



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on June 9, 2014

Published in the June 9, 2014 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 30, No. 11

## SPLC Launches Hysterical Attack on Common Core Critics

As the tsunami of [opposition continues to grow](#), proponents of the [Obama administration-pushed Common Core nationalization of K-12 schooling](#) are getting nervous that their controversial scheme is on the verge of coming undone. At least that is the message of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a self-styled [“civil-rights” outfit](#) with links to various government agencies, in a [report released this week](#) denouncing critics of Obama’s education agenda. Already, though, the ultra-left group is being mercilessly ridiculed for its factually challenged rants, lies, name-calling, and deception.



From Fox News, Glenn Beck, and Alex Jones to prominent politicians and political donors, and to the [The John Birch Society](#) and “Patriot” groups, the SPLC’s half-baked campaign takes aim at vast swaths of the opposition to Common Core. (Contrary to most Americans, SPLC uses the term “Patriot” as an attack rather than a compliment). The outfit acknowledges that there are “legitimate” concerns about the scheme being foisted on more than 40 states [by billionaire Bill Gates and his allies in the White House](#). However, it claims that much of the criticism is actually based on “propaganda” put out by “extremists.”

It is clear from the report that the opposition is making big gains. Indeed, U.S. Program boss Allan Golston with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which [bankrolls Planned Parenthood, the United Nations, population control, and Common Core](#), made that explicit in comments to the SPLC. “It’s causing political leaders to question this, with hearings across the country,” Golston complained, referring to the efforts of critics. “There are indications some political leaders are feeling pressure to back away from Common Core.” It was not immediately clear why the Gates foundation would oppose questions or public hearings into national education standards being foisted on tens of millions of children.

The SPLC report, packed with factual errors and paranoid conspiracy theories bordering on delusions, follows another recent document from the organization [blasting critics of the United Nations “sustainability” plot Agenda 21 using similar hysteria](#). Like its previous report, though, it appears that the latest bizarre screed has largely fallen on deaf ears as the discredited Alabama-based group increasingly fades into irrelevance. Other than a handful of leftist blogs and this report, it appears that the SPLC’s attacks have gone virtually unnoticed in the press thus far.

There is a good reason for that. Critics of the SPLC, for example, argue that the radical outfit is [akin to an “anti-Christian hate group.”](#) Many of its strongest critics [come from the “progressive” end of the political spectrum](#). In 2012, SPLC propaganda against Christian and pro-family groups was [even cited by a now-convicted terrorist and would-be mass murderer who sought to gun down employees of a non-](#)



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[profit organization targeted by the SPLC](#). Authorities across America have also been quietly distancing themselves from the fringe group in recent years, but the outfit still retains some links to extremist officials with similar agendas.

One of the most ludicrous conspiracy theories throughout the latest SPLC rant is the suggestion that opposition to Common Core is somehow being orchestrated by a vast right-wing conspiracy opposed to all government education. Considering the outrage among parents, government-school teachers, Democrats, educators, and even labor unions, though, the claim is so preposterous it's hard to believe such a claim would even be made — much less taken seriously. Ironically, the Chicago Teachers Union joined [New York State's educators' union](#) in [opposing the "deeply flawed" Common Core](#) on the same day the SPLC report was released.

Indeed, pro-public-school educators from across the political spectrum have become some of the fiercest critics in the battle against Common Core. "Never have I found myself finding so much common ground with people who call themselves conservative and libertarians — we all agreed public schools were going to be ruined by this," Fordham University Professor Dr. Mark Naison, who leads an [alliance of tens of thousands of teachers opposed to Common Core](#), told *The New American*. "This really represents the worst fantasies of both the Right and Left coming true: Big Government and Big Corporations imposing this terrible, untested, expensive plan using intimidation and bullying."

For the SPLC, however, there is a sinister agenda behind much of the opposition to Common Core — an insidious secret plot to abolish all government education. Lamenting the fact that polls show less than one third of Americans have confidence in public education, the report quotes a few statements by critics of government schooling and links them to the industrialist Koch brothers in concocting a vast conspiracy among "the most ardent on the radical right" whose supposed "real purpose is to destroy public schools." (For perspective, "radical right" to the SPLC includes, for example, [support for traditional marriage, and so, would have included Obama just a few years ago](#)).

The acrobatics in "logic" evident throughout the whole report are stunning. Incredibly, the SPLC also tries to imply that because a higher proportion of minorities go to government school than whites, criticism of Common Core must be at least partly due to racism. The half-baked insinuations are hardly new. In fact, SPLC spokesman Mark Potok was recently [ridiculed on national television](#) after suggesting that more than half of whites had "anti-black" attitudes.

