

'Equal access' bill poses dangers

A bill is being proposed by the U.S. House of Representatives which would circumvent current rulings on prayer in the public schools and would violate the principle of the separation of church and state.

This bill, Resolution No. 5345, is known as the "Equal Access" bill. Equal access is designed to provide school facilities on an equal basis for groups which wish to use public-school facilities at non-class time.

Specifically, it would bar public high schools from denying equal access to students or groups of students that sought "to engage in voluntary extra-curricular activities that include prayer or religious speech" during non-instructional hours.

THE INTENT OF this bill is clearly to permit prayer meetings, religious discussions and revival meetings on school premises. It would also bar federal funding of any school that "discriminates on the basis of religious content of the speech at such meetings." There is a similar bill in the U.S. Senate which would allow "equal access" in all public schools.

moral perspectives

Rabbi Irwin Groner

This legislation is fraught with the same dangers of allowing religious exercise or formulations of prayer in the public schools. First, there is the danger of favoritism by school authorities toward a particular religion. Second, one can force a potential division of students along religious lines if public-school facilities can be used during lunch hour, study periods or other non-instructional times during the day for religious purposes.

One also notes the risk of proselytizing, with the appearance of official approval. After all, young people are prone to peer pressure, teacher influence and the emotional force of a group.

OTHER CONCERNS should be noted. Any collective activity that takes place within the public schools during mandatory school hours has the implied endorsement of public-school authorities. Scheduling religious activities or meetings during school hours in a public school will make of our schools extensions of church or synagogue.

Public-school students, unlike college students, are impressionable minors whose attendance at school is mandated by law and whose educational programs are strictly controlled. It is improper that they be asked to accept religious practices and beliefs when they enroll in a public-school program.

Finally, this proposed legislation would open up school facilities not only to established religious groups, but also to other groups that prey upon impressionable or disturbed youngsters such as the Moonies, the American Nazis and other cults.

If your share these views, you should contact your congressman and the senators of the State of Michigan to express your opposition.

volunteers

Listeners are needed

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau has a current file of volunteer opportunities for more than 200 agencies. Non-profit organizations needing assistance may list with the bureau. For further information about these and other volunteer openings, please call the bureau at 642-7772.

CONTACT LIFELINE needs compassionate listeners for crisis telephone. Extensive training is provided by this agency which serves the metropolitan Detroit area. Volunteers talk to people with troubles and make referrals to sources of help. Scheduling is flexible.

SOUTH OAKLAND YMCA has a variety of volunteer opportunities available. Maintenance aides are needed to help with painting and electrical work. Desk receptionists are needed to answer the phones and write up class registrations. Groundskeepers are needed to plant flowers and trim shrubs. Aides are needed to run weekly bingo games and assist handicapped children in the swimming pool.

PERINATAL COACHES are needed to provide personal support to expectant/first-time parents from the seventh month of pregnancy through the baby's first year. Volunteers must be 20 years old or older and available two hours a week with days and time schedule flexible.

Grammy showers are great idea

Dear Jo:

While our grandmother was going through the process of moving from her home (for more than 50 years) to a senior-citizens' apartment, my sister and I decided to give her a "moving" shower. We know showers are mainly for brides and mothers-to-be, but we figured Gram needed a lift, and what better way than a party? We invited friends not only from her generation, but from our mother's and ours as well. It was a nice mix of people and the evening was a great success.

At the party we enjoyed hearing about other showers in her life, particularly the one before our mother was born. . . The gifts were very practical — new linens, kitchen gadgets, magazine subscriptions, etc.

I hope you'll print my letter as I think that although giving a shower for an older woman is a fairly new idea, it certainly is a "fun" one.

Mrs. R. F.

gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

from all walks of life — married, single, rich, not-so-rich, etc. Hopefully, the future readers will be able to identify with those they are reading about.

I have attempted to get these letters through classified ads, but so far, have not been successful. Since your column is published in towns and cities across Canada and the U.S., I would appreciate it if you would publish my letters. Retired persons who wish to share their experiences with me, Eleanor Redding, for publication in my book can write to me at 111 Forest Hill Road, Grimsby, Ontario L3M 1A2. — Thank you.

Dear Eleanor:

I'm sure many of the readers of this column will respond to your request. Please let me know the title, publisher and cost of your book after it is published so I can publish this information here in the column and we can all enjoy your book.

Dear Jo: Why do older people appear so pale? Are they anemic

Ms. M.B.

Dear Ms. B:

Most people appear pale this time of year not just those who are older.

With aging, there can be a reduction in the number of facial skin capillaries, which are the tiny blood vessels that are close to the surface of the skin — and this can give one a paler look.

But, anemia as part of the aging process, no. Anemia is a medical condition that is secondary to some problem causing visible or invisible blood loss.

Parks commissioners feted

Two retiring Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commissioners — John Gau of Bloomfield Hills and Dr. Joseph Montante of Orchard Lake — were honored at a banquet.

Gau served as an ex-officio parks and recreation commissioner in 1977, 1978 and 1983 while chairman of the Oakland County Road Commission. He has been a road commissioner since 1975.

Montante was a member of the parks commission in 1975-1983. He served as an Oakland County Commissioner 1972-1983.

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Dear Mrs. F.:

Thank you for your letter. I think your idea of showers for older women is excellent.

Dear Jo:

I am compiling a book on successful retirement — and I very much need the help of some of the retired readers of your column. The book will include solid research in this field and an added feature of letters from "real" people (your readers) who are enjoying happy, successful retirements.

Most books on retirement are on the planning aspect — mine will look at the actual living aspect using a down-to-earth writing style that includes both anecdotes and stories from retired persons

Columnist Jolayne Farrell encourages questions and comments on the subject of gerontology. Readers wishing to do so may write to: Jolayne Farrell P.O. Box 68 1075 Queen St. East Toronto, Ontario Canada.

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