

Livonia Public School Teacher Backs Parochial Aid

EDITOR:

Mail is being sent to Lansing at a record clip concerning state aid to parents of non-public school students. I have been a Livonia public school teacher for over 13 years. My family is Catholic, but my children attend local public schools. I feel my position on both sides of the fence lends itself to a more objective appraisal of the bills pending in our Legislature.

Opponents to the aid generally use three arguments which are: (1) Separation of Church and state, (2) Harm to public schools, and (3) Controls placed on the non-public schools. Questioning the legality (first argument) is at its best very weak. The First Amendment of the Constitution gives religion the right to exist. The Supreme Court has provided a test to determine the Constitutionality of laws challenged as in violation of the separation of church and state. Stated in the *Schepp* case, the test may be the purpose and effect rule.

The purpose of the proposed laws and the primary effect of the law tell us whether a law is constitutional. If both the legislative purpose and the primary effect of the law are secular, the law is valid even though an incidental benefit comes to religion. An example would be the *Everson* case of bus rides for children attending Christian and Hebrew schools where the primary effect is the health, safety, and welfare of the children.

The Federal Government has enacted various educational programs such as the G.I. Bill of Rights, The National Science Foundation Act, The National Defense Education Act, and the Title III Program which has

recently granted a quarter of a million dollars to our area in which both Livonia Public Schools and Ladywood Catholic High School are participating. Therefore, Federal funds are being given legally to both public and non-public schools from kindergarten on through college.

The second argument concerns harm to public schools if the proposed legislation passes. Another way of putting this would be the revenue given to non-public schools would be taken away from public schools. Let us consider some facts. In the past three years, 53,000 students have left non-public schools to enter Michigan public schools. These students will cost taxpayers an additional \$18 million in state aid and local taxes. This figure should include \$712 million for facilities, sites, equipment, and furnishings by 1971-2.

At the present rate of students leaving non-public schools, the cost by 1971-2 will increase to a total loss of \$240 million with a loss of \$90 million in 1971-2 alone. In Livonia, there are over 4,300 non-public school children. The cost to educate these in our public schools would be \$2.8 million or over \$100 per taxpayer household. This does not include \$6-8 million that would be needed in sites, buildings, and equipment.

There are over 10,000 Catholic and Lutheran children presently attending Livonia Public Schools. Many of these could be attending non-public schools if operating funds were made available.

Facilities are not the problem and operational costs are proportionally much lower. In the long run, the taxpayer gets much more value for his dollar in the non-public schools since their teachers (Nuns) and administrators work more for

dedication and vocation than for financial compensation. It is becoming obvious that non-public schools cannot continue to operate without some form of aid. As I see it, we have one of two choices. We can continue to absorb non-public school children in public schools at a great expense or we can take advantage of their existing facilities and give them help which would cost much less.

How would non-public schools react to state controls if state aid were made available to them? All Michigan schools come under the State Board of Education which sets down rules governing: annual number of school days, length of school day, specified courses of study, curriculum content, certification of teachers, fire, safety, and sanitation standards, health standards for children and employees, plans of new school structures, modernization of buildings, extra-curricular activities such as athletics and others.

These state controls have been in force for a long time and have not been grudgingly conformed with but are actually welcomed by local non-public school administrators since they have encouraged a raising of standards which any sincere educator could not help but be pleased with.

In summation, I would like to close with a few general statements: 1. We are a growing community that needs a cross-section of voter support to pass or renew any millage. 2. We have sought and obtained support from non-public school authorities for school millage proposals. Public school officials, by vigorously opposing state aid to non-public schools, could alienate a large segment of voters against any future renewal and new millage. 3. School board members are elected by all parents and their responsibility does not end with public school children. To do so would disenfranchise 20,000 Lutheran and Catholic parents.

If people are concerned about religion being taught during the legal school day, the State Board of Education could direct non-public schools to teach religion before or after the legal day.

In conclusion, I hope this communication helps to take the matter of state aid to non-public schools out of the emotional strata and places it in the realm of the logical and practical where it truly belongs.

KENNETH G. TIMMONS
Would Like Facts

EDITOR:
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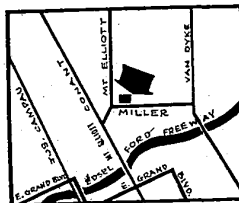
is to print all letters to the editor, even if some are full of four letter words and kookies? Just for the sake of common decency, you wouldn't censor one would you?

Sometime ago an editorial in the Observer on Pete Ventura stated—that there was some benefit of the doubt, it said. Why did your paper censor the scandal? However, we must be charitable and give him the

Shouldn't we Livonians have ourselves if this is the man we want for Mayor of our city. DEL

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- HORIZONTAL: 54** Mental faculties of dog
55 Required break at the brow in its long tapering profile
56 Speaker
57 Sped
58 More refined
59 Oriental porgy
60 Too
61 Fur-bearing animals
62 Siouxan Indian
63 Long (ab.)
64 Electrical unit
65 Antlered creature
66 Youth
67 Whirlwind
68 Correlative of either
69 French article
70 Yes (Sp.)
71 High mountain
72 Membranous bag
73 Right (ab.)
74 Paid notice in newspaper
75 Shoshonean Indian
76 Play the part of
77 Host
78 Collection of sayings
79 Loose egg
80 Main blood vessel of the body
81 Russian community
82 Group of soldiers
83 Type of fur

Here's the Answer
1 Symbol for
2 Lounge
3 Reatin
4 Great Lake
5 Brother of
6 Spin (Rin.)
7 Erukan title
8 Symbol for
9 Dress
10 Proprietion
11 Sitting
12 Groups of three rings
13 Challenged
14 Short jacket
15 Fasten
16 County in Ohio
17 Despairation
18 Symbol for erbium
19 Solar disk
20 Weight education
21 Among
22 Bone
23 Myself



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