Throughout the report, the SPLC also parrots debunked lies in a bid to build support for Common Core. For example, it labels as a "myth" the notion that the national standards will dictate curricula. Perhaps Bill Gates, who spent an estimated \$2 billion to finance Common Core, never got that memo. In a 2009 speech at the National Conference of State Legislators, Gates celebrated the adoption of his standards as encouraging. "But identifying common standards is not enough," he said. "We'll know we've succeeded when the curriculum and the tests are aligned to these standards."

Despite [all of the evidence — and the fact that the two lobbying and trade groups that developed Common Core are federally funded, along with the national testing regime that goes with the standards](#) — the SPLC also claims "the federal government was not involved." In reality, the federal government was involved in virtually every aspect of the imposition of Common Core, even using "stimulus"-funded bribes to coerce state governments into imposing it on government schools.

Ironically, the SPLC also blasts political leaders for seeking to end federal involvement in and support



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for the scheme. “Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul has joined with seven other senators, including Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, to sponsor legislation prohibiting federal financing for any Common Core component,” the report complains. If there is nothing federal about it, why is the federal government funding Common Core components in the first place? The SPLC does not say.

“The disinformation campaign is being driven by the likes of Fox News, the John Birch Society, Tea Party factions, and the Christian Right,” the SPLC report claims without ever specifically identifying or disproving any alleged “disinformation” put out by any of its targets. “National think tanks and advocacy groups associated with the Koch brothers, whose father was a founding Birch member, have taken up the cause.”

Indeed, throughout the report, the SPLC takes special aim at [one of its favorite targets, The John Birch Society](#) — “Chief among the Patriot groups,” it says — often parroting talking points that have been thoroughly [debunked for months](#). As just one example among many, the 40-page document claims that “the JBS’s American Opinion Foundation is paying travel expenses for alleged education experts to testify against the Common Core in states like Wisconsin that have held investigative hearings on the standards.”

Of course, if the SPLC has done [some reading](#), it would have [discovered that AOF, which is independent of JBS, did not actually pay for anything — concerned Wisconsin citizens did](#) — and the “alleged education experts” in question included the [only two content experts on the Common Core’s own Validation Committee](#). So, in addition to factual mistakes, the SPLC inadvertently took a swipe at the “alleged experts” selected by Common Core’s own architects to review their material. Both of those internationally recognized experts [refused to sign off on the standards, citing incorrect math, decreased critical-thinking, and other major problems](#).

The SPLC also takes aim at an article in *The New American* published in March entitled “[Common Core and UN Agenda 21: Mass Producing Green Global Serfs](#).” While the SPLC report never points to any actual problem with the article, it omits the key quotes, perhaps expecting that nobody will check them out. In the article, though, Obama’s Department of Education boss Arne Duncan is [quoted telling a “sustainability summit”](#) that his department “is taking a leadership role in the work of educating the next generation of green citizens.”

In a [separate speech to UNESCO](#), Duncan boasted of the administration’s cooperation with the UN agency and promised more to come, even quoting [Nelson Mandela](#) on using education as a “weapon” to “change” the world. “We must advance the [sustainability movement](#) through education,” Duncan also said in a speech posted [right on the Education Department’s website](#). Instead of actually dealing with the facts contained in the *TNA* article, the SPLC simply claims the “allegations are impossible to refute” because they apparently rely on “wild conjecture, leaps of logic and supposed documents that have nothing do with the Common Core.” The article is [linked here](#) for anyone who cares to check the facts themselves.

Art Thompson, the CEO of JBS, responded to the SPLC report in a statement to *The New American*. “The report against The John Birch Society and others in opposition to Common Core is a masterpiece of hiding the full story of what is involved in Common Core,” he explained. “It is revealing that they include so many people of influence and expertise that oppose it. On the other hand, they do not include the fact that even some teachers’ unions have come out against it. The work of the anti-Common Core



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organizations must be taking a toll on the success of a campaign that was essentially a stealth operation before its exposure by so many people, originally independent of one another but who have now come together to fight for the future of our children.”

The SPLC also takes aim at the American Opinion Foundation’s [FreedomProject Education program](#), an online K-12 school offering Common Core-free classical education with Judeo-Christian values. FPE Academic Director Dr. Duke Pesta, a university professor who has [spoken to tens of thousands of concerned Americans about the standards at speeches nationwide](#), also comes under attack for pointing out the agenda behind the nationalization of education. Again, the SPLC report never actually disputes any of the facts Pesta has highlighted in his speeches, which have also been viewed hundreds of thousands or even millions of times online.

“The Southern Poverty Law Center — are they still in business? Nothing screams passé like a febrile rebuke from a bunch of warmed over leftist apparatchiks masquerading as defenders of liberty,” Dr. Pesta told *The New American* in response to the SPLC report. “I especially admire their full-throated defense of Common Core, that unholy alliance between the feds and crony capitalists like Bill Gates. Lenin would be rolling in his grave, if they ever stopped worshipping him long enough to dig one large enough to accommodate his failed and murderous ideology, so tepidly kept alive by the anachronism that is the SPLC.”





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