

Pilfering Our Children's Future School Administrator's Blame the Economy While Lining their Personal Pockets with More Tax Dollars...

Coming Back

Economy, Continued From Page 3...

I by Jefferson Pinto

It's everywhere; the newspaper, broadcast news, advertisements, and casual conversations. They all start the same way, "With the *current economic crisis*..." "Isn't it nice to know that with *these tough economic times* you can still save money on your auto insurance?" The "*bad economy*" is a new reference point of casual conversation and the media. "*Well, you know the economy...*" In the words of our governor in his address to the state legislature, "Last year, we confronted what history will record as *The Great Recession*."

I know, with unemployment above 12 percent, economic growth barely creeping along, and the number of mortgage defaults at their highest level since 2008, the economy isn't all that great.

As **Americans** we really like to blame someone or something for everything. Well if you can't blame it on **El Niño**, then try global warming. If all else fails blame it on the economy.

Let me tell it like it is. Things that were really screwed up before the recession will still be really screwed up after the recession.

During good economic times, the ocean is at high tide and there is a lot of water to go around. During bad economic times, the low tide reveals the "rocks" no longer hidden below the surf and exposes the gross inefficiencies.

THE VICTIM – PUBLIC EDUCATION: California schools rank 49th out of 50 states according to **Thomas G. Mortenson**, author of "*California at the Edge of a Cliff*."

The matter at hand is the poorly managed public education system in California, both academically and economically. Recently, every school district took a substantial reduction in state funding, then started the day sessions of whining and marches.

So what's wrong with across the board cuts? First of all, they fail to take into account duties and priorities. They fail to take into account the existing top-heavy distortion that has grown worse over the past few decades. What core duties and priorities you may ask? Remember English, arithmetic, and science?

I'm not sure there are any counselors left in public high schools? My son's high school has no counselors and yet a single registrar to handle all the transactions for 2,400 students. Bad delegation of duties. Think about this: one person, (*the registrar*) is responsible for administering all admission paperwork, procuring official transcripts from the prior school, confirming immunizations, and validating eligibility (*yes, people regularly lie about their citizenship and jurisdictional eligibility with the school's residency boundaries*). She is also responsible for sending all transcripts for all current or past graduates so graduates can get into college. She does a lot more than that too. Here's the problem, the registrar was cut back to 6 hours a day or 30 hours per week. Did I mention her telephone doesn't ring, not because people aren't calling, but because it's *broken*? She has the task of calling to check voice mail several times per hour. *Thankfully, her voice mail seems to work most of the time.*

DUE THE MATH

It takes about 25 minutes to process each new student. Approximately 600 incoming freshmen equates to 250 hours for new admissions at the beginning of the year. Given the current mandated work schedule of 6 hours per day, that's 8.3 weeks just to get the new students in the door. If the registrar had all the applications for new student admissions in hand, she would have to *start in June* to get all the work done *by September*. That's all without answering a single phone call.

What about the 600 or so graduating? Let's say it takes 15 minutes each to send transcripts for every student (*assuming they apply to only one college*). When your children's college application gets rejected because the transcripts didn't get there on time, don't blame the Registrar. The problem flows down from a much higher level. Helpful hint, it wasn't **El Niño** or the economy.



EDUCATION: GET DOLLARS AWAY FROM ADMINISTRATION AND INTO THE CLASSROOM

The poor academic performance of **California's** public schools is not due to a lack of competent and motivated teachers or failure to provide breakfast for indigent students that come to school hungry. Nor is it due to the cancellation of *Ebonics* as a second language either. The proximate cause is the lack of focus (*money time etc.*) that actually educates students.

Gov. Schwarzenegger said, "*In particular, my budget proposal protects education, including higher education, from additional deep cuts. I believe strongly that additional reductions below current year funding levels would leave a permanent scar on our children and on the greatest university system in the world. In fact, I intend to propose a re-prioritization of funds away from administration and into the classroom, and away from prisons and into our universities.*"

I don't know how far the governor's proposal got, but the counter proposal is to *lower the academic standards* so students who wouldn't have graduated under the old standards will graduate under the *new standards*. The impetus is to save money by *whooshing* substandard students out the door.

The public education system has slowly eroded over the past years. Not necessarily the overall funding, as total expenditures have a consistent

upward trend over the past 20 years. The number of people employed by the **California Department of Education** has also consistently *increased*, but the ratio of *teachers per pupil* has remained relatively *flat*. What does that mean? The *braniacs in charge* are disproportionately adding more non-teachers to the payroll than teachers. This isn't unique to education in this country. Something like 25 percent of employees who work for the telephone company *actually provide* the dial tone.

