



# FACTS & OPINIONS

*On Public Interest Issues*

## Quotes

“New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common.”

- John Locke (1632-1704)

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the conditions that surround him. The unreasonable man adapts surrounding conditions to himself. All progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

- George Bernard Shaw,  
*Mrs. Warren’s Profession*,  
1893

“Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools. The miracle is that at times they accomplish this impossible task.”

- Haim G. Ginott, *Teacher and Child* (1976)

## State Legislatures Embrace Education Reform Proposals

by Sarah McIntosh,  
*School Reform News*

Education reform became a defining issue in several state Legislatures this session. Newly elected Republican Governors, including Scott Walker in Wisconsin, Rick Scott in Florida, and John Kasich in Ohio, explicitly linked school reforms to their states’ fiscal health.

State Legislatures passed a variety of reform bills that had foundered in years past, from expanding charter schools and virtual learning to establishing merit pay for teachers and vouchers for low-income or special-needs children.

“2011 sets a new standard for education reform,” said Matthew Ladner, Senior Advisor for Policy and Research at the Florida-based Foundation for Excellence in Education.

“The teacher unions are still powerful, but their credibility approximates that of Big

Tobacco’s claims regarding smoking and cancer.” As the legislative sessions wind down in many states, the list of noteworthy policy accomplishments is long.

### Arizona

Arizona became the first state to enact an education savings account (ESA) program designed specifically for K–12 schools.

Under the new law, when an eligible student leaves a public school to attend another school, the state will fund an account equal to 90 percent of the state’s per-pupil expenditure.

“The account may be used for any educational expense, from private school tuition to distance learning to tutoring to software to community college tuition,” explained Clint Bolick,

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## FACTS & OPINIONS

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**President,** Dr. Don Racheter  
**Editor,** Deborah D. Thornton

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## Focus on Iowa Wesleyan College

### Wesleyan Named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) honored Iowa Wesleyan College as a leader among institutions of higher education for its support of volunteering, service-learning, and civic engagement by naming the college to the 2010 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The Honor Roll admitted a total of 511 colleges and universities.

"Congratulations to Iowa Wesleyan College and its students for their dedication to service and commitment to improving their local communities," said Patrick A. Corvington, Chief Executive Officer of CNCS.

The mission of the Iowa Wesleyan College Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement is to prepare future graduates for global stewardship by fostering learning through service. For more than forty years, Iowa Wesleyan

College's students and alumni have been actively engaged in service in southeast Iowa and around the world, making the Center one of the oldest civic engagement programs in the country.

"We are very pleased to have been named to the 2010 Honor Roll," said Alisha Vincent, Director of the Center for Service-Learning & Civic Engagement. "We are grateful for the distinction and look forward to continuing our level of service at Iowa Wesleyan College."

In 2009, 3.2 million college students dedicated more than 307 million hours of service to communities across the country — service valued at more than \$6.4 billion.

### Summer Orientation Days, Service Learning Fair, and Private College Week

Over 200 incoming freshman students participated in a summer orientation day and service-learning fair on either June 20 or July 18. Move-in Day for Fall 2011 is Tuesday, August 16.

Faculty, administrators, and students will participate in Iowa Private College Week, August 1-5, 2011.

A full schedule of activities is planned to introduce high school juniors and seniors to the opportunities available at Iowa Wesleyan, with tours and information sessions at 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. each day.

*Call 800-582-2383  
for more information on  
Iowa Wesleyan College.*

## What's New at Public Interest Institute?

### THE IOWA CIVICS PROJECT is Available, for Free — Order Today

In 1996, PII developed and started distributing free copies of *THE IOWA CIVICS PROJECT*, a twelve-unit curriculum on Iowa state and local government, to teachers statewide.

In the textbook, *IOWA GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS*, each unit is designed to focus on one aspect of government, and includes a list of Useful Websites, a Vocabulary list, a Review Quiz, and Suggestions for Additional Activities.

The chapters explore the historical development of government in Iowa; the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches; Authorities, Boards, Commissions, Councils, and Districts; Local governments; education; political parties; interest groups; the mass media; voting and elections; and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

The series is free to any teacher, school — (public or private), or home school teacher/parent wanting to teach this curriculum.

If you would like to receive copies, e-mail us at [Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org](mailto:Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org).

## *Facts & Opinions* Question of the Quarter:

**What did you think of the performance of the Iowa Legislature, both House and Senate, this session?**

Send your thoughts on this issue to us at  
[Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org](mailto:Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org).  
We may publish some of your ideas in the next issue  
of *Facts & Opinions* in October 2011 and on our Website at:  
[www.LimitedGovernment.org](http://www.LimitedGovernment.org)

### PII at Iowa Straw Poll

PII will have a presence at the Iowa Republican Party Presidential Straw Poll on August 13 in Ames at Iowa State University. Stop by and see us.

