

## PREFACE

*The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained.*<sup>1</sup>

The General Assembly – not the local civil government – is to provide a school system. (And based on plain language one that is “free”.) In conjunction, there is no provision mandating to what degree a civil government school system must be maintained. That is, there is nothing unbiblical (and therefore unconstitutional) about decreasing the civil government school system’s size, which is what must be done in light of Superintendent Robert Johnson’s public admission that enrollment has decreased over the last decade. The *Lynchburg News & Advance* quotes Dr. Johnson:

The division’s enrollment has dropped by about 1,000 students over the last decade, Johnson said, and while that has reduced per-student state funding in the schools, it has not lowered costs. Those students are scattered across schools and grades in such a way that it has not allowed the division to reduce the number of teachers, and the cost of maintaining the buildings remains the same, he said.<sup>2</sup>

To rebut Dr. Johnson’s request for taxpayer dollars to buttress a system that he admits experienced a decrease in demand, there now exists the opportunity to further decrease the civil government school system’s size. *Doing so is not unconstitutional, immoral, or unreasonable.* Dr. Johnson said, “The expense hasn’t gone away, but the revenue has.”<sup>3</sup> The same could be said for Campbell County *home schools*, yet millions more will be taken from them if civil government schools are given more money.

Rejecting Dr. Johnson’s taxpayer dollars request is reasonable. First, it is reasonable because the Board of Supervisors has the affirmative duty, as the civil government, to protect Campbell County citizens’ liberty interests. In practice that means not allowing the civil government school system to forcefully extract taxpayer dollars – AT THE LITERAL EXPENSE OF PRIVATELY EDUCATED STUDENTS. Respectfully, I remind the Board of Supervisors that there are many Campbell County residents who are home schooled and that attend private schools. The civil government is supposed to **protect** the parental duty owed to God to raise children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord – **not interfere**

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<sup>1</sup> VA Const. art. VIII, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> Katrina Dix, *Campbell County School Board frets over repairs, capital improvements*, LYNCHBURG NEWS & ADVANCE, January 11, 2016, [http://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/campbell-county-school-board-frets-over-repairs-capital-improvements/article\\_4b464215-786c-5ef3-8b68-32efcbfff2fa.html](http://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/campbell-county-school-board-frets-over-repairs-capital-improvements/article_4b464215-786c-5ef3-8b68-32efcbfff2fa.html).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

with it. Giving Dr. Johnson what he is asking for would be interfering with parental responsibilities, as money is the means by which parents exercise their educational responsibilities. Likewise, why would the Board of Supervisors forcefully extract money from citizens who do not even have children – and therefore do not utilize a civil government school?

Second, rejecting Dr. Johnson's taxpayer dollars request is reasonable, since it seems the whole world – except the regressive Campbell County School Board – is moving towards educational freedom. The national and international trend is towards educational freedom.<sup>4</sup> Everyone seems to understand this, except the School Board, which has an inherent conflict of interest in that they are relying on taxpayer dollars to perpetuate the very thing they must hold on to for their own benefit: the civil government school system. Free online tutorials, cooperatives, home schools, trusts, scholarships... Why would the School Board act so contrary to educational freedom and stifle American creativity?

Third, rejecting Dr. Johnson's taxpayer dollars request is reasonable, as it conforms to James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments* and Thomas Jefferson's *Act for Establishing Religious Freedom*, which is still legally in force. At one point there was an established church in Virginia. Prior to 1786 there existed: (1) State approved doctrine; (2) State compelled attendance laws; (3) State compelled tithing; and (4) State compelled preachers. Now, in violation of the law, the same scenario once again exists, except that now (relative to element four) "preachers" are called "teachers". If the civil government school system is such a valuable institution, why does its existence rely on force and coercion?

As a sidebar, a poor line of reasoning exists that speaks against "favoring" private education, or what would loosely and vaguely be cited as the so-called separation of church and state. Preliminarily it is good apologetic form to point out that it is the Christian faith that calls for such a thing as distinct duties owed to God by civil government and *separately* church government. Voting against giving Dr. Johnson taxpayer dollars is not favoring private and the almost synonymous *Christian* education; as it now stands the civil government school system is favored.

**The suggested action** is to reject Dr. Johnson's plea; at the same time shelve his plea for additional consideration in one year. In the meantime, explore ways to further reduce the civil government school system's interference with those who do not utilize the system; that will alleviate the long term, continual need for additional civil government school funds and simultaneously advance educational freedom.

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<sup>4</sup> See James Tooley's suggested reading below.

## REGARDING MULTI-GENERATIONAL DEBT AND TAXES

It is a red herring argument to assert that the negative debt effects will be minimized by forcing it on subsequent generations. That is in fact a red herring because it bypasses the threshold issue as to whether debt, in the first place, should be incurred. Its incurrence is not in accord with sound fiscal practice, for it is better to earn interest than pay it. Worse than paying interest is incurring it and then forcing our children to pay it.

