

OUR VIEWS

Choice won't solve problems

Farmington school officials got an earful from parents last week about out-of-district Schools of Choice - most of it on the negative side.

Some of the reasoning seemed frighteningly close-minded, and if this practice should become district policy, we have serious concerns over how Schools of Choice families would be treated.

One parent advised out-of-district parents were all but shunned in West Bloomfield. She also pointed out a couple of Royal Oak teachers, under cloak of anonymity, claimed most of their district's discipline problems are Schools of Choice students.

Whether or not either of those findings is true, why are they relevant here?

Students, faculty and parents create a school's atmosphere, and it would be a sad commentary indeed if they elected to turn their backs on students who come in from outside the district. We're not talking about importing a gang of outsiders who are going to maraud their way through classrooms, even though that's the image some parents painted.

Yes, an out-of-district program comes with challenges, and we appreciate parents who took hours of their own time to research those issues. We hope board members carefully consider public attitude as they make their decision. However, that's not the crux of our objection to out-of-district Schools of Choice.

Look at the critical financial picture officials have painted. Without these students, Farmington Public Schools will face the need to close a building within five years. Once started, this program will become not just an option, but a necessity.

This isn't a question of fairness or how out-of-district parents and kids will fit in. This is a glimpse into the future of Farmington Public Schools, a future of state funding crises and enrollments that are no longer growing at a fast and furious rate.

The per pupil contribution from 20 Schools of Choice students is absolutely better than getting no money at all. School officials wisely point out there are economies of scale and it makes sense to keep our buildings as full as possible.

But opening the doors won't solve long-term problems. As the Little Dutch Boy learned, there are just so many ways to plug up the leaks before it's time to build a new dike.

Legislature must act on budget challenge

As Jennifer Granholm traveled the campaign trail, and then again as she toured various town meetings at which she sold her budget message, the state's first woman governor promised to make K-12 education a top priority.

At the same time, legislators on both sides of the aisle agreed the state's budget was in such bad shape that nothing but a bipartisan effort would solve it, and they promised to deliver just such an effort.

In unveiling her budget in an unusual personal appearance before the House and Senate appropriations committees, Granholm kept her promise.

Now it's time for legislators to do the same. Granholm's budget pretty much preserved K-12 funding, if you don't count a 25-percent reduction for items such as adult education and talented-and-gifted programs and an 80-percent slash to MEAP scholarships.

Her solution for the rest of the \$1.9 billion budget mess is about equal parts aggressive slashing of what she thinks is government waste and ambitious optimism about what she thinks the state can generate in revenue. The biggest losers in her budget are the state-funded universities and the students who wish to attend them, who will likely be hit with double-digit tuition increases; and patrons of the arts, who saw their favorite destination for state money cut by 50 percent.

To their credit, Granholm's opponents have not attacked her plan. That might be because, in order to attack it, they'd have to come up with better ideas on where to raise revenue or cut expenses. Even if she wanted to - and she consistently says she doesn't - there's no way Granholm could get a tax increase through a Legislature dominated by Republicans. Revenue has to come from somewhere.

Granholm campaigned on the idea of a "lean, not mean" government that reduces waste and lives within its means. She believes the budget she delivered does exactly that. And, unless they have a better plan, it's incumbent upon legislators to finally mean it when they say they'll deliver a bipartisan effort to solve the state's financial problems.



Miss Farmington pageant veteran Ginny Morris was back on the scene at Sunday's chili cook-off. Morris suffered a mild stroke several months ago, but hasn't lost her enthusiasm for local events. The chili cook-off raised funds for Farmington Hills Police's K-9 unit.

BILL BRESELER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

LETTERS

Bravo, Mercy

I was absolutely appalled to read the story about Mercy High School.

I can't believe that there are still such close-minded people out there.

Not having lunch with Jennifer Granholm because she is apparently somewhat wishy-washy about her views on abortion? Good job, Mercy, for putting the item back up for auction. As a very proud 1999 graduate of the school, I take pride in being an alumna of such an amazing school.

Didn't Catholicism teach us to be tolerant? Didn't Jesus himself associate with what we might call present-day scandalous persons? I couldn't believe that some people were so ignorant to picket outside, completely ignoring the facts. What is even more upsetting is that they have tainted the name of Mercy with their ridiculous nonsense. I am proud of Mercy's decision in the case and I hope that they continue to remain thoughtful, diverse, and just in future decisions.

