
toral College rewards such coalition building. Ross shows that Harrison, despite losing the popular vote, was actually the candidate with greater national legitimacy. Indeed, Ross chops and dices claims that a president elect who failed to win the popular vote will lack legitimacy, and knocks aside most other objections to the College with relative ease as well. She demonstrates how the College can make fraud less likely and election outcomes more certain.

She is less convincing when arguing that absent the Electoral College, the American electorate would splinter from two parties that represent grand coalitions into numerous, rigidly ideological parties. She suggests that a strength of the college is that if a regional party began to win, or threatened to win, Electoral College votes, it would force the major parties to compromise to bring them in the fold; but then switches direction and suggests that without an electoral college, such regional parties would proliferate. It is never quite clear why they would not still be brought into the fold in a winner takes all system of voting. And Ross wrongly, in my view, accepts the argument that we should do away with the Electors themselves, and have electoral votes automatically assigned according to each state's popular vote. While electors have rarely used their discretion to vote for someone other than whom they are pledged, this seems a valuable safeguard against late breaking information or the sudden death of a candidate. Similarly, she argues that in the event no candidate wins an Electoral College majority and the election is accordingly sent to the House of Representatives, deliberation and deal-making should be replaced by automatic deference to the popular vote in each state. In each case, Ross's position runs counter to the general thrust of her book, which prefers "enlightened democracy" - deliberation and process aimed at producing refined, thoughtful results - to direct democracy.

Those steeped in the Electoral College or the benefits of federalism may find *Enlightened Democracy* a bit of a disappointment. For example, the discussions of federalism are, as noted, necessarily brief. But this is not really a drawback at all, because I suspect that for most Americans Ross's discussion of federalism will seem quite novel and different - food for thought, if you will, and as deep as they care to go at the present time. In this way, Ross's book is important for what it is not. As the author herself notes in the introduction, *Enlightened Democracy* is not a dense treatise written for election lawyers or political scientists. Rather, it is "a primer, a summary of the history of and justifications for preserving our unique presidential election system." For those who instinctively agree with Ross but haven't given the question much thought, this book should help to clarify and organize their thinking. More importantly, for those who have simply accepted the notion that of course the president should be elected by popular vote, it is just what is needed: a short, easy-to-read book that will change some minds, cause others to take a second, more serious look, and generally stir interest in further exploration of the issues involved, including federalism.

For many years, supporters of the Electoral College have been on the defensive. *Enlightened Democracy* turns the tables to press the positive case for the College. The increase in support for the Electoral College after the 2000 election indicates that the public may be more ready for that case than critics of the Electoral College believe.

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EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM IN URBAN AMERICA: BROWN V. BOARD AFTER HALF A CENTURY

BY DAVID SALISBURY AND CASEY LARTIGUE JR.

REVIEWED BY CLINT BOLICK*

Last year our nation celebrated the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*—and lamented the appalling lack of progress in delivering on the promise of equal educational opportunities for minority schoolchildren. In a perverse sense, we are closing in on the goal of equality, because the quality of American public schooling has been worsening for everyone. But for blacks and Hispanics, who are disproportionately represented among the poor, the situation is catastrophic.

As Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom pointed out in their landmark *America in Black and White*, even in the midst of a flourishing black middle class and massive spending on

public schools, the academic gap between blacks and whites has widened over the past decade, and now measures four years of academic performance between white and black high school seniors. Given that incomes of college graduates are nearly double those of high school graduates—and nearly three times higher than high school dropouts—it is alarming, as Dr. Jay Greene has reported, that nearly half of all black and Hispanic students fail to graduate. Similarly worrisome is the fact that among young black men who failed to graduate, 28 percent are today in jail.

Educational Freedom does what few others have attempted in the many recent analyses of *Brown's* unfinished

legacy: to draw the connection between the racial academic gap and the solution of parental choice. In a series of 13 excellent articles written by a broad and bipartisan array of experts, the volume provides the outlines of a pragmatic policy strategy to confront our nation's most urgent domestic crisis.

