



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on April 4, 2011

W. Texas Town to Send Migrant Students to Socialist Conference in D.C.

On Tuesday, March 29, the school district of Ector County, Texas (ECISD) approved sending 9th- through 12th-grade migrant students on a grant-funded trip to Washington in June, where they will attend the Experience in Democracy (EID) Leadership Conference. However, many residents of Odessa, the county seat, are not happy about the curriculum or the fact that some expenses may be picked up by the school district after all.



Residents have Faye Hall, founder of Odessas Concerned Citizens Coalition, to thank for educating them about the scheme. She began following this issue several years ago after learning of its approval by the school district, and became particularly disturbed when she discovered EIDs connection with Communist community organizer Bert Corona (picture, above). Then she went to work.

Mrs. Hall told *The New American* that she began to question what was going on after seeing a small item in the local newspaper, the *Odessa American*, a few years ago. She filed a FOIA to find out the facts, and was shocked to learn the history of Corona and the Bert Corona Leadership Institute (BCLI), none of which was being made known to the taxpayers of the school district. She called the district office simply to get information about the program, but was immediately told her children were not eligible. She hadnt intended to inquire on behalf of her grown children, but believes the defensive response she received was indicative of an unseen agenda. The program, it turns out, is open only to children of seasonal, migrant workers in the farming or fishing industries.

According to an *Odessa American* article, ECISD assistant superintendent for accountability and special populations H.T. Sanchez commented about this years [trip](#):

What the experience provides our students is one rendition of democracy. Think back to the Boston Tea Party, it was a very active form of democracy at that time. This often is a little more to the left of what you find in Texas politics. We want to provide the full spectrum of what democracy entails.

Never mind that the United States was [never intended to be a democracy](#). Nevertheless, the school board advised Sanchez to provide students with a curriculum showing a more conservative point of view before they head to the nations capital and during the time theyre there, before attending more left-leaning parts of the agenda.



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[Bert Corona](#), who died in 2001, was an American civil rights leader and community organizer born in El Paso. Known as El Viejo ("the Old Man"), he was a veteran activist during the Chicano Movement of the '60s and '70s. During his high school years, he became involved in [anarchosyndicalist](#) activities a branch of anarchism focusing on the labor movement. Eventually he moved to California and became involved with well-known socialist movements such as the International Workers Order, the Mexican American Movement of Los Angeles, and labor and union activities eventually founding La [Hermandad Mexicana Nacional](#) (Brotherhood of Mexican Nationals) (HMN). HMN emphasized organizing unions, and defending and providing social services for undocumented workers. Former President of BCLI E. Francisco Lopez later noted of Corona, "The paths of Cesar Chavez and Bert Corona have crossed many times. They worked together to advance the cause of social justice for the disenfranchised. Our purpose is to train new generations of grassroots leaders and active citizens to embrace this commitment."

The Communist newspaper *Peoples World* quoted Corona on September 12, 1970, as follows: "I call for the replacement of the present economic system by one which is based on worker's control of the work place." Corona worked diligently toward that goal, organizing along the lines developed by Saul Alinsky.

According to his BCLI website, the Experience in Democracy scheme . promotes education, civic participation, and economic advancement among youth from farm worker and under served communities.

After learning of Corona's background, Mrs. Hall and other informed West Texans were dismayed to learn that high school migrant students would be taken to Washington to attend a program developed by him. But there was more apparent deception afoot.

Although school superintendent Sanchez had stated, It doesn't cost the district anything, it doesnt cost the kids anything, when Mrs. Hall visited the Institute website, she discovered that the Institute claims it will provide no transportation costs for participants. Its unknown if the Institute or ECISD will pay for transportation costs for this years trip, and Mrs. Hall is still attempting to learn all the facts. She has also presented a petition to have approval rescinded for the entire project.

Her research into Coronas background including accounts of the violence he used in attaining his goals for community organizing in California has heightened her concern about the wisdom of sending Ector Countys migrant workers to Washington to be taught the same sort of tactics. In fact, when she learned that a conservative viewpoint would also be provided, she asked, If its so harmless, why do they have to present a conservative agenda?

In response to district comments, Mrs. Hall told the *Odessa American*:

Yes, the right exists to have a dissenting opinion, the right exists to be exposed to different philosophies, the right exists to learn different things. We're just tired of being told to shut up when we object to paying for them. And we [do] object to paying for them. This school trains high school students [and others] how to effectively promote fundamental changes in our government that 80% of Americans do not want and uses our money to do so. They train them to go back home and start using their newly-acquired skills at their schools and in their communities. And it's not just this one school. I think this school had about 10 locations. And, it's not just this school. It's thousands and thousands of organizations that have found their way into our pockets to finance their agendas while the average American is left not only having to pay for the opposing viewpoint, but ... with only a keyboard to complain about [it] and when the few actually do complain, they are told to shut up.



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Mrs. Halls concerns have spread to other residents of this hard-working community on the plains of West Texas and to the neighboring county of Midland. Craig Anderson, conservative radio talk show host at KWEL in Midland, has joined the fight. He claims that Corona never renounced his Communist party membership, and expresses concern that other counties in Texas will adopt the program for migrant workers without knowing its dangers.

Parents and taxpayers in school districts around the country would be wise to watch for Coronas programs in their cities.



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