### Recent PII Publications

Recent POLICY STUDIES published include: #11-1 *Iowa's Privileged Class: State Government Employees*, by Amy K. Frantz.

Iowa has the largest pay gap in the nation and has held the top spot for the largest pay gap between government workers and private-sector workers for over two decades.

In 2008, Iowa's state-government workers received an average wage that was 148 percent of what the average private-sector worker in Iowa

was paid. That means that for every \$1.00 an average private-sector worker earns in Iowa, an average state-government employee in Iowa earns \$1.48.

Study #11-2 *Tax and Expenditure Limits II: Are There Additional Options?*, by Deborah D. Thornton, focuses on options for limiting government expenditures, including establishing state budgets on a rolling average and increased use of the line-item veto.

Study #11-3 *Monopolizing and Derailing the Education Freedom Train*, also by Thornton, explores the history of school choice, focusing on Milwaukee, Wisconsin's experience, and offers suggestions for expanded open enrollment and education reform in Iowa.

All Institute studies are available on our Website, [www.LimitedGovernment.org](http://www.LimitedGovernment.org).

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## State Legislatures Embrace Education Reform Proposals

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Director of the Phoenix-based Goldwater Institute's Center for Constitutional Litigation.

Bolick said the program saves the state and local districts money, allows students to harness technology and individualized academic programs, and "cuts out the [bureaucratic] middleman."

The new law also complies with the state's Blaine Amendment, which forbids the Legislature from funding any religious schools or institutions, by funding individual parents' accounts and letting them choose how to direct the spending.

The initial pilot program is limited to special-needs students. Several other states are considering ESAs, Bolick said. "This idea has enormous potential to change the way K-12 educational services are provided," he said.

Ladner said reformers in other states should pay particular attention to Arizona's education savings account plan.

"I believe that this program will be found to be constitutionally distinct from vouchers and represents an important refinement of Milton Friedman's voucher concept: parental control of education down to

the last penny," he said.

### Florida

Sunshine State lawmakers expanded charter schools, scholarships for special needs students, and public school choice and implemented a far-reaching teacher merit-pay plan.

Senate Bill 736, the Student Success Act, passed both houses early in the session and was the first bill Gov. Rick Scott (R) signed into law, on March 24.

The law revamps the state's teacher and administrator evaluation system, making objective assessment of student performance 50 percent of the evaluation. It also establishes incentives for teachers and administrators.

"The Student Success Act helps Florida move to a higher standard," said state Senate President Mike Haridopolos (R-Merritt Island), who singled out state Sen. Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville) for his efforts to reach across the aisle to attract votes from Democrats.

"As [Gov. Rick Scott] and lawmakers work on ways to improve the economy and attract people to Florida, the

implementation of the Student Success Act will contribute to our competitiveness in attracting individuals to move to and stay in our state to raise families and build livelihoods."

Ladner says Florida lawmakers made great strides on education reform this year, despite some Republican intra-party disagreements in the session's waning hours. "[They] passed a very far reaching digital learning bill, a fantastic charter school law which will lead to a proliferation of high-quality operators, and tenure and merit pay reform," he said.

### Idaho

Amid a rancorous debate, Idaho State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna helped shepherd three major reform bills through the Legislature.

Senate Bills 1108 and 1110, which passed in March, phase out teacher tenure and phase in performance pay, include student achievement and parental input in professional evaluations, and limit the scope of public-employee union collective bargaining.

In April, Gov. Butch Otter (R) signed Senate Bill 1184,



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the final piece of Luna's plan, which gives local districts greater flexibility in allocating funds previously designated for class-size reduction, modestly raises teacher base pay, and increases funding for digital learning and classroom technology.

"It's a great start, and it's the beginning of where we need to go," said Briana LeClaire, an education policy analyst for the Idaho Freedom Foundation.

"The labor reform particularly will cause a lot more openness and transparency."

### **Indiana**

Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels signed legislation creating the nation's largest voucher program. The School Scholarship Act is the cornerstone of his school reform agenda. It creates a voucher program for low- and middle-income families and doubles the cap on the scholarship tax credit program.

Under the sliding scale plan, even families of four making more than \$60,000 would qualify for a minimal scholarship when switching from public to private schools. In the first year, the program

is capped at 7,500 students, increasing to 15,000 in the second year, and there would be no limit to the number of children who could be accepted after three years. It allows a maximum of \$4,500 for students in grades 1 through 8, and includes a tax deduction of up to \$1,000 for out-of-pocket private or home schooling expenses.