Carry S. Czech

Mercy High School Class of 1999

King, Gandhi, Mercy

Martin Luther King freed America from segregation. He publicly asserted that laws should be overturned because they are immoral.

Mahatma Gandhi fought against India's caste system and its "untouchables" as being immoral. King and oppressed African Americans refused to walk away from the battle just because segregation in the south was popular and the law of the land.

Neither Gandhi nor King gave in to political leaders who tried to uphold the "law of the land" including those who claimed they personally opposed segregation or the caste system.

King led this fight in America to overturn segregation just as others before him lead the fight to overturn the immoral decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case. This decision declared slaves to be less than human persons.

Abortion is an action protected since 1973 by the law of the land and forced upon America by the Supreme Court. However, it is also immoral based on the natural law that guided King, Gandhi and our founding fathers.

I am glad that you clearly identified yourself as "we liberals" in your editorial. This admission explains your thinking. I believe even liberals should understand that it is a contradiction to claim to be a Catholic institution when that High School treats, as a role model, a politician who supports Emily's List objectives.

Catholic Bishops and Cardinals have consistently rejected such objectives as contrary to the "Gospel of Life."

Edward Leslie
Farmington Hills

God is Judge

I couldn't agree more with your article about the Mercy High School Auction.

I am a parochial school-educated Catholic who also opposes abortion. I do not, however, believe in forcing my opinions on others as do the Stop Granholm Church and Truth Project. I only wonder why they have chosen to judge others, thereby trying to put themselves on the same level as God who in the end is our only Judge.

Pauline Smart
Farmington Hills

McAuley was obedient

Tell me please, what part of Mercy High School convinces you that they are centered in God and Catholic?

I know it can't be their love of God's unborn children. People who care about babies in the womb wouldn't dream of profiting from Michigan's top abortion spokesperson, Jennifer Granholm.

Were you convinced they are of God and the Catholic Faith when they took "Our Lady of," out of the school's name, "Our Lady of Mercy"? Or was it the fact that they have no visible crucifix on any wall, like other Catholic institutions? And how about the statue of their foundress, Catholic Mother Catherine McAuley? Was it her lack of habit, modern hair and unbuttoned blouse that showed you how centered in God and Catholicism they are?

Joni Hubred wrote, "...nobody's come to me in 15 years and confessed they had a change of heart." She fits in well with the "sisters of the self-ordained priest" and ready to give abortion too, I bet.

What Hubred left out is that the foundress, Catherine McAuley was obedient, unlike today's Sisters of Mercy.

War-mongering? Who's killing the babies? Not the pro-lifers.

Lynn Mills
Livonia

Local group helps

Our community owes a debt of gratitude to the students, parents, and alumnae of Mercy High School that made their public stand against the MHS tolerance of pro-abortion Gov. Granholm. They exhibited great courage to take such a politically incorrect position.

Gov. Granholm is one of the so-called "moderate" political leaders that claim to

be personally or morally opposed to abortion, while maintaining that they do not want to impose their morals on others.

Every time the governor signs a bill in to law, on any issue, she will be imposing her judgment, her will, her morals on everyone in the state. Why is it that only on abortion, she decides not to impose her moral convictions on others? If one of her children should, heaven forbid, come to her 10 years from now to say they were considering aborting a child, would she say, "well it's morally wrong, but if you want to do it, OK?"

Abortion is the holocaust of our generation. Tens of millions of lives have been snuffed out, for the sake of protecting "choice."

Right here in Farmington, we have an organization called "Another Way Pregnancy Center." I am on the board of that organization. We provide a variety of services for individuals facing "unwanted" or "unexpected" pregnancies. We counsel folks on the many options that are available to them, and encourage them to have their children.

Rather than considering abortion alone, we encourage individuals to seek "another way." We also provide material goods to new parents, to ease their burden after the birth of their child.

If those brave students, parents and alumnae of MHS want to put their energies to work to help change the world one baby at a time, I'd encourage them to get involved with Another Way Pregnancy Center. They can contact me through the Center, to keep involved in this most important struggle.

Michael Legg
Farmington

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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QUOTABLE

"There is a value in looking at what we can do for others, rather than ourselves."

Frank Turner, Channel 7 anchor and keynote speaker, at Tuesday's Turn Around Awards

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