Advice For Education Secretary Spellings

by Phyllis Schlafly June 13, 2007

Printer Friendly version

Google Ads are provided by Google and are not selected or endorsed by Eagle Forum

Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, please call your boss and urge him to read your May 9 speech to the National Summit on America's Silent Epidemic in Washington, DC. Your eloquence in describing the silent epidemic was exceeded only by our shock at the facts you described.

"The dropout rate for African-American, Hispanic, and Native American students approaches 50 percent. . . . Every year nearly a million kids fail to graduate high school. . . . The United States has the most severe income gap between high school graduates and dropouts in the world."

You exhorted us to deal with this problem because "stopping the exodus" is both a "moral imperative" and an "economic necessity." You lambasted our government's current "state of denial" and demanded "a state of acknowledgement."

Right on, Secretary Spellings. But your own boss must be one of those in a state of denial. At the same time you were delivering your call for action, President Bush was demanding passage of the Senate immigration bill which would dump many more millions of high school dropouts in your lap.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, 49 percent of illegal aliens are high school dropouts, compared with 25 percent of legal immigrants, and only 9 percent of native-born Americans.

Secretary Spellings proclaimed in her speech that "the days when you could earn a good living off the sweat of your brow are disappearing. In industries ranging from manufacturing to micro-processing, a high school diploma is the bare minimum for success."

But that's not what corporate lobbyists are telling the Senators. The lobbyists are saying that employers need waiters and dishwashers to work in restaurants, lettuce and strawberry pickers for big agriculture, and grass-cutters and shrub-trimmers to tend our lawns.

High-school dropouts are the kind of workers these employers want to hire. That's why employers are lobbying to legalize the up to 20 million illegals already here and also to bring in hundreds of thousands more in a guest-worker program.

The CEOs of multinationals publicly announced their dissatisfaction with the Senate bill because it contains some feeble provisions to give some limited preference (eight years into the future) to foreigners with skills instead of giving preference to remote relatives of the illegal alien high school dropouts whom the Senate bill would legalize.

Big business employers prefer to import foreigners who are eager for any kind of menial job. They come from countries where they have endured a poverty so severe that it is incomprehensible to even the poorest of U.S. citizens.

Big business employers know that legalized illegals and guest-workers are willing to work long hours at sub-minimum wages. Employers know that U.S. taxpayers will supplement those low wages by the handout called the Earned Income Tax

Credit (EITC) and to pay the costs of medical care, public schooling, school lunches, housing subsidies, and dozens of other tax-paid benefits that flow to low-income workers.

The Heritage Foundation estimates that U.S. taxpayers pay about $20,000 per year to every household headed by a high school dropout. That's even before retirement age enables the high school dropouts and their imported relatives to cash in on Social Security and Medicare.

In her speech, Secretary Spellings coined an apt phrase and also borrowed a pertinent phrase from the immigration debate to describe urban public schools. She called them "dropout factories" and decried the fact that they have been "in the shadows for so long."

You said it well, Secretary Spellings. It's not just illegal aliens who need to be brought out of "the shadows"; it's the scandal of forcing the taxpayers to pay an average of $10,000 per public school student even though many students are not taught how to read.

A typical bureaucrat, Spellings' solution is to pour more taxpayers' money into the schools. But that could only address the problem of kids still in school; it does nothing for the dropouts who have given up on schooling and gone out to the streets where they get into all sorts of mischief.

What our own high school dropouts need is a job so they can get started building a life. Instead of rewarding illegal aliens with a Z-visa to enable them to hold a job legally, Secretary Spellings should ask the Senate to authorize a Z-diploma to encourage U.S. businesses to hire our own high school dropouts.

The primary result of the Senate immigration bill will be to provide corporations with more high school dropouts, and that's exactly what our country does not need.

Secretary Spellings, when you phone President Bush, maybe he will answer if you press 2 for Spanish.