Again, the issue is the *efficiency* of the funding *not the total funding*. Those boys are *scrimping on primary* duties of educating and developing our students while *spending money on* things that are *inconsequential* to academic performance. Think of it like a big tape worm where the politicians and the high level administrators are the parasites and the teachers and students are the hosts, barely given enough to survive. It's almost a replay of **Saddam Hussein's** human shield except for this time our students are being used to *shield the waste*. Again it's not the total monies spent on "education" but the quantity that actually goes to providing the education.

'HELP' FROM UNCLE SAM

The **Federal Office of Education** wins the *Golden Fleece* for spending \$219,592 in a "*curriculum package*" to teach college students *how* to watch television. Tell me again *how that* teaches English, arithmetic, and science? Oh yeah, today they are called Language Arts, and mathematics, and science.

Public education in **California** was a mess *before* the recession. The recession helped to expose some of the *existing* economic problems. Now is a really good time to take aggressive action and fix the ills of the system.

Pull the lever and flush the educational "waste product."

Start by firing everyone associated with the educational system *above* the school principal level. As all attempts to fix the system have failed, start fresh with a *new minds* by including public school teachers, private school teachers, parents, and those who care *more* about the students and *less* about building a *bigger fiefdom* at the expense of our children and pocket book.

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"I intend to propose a re-prioritization of funds away from administration and into the classroom, and away from prisons and into our universities"

- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger



with two of those challenges: One foreign and one domestic.

First the foreign challenge. This can be framed in one noun: **CHINA**. We may lose jobs to **Thailand** and **Vietnam**, but those nations seem to play the trade game according to internationally accepted rules. **China** is in another league and so they play the game according to a different set of rules. To them the old chard, "*Heads I win, tails you loose*," is not only the basic rule, it is their *only* rule.

In the past twelve months or so, **China's** share of our trade deficit has jumped from below 70 percent to a bit over 80 percent, in one year! **China** exports to the **USA** a bit more than **\$330 billion** of goods but purchases *less than \$90 billion of American products*. How do they do this? Let's set the record straight. Low labor costs are not a major reason. **China** bends the rules...right to the breaking point. They *demand* that domestic and foreign companies use only **Chinese-made** goods if those goods are available in **China**. **China** determines where factories will be built. The central government in **Beijing** determines all the financing for ALL new factories. *Taxes are often circumvented* by paying a much smaller *bribe* to a **Communist** official. They have, to say the least, lax environmental regulations. But **MOST** of all, the **Chinese** manipulate the value of their currency (*the yuan or renminbi*). Their currency manipulation alone amounts to a colossal subsidy of 25 percent to their exports. Currency manipulation, according to **World Trade Organization (WTO)** rules is illegal.

About 90 percent of **China's** control of manufactured goods, vis-a-vis the **U.S.**, is due to the above subsidies to their domestic and foreign owned manufactures.

Congress must challenge directly, **China's** illegal subsidies, especially their currency manipulations. They should create an **International Trade Commission (ITC)** to check, each year, the value the **Chinese** have stolen. The **ITC** would then recommend to **Congress** a value added tax, plus 50 percent to the loss. **Congress must vote 'No'** within thirty calendar days or the value added tax goes into effect. The **Chinese Government** will yell, bellow, and huff, but they will either change and play the trade game *like everyone else* or they will lose market share. Either way, **America** wins. Jobs will not be sent to **China** but will stay right here in the **USA**. Just think, creating **American jobs for Americans**. Sort of brings a tear to your eye, doesn't it?

Our domestic challenge can also be summarized in one word: **JOBS**. A former **British** prime minister, **David L. George**, stated our problem almost a century ago, '*...you can't cross a chasm in two small jumps.*' With unemployment around 10 percent and another 7 percent in underemployment, with 15 million **Americans** looking for work, bold action, *not baby steps*, must be taken. Why is **Washington** *dithering* with "baby steps"?

A close look at our unemployment may well provide a glimpse at the lethargy we find in the nations' capitol. Those persons earning at least **\$150,000** a year had an unemployment rate of only 3 percent. Those earning between **\$35,000-\$149,999** a year had an unemployment rate of about 9 percent. The bottom 10 percent of the income ladder had a startling unemployment rate of 31 percent. These figures are from a study by **Northeastern University's Center for Labor Studies**.

New York Times op-ed writer **Bob Herbert** recently wrote that these sort of statistics are, '*...unmistakable signs of societal instability.* This

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