Is the Government Planning Your Child's Career?

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Republican Presidential candidates criss-crossing the country have discovered that one of their best hot-button applause lines is "I promise to abolish the Department of Education." Out in the byways of America, parents know that public schools are a disaster area and that Federal Government spending has hurt, not helped, the situation.

So it is a puzzlement why the Republican House just passed an education bill that increases federal control and involvement in the public schools rather than reducing it. Called the "CAREERS" bill, it uses federal dollars to expand and institutionalize one of the worst Clinton bills passed last year, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

Republican Congressmen who voted for this bill are sending six-page handouts to their constituents purporting to show how amendments have "answered parents' concerns." But opponents of CAREERS didn't merely have "concerns" about the CAREERS bill; they recognize it as the philosophy we thought we defeated in the 1994 election.

When one takes time to read the CAREERS bill, it is obvious that it is the legislative implementation of an 18-page letter written by Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, to Hillary Clinton on November 11, 1992, just after the Presidential election. This letter states that it was the result of a meeting in David Rockefeller's office, at which those present were "literally radiating happiness" at Clinton's victory.

They were celebrating their plans for what "you [Hillary] and Bill should do now about education, training and labor market policy." Tucker's letter laid out their master plan to "remold" the public schools into a "national human resources development system," which would be "guided by clear standards that define the stages of the system for the people who progress through it, and regulated on the basis of outcomes that providers produce for their clients."

Tucker's vision is aggressively ambitious. His letter called for "a seamless web" that "literally extends from cradle to grave and is the same system for everyone -- young and old, poor and rich, worker and full-time student."

Tucker's "seamless web" includes a national employment service in which "all available front-line jobs, whether public or private, must be listed in it by law." Then, "a system of labor market boards is established at the local, state and federal levels to coordinate the systems for job training, postsecondary professional and technical education, adult basic education, job matching and counseling."

Tucker's "seamless web" calls for government to be in the drivers' seat at every stage of the "human resources development system." The "labor market boards" will decide what jobs may be allowed, and the schools will "train" students (the human resources) for jobs selected by the "labor market boards."

The "new general education standard" (i.e., a state-certified "certificate of mastery" rather than a diploma) will become a "prerequisite for enrollment in all professional and technical degree programs," as well as for all hiring. Tucker's letter lays out how, under his system, schools will be required to provide information "to government agencies in a uniform format."

Tucker's letter makes it clear why so much of the discussion about Congressional appropriations for education includes references to the Department of Labor. Tucker and his friends have been planning to meld Labor and Education functions ever since Lynn Martin, Secretary of Labor in the Bush Administration, published the SCANS report.

Much of Marc Tucker's ambitious plan is already in place. Last year, Clinton signed the Goals 2000 Act, which requires schools to adopt "standards," and the School-to-Work law, which lays the groundwork for using high schools to train students for occupations selected by the local labor market boards.

The CAREERS bill expands on School-to-Work and perfectly tracks the Tucker letter. The CAREERS text states that the Governor of each state (if he wants the funds) shall "designate" the establishment of "a local workforce development board" in each local area. In the House debate on CAREERS on September 19, Education Opportunities Committee Chairman William Goodling (R-PA) stated that the bill requires that "training be tied to occupations in demand in the local community."

CAREERS makes it clear that government will now assume the power to set up workforce development plans, with a comprehensive and coordinated labor market computer system, and that students will be

trained only to work in the occupations prescribed by the government.

In the House debate, Goodling boasted that the White House is pleased with this legislation. He admitted that the CAREERS bill has been in preparation "for 2 years," which places the date at long before Republicans became a majority in the House.

When you combine this workforce system with the schools' obvious failure to teach children to read and the dumbing down process called Outcome-Based Education, the result will be a Third World education to accustom Americans to Third World wages. The "powers that be" want public school graduates to be content to compete with workers in foreign countries who work for 1/40th of American wages.

Think about that every time you hear politicians, businessmen, educators and bureaucrats talking on television about "competing in the global economy" and becoming "citizens of the world."