

December 31, 2007  
(Mijas Pueblo, Spain)

## *Sidebar*

### **EDUCATION: No Child Left Behind**

**I Why The Act?** The Act that passed during President Bush's first year in office is embattled. It is being held hostage by the teachers' unions. The Democrat aspirants, such as Clinton, Edwards, Obama, and Richardson attack it, but would not change its "core goals." Republicans, such as Giuliani, McCain, and Romney have expressed support. (The teachers' unions are not pro-Republicans.) The core goals are: (1) to educate every child (advanced or minority or disadvantaged or disabled), and (2) to make schools (read, *teachers*) proficient and accountable. (That tickles the unions.) That is basic in our mixed society. We really do not need the Act. Why? The states have the duty to accomplish those core goals. For example, in Miami-Dade County (my place of residence) we have a district-style School Board (large and extremely costly). Its duty is to oversee education (teachers and students) and to hold schools and teachers accountable. They also must deal with the powerful local teachers' union. (They oppose the Act. They are mostly Democrats—Bush haters.) Strong School Board members are needed. It seems to me that to educate is a simple matter: All you need are schools (clean properties), capable teachers (give them "tests"), and students that want to learn. Teachers must teach. They should have to pass Continue Education Exams (frequently). They should get "pay" incentives for advanced studies and for intelligent teaching—obtaining student results. The School Boards (in Miami-Dade members are subject to "elections") must hold schools and teachers accountable: Schools must produce results (minorities must be taught; disadvantaged must be taught, disabled must be taught). Obviously, advanced (gifted) students must be placed in *special* schools—those students must be encouraged to continue advanced and higher studies. The Act (why not the School Boards) must help schools become more proficient—teachers must teach or be reeducated or be fired for lack of ability.

**II 2007-2014.** This was the year that Congress was to renew the law—by 2014 every child had to be proficient in reading and math. (Why are they not proficient today?) Renewal encountered difficulties. Especially, from Bush haters—they place politics ahead of teaching (education). That is regrettable (punishable on Election Day). Voters should keep that in mind. Why was 2014 selected? Are our public schools so bad that they need a deadline or suffer accountability? I simply do not understand the methodology: Are our teachers not teaching children to read? What is happening with math? Perhaps, the Act should be critical of the methodology of teaching, and also subject School Boards to accountability. As I said before: Teachers must teach. And children must be dedicated to learning or suffer consequences. We need "unity of

purpose.” We need identity. I favor nationwide vivid school uniforms—red, white, and blue. I suggest that *the parents of every student* (in the public school system) pay a token monthly fee (obviously, with limited exceptions)—nothing should be free in a capitalist society. That fee (as small as \$1.00 or \$5.00 per month, per child) might force (cause) parental oversight—caring that their children be properly taught. I also favor the fundamental right of every student to pray on school grounds, if he or she wishes—aloud or silently. (Islam permits it!)

**III The Democrat Aspirants.** (By combating the Act—a negative brand in America—the Democrat aspirants attack also the President of the United States.) I have read that John Edwards criticized the Act as emphasizing testing over teaching. I seem to agree, since my choice is to force the local School Boards to emphasize intelligent teaching of *every* child. (Meaning: Immediately, improve teaching in poor areas or face federal sanctions). Bill Richardson would “scrap” the Act. Well, that is just a sad mistake, but political pandering to the strong teachers’ unions. Senators Clinton and Obama want a total overhaul the Act. Clinton favors accountability, and Obama likes the core goals. Neither has stated, with clarity, how to do it because they want to avoid controversy, such as favoring: (1) school uniforms, (2) payment of monthly fees, (3) testing of teachers, (4) firing incompetent teachers, etc. (all would cause the teachers’ unions to attack them). Those aspirants care about votes. Do they really care for Education: No Child Left Behind? Who do the teachers’ unions favor? Why do teachers’ unions oppose the Act? While the political debate rages on the students suffer. That must change. We need a strong education president. Who will step forward and save our children—the future of America?

**IV My New Year’s Hope To Teach Our Children.** Education should be high on the people’s socio-political election agenda: *Third* behind fixing Social Security and Medicare. Education is a social need. To tackle it “face to face” America needs a strong education president (one willing to also resolve the other two social needs). On the Democrat side, I was hoping that Obama or Edwards would step forward and change the Act—they have danced around it. Clinton, in a cold statement (befitting her programmed personality), would end the unfunded mandate. She is afraid of the battle. Her ’90s health insurance failure still haunts her. On the Republican side, I was hoping that Giuliani or McCain would courageously step forward—they have not done so yet. In my opinion, both should pick up the loose football and run to the end zone. They have experience, talent, and proven courage. A Giuliani-McCain education debate would make one or both unbeatable. (The Democrats fear McCain the most.) Who will educate our children? *My answer:* The School Boards have the responsibility to make schools (teachers) accountable.