This legislation was part of the five-week legislative boycott by Indiana Democrats. As of July 1, the Indiana State Teachers Association has filed suit against the program, alleging that it is unconstitutional.

### **Oklahoma**

Oklahoma state Rep. Lisa J. Billy (R-Lindsay) championed the passage of House Bill 1456, which mandates that state assessment tests give schools A to F grades and make them public.

"This is an important reform. The letter-grading system will provide parents a measurable, concrete, and clear apples-to-apples comparison between local schools," Billy said.

"It will help identify both success stories and areas of need in our school system, and incentivize improvement. I believe this reform will foster greater collaboration among schools so that successful strategies will be duplicated to the benefit of all Oklahoma

students."

### **Utah**

Utah Senate Bill 65 also passed this session, creating the Statewide Online Education Program. Reformers had worried Gov. Gary Herbert (R) might veto the bill, but he ultimately signed it.

The new law provides funding incentives based on test scores online students achieve.

The law has no participation caps and allows both private and public providers to offer classes. The program will begin with students currently enrolled in public high schools (grades 9–12). Private high school students and homeschoolers will be able to use their education funding to attend online courses beginning in 2013.

### **"Best Is yet to Come"**

Ladner noted that lawmakers in Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin are still considering major reforms.

"I'm not aware of anything especially bad going forward," Ladner said. "As great as 2011 has been, I suspect that the best is yet to come."

*Sarah McIntosh (mcintosh.sarah@gmail.com) is a constitutional scholar from Lawrence, Kansas. This article is reprinted with permission from the author and School Reform News, June 2011.*

***Have you renewed your  
membership with  
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Institute?***

## *The Food Security Reader*, a “Greatest Hits” book

By Mary Boote

Executive Director, Truth about Trade & Technology

You might assume farmers know more about rootworms than bookworms, but that’s not necessarily true. We’ve been writing short pieces on food, agriculture, and trade every week for over a decade. So we’ve gathered the finest in an anthology, hot off the press.

Our new book, whose full title is *The Food Security Reader: The Best of Truth about Trade & Technology* is our album of “greatest hits.”

A farmer’s job involves growing the food the world needs — and working hard to use less of our resources to grow more. The mission of Truth about Trade & Technology is to give farmers a voice in public debates about free trade and the importance of access to technology in agriculture.

We believe farmers should enjoy the right to sell what they grow to consumers around the world. For every three rows of corn grown in the United States, one is shipped abroad. Our livelihoods — and the American economy — depend on this trade.

One of our columns, by Chairman Dean Kleckner, is headlined “Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-Bahrain.” (Yes...you can hum it to the tune of “Barbara Ann” by the Beach Boys.) It’s about the economic and security reasons for a free-trade agreement with a Middle Eastern nation.

“Bahrain may be a tiny

country, but by helping create jobs at home and spread freedom around the planet, it’s also an important part of a grand strategy,” wrote Kleckner.

When we aren’t discussing the politics of trade, it’s the politics of what we eat. We believe farmers everywhere, in developed and developing countries, should have access to the most effective tools they need for growing crops and producing food. That means government should base their regulations on science-based methods — not fear.

In 2009, the popular U.S. TV show “CSI: Miami” attacked corn farmers and biotechnology out of sheer scientific ignorance.

Iowa farmer and TATT Board member Tim Burrack fired back in a rapid-response column: “It was malicious propaganda based on distortions and lies about the common practices of modern agriculture. Call it ‘un-reality TV,’” he wrote.

“The Food Security Reader” covers a lot of ground in 440 pages. Twenty-three contributors discuss mad-cow disease, biofuels, and even the FarmVille fad on Facebook. The range of topics is impressive.

Some of the best columns come from our global farmers. Rajesh Kumar of India pleads for access to biotechnology:

“Farmers have the ability to take a big step forward with biotechnology -- but only if the government in New Delhi will allow us to do so. If it doesn’t let us grow biotech eggplants, it may not permit us to grow any of the biotech crops that my country needs.”

Sadly, Kumar and a billion of his countrymen are still waiting for this opportunity.

*The Food Security Reader* is dedicated to the late Norman Borlaug, the father of the Green Revolution and an inspiration to farmers. For his pioneering efforts to improve food production, Borlaug won the Nobel Peace Prize.

*The Food Security Reader* may not win the Nobel Prize in Literature, but we do hope that it will help Truth about Trade & Technology follow in Borlaug’s footsteps as we confront the great challenge of feeding the world.

