



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on February 17, 2023

Bill to Abolish Dept. of Education Gaining Sponsors

“The Department of Education shall terminate on December 31, 2023.”

That one sentence is the total text of HR 899, a bill authored by Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) and co-sponsored by 20 of his colleagues, all of whom are Republicans.

Massie introduced this version of the bill on February 14. Two years ago, he introduced the same bill, using the same language.

“Unelected bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. should not be in charge of our children’s intellectual and moral development,” Massie said in a press release in 2021 when he offered the bill last time. “States and local communities are best positioned to shape curricula that meet the needs of their students. Schools should be accountable. Parents have the right to choose the most appropriate educational opportunity for their children, including home school, public school, or private school.”

“Neither Congress nor the President, through his appointees, has the constitutional authority to dictate how and what our children must learn,” Massie added.

Massie rightly remarks that there is no mention in the U.S. Constitution of the federal government having the authority to take any role in the education of America’s students. Indeed, the universe of federal power is contained in the Constitution and there is not a single syllable, no shadowy penumbra, where the states, upon creating this general government, granted it power over education.

Mind you, had such a suggestion been made at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 it is unlikely that a single one of the 55 (give or take) delegates would have stayed even one more night in Philadelphia!

None of those men would have hung around and debated whether money should be forcibly taken from Americans to fund the education of the children of other Americans! Period.

Today, even self-identified patriotic parents consider it an obligation to send their children to “schools” funded, managed, and manipulated by agents of the government they know to be corrupt, tyrannical, and adversarial to the principles those families hold sacred.

We live in a time when millions of self-described “conservatives” send their children to government-funded schools where these families’ values are mocked and made to seem silly and out of touch. They send them to schools where, when the kids get home after eight or nine hours of indoctrination, they are forced not only to endure another four or five hours of homework (a concept completely foreign to education prior to the late 19th century), and diligent and dutiful parents must deprogram their



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children, explaining why they don't agree with the practices and principles that their teachers have praised all day.

All of this is apart from the legitimate fear of violence not only from armed sociopaths, but from the bullying that keeps so many kids in a state of perpetual fear of going to school in the first place.

Americans' devotion to and support of the public school culture is a mystery. One is reminded of James Madison's statement in *The Federalist*, No. 46:

That the governments and the people of the States should silently and patiently behold the gathering storm, and continue to supply the materials, until it should be prepared to burst on their own heads, must appear to every one more like the incoherent dreams of a delirious jealousy, or the misjudged exaggerations of a counterfeit zeal, than like the sober apprehensions of genuine patriotism.

Are we suffering from the "misjudged exaggerations of a counterfeit zeal" when it comes to the role and the relevance of public schools?

Do we not stop and consider the costs — physical, intellectual, and psychological — of our perpetual support for public schools?

With our lips we draw near unto doing away with the public schools and abolishing the Department of Education, but our hearts continue to somehow justify sending our precious children to those same institutions.

That's why Representative Massie and the 20 congressmen willing to support HR 899 deserve our praise and our respect for having the courage to call for the shuttering of the federal bureaucracy that, it can be argued, does more damage to our country than any other.

Finally, I'll give the last word to *The Law*, Frédéric Bastiat's exposé of legalized plunder. This particular quote focuses on the threats to freedom inherent in government-managed and -funded education:

You say: "There are persons who lack education," and you turn to the law. But the law is not, in itself, a torch of learning which shines its light abroad. The law extends over a society where some persons have knowledge and others do not; where some citizens need to learn, and others can teach. In this matter of education, the law has only two alternatives: It can permit this transaction of teaching-and-learning to operate freely and without the use of force, or it can force human wills in this matter by taking from some of them enough to pay the teachers who are appointed by government to instruct others, without charge. But in this second case, the law commits legal plunder by violating liberty and property.

And there you have it: Good, bad, or indifferent, the federal Department of Education can only exist by "violating liberty and property." Patriots and friends of liberty should contact Representative Massie and let him know that they support him and let him know that his efforts are not in vain.



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