Federal Grab for Control of Education

May 19, 1994 *by Phyllis Schlafly*

The same Congress that can't be trusted to run a bank, a restaurant or a post office, whose most powerful member is on the verge of being indicted, wants to take over the entire U.S. school system as well as the entire health industry. While the latter has received a good deal of publicity, the former is a stealth assault that has received almost no television, newspaper or cartoon coverage.

S.1513, the 700-page Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is due to be voted on by the Senate this month, will do to education what the Clinton health bill will do to health care. That means a federal grab for power, more bureaucratic control over private and local decisions, lower quality, higher taxes, and the implementation of a liberal social agenda that would never be adopted if Americans are allowed to make their own choices.

Under S.1513, the feds will acquire national control of curriculum and tests (called assessments). States will be required to adopt a curriculum and a series of tests that conform to the federal mandates laid down in the other education law, Goals 2000, which was recently signed by President Clinton.

S.1513 legislates the controversial system called Outcome-Based Education. Title II, Sec. 2132 states: "The term 'outcome performance indicators' means measures of specific outcomes that the state or local educational agency identifies as assessing progress."

Under S.1513, each state must adopt "content standards" and "performance standards" that specify what "all children are expected to know and be able to do," and that describe three levels of performance: "proficient," "advanced," and a "third bench mark" described as "lower-performing." The states must inform the feds in detail about how the children are "mastering" the material.

Don't be under any illusion that this means higher academic standards. Cutting through the jargon, S.1513 will forbid schools to teach reading by phonics or arithmetic by drills such as the multiplication tables.

S.1513 would arrogantly write into federal law the utterly false statement that teaching children "basic skills" ("with emphasis on repetitive drills and practice") "before engaging in more complex tasks" is a "disproven theory." S.1513 further demonstrates its animosity toward the basics by requiring that all states use "instructional strategies" that provide an "accelerated curriculum rather than remedial drill and practice."

The dumbing down process, which is the essence of Outcome-Based Education, is further advanced by the provision that gives federal bonus funds to "Distinguished Schools," which are defined as schools in which "all students" meet the designated "performance standards" for three consecutive years. It is obvious that "all" students cannot meet a designated performance standard unless that standard is very low.

S.1513 is a federal grab for power to regulate homeschoolers and private schools. It forces each state to describe and enforce standards based on tests (assessments) "for all children."

The phrase "all children" is used repeatedly. It puts the squeeze on each state's public school bureaucracy to regulate "all children" in order to receive its federal funding.

S.1513 authorizes school-based health clinics for every school, as well as school cooperation with Planned Parenthood. S.1513 authorizes schools to "coordinate and collaborate with other agencies providing services to children, youth, and families, including, but not limited to, health and social services."

In the name of "gender equity," S.1513 sets up a federal!y financed bureaucracy to hire radical feminists to evaluate, censor, and insert feminist propaganda into "curricula, textbooks, and other educational materials." This will provide federal funds to hire a feminist gestapo, make grants to radical feminist organizations and individuals, and issue censorship instructions to publishers and school administrators.

S.1513 requires all parents to sign a "school-parent compact." This will put parents in a contractual relationship with "the entire school staff' in order to make parents "partners" to "share the responsibility" for educating their children.

S.1513 assumes that parents need the approval of schools in order to function as parents. The bill sets up a system for government agents to go into the homes of preschool children to evaluate and monitor parents in order "to help parents become full partners in the education of their children."

S.1513 sets up a two-step system for national certification and licensure of teachers and administrators. First, it forces certification requirements on the states, and then it authorizes federal funds to provide "financial or other incentives" to corral teachers into a process of being certified by the union-controlled National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The Senate should reject S.1513. The Senate can very easily continue the appropriations in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act without enacting the above obnoxious provisions.