The volume begins with an essay by Dr. Howard Fuller, former Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent and founder of the Black Alliance for Educational Options. Fuller explains the crucial difference “between public education, which is a concept, and the system that delivers public education.” The system is a means, not an end in itself; and achieving the goal of public education often requires challenging or going around the delivery system. The capacity to exit the system is paramount, Fuller says, and the absence of such power distinguishes poor from wealthier families and consigns their children to inferior schools.

Former Democratic Rep. Floyd Flake, who runs both a private school and a charter school in Jamaica, Queens, weighs in with unconventional prescriptions. Beyond school choice, he urges changes in teacher training, elimination of special education programs that serve as a “dumping bin for children whose teachers cannot or do not know how to educate,” and resisting the temptation to lower academic standards.

Young scholar Gerard Robinson provides a superb historical analysis of the “choice” movement that was used to subvert school desegregation in the South in the 1960s and '70s, as contrasted to the contemporary “freedom-based” choice movement. The current movement's nefarious antecedent created cynicism about school choice that endures today among many older black Americans, while the focus today on freedom and opportunity empowers those who are the main intended beneficiaries of Brown's promise.

Harvard Professor Paul Peterson points to two main impacts of school vouchers: improved student performance coupled with improvement of public schools faced with robust competition. Choice programs do not skim the cream, he finds, but rather attract a representative cross-section of urban schoolchildren. He notes that far from draining public schools of resources, voucher programs tend to take only partial funding away when students leave, resulting in higher per-pupil expenditures in public schools.

Chaim Karczag takes on the vital issue of teacher certification as a barrier to education improvement. Despite the promising advances of alternative certification that bypasses mind-numbing university teacher training programs, Karczag laments that the No Child Left Behind Act, in a “paradigmatic example” of the “risks of trying to impose reform through regulation from above,” may stifle alternative certification through its insistence on credentialing.

David Bositis of the liberal-leaning Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies presents a revealing report on the politics of school choice. A slight majority of Americans

support school choice, he finds; but a strong majority of blacks (57 percent) and an even higher percentage of Hispanics (60 percent) support school choice, because their public schools are so bad and their options are few. Yet that public opinion support rarely translates into political influence among black and Hispanic leaders. Why? Bositis finds there is a generation gap—most older blacks oppose school choice, while two out of three under age 35 support it—and older blacks vote at much higher rates than younger blacks. For those same demographic reasons, however, Bositis concludes that “in the not-too-distant future, the politics of school choice could easily change.”

Co-editor David Salisbury reports on the cost of average private school tuition in six cities, and finds that the average tuition nationally is \$4,689. Forty-one percent of all private schools charge less than \$2,500, while over three-quarters charge less than \$5,000. He concludes that “[e]ven a poor child, armed with a voucher of \$5,000, could obtain a quality private education.”

Frederick Hess investigates the impacts of markets on public schooling. While concluding that markets are necessary to improve education, he observes that the “statutes, bureaucracy, and procedural routines that hamper school officials are central to the structure of urban districts.” Without structural reform, schools will find it difficult to respond affirmatively to market forces.

Andrew Coulson rounds out the volume by analyzing market education internationally, concluding that parental choice and deregulation are key ingredients of success. Far from ideological, Educational Freedom presents a vital and practical roadmap for education-based policy reform. Indeed, if policymakers could have only a single volume on education on their bookshelves (or better yet, in front of their noses), this would be it. Having a roadmap is far easier than implementing it. Institutional inertia is rampant in the most hide-bound socialist system west of Communist China and south of the United States Postal Service. But this volume illustrates powerfully the transformative promise of parental choice.

As Howard Fuller puts it, “I understand that our position is controversial. But social change is always controversial. It transfers power to people who have never had it and takes power from those who have had it. How can that not be controversial?” But, he adds, “We intend to endure to the end.” This year marks the 50th anniversary of Brown II—the promise of educational opportunity “with all deliberate speed.” In those five decades, we have lost the better part of three generations of disadvantaged students. Our nation's children do not have another moment to lose. We need to get on with making good on one of our nation's most sacred vows.

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