P.S. to the NEWS
by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

RELEASE: OCTOBER 10, 1980

SCHOOL CAN WAIT

Somewhere between a quarter and a half million children are not in school this fall. They stayed home to be taught by their parents. This rapidly growing trend worries and embarrasses the educators.

The principal reason for the doubling or tripling of education at home is that more and more parents have decided that they can do a better job than the public schools. Newsletters such as "Growing Without Schooling" and publications such as "Home Learning Recipes" are growing in readership.

Raymond Moore, author of "School Can Wait," is a leading advocate of keeping children at home where they can be taught by their parents until at least the age of seven. He argues that home-schooled children outperform students in public schools when they finally attend school.

I discovered that truth long before I read his book. Twenty five years ago, I started educating all my six children at home until they entered the second grade. I taught them to read by the authentic phonics method after which, of course, they sailed through school as superior readers.

My reason for home teaching was that I wanted my children to become excellent readers. I did not want them to endure months and years of the frustrating nonsense called "sight reading" or the "whole word method", because that would result in a lifetime handicap of being denied basic reading skills.

The hundreds of thousands of parents who have resorted to home schooling today have a variety of reasons for making their unorthodox decision. They cite the failure of the schools to teach the three R's, the drug and discipline problem, and the harmful moral climate.

When I started teaching my children at home, the principal objection voiced by by incredulous friends was that my children would miss out on the social and group learning of the school environment. Today, those aspects have become a principal reason why parents are resorting to home schooling.

(more)

"Schools are not only destructive of intellect but character," says the newsletter "Growing Without Schooling." "With very few exceptions, the social life of our schools is meanspirited, competitive, status seeking snobbish, cruel, often violent and full of talk about who went to whose party and who did not."

Other parents have taken the different approach of trying to improve the textbooks used in the schools. After 20 years of reading, comparing, and objecting to offensive passages in textbooks, Norma and Mel Gabler of Longview, Texas, are finally beginning to receive the recognition they deserve as the nation's premier textbook watchdogs.

Probably the Gablers' most famous objection to a textbook occurred in 1972 when they pointed out that a fifth grade history text devoted nearly seven pages to Marilyn Monroe and less than a paragraph to George Washington. "Is Texas ready," Norma asked, "for Marilyn to become the mother of our country?"

In the curious value system of the educators, it is called "censorship" to object to the seven pages on Monroe, but it is "academic freedom" and "education" to put them in. The Gablers are not censors but balancers. It is a citizen's right to voice objections to textbooks which offend standards of truth, morality, and patriotism.

The education movement of the 1970s and '80s which is far greater than home teaching and textbook watchdogism is the growth of fundamentalist Christian schools. They are being organized at a rate of more than three schools per day. If this pace continues, their number will equal the number of public schools by the end of the decade.

"The emergency of these schools reflects the belief that the family is the first school in which we are taught the personal values and habits essential to the preservation of a free society," writes Carl Anderson, president of the American Family Institute. He upholds the right of the family to seek a school with values and moral commitments consistent with the religious upbringing sought by the parents.

The growth of private religious schools has come about in the face of substantial barriers and regulations imposed by federal and state governments. The determination of parents to overcome such obstacles, despite the cost in money, time and effort, and the variety of ways they have devised to educate their children, all witness to the fundamental defects in American education today.

(end)