

Rita B. Anderson

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The Honorable Phillip Gunn
Speaker of the House of Representatives
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215

Dear Speaker Gunn,

This is to follow up on our recent telephone conversation regarding the Common Core State Initiative. You asked that I compile some information that would serve to inform you more clearly as to the objections that we in the Central MS Tea Party hold regarding this initiative.

There is much in the minutia of Common Core with which to object, however, I will try to focus on the big picture and the primary issues. It is an educational reform program that

- was never tested,
- was written after States committed to adopt it,
- aligns with a decades-old social reform agenda,
- has questionable academic achievement benefits for students,
- and lacks sound fiscal assessments for its implementation and on-going costs.

The enclosed white paper covers the various elements of concern. In addition, there is an article following the white paper authored by Mary Grabar, a writer and college english professor whose parents immigrated from Austria in 1960. She earned her Ph.d. from U. of Georgia in 2002. Her article covers the gamut of issues related to Common Core and merits a thorough review.

Highly Questionable Origin & Framers

The notion that Common Core is state-led is false. The chart on page 2 demonstrates the flow of funds from the Gates Foundations to the various entities - National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, Achieve, Inc., etc. - to promote Common Core. The framers of the Standards and the key influencers are a bevy of social reformers who have *no* credentials at all in the K-12

classroom. See page 2 of the white paper as well as articles behind the 'Social Reform' tab.

Standards Are a Trojan Horse

The most qualified members of the Validation Committees for Math and English Language Arts both refused to sign off on the Standards before their release and both have subsequently spoken out in opposition to CCSS in many public forums since. See pages 7-9 of the white paper and articles behind the CCSS tab.

Unfortunately, some of our State officials cling to the false narrative that 'it's just standards - not curriculum.' Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the curriculum is an integral part of the CCSS strategy to fundamentally change our country through the indoctrination of our children.

It should be noted that states adopting the Standards are required to implement 100% of the Standards with no modifications or deletions. States may add up to 15% of new material to the Standards.

Defies the Constitution, Parental Rights & Privacy

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Education issued revisions to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act to loosen the restrictions on the release of students' private records so that information can be shared with non-governmental authorities without parents' consent. Certainly, revising a legislative Act without legislative action is not unprecedented within the Obama Administration but should, nevertheless, not go unchallenged.

In addition to the data-mining and privacy concerns related to that data, there is the question of United Nations influence and agenda that undermines parental rights and local control over education. (It is difficult to even write those terms when they have become such a joke in this political climate!) On this subject, I commend to you the article by Jim Kelly, international human rights attorney from Atlanta, Georgia. Please give attention to his concluding section on page 7 with advice to state leaders.

Actions by Republicans

Also included in the material are

- the RNC Resolution regarding Common Core,

- a letter from nine U.S. Senators calling for elimination of federal interference with state decisions on academics and proposed new language in the budget bill to prohibit funds being used for Common Core State Standards implementation,
- letter from 34 U.S. Congressmen to Sec. Duncan expressing concern that Congress was by-passed in the implementation of Common Core; changes to FERPA were made without Congressional approval; and requesting a detailed description of the changes along with evidence of his authority to make such changes.

It is disappointing that none of our MS delegation were a party to these actions, but understandable since there has been little or no examination or dialogue among us on the issue. That dialogue is long overdue!

In Conclusion

You know that I am not an educator and that my children have long since been out of school, so I have not been 'in touch' with public education for quite some time. When I first heard about Common Core and its many red flags, I committed to research the issue. What I am presenting here is a very small portion of the voices of objection to Common Core State Standards Initiative that are resounding around the country. Those are the voices of dedicated teachers, parents, legislators, educators, and legal professionals - all more expert than I and all worth considering.

All that I ask, on behalf of the Central MS Tea Party and its Board, is that our elected representatives conduct or take part in a thorough and objective review of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Is it good for Mississippi school children and can we afford the price we will pay? I am very much concerned that up to this point our State Board has simply been a conduit for the promotional narrative of those entities paid to promote the CCSI agenda.

There are many excellent public policy groups and education professionals who are following the Common Core issues closely and would be excellent resources.

Sincerely,

Rita B. Anderson

cc: Rep. John More
Sen. Gray Tollison
Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves
Governor Phil Bryant