



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 2, 2013

Lawmakers and Activists Rally to Stop Obama-backed “Common Core”

As [opposition](#) continues to mount against an [Obama-backed scheme known as “Common Core”](#) to standardize education across America, lawmakers and activists determined to stop the radical agenda are turning up the heat. In Congress, senators and representatives are taking action. State lawmakers are too. Among the grassroots, meanwhile, advocates for educational freedom are hosting gatherings in numerous states while planning another online “Twitter Rally” on May 2 to stop Common Core before it is rolled out nationwide.



Over 45 state governments have already agreed to adopt the extremely controversial program [in exchange for](#) taxpayer-funded “Race to the Top” bribes and “No Child Left Behind” waivers offered by the Obama administration. However, as awareness of the scheme grows, [opposition is surging](#), too. Just last month the Republican National Committee (RNC) [unanimously adopted a resolution slamming Common Core](#) as “an inappropriate overreach to standardize and control the education of our children.” GOP lawmakers at the state and federal level took notice as public pressure to stop the agenda balloons.

In the U.S. Senate, Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) has been leading the opposition so far. Shortly after the Republican Party adopted its pro-educational freedom resolution blasting Common Core, Grassley began [circulating a letter](#) among his colleagues calling for a prohibition on the Department of Education’s controversial bribes to state governments that accept Common Core. If approved, the measure would also stop federal funding of the nominally private entities working to develop the widely criticized national standards.

The [Grassley letter](#), dated April 26, was sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee’s Education Subcommittee leadership. It was signed by eight other senators: Mike Lee (R-Utah), Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), James Inhofe (R-Okla.), Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), Rand Paul (R-Ky.), Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), and Ted Cruz (R-Texas). In the document, the coalition of senators asked that an amendment be added to the next appropriations bill funding the Department Education to restore state decision-making and accountability on academic standards.

“The decision about what students should be taught and when it should be taught has enormous consequences for our children,” the senators [wrote](#). “Therefore, parents ought to have a straight line of accountability to those who are making the decisions. State legislatures, which are directly accountable to the citizens of their states, are the appropriate place for those decisions to be made, free from any pressure from the U.S. Department of Education.”

In the House of Representatives, meanwhile, lawmakers were also working to stop Common Core. Led by Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), a coalition including over 30 congressmen [sent a letter](#) to



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Education Secretary Arne Duncan outlining concerns surrounding recent developments. In the document, the lawmakers also suggested that the Obama administration was moving forward with “education policy reform” without authorization or input from Congress.

“Such an action is, at best, in contravention with precedent,” the representatives [wrote](#), noting that the authority to move forward with some of the administration’s schemes ended in 2008 without congressional re-authorization. “In addition to expressing our concern with the Department’s circumvention of Congress to reform education policy, we are writing to express our concerns with the implementation of Common Core standards and changes to federal data collection and disbursement policies.”

Both of the letters — one from the House, the other from the Senate — also pointed out that Common Core has been touted as a “voluntary” and “state-led” scheme. In reality, however, the Obama administration has played a key role in developing the controversial education program and foisting it on state governments using federal “incentives,” lawmakers explained. Of course, U.S. law specifically prohibits federal involvement in school curricula.

“In addition to the serious concerns we have regarding the [Education] Department’s aforementioned coercion of states to opt-in to Common Core standards, many of which continue to have serious budgetary constraints and issues with existing education policies, we have become increasingly concerned over the development of Common Core standards themselves,” the congressmen [wrote](#). “Though initially promoted as state-based education standards, Common Core standards, as they have been developed over the last few years, are nothing of the sort.”

Among other problems, the letter from House members highlights the federally funded national testing scheme that will replace state-based tests. Also under fire are changes in Education Department policies surrounding the gathering and sharing of student data, which *The New American* [recently exposed in depth](#). According to lawmakers, the Obama administration circumvented Congress to avoid privacy protections in U.S. law and is using more federal bribes to coerce state governments into [collecting vast amounts of private, sensitive information on students and parents](#).

“As representatives from states across the nation, we understand the diverse cultures and state-specific education needs that exist in America,” the House letter to Education Secretary Duncan explains. “Moreover, we believe that state-based education policies are vital to the successful education of a child. As with most one-size-fits-all policies, Common Core standards fail to address the specific needs of our states.”

Meanwhile, at the state level, Common Core is encountering serious resistance as well, with Indiana becoming the latest seeking to put the brakes on the controversial program as the legislature [passed a bill to stop its implementation](#). “This movement against Common Core started with citizen involvement. Our success with this legislation would not have been possible without the concerned Hoosiers around the state taking action,” [said](#) Indiana State Sen. Scott Schneider. “Education decisions should be made by Hoosiers and not ceded to unelected bureaucrats many miles away.”

