classrooms today.

The letter reads: "I am the parent of _____ who attends _____ School. Under U.S. legislation and court-decisions, parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education, and pupils have certain rights which the school may not deny. Pupils have the right to have and to hold their values and moral standards without direct or indirect manipulation by the schools through curriculum, textbooks, audio-visual materials, or supplementary assignments.

"Accordingly, I hereby request that my child be involved in NO school activities listed below unless I have first been given the opportunity to review all the materials to be used and have given my written approval for their use: Psychological and psychiatric examinations, tests, or surveys that are designed to elicit information about attitudes, habits, traits, opinions, beliefs, or feelings of an individual or group; psychological and psychiatric treatment that is designed to affect behavioral, emotional, or attitudinal

characteristics of an individual or group;

"Values clarification, including use of moral dilemmas, discussion of religious or moral standards, role-playing of situations involving moral issues, and survival games including life/death decision exercises; death education, including abortion, euthanasia, suicide, and use of violence; instruction in nuclear war and nuclear classroom games;

"Anti-nationalistic, one-world government or globalism curriculum; education in inter-personal relationships, including family life, discussions of attitudes toward parents and parenting; education in human sexuality, including premarital sex, extra-marital sex, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, group sex and marriages, prostitution, incest, masturbation, bestiality, divorce, population control, and roles of males and females; discussions of witchcraft and the occult;

"Pornography and any materials containing profanity and/or sexual explicitness; guided fantasy techniques; hypnotic techniques; organic evolution, including the idea that man has developed from previous or lower types of living things;

"Testing and/or instruction relating to political affiliations and beliefs of student and family; personal religious beliefs and practices; mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or family; sex behavior and attitudes of student or family; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships; legally recognized privileged and analogous relationshps, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; and income, including the student's role in family activities and finances;

"Non-academic personality tests; questionnaires on personal life, views, and family; autobiography assignments; log books, diaries, and personal journals; sociograms; contrived incidents for self-revelation; sensitivity training, including group encounter sessions, group contact sessions, magic circle techniques, self-evaluation and auto-criticism; strategies specifically designed for self-disclosure such as the zig-zag technique; blindfold walks; isolation techniques; psychodrama; sociodrama."

Schools have no right to inflict these psychological courses on children without their parents' consent. When will the civil libertarians discover that this parents' and pupils' rights in education is the civil rights issue of the 1980s?