

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

A Better Way: The Republican Agenda

June 2016

Public Policy Notes

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What's Missing from *A Better Way*?

Two of the most contentious issues in the presidential primaries—immigration and trade—are noticeably absent from the new Republican proposals. Republican positions on both issues are mixed and Donald Trump has taken policy positions on both that provide a challenge to the traditional Republican positions.

The positions of [Trump](#) and [Clinton](#) on these two issues are located on their campaign websites.

As we move toward the party nominating conventions of the respective political parties, information about possible party platforms and agendas are beginning to surface.

This month, Speaker Paul Ryan introduced *A Better Way*, a series of policy agendas that provide a possible perspective of the Republican party as it develops a party platform that will be utilized in the months leading up to the general election in November. This platform has historically been designed to provide a “roadmap” on which the party nominee campaigns; however, this isn’t a usual year for the Republicans. At this time, there is no information concerning whether the presumptive Republican nominee, Donald Trump will adopt these policy positions.

A Better Way includes positions on the following topics.

Poverty

- Reward work
- Tailor benefits to people’s needs
- Improve skills and schools
- Plan and save for the future
- Demand results

National Security

- Protect the homeland
- Take the fight to terrorism
- Tackle new threats
- Defend freedom
- A stronger Medicare

Tax Reform

- Simplicity and fairness
- Jobs & growth
- A service-first IRS

Although Speaker Ryan has received the majority of press regarding the Republican agenda, there is a Congressman from Texas who is carrying much of the weight.

Representative Kevin Brady of Texas serves as the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and has as-



sisted with developing the positions on poverty, health care and taxes. “It isn’t a 50-point plan for solving global issues,”

Brady said in an interview. “It is key priorities for House Republicans to turn this country around. We’re going to lay these ideas out, run on them this election, and if we return as a majority, we’re going to act on them.” Source:

www.houstonchronicle.com/6/27/16

For a complete look at the agenda and specifics on plans within that agenda, [click here](#).

The Economy

- Regulate smarter
- Deliver affordable and reliable energy
- End bailouts and promote financial independence
- Put students and workers first
- Preserve Internet innovation
- Crack down on lawsuit abuse

The Constitution

- Less government overreach
- Fewer needless regulations
- More limits on runaway spending
- More openness and transparency

Fix Health Care

- More choices and lower costs
- Real protections and peace of mind
- Cutting-edge cures and treatments

The U.S. Supreme Court Issues Opinions In June

This month, the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) issued several decisions that will have far reaching implications for many Southern states.

Affirmative Action

[Fisher v University of Texas at Austin](#)

The Court ruled on June 23, 2016 against the appellant, a female student who was denied entrance to the University of Texas at Austin based upon a previous affirmative action policy. Since the filing of the suit, the University undertook to develop a new set of guidelines to determine acceptance and the Texas Legislature enacted the Top Ten Percent law to support that new system. (This law provides that any student who graduates in the top ten percent of their high school class is automatically granted admission.) In ruling against the appellant, the Court certified that systems utilized to ensure diversity among student populations in public universities could be designed and implemented constitutionally.

Immigration

[United States v Texas](#)

On June 23rd, the Court issued a one page affirmation of a lower court action that had blocked two of President Obama's signature programs in regard to immigration.

"The first is actually an expansion of an existing program, known as [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#), which launched in

2012 and provides two years (four if renewed) of deportation relief and work visas to qualified immigrants brought to the United States illegally before their sixteenth birthday. Under the proposed Obama expansion, DACA would be granted for three years instead of two, and more immigrants would be eligible.

The second, known as [Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents \(DAPA\)](#), was unveiled in late 2014 to provide similar benefits to undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

The judgement issued by the court did not set a legal precedent but effectively kept millions of undocumented immigrants in the United States under the threat of deportation. [Source: Council on Foreign Relations](#)

The SECA states of [Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia](#) were listed as plaintiffs in addition to [Texas](#) and other states throughout the U.S. The [Governors of North Carolina and Mississippi](#) also signed on as plaintiffs.

This [suit](#) was brought in response to questions concerning the constitutional authority of the President to create special immigration programs, based upon the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Abortion

[Whole Women's Health v Hellerstedt, Commissioner, Texas Department of State Health Services](#)

On June 26, the Court issued an opinion that an abortion law passed in the state of Texas unconstitutionally prohibited a woman's right to abortion. The Texas law required abortion clinics to meet standards set for ambulatory surgery clinics and to require hospital admitting privileges for doctors performing abortions.

Thirteen states currently have similar laws on the books. The "hospital admitting privileges for doctors" law is in effect in [Texas](#) and [Tennessee](#). That requirement is on hold in the SECA states of [Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma](#).

The outpatient surgery standards are in place in [Virginia](#) and blocked in [Texas](#) and [Tennessee](#) through lower court action.

Corruption

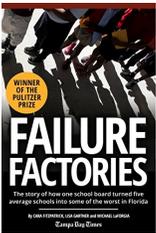
[McDonnell v United States](#)

Former [Virginia](#) Governor Robert McDonnell was previously convicted of corruption for his relationship and receipt of gifts from a major political donor while in office. On June 27th, the Court vacated the conviction and narrowed the definition of the sort of official act that provides the basis for a prosecution of corruption. In order to meet the new definition, the "act must be a formal, specific and focused exercise of government power, such as a lawsuit, hearing or administrative determination...The prosecution must prove that the defendant made a decision or took action on the matter, or agreed to do so."

