

Vouchers...

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The greatest surprise has been how Milwaukee Public Schools has responded to the challenge and competition from vouchers, charters and suburban schools. Fifteen years into Milwaukee's school choice experiment, more than half of Milwaukee Public School's 90,000 students attend schools that did not exist in their current format when school choice started.

Schools offering effective programs have thrived and grown. Milwaukee Public Schools, which reduced options for low-income, central city and minority families for decades, expanded both neighborhood school options and specialty schools previously targeted to middle class and white enrollments. International Baccalaureate, Montessori, and other popular specialties have been replicated in both Milwaukee Public Schools and the choice and charter sectors.

Milwaukee has redefined "public education" from a government monopoly to a multi-sector public service delivered by governmental, independent and religious schools. Parents know, or learn fast, which schools work and which schools don't.

Best of all, terrible, persistently failing schools have closed. Middle schools for sixth- through eighth-graders — an often bad idea in general, with disastrous results in many urban low-income communities — have closed and been replaced by smaller, safer kindergarten through eighth-grade schools. Three low-performing high schools have been shut down and converted to multiplex facilities for smaller, more responsive academies. Milwaukee public elementary schools that cannot sustain their enrollment are closed and no longer drain the system of resources.

Mr. Friedman died on November 16, 2006. In the last 10 years of his life, he concentrated on promoting educational freedom through school choice, including founding the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation with his wife.

The market Friedman envisioned works. Remarkably, school choice works not only for students, families, and independent and religious schools, but for Milwaukee Public Schools.

- John Gardner
Reason Foundation

John Gardner is a self-described left-wing Democratic organizer, with 40 years' experience with labor unions, cooperatives, election, and schools.

A Message From The League Treasurer

Fellow League Members,

As your long-time Treasurer, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your support over the years!

*The League has come to a point in time when we need to consider raising the dues for membership. The cost of our newsletter, Tax Talk, has gone up tremendously in the past few years, mostly due to postal requirements and some printing costs. Many of you have been most generous in sending more and making donations, which, I might add, are **tax deductible**. I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to voluntarily raise your membership to \$10 or \$12 per year, businesses higher, or make other, larger tax-free donations.*

We have accomplished many good things through the years and can continue with your help. Please feel free to call me at (530) 885-5074 with comments or suggestions. Thank you.

- Betty Sampson

Common Good...

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around a *common purpose*. Hilary Clinton on common good stated, "It requires people giving up a little bit of their own turf in order to create this *common ground*." That means something has to be taken away from some people. (*This used to be called robbing Peter to pay Paul.*-Ed.) Karl Marx' Communist Manifesto phrased it as "from those who have to those who have not." President Franklin D. Roosevelt, an admirer of Fascist leader Benito Mussolini, stated in his first inaugural address, "If we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the *good of a common discipline*. We are, I know, ready and willing to submit our lives and property to such discipline, because it makes possible... *a larger good*." FDR went on to copy the Nazi cartel system and, what Stalin was doing, with the NRA and AAA programs for the U.S. until he ran into the stone wall of the Constitution and Supreme Court.

One U.S. poster for the NRA "Blue Eagle" symbol bore a sledge hammer with the slogan "Work to Keep Free," a chilling echo of the "Arbeit Macht Frei" sign that greeted prisoners as Auschwitz.

In 1944, in "The Road to Freedom,"

Nobel economist F.A. Hayek warned that economic planning could lead to totalitarianism. In 1976 presidential candidate Ronald Reagan told the *New York Times* that "Fascism was really the basis for the New Deal."

Earlier, John Stuart Mill in his 1859 book *On Liberty* urged, "The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually and collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection... The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any number of civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm from others."

Leonard Read, founder of the Foundation for Economic Education issued this premise, "Do anything that is peaceful and harmless."

Americans tend to think of themselves as individuals, with equal rights and equal freedom. A nation whose fundamental ideology is, in the words of sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, "Anti-statism, laissez-faire, individualism, populism, and egalitarianism," will be more resistant to liberal ideologies. The "common good" may be a snare to restrain or prevent our possible individual achievements.

- Wally Reemelin