



Social Studies Testimony by Michael J. Chapman

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Social Studies Testimony by Michael J. Chapman on Behalf of Edwatch (Formerly, the Maple River Education Coalition), in Favor of Passing the Proposed Social Studies Standards – As Written (Delivered before the Senate and House Education Committees)

My name is Michael Chapman. I live in Eden Prairie and serve as a volunteer on the executive board of Edwatch, formerly, the Maple River Education Coalition. I am also a collector of rare, founding era books, which I use as a basis for history lectures and curriculum reviews.

On behalf of our 20,000 members, thank you for allowing me time to express three reasons why we support the new social studies standards – as written.

First – these standards represent true high-level academics, rather than the minimum competencies of the repealed profile of learning. There are some who say these standards are too difficult. But wisdom tells us that standards should be set at a height few could reach.

“It is an old proverb, that he who aims at the sun, to be sure will not reach it, but his arrow will fly higher than if he aimed at an object on a level with himself.” [Hawes.]

The second reason we support these standards is because they are KNOWLEDGE-based rather than PROCESS-based. According to this report from the old DCFL, the repealed Profile was Constructivist-based, meaning, “objective knowledge is not knowable,” therefore, it is only important to focus on the process of learning, the process of thinking, and the process of doing – based apparently, on thin air. Constructivism gave us fuzzy math – where, according to the National Math Standards, [quote] “Students learn that mathematics is arbitrary... and good solutions are arrived at by consensus.” [End Quote]

We also got *ARBITRARY* history. The National *Fuzzy* history standards tell us [quote], “one of the most common problems...is the compulsion students feel to find the one right answer – OR WORSE yet [is when they] report back as ‘self-evident truths’ the facts or conclusions presented in [an historic document].” [End Quote]

Thankfully, the PROPOSED standards require knowledge of the non-arbitrary facts and SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS contained in America’s Founding Charter – the Declaration of Independence! Among these important foundation principles are National Sovereignty, Natural Law, Self-Evident Truth, Equality before God, Creator-given – and therefore – unalienable rights (including Life, Liberty, and Property); and Limited Representative Government by the consent and authority of a sovereign and free people.

Which brings me to the 3rd, and most important, reason we support these standards: The proposed standards help cut through some of the censorship of our true heritage and the anti-American bigotry with which the public has grown so weary!

I know some people say the Declaration principles are irrelevant for the 21st Century, and that it's time to move on. But their opinions, or for that matter, any of our opinions are ultimately irrelevant to the establishment of objective, knowledge-based history standards. What is important is that we teach the Truth regarding the opinions of America's Founders.

For example, in this original 1839 publication, John Quincy Adams explained, [QUOTE] "the virtue which had been infused into the Constitution...and [gave] its vital existence the stability and duration to which it was destined, was none other than...those principles which had been first proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence." [END QUOTE]

It was an appeal to those same principles that declared the Supreme Court wrong in Dred Scott; eventually broke the back of slavery; convicted the Nazis at Nuremberg; and inspired Martin Luther King Jr. from his jail-cell in Birmingham.

We owe it to our children - our future citizens, voters, and leaders - to engrave those same principles on their hearts, thereby passing down the keys to keeping America Free. These standards move us in that direction.

One final thought, in closing: There are various items in these proposed standards we would have liked to improve. But an extensive democratic process was followed and all sides were required to compromise. For the most part, we are satisfied that the compromise avoids anti-American bias and censorship, so we support them - as written. However, we are well prepared with our own list of grievances if the standards are opened up to legislative micro-management - especially if anti-American bias is re-introduced. **I therefore urge you to pass these standards - as written.**

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael J. Chapman