

## A Seminarian's Case against the Common Core Curriculum

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Seminary graduates and friends gathered in UTS Lecture Hall I Sunday night, May 24th, to hear about some issues of concern to alumni. For me, a foremost freedom issue facing the nation is the federal government's mandate for a "Common Core" curriculum for all schools. After teaching in a public high school in 2014, I discovered the inside story. That's why I presented a film about how the curriculum mandated for all public schools seriously diminishes educational excellence and is a threat to the freedom of states, schools and families. The presentation was related to our Founder's desire that seminarians use their education to "transform America" and further the aims of "faith, family and freedom." Our engagement with this issue partly can be traced to our work with Causa and American Freedom Coalition that emerged in the 1980's. More recently, in our Founder's speech at East Garden in September 2008, he shared with

members and leaders that "we must form a family values group...for faith, family and freedoms....If we do not, [as individuals] get involved in the political process, then we will decline."

We presented the film, "Building the Machine," (HaltCommoncore.com video) which is a brief exposé on this new nationalized curriculum and interviews both proponents and opponents of Common Core. As proponents of the Common Core state, they advocate "higher standards" and more rigorous testing procedures that will make all students accountable to these "one size fits all" standards nationwide. However, opponents of Common Core are concerned with the losses of freedom for states, schools, teachers, and parents to design their own curriculum and teaching methods for their specific constituency and with valuing each student as a whole person, rather than a product to be manipulated. In fact, opponents find confusion in standards and curriculum issues. In some cases, there is a "dumbing down" of academic and teaching standards in Math and English. In literature curriculums there is less exposure to classical literature and sophisticated literary criticism. In the AP U.S. History curriculum, content is skewed to politically-correct views with noticeable omissions of many topics such as the history of George Washington's legacy, the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, U.S. military history and the efforts of organizations dedicated to defeating Communism.



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Since Common Core came in under the offering of federal-government stimulus money to public schools in 2009, many state and school officials did not know the implications behind the curriculum, nor did they have adequate time to prudently evaluate it. They were given two months to decide whether to accept federal monies from "The Race to the Top" initiatives in 2009. Several states, Texas, Alaska, Nebraska and Virginia, immediately rejected it. Now, a number of states have repealed it and/or are in the process of repeal. Many educators and parents now realize that a federally nationalized curriculum comes with the loss of state- and school-district control of their curriculum and testing methodologies. Once Common Core is in place, administrators and

teachers have little control over their own classroom curriculum and testing. Many report that there are too many tests and that teachers are required to "teach to the test" almost every day. However, since this nationalized curriculum is a violation of the Tenth Amendment that protects schools from national government control, students can legally opt out of taking these extra tests.

The purpose of the **Stop Common Core** initiative is to get back the freedom of the states and schools to deal with their own needs and curriculum contents for their constituencies. Having taught in both high schools and colleges, I shared that we teachers know how to improve standards. We can set the bar higher when that is needed and teach for excellence. By having excellent teachers who care about the students, we can also value our student as a whole person. Additionally we need to provide a high-school diploma for students with different needs and interests, whether they are college-prep, vocational-tech-oriented or otherwise. Under Common Core which devalues individualized learning and creative curriculum needs, it is predicted that more students will not graduate from high schools and even more students will not be ready for high-level college courses. Teachers who stay in the school system will have to be compliant in order to keep their jobs. Additionally, as the film has documented, the new college SAT board President, David Coleman, is a proponent of Common Core. He has implemented new changes in the SAT to make it compliant with Common Core standards. That means that those in private schools or homeschooling will also be affected. They will also have to be compliant with this content in order to pass the SAT with proper scores.

In addition to curriculum issues, compliance with Common Core requires schools to report to the government extensive data on students' profiles, including family history, health records, religious and political affiliations, school behavior records, job and career histories, etc. These requirements are a serious invasion of privacy. So, the message of the film and or our talk was: "Wake up America! Schools, teachers and parents must take a stand for our educational systems in order to Save America!"

A more in-depth research study of the legal documentation behind the dubious inception of this nationalized Common Core curriculum and the confused standards and issues of content can be found in Dr. Peg Luksik's presentations on DVD found on [nyunited4kids.com](http://nyunited4kids.com) or [TruthinAmericanEducation.com](http://TruthinAmericanEducation.com).



*Dr. David S.C. Kim celebrates the Drew Ph.D. for Dr. Donna Ferrantello*