from Phyllis Schlafly September 9, 1993 LOOK OUT! HERE COMES ANOTHER EXPENSIVE "REFORM!"

Any time you hear the word "reform" out of the mouths of liberals, look out. It usually means gold-plating the same old bureaucracy and it always means lots more spending. That surely describes President Clinton's "education reform" bill, called "Goals 2000: Educate America Act."

Goals 2000 would put the education establishment, with the heavy hand of federal control, into all aspects of life from conception until a child enters the labor force. It would endorse all sorts of highly controversial programs, including a national school board, a national curriculum, national testing, funding of school-based clinics (the so called condom clinics), Outcome-Based Education, the "Robin Hood" plan that forces states to equalize funding among school districts, and a national "teachers as parents" program.

Goals 2000 would create three new bureaucracies to set up national standards and use the heavy-handed technique of tying funding to state adoption of federal standards and mandates. Goa1s· 2000 explicitly rejects private school choice in favor of plowing more tax money into the same dinosaur establishment that has failed our children so miserably.

Title I establishes seven National Education Goals to be met by the year 2000. These goals broaden the scope of education to cover almost everyone from prenatal babies and preschool children to parents and adults in the labor force.

Goal 1 states that all children in America must start school "ready to learn." This means that the government plans to take over the responsibility for raising infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and for running all kinds of preschool baby-sitting and health-care programs.

Goal 2 states that the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent, with assurances that the graduation rates for minority and non-minority students will be the same. This goal will no doubt be facilitated by the current trend of giving everyone high grades, thus making report cards meaningless.

Goal 3 states that all students will leave grades 4, 8 and 12 having demonstrated sufficient competency over subject matter including foreign languages and art, history and geography, involvement in community service, and knowledge about the ''diverse cultural heritage." There is no mention of schoolchildren learning how to read, which should be the number-one task of the schools.

Title II establishes two new layers of bureaucracy: a National Education Goals Panel and a National Education Standards and Improvement Council. This Council will function as a national school board that controls criteria for certification of teachers, schools, and the so-called "voluntary" standards for national content, student performance, and the assessment systems submitted by the states.

Most of the money in Goals 2000 will go in grants to the states and local public school systems. Money would be made available for developing, field testing, and evaluation of systems of assessment, and the states are already setting up their own spending programs to parallel the federal plan.

The bill requires grantees to give special attention to how assessments treat all students in regard to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, and language proficiency. Many parents are concerned that this is a device to finance the controversial Outcome-Based Education, which teaches attitudes and outcomes rather than cognitive skills and factual knowledge.

Title III authorizes grants to the states for plans that support

the federal takeover of education, including: (1) development or adoption of content, student performance, and opportunity-to-learn standards, (2) improvement and coordination of staff, curriculum, and assessment systems, and (3) coordination of health and social services. The committee report emphasizes that the use of federal funds is not restricted to the academic area (and one wonders if any money at all will be spent on academics).

Title IV sets up the third layer of bureaucracy: a National Standards Board to stimulate the development of a national system of skill standards used in industry hiring. When did it become the job of the public schools to advise business on hiring standards?

Title VI authorizes money to train parents. Since when did it become the job of the public schools to train parents?

This expansion of the public schools' mission is modelled on the Missouri plan called "Parents as Teachers" (often called "Teachers as Parents"). This program greatly expands the turf of the public schools by sending state employees inside private homes to evaluate parents and teach mothers how to raise their children.

Congressman Dick Armey's (R-TX) Republican alternative, called the "Parent and Student Empowerment Act," offers real education reform with an emphasis on local control. It incorporates the goals for education that were originally agreed to by the Governors, including school choice and parents' right to opt out of programs they consider detrimental.

Armey's plan also requires schools to get informed consent from parents before subjecting children to intrusive psychological testing or sex surveys, and it recognizes parents' right to decide who can view their children's school records. Armey's bill sounds like real reform.