Dr. Borlaug believed in a farmer’s ability to accomplish great things with the right tools. It’s our hope that the farmers’ voices in this book will support his vision and explain why trade and technology are necessary for achieving food security and environmental sustainability.

Purchase it for yourself, a friend, and your local school or library at [www.truthabouttrade.org](http://www.truthabouttrade.org) or [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). Printed with permission of the author.

## A Need for More Immigrant Workers? Unemployment and Underemployment in the First Quarter of 2011

by Steven A. Camarota,  
Director of Research at the Center for Immigration Studies

In his May 10 speech in El Paso, President Obama outlined his vision for reforming the nation's immigration system. He argued that it is now time to legalize illegal immigrants and to increase the number of legal immigrants allowed into the country.

Like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the president argues that illegal immigrants need to stay in their jobs and more immigrants need to be admitted. The president's speech assumes that jobs are plentiful.

But all the evidence indicates this is not the case, particularly for the young and less-educated, who are the most likely to compete with illegal immigrants. Current unemployment data indicates that illegal immigrant workers are overwhelming those with relatively little education.

While it would be a mistake to think that every job taken by an immigrant is a job lost by a native, it would also be a mistake to think that allowing illegal immigrants to stay permanently and increasing immigration further has no impact on labor market outcomes.

Americans with relatively little education have been very hard hit by the current downturn. Additionally, the president argued that anyone who

completes college in the United States should be allowed to stay. But again, this position ignores the difficult employment situation for young college graduates.

### Overall Unemployment Details (U-3 & U-6)

To be unemployed using the U-3 measure, one has to have looked for a job in the last four weeks. Unemployment varies significantly by group and is very high for teenagers, those without a high school diploma, and young high school graduates.

One of the most important findings is that those who are young (18 to 29) with a high school education have an unemployment rate similar to those who have not completed high school (all ages) — 22 vs. 20.3 percent.

Unemployment is much higher for young and less-educated U.S.-born minorities than for the population as a whole. For example, U-3 unemployment is 32.9 percent for U.S.-born blacks who have not completed high school, much higher than for all natives without a high school education.

Unfortunately, for young blacks (18 to 29) who have completed high school the situation is the same.

Using the broader measure, (referred to as U-6) that includes those who want to work, but have not looked recently, and those forced to work part-time, things are very bleak for American workers.

For those without a high school education (all ages), U-6 unemployment is 45.2 percent. For young high school graduates, the U-6 measure is 34.4 percent compared to 20.3 percent using the U-3 measure.

Additionally, the U-6 shows things are very bad for U.S.-born minorities. For both U.S.-born Hispanics without a high school education and young high school graduates the U-6 unemployment rate is more than 35 percent.

For U.S.-born blacks the situation is even worse. They are the ones most likely to benefit from having fewer illegal immigrants in the country.

Those with a bachelor's degree have generally been more insulated from recessions than

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others, and this is still somewhat true. But for young (21 to 29) college graduates, the U-6 measure was 12.2 percent in the first quarter of 2011.

For those who have attended college, but not completed a bachelor's degree, the U-6 measure was 20.2 percent.

### **Many Not Working**

The U-3 and U-6 measures both deal with those who express some interest in working. If someone has not looked recently for a job and has given up entirely looking for work, then they would not be part of either category.

In first quarter of 2011, nearly 40.4 million U.S.-born adults were not in the labor force — not working or looking for work. If we include the 11.3 million U.S.-born adults

(18 to 65) who are unemployed, the total number not working would be 51.7 million, an increase of 10.1 million since the first quarter of 2007.

This means that there is already a huge pool of legal workers available in the United States. In the first quarter of 2007, 73.6 percent of U.S.-born working-age adults were employed. In 2011 only 68.1 percent were employed.

### **Conclusion**

It is difficult to overstate the number of potential workers that now exists in the United States.

If a large fraction of illegal immigrants returned to their home countries, there would still be an ample supply of idle workers to replace them, particularly those who have rela-

tively little education and who need jobs the most.

Employers might have to pay more and offer better benefits in order to attract American citizens. But improving the living standards and bargaining power of the least-educated and poorest workers can be seen as a desirable social outcome, one President Obama should be interested in achieving.

The contention that there is a general labor shortage that has to be satisfied by increasing the number of immigrants allowed into the country seems entirely inconsistent with the available evidence.

The full report, with tables, is available at <http://cis.org/CenterforImmigrationStudiesWebsiteIndex>. *Printed with permission of the author.*