Moreover, there is the taxation issue. In Robert Thoburn's *The Children Trap (Biblical Principles for Education)*, he wrote:

If you send your kids to the [civil government] school, you are in effect forcing your neighbors to pay for their education. Here are some ways in which they are forced to pay the bill:

1. A tax on any real estate which they own.
2. A tax on the real estate of a landlord.
3. A tax on the real estate of local businesses.
4. A tax on your neighbor's car.
5. A tax on your neighbor's income.
6. Other taxes on your neighbor.<sup>5</sup>

For the humanist these taxes are perfectly acceptable. However, for the Christian they violate the commandments against covetousness and stealing.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Remember that the Board of Supervisors represents all Campbell County residents, not just civil government school system stakeholders**

The Campbell County School Board is conflicted as they represent only civil government school system stakeholders; the Board of Supervisors must remember they represent all of Campbell County, including some of the more than two million American home school students,<sup>6</sup> privately educated students, and persons/families with no children.

**Reject federal money**

This would eliminate the need to comply with distant bureaucratic regulation and would therefore increase economic efficiency and local control.

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<sup>5</sup> ROBERT THOBURN, *THE CHILDREN TRAP* (Gary North ed., Dominion Press and Thomas Nelson 1986).

<sup>6</sup> BRIAN D. RAY, NAT'L HOME EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE, 2.04 MILLION HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2010 (2011). (<http://www.nheri.org/HomeschoolPopulationReport2010.pdf>)

## **Deflect money to the Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits**

Encourage the School Board to deflect donations to Virginia's consumer-oriented EISTC. Over the long term this will decrease the funds available to the civil government school system central planners, simultaneously increasing education freedom.

## **Resist the insistence that more money is needed, "For the Children"**

The Board of Supervisors has an obligation to all Campbell County children, in that they must protect each young person's private education – not interfere with it by taking more money from privately-educated citizens.

## **Incentivize home school education**

This is done through lowering taxes, particularly those levied on real property. This would allow poor families to exit a system they are forced into (because of the civil government extracting private dollars to maintain a monopoly.) Homeschool costs about ninety percent less than does a civil government school system "education". Moreover, it is statistically irrefutable that home school students score better on standardized tests.<sup>7</sup> Just as important is that an increased homeschooled citizenry would literally eliminate the need for any capital improvement expenditures.

## **Divest the County's school property ownership**

If the County does not own property it need not expend its citizen's tax dollars to maintain it. For example, the County does not need to expend money on a home school's heating and air conditioning maintenance; that expense, of course, belongs to the home school. In conjunction, the County's school property ownership – and therefore the additional "investment" in it, adds *zero* value to a child's education.

## **Trend towards educational freedom**

Online education, home schools, cooperatives, academies, parochial schools, Montessori schools, and so on, exist in Campbell County or Campbell County citizens rely on them. (The Campbell County Board of Supervisors must protect citizens utilizing those private education forms.) Home schooling is growing nationwide, and therefore most likely in Campbell County. Civil government must get smaller to reflect the demand for educational freedom.

## **Leverage the new Campbell County library**

While I do not believe the civil government has the God-given right to excise taxpayer dollars to build a library, Campbell County just spent money on a new library, all must be able to utilize it. Leverage that brand new facility.

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<sup>7</sup> BRIAN D. RAY, NAT'L HOME EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE, HOME EDUCATION REASON AND RESEARCH (2009). (<http://www.nheri.org/HERR.pdf>)

## EDUCATION DICHOTOMY

Civil Government School System	Private Education
Centralized	Decentralized
Outdated	Modern
Prussian	American
Based on central planning <sup>8</sup>	Based on personal liberty
Socialistic	Democratic
Regressive	Progressive
Relies on coercion	Relies on freedom
Taxes another's wealth	Stewards one's own wealth
Humanistic	Christian

<sup>8</sup> The Campbell County School's website lists over forty employees (besides actual teachers) maintaining the civil government school system. CENTRAL PLANNING IS EXPENSIVE AND IT SIPHONS RESOURCES THAT SHOULD GO TOWARDS ACTUAL EDUCATION.

The education of children for God is the most important business done on earth. It is the one business for which the earth exists. To it all politics, all war, all literature, all money-making, ought to be subordinated; and every parent especially ought to feel, every hour of the day, that, next to making his own calling and election sure, this is the end for which he is kept alive by God – this is his task on earth. **R. L. Dabney, *On Secular Education***<sup>9</sup>

## SUGGESTED READING

JAMES TOOLEY, *THE BEAUTIFUL TREE* (Cato Institute 2009). *This book objectively documents how poor families in the world's most impoverished areas are finding ways to truly educate their children, despite civil government intrusion.*

ROBERT THOBURN, *THE CHILDREN TRAP* (Gary North ed., Dominion Press and Thomas Nelson 1986). *This book is available online as a free PDF at Gary North's website. It chronicles how the civil government maintains, through force and coercion, a discipleship monopoly.*

SAMUEL L. BLUMENFELD, *IS PUBLIC EDUCATION NECESSARY?* (American Vision Press 2011) (1981). *This book chronicles how Harvardians, Unitarians, and Owenites banded together to form a civil government school system intending it to be the engine for a utopian society.*

BRUCE N. SHORTT, *THE HARSH TRUTH ABOUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS* (Chalcedon Foundation 2004). *This book addresses, with factual evidence, the actual things occurring in civil government schools – even those purported to be "good".*

KERRY L. MORGAN, *REAL CHOICE REAL FREEDOM IN AMERICAN EDUCATION* (University Press of America 1997). *This book addresses the intellectual arguments in favor of parental rights. It also addresses the legal argument against civil government schools, including in light of Virginian Thomas Jefferson's *A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom* and Virginian James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*.*

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<sup>9</sup> R.L. Dabney, *On Secular Education* (Moscow, Idaho: Ransom Press, 1989).