Before that, lawmakers in Michigan targeted the scheme as well, with the House passing legislation to defund implementation. Multiple state legislatures also have bills to withdraw from Common Core. In addition, despite the loss of federal taxpayer-funded bribes handed out by the Obama administration, independent-minded states like Alaska and Texas refused to adopt the standards from the start. Experts [say](#) this is just the beginning of the resistance.



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Citizens are also rallying to stop Common Core, with the outcry spreading across America like wildfire as activists learn about the program, its costs, and what it means for education, state sovereignty, local self-governance, liberty, and more. One of the organizations fighting the program, known as [Parent Led Reform](#), is hosting another “Twitter Rally” on May 2 at 9 p.m. Eastern time using the tag [#StopCommonCore](#).

The online effort, which follows a similar “rally” held on April 16 that reached almost 2.5 million Twitter users, is also being organized with [Truth in American Education](#), one of the leading groups trying to stop the controversial standards. It will feature a panel of experts answering questions including Shane Vander Hart with Truth in American Education, attorney and Director of Federal Relations William Estrada with the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), the Heartland Institute’s Education Research Fellow Joy Pullmann, Ben DeGrow with the Independence Institute, and the American Principles Project’s Emmett McGroarty.

“We are thrilled about the amazing turnout to share awareness of the concerns of Common Core standards,” said Parent Led Reform spokesperson Karin Piper in announcing the latest rally. “Parent Led Reform opposes a lock-step approach to education that takes the focus away from the student and decisions away from the parent and so pleased to work in collaboration with organizations, parents, educators and citizens across the country to share these concerns.”

Meanwhile, the roster of prominent voices joining the chorus against Common Core continues to grow. Conservative pundit Glenn Beck, for example, said the scheme would push parents and states out of education while giving federal bureaucrats control of America’s children. Another conservative heavyweight, columnist Michelle Malkin, has also been actively opposing the Obama-backed nationalization of education standards despite vicious attacks from Common Core supporters.

Eagle Forum chief Phyllis Schlafly even said that the effort should be considered unconstitutional. “This process bypasses parents and state and local school boards, and will fundamentally transform education by dictating what every child will learn and not learn,” she [explained](#), adding that Common Core was a “dictatorial” part of the president’s effort to “fundamentally transform” the nation. “Obama Core is a comprehensive plan to dumb down schoolchildren so they will be obedient servants of the government and probably to indoctrinate them to accept the leftwing view of America and its history.”

A prominent organization advocating for the rights of parents to be enshrined in the U.S. Constitution has also come out swinging. “[ParentalRights.org](#) is still researching the details of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), but there is no question that we oppose the de facto takeover of education by the federal government and unaccountable private organizations,” said Director of Communications and Research Michael Ramey in an e-mail to supporters, calling it an “underhanded move” by the Education Department that should be opposed by both parties. “By shifting the power to set school standards and curricula away from the states, CCSSI would rob parents of the right to hold accountable those planning the education of their children in public schools.”

While proponents of Common Core try in vain to demonize critics as “extreme” or “right-wing,” more than a few so-called progressives are speaking out as well. Countless teachers, too, are publicly blasting the national standards and calling for an end to the deeply controversial plan. In fact, even the most ardent supporters of nationalized education standards are warning that the effort to foist Common Core on America is now in total disarray.

“The Common Core is in trouble,” [admitted](#) Randi Weingarten, head of the American Federation of



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Teachers union described by the *Washington Post* as a “strong supporter” of the Obama-backed program. “There is a serious backlash in lots of different ways, on the right and on the left.” According to Weingarten, the new standards are being poorly implemented, requiring a “mid-course correction” before the entire dream of supposed education reformers crumbles. Among other concerns, the union boss said state governments were rushing out the Common Core-based tests without preparing teachers or designing new curricula to incorporate the national standards.

With the [opposition to Common Core](#) continuing to expand as citizens become aware of what has happened, experts [tell](#) *The New American* that the easy phase for its proponents is now behind them. As lawmakers at the state and federal level join with outraged citizens across America, advocates of educational freedom and constitutional government remain hopeful that, with enough public pressure, the administration’s effort to foist national standards on the nation’s children will ultimately fail. How long that may take remains to be seen, but liberty-minded activists say they are encouraged by their progress so far.

Photo: AP Images

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