

Senate Bill 321 March 12, 2015

Dear Chair Roblan and Members of the Committee,

Surely our mutual desire is that children turn out to be responsible adults, engaged in their communities, and a benefit to society.

Surely we agree that children ought to be educated successfully. But what is educational success? Is it measured by academic scores or I.Q. or knowledge or the number of years spent in a classroom or the price-tag of that education? Is it measured by the number of iPads or the most up-to-date technological gadgets in student's hands? Is it measured in the values transmitted? Whose values should we use? Yours or mine? We differ on what and how education should best be done.

Parents are the best people to raise and educate their children. They know their children best and they must have a voice. Parents know their children's strengths, weaknesses, and abilities. Even when parents are un- or under-educated, they do a better job of educating their children than do the public schools. This is evident in academic scores as research shows. (1)

As an educator myself, I have taught piano, among other more academic subjects. Many parents who want their children to get ahead early often start their very young children out with music lessons. One parent starts a child at age 4 or 5; another parent starts their child at age 8 or 9, which is when I recommend lessons. Unless one is a prodigy, the children will be at the same place in their musical attainments by age 12. The 5-year-old seems not to have any advantage over the 8-year-old even with those additional several years.

The same holds true in general education. Educating children early does not have positive long-term benefits. The earlier educated child ends up at the same level as the later educated child by age 12. This is especially true for male children. (2)

This plan, Senate Bill 321, to spend 4 years to get all children to read "at grade level" by 3rd grade, is unnecessary. Fifty percent of enrolled children, who are at or above the 50th percentile, will learn to read and be proficient by 3rd grade without mandatory kindergarten and early intervention. Many of those will learn to read in less than 2 years. A long program of reading from age 5 to age 8 may kill the interest of fast learners. It may serve to stifle creativity and interest. Fifty percent of enrolled children, who are below the 50th percentile, are not going to read "at grade level" no matter if they have been enrolled as a 5-year-old or a 7-year-old. The increase in time spent at school will not improve scores, intelligence or knowledge.

Public schools no longer represent parents, they represent the interests of the state. In another age, we would have agreed that making state-directed education compulsory from age 5 to 18 was a tenet of the since failed Soviet State.

Unfortunately, Oregon ranks very low on measurable scales of student performance. The Oregon education system has consistently failed to educate students in 12 years. Additional years will not increase student academic achievement, in Oregon or anywhere else. In 1972, California tried and, thankfully, failed, to lower the compulsory education to less than 3 years of age. Too much emphasis is put on high esteem and not enough emphasis on academics. In my family, we joke that American

education teaches students to feel good about being stupid.

“The educational system is living a lie.” (3) That lie is that every child can be anything they want to be. Of course, you don't really believe that. There are natural limitations, natural strengths and weaknesses in every child, in every adult. The natural abilities of the children, half of which register below the median, cannot be realistically addressed or progressed by the educational system we have in place. Half the children are below average. It is the nature of the statistics.

“If a thousand children are administered a good IQ test at age 6, and those children then attend a wide variety of elementary and secondary schools, their IQs at age 18 will be very similar to what they were at age 6...” (3)

State education has a romantic affair with itself, believing it to be the solution to all man's sorrows. More money, more teachers, better teachers, more technology, more years in the education system - none of this yields better students or citizens. The quality of education matters more, not the quantity or number of years in the system. That quality has been in a state of erosion in the public schools for more than 40 years.

We have not even addressed the cost of the proposed Senate Bill 321, which undoubtedly would be astronomical.

“Our country spends more on education per student than all other industrialized nations of the world. Yet we rank near the bottom in math and science aptitude compared to these same nations.” (3) There is nothing in the U.S. Constitution that provides for state or federal education to the masses or illegal immigrants or to compel attendance at such institutions. This government monopoly on education turns out millions of barely functional illiterates.

Famous people with little, if any, public education include Abraham Lincoln, John Adams, Daniel Boone, Robert E. Lee, Thomas Edison, William Shakespeare, Andrew Jackson, Albert Einstein... These people, along with many others not so famous, turned out to be those responsible adults that we would agree we all desire.

I believe I have something to say about the benefits and outcomes of education and parental responsibility. Thank you for the opportunity to testify against Senate Bill 321. Fixing our education system in Oregon will not be an outcome of this bill. Please vote no with me.

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My Education and Background

My undergraduate and graduate degrees were in Home Economics, a broad study of individuals and families and their impact on each other and the society at large. Home Economics involves child

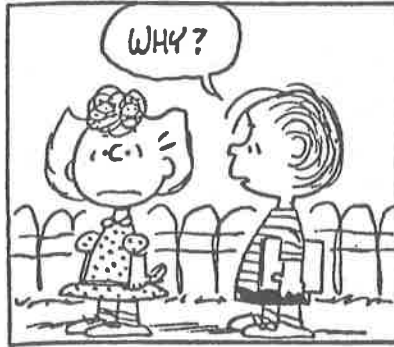
development and family studies; foods and nutrition; clothing and textiles; housing; and consumer studies.

Professionally, I have taught at Oregon State University; worked with the Elderly Nutrition Program and Meals on Wheels; and in Foods and Nutrition with Samaritan Hospital Systems.

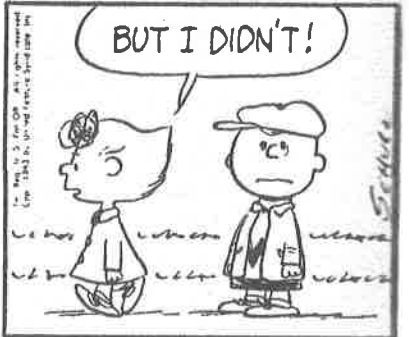
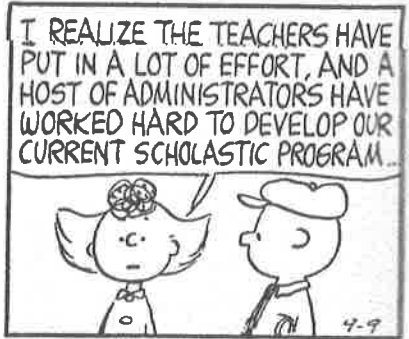
I educated our children at home, graduating our last child in 2012, totally independent of the public school system. Since graduation, they are at the top of their class in the Honors Program at Western Oregon University.

Resources and quotes bibliography:

- (1) Dr. Brian Ray, educator and statistician; Home Educated and Now Adults; 2004
 - (2) Dr. Raymond Moore, developmental psychologist, and Dorothy Moore, reading specialist; Better Late Than Early, 1975; Home Grown Kids, 1981; School Can Wait, 1986
 - (3) Charles Murray, social scientist; Real Education; 2008; Coming Apart; 2012
- Deani A. Neven Van Pelt, Ph.D., Patricia A. Allison, M.Ed., and Derek J. Allison, Ph.D.; 15 years later: Home Educated Canadian Adults; 2009
- HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association); 2015
- Marlin Maddoux, Public Education Against America; 2006



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