

# COMMON CORE'S STRONG ARM TACTICS

The implementation of Common Core in New York State, one of the first states to adopt it, is an abject failure: academic achievement is regressing. Whatever merits it may have, its most vociferous proponents are out of line when they try to strong-arm Catholic schools into accepting it.

The Council for a Strong America (CSA) is pressuring Catholic educators to adopt Common Core. That wouldn't be so bad if it weren't doing so at the behest of its benefactor, the Gates Foundation, or if it weren't bashing the Cardinal Newman Society (CNS), a respectable Catholic education non-profit, for opposing Common Core. But the fact is that CSA has received \$1.7 million from the Gates Foundation, and its Florida office is hammering CNS for making "strident attacks" on the program. God forbid that Catholic schools exercise their independence by rejecting Common Core.

A little more than half of Catholic dioceses have accepted Common Core, and some are having misgivings about doing so. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops observes that the Catholic education community is split on its utility, noting that it was "developed for a public school audience," and "is of its nature incomplete as it pertains to the Catholic school."

Bill and Melinda Gates have spent upwards of \$200 million promoting Common Core, so a lot is at stake. But instead of having the results speak for themselves, those pushing Common Core—and there is no end to the lobbyists, activists, researchers, unions, think tanks, and politicians who have been paid to get on board—have from the beginning acted more like salesmen than educators. To wit: five respected scholars on the Validation Committee of Common Core refused to sign off

on the final version because it was being promoted as a done deal before the committee had a chance to provide its input noting certain deficiencies.

We have no interest in grading Common Core, but we do object to the tactics being used by its paid advocates to whip Catholics into line.