

# National columnists back Parental Choice in Education

## California vote gets national attention

George F. Will (*Chicago Sun Times*) and Stephen Chapman (*Chicago Tribune*) have come out strongly in favor of proposition 174. Pointing out that private schools often show better results than public schools while spending less money per pupil, Will maintains that as more students use vouchers to attend private schools, the state will save money. Will characterizes the frantic efforts of the NEA and the California Teachers' Association to defeat proposition 174 as spreading "hysteria" about the so-called evil of parental choice. Many of the people who oppose educational choice (for example the Clintons) send their own children to private schools.

Chapman urges Californians to reply "It's about time" to critics of proposition 174 who warn that its passage will sound the death knell of public education as we know it. Because proposition 174 is about rewarding success and punishing failure, Chapman agrees that it may pose a threat to many California schools which are unfamiliar with success. The alternative to proposition 174, says Chapman, "is to go on subsidizing failure, which is a sure way to get more of it."

## **Puerto Rico experiments with parental choice**

Meanwhile, on September 3, Puerto Rico's governor Rossello signed into law legislation creating an education voucher program. Framing the matter in terms of good schools versus bad schools, rather than private schools versus public schools, the governor said that families would now have the power to determine which was which.

According to *The San Juan Star*, the new law, called the

Special Scholarships and Free School Selection Program, gives students the option of choosing which public school to attend or to attend a private school. On the other hand, private school students are encouraged to attend public schools, and the law offers high school students a chance to take university-level courses. The vouchers are limited to \$1,500.00 for each child, with the estimated cost of attending private schools set at \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00 per student.