News to Note

A Nurse for Every School

The American Academy of Pediatrics has published a new [position statement](#) that recommends that a full time nurse be available in every school. “The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes the important role school nurses play in promoting the optimal biopsychosocial health and well-being of school-aged children in the school setting. Although the concept of a school nurse has existed for more than a century, uniformity among states and school districts regarding the role of a registered professional nurse in schools and the laws governing it are lacking. By understanding the benefits, roles, and responsibilities of school nurses working as a team with the school physician, as well as their contributions to school-aged children, pediatricians can collaborate with, support, and promote school nurses in their own communities, thus improving the health, wellness, and safety of children and adolescents.”



Education & Race: A Pulitzer Prize

The [Tampa Bay Times](#) was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for local reporting for its [Failure Factories](#) series about the failures of the Pinellas County, Florida school system. The series highlighted the school system’s efforts to educate its African-American children. A compilation of the articles is available through Amazon.com.



Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship Program

[HB 626](#) that created a new Kentucky scholarship program passed both the House and Senate; however, it

was vetoed by the Governor. This bill would have assisted all graduating high school students in Kentucky with scholarship funds to attend a community college. According to the Governor’s [veto statement](#), the bill “did not allow funding to be targeted to students with a true need, and with limited funding, may leave behind those with the truest need.”

Millennials Overtake Baby Boomers in U.S. Head Count

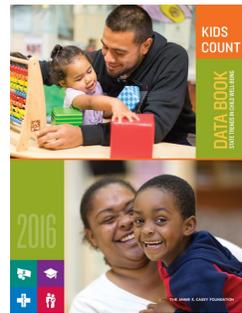
According to a report released by the Pew Research Center, “Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as the nation’s largest living generation, according to [population estimates](#) released in April by the U.S. Census Bureau. Millennials, defined as those ages 18-34 in 2015, now number 75.4 million, surpassing the 74.9 million Baby Boomers (ages 51-69). And Generation X (ages 35-50 in 2015) is projected to pass the Boomers in population by 2028. The Millennial generation continues to grow as young immigrants expand its ranks. Boomers – whose generation was defined by the boom in U.S. births following World War II – are older and their numbers shrinking as the number of deaths among them exceeds the number of older immigrants arriving in the country.”



Reducing the Achievement Gap

“Recognizing the tremendous potential for high-quality preschool to improve chil-

dren’s outcomes, this report considers how a universal publicly funded pre-kindergarten program in the United States could decrease both disparities in access to early learning and achievement gaps at kindergarten entry. Data from two nationally representative datasets and prior results from evaluations of high-quality universal pre-kindergarten were analyzed to estimate the extent to which a national high-quality universal pre-K, or UPK, program would reduce achievement gaps at kindergarten entry based on children’s race/ethnicity and income.” This study was completed in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Boston, Massachusetts. [Click here](#) for a copy of the report.



Kids Count 2016 Data Book Now Available

The latest in the series of [Kids Count Data Books](#) that have been published by the Annie B. Casey Foundation is now available. “This year, the annual report focuses on key trends in child well-being in the post-recession years and offers recommendations for how policymakers can ensure all children are prepared for the future, based on the country’s shared values of opportunity, responsibility and security.”

According to the state rank of child well-being, most SECA states remain at the end of the list. State ranks: AL (46), AR (44), FL (40), GA (42), KY (35), LA (48), MS (50), NC (34), OK (37), SC (41), TN (38), TX (43), VA (11) and WV (39).

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"A Voice for Southern Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information

that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

<http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/public-policy/public-policy-notes/>

to receive notice of its availability each month.

Wikipedia: Have You Made Your Contribution?

One of the first things most college freshmen are warned against is using Wikipedia, The On-line Encyclopedia as a source for information. Because the website is an online open opportunity for contribution, the information that is posted is not always correct and there are people who have now made it their "hobby" to focus on particular areas of Wikipedia and make those corrections.

Interestingly, some college professors are now utilizing the platform to enrich student experiences in research and writing. Some teachers and professors are now requiring students to use Wikipedia but to edit it for class assignments.

According to an [article](#) that appeared in the Washington Post, students at Emerson College in Boston are responsible for Wikipedia's "Theater and Disability" page. The encyclopedia article was first reviewed and redone by a student at North Dakota State University.

For those of us in the early childhood field, immunization, a hot topic both in our field and in the community at large, has a page that is edited and maintained by a sophomore level chemistry class at the University of Michigan according to the article.

The [Wiki Education Foundation](#) connects higher education resources in the USA and Canada to the publishing power of Wikipedia. "We cultivate learning that enriches Wik-

ipedia and universities, creating a world where any learner can contribute to open scholarship and education for all. We change the lives of students by helping students change the world....The Foundation "engages students in solving real-world problems, expands access to university resources, brings diverse content to Wikipedia, and increases digital literacy....**Rather than writing a term paper that ends up in a drawer, students contribute to a knowledge base the world uses every day. It's service learning with a lasting impact.**"

Perhaps a class project or a publishing opportunity as a service learning project? Another way to network and collaborate with colleagues around the world!