

- Education would be so much more exciting that your child might want to spend several hours a day on his own exploring mathematics, history, geography, creative writing, or some other subject that has ignited his imagination.

- Since there would be no school board imposing one type of education on everyone in the district, there no longer would be bitter fights over curricula, school prayer, sex education, "sensitivity" training, bilingual education, homosexual teachers, sports emphasis, or any of the dozens of other controversies that typify government schools. If you didn't like what your child's school was doing, you'd simply find a better school — just like finding the grocery store that suits you.

- There would be dozens of choices available to you — schools that focus on hard academics, others that offer special courses in music or sports, others that promote an understanding of the free market that will help your child earn a much better living when he grows up. Some schools would tailor-make a curriculum just for your child, while others would offer a low-cost, no-frills education for those who need to economize.

We can thank our lucky stars that computers aren't produced by the government. But we also should never forget how exciting education could be if *it* were as free of the government.

### A Better Future

While it might seem far-fetched to even discuss the idea of getting government completely out of education, it really is a practical possibility.

More and more parents are becoming fed up with government schools — demonstrated by the burgeoning home-schooling movement.

One reason to be optimistic is the very fact that ending government schooling is such a revolutionary idea. There is no Republican or Democratic position on the issue, and so very few people are wedded to a party position. Minds are open to us if we talk in terms of a better life for one's children.

Conscientious teachers and school administrators should be on our side, because they know much better than we do how bad the schools are being operated. Imagine a world where you pay no school taxes, and you choose a school for your child the ay you buy a new computer or a new car.

**Why not?**

You can download Harry Browne's *Why Government Doesn't Work* at [www.LibertyFree.com](http://www.LibertyFree.com).

You can read more of his articles at [www.HarryBrowne.org](http://www.HarryBrowne.org).

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## —Alliance for the— SEPARATION —of— SCHOOL & STATE

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We encourage families to leave "public schools."  
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# FREE THE SCHOOLS!

Harry  
Browne

## the worst step that's been taken on the American serfdom?

In my view, it was government to educate our children. Given children learn about the world from parent employees, working in a government system, it's no surprise that children grow up believing:

- That government is the fair and impartial arbiter, as opposed to private businessmen who act from self-interest;
- That government programs actually do what they promise to do;
- That the U.S. government liberated Europe and Asia in World War II;
- That Franklin Roosevelt saved America from the Great Depression;
- That without government health care, education, and welfare, we'd all die young from sickness, we wouldn't know how to read or write, and people would die from starvation in the streets; and
- That the U.S. government *is* America — that it's our patriotic duty to support whatever idiotic policies the government decides to embark on.

Education is a disaster. If you don't believe me, ask the politicians. Every election year they tell us how terrible the schools are — children not reading at their grade level, bullies running the schools, infrastructure falling down, drugs being sold in the schools, classes that are too large.

Of course, every politician has solutions in his pocket that will cure all these problems. But even after they impose their solutions, they keep coming back to tell us what terrible shape the schools are in.

## Politics

The first thing we need to understand about government schools is that they are *not* educational institutions. They are political agencies — to be run by whoever has the most political influence. And that will never be you nor I.

So it's no wonder that their policies are dictated by the teachers' unions, administrators' unions, and the utopian fantasies of the teachers' colleges. There are no rewards for local innovation, no opportunities to solve problems with new methods, no way to be compensated for superior performance.

Government schools wind up teaching many things that would horrify parents — if the parents were fully aware of what's being taught. Sexual techniques, drug use, death education, and sexual-abuse paranoia are just the tip of the iceberg. Students are taught to badger their parents to recycle and to practice other environmental pieties. If classic literature is ever studied, it's more likely to show how unenlightened and insensitive people once were, rather than to show students the complexity of life and the richness of the English language.

The time and resources are always available to teach children to conform to trendy thinking. But if parents complain that their children aren't learning enough math, science, history, and reading, the politicians respond that there isn't enough money — unless you vote for the next tax increase.

And why would we expect it to be otherwise? Under no competitive pressure, school administrators are free to indulge their wildest ideas for indoctrinating children to be better citizens of the New Order. In such a system, the best teachers in the world have no chance.

## Government vs. Private

The problem isn't poor teachers. The problem isn't lack of money or lack of parental interest.

The problem is that schools are run by the government.

We can see this easily just by comparing government education with the computer industry — one of the freest industries in America.

- Education is the province of politicians and bureaucrats who will never personally face the consequences of their own decisions, no matter how much they ruin your children's education. And so schooling gets more expensive year after year, even as it becomes less and less useful.
- Computers are the province of profit-seeking businessmen who must continually find new ways to please you by doing more with less — or else lose their own money and go out of business. And so computers become less expensive year after year, even as they become more and more useful.

Unlike computer companies, government schools are non-competitive monopoly organizations — backed up by all the guns of government. Vouchers won't make government schools more competitive, because

*government schools don't have to compete.* No matter how many students they lose to private schools or home-schooling, government schools still take their money by force — and they cite their worst failures to demand even more money.

## Role Reversals

Suppose that government had taken over the computer industry in its infancy (for the "public good," of course). It isn't hard to imagine what it would be like today:

- A "personal" computer would cost a few million dollars, and would be bigger than your residence.
- It would be able to add and subtract, but government officials could explain why it's a scientific impossibility for such a machine to multiply or divide.
- The cost of a computer would go up every year, and each new model would be less efficient than last year's.
- There would be organized pressure groups pushing for the government to produce DOS-based computers, and other groups pushing for graphical interfaces. There would be intense controversies over whether government-produced computers should be able to access religious sites on the Internet.

On the plus side, however, every computer would come with software that shows you how to put on a condom.

## On the Other Hand . . .

But suppose instead that the education industry were organized like the computer industry — made up of private, non-regulated companies that weren't subject to bond issues or political boards, but simply competed to get parents' patronage.

What would schools be like then? I think it's obvious:

- The cost of schooling would decline year after year, as companies found ways to produce good education more and more economically. And all the money you're paying now to government schools through property taxes would be yours to use as you see fit.
- Competition would cause schools to get better year after year. Your child might need to attend school only three or four hours a day to get a far better education than he gets now in government schools.