

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

SDUC - Vouchers
Charter Schools

Breazell's Heresy

A funny thing happened on the way to Willie Breazell's demise. As we reported earlier, Mr. Breazell found himself sacked as head of the NAACP's Colorado Springs chapter after he wrote a column in favor of school choice. But Mr. Breazell did not disappear. At a time when Presidential candidates Bill Bradley and Al Gore have both sworn eternal opposition to vouchers, his case has helped ignite a debate among African-Americans about just how well the Democratic Party and liberal groups such as the NAACP really do represent their interests these days.

Since his resignation last month, Mr. Breazell says he's heard from a number of people who "wonder why too many black and Hispanic leaders don't trust parents to make good decisions for their own children." Former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, Mr. Breazell notes, has himself come out for school choice as well, recently telling an NAACP dinner that "if you're in an underachieving school, then you have a right to seek a voucher to go to a school where you can be guaranteed some level of achievement." And vouchers aren't the only problem. As we report above, the Justice Department has been harassing charter schools whose only crime appears to be that they might actually improve educational opportunities for minority students.

This may help explain the re-thinking we're seeing at the Urban League, which has also softened its opposition to choice. Indeed, the League's Greater Miami chapter now opposes a lawsuit filed by the Florida branch of the NAACP against the state's new voucher program. Hugh Price, the Urban League's president, recently warned public educators not to take the support of black parents for granted. Mr. Price suggested that "we can use public support for vouchers to flog teachers unions and public schools" to improve schools.

As for Mr. Breazell, next month he will lead a delegation of Colorado parents to Milwaukee for a firsthand look



Willie Breazell
*Cross the NAACP
on school choice*

at the success of that city's nine-year-old school choice program. Among the people he hopes to meet is Mikel Holt, editor of the Milwaukee Community Journal, Wisconsin's largest black newspaper. In "Not Yet Free at Last," just released by the Institute for Contemporary Studies, Mr. Holt argues that school choice has become the new civil rights movement. Though Mr. Holt is no conservative, the accusations that many traditional civil-rights groups no longer serve the real concerns of minority parents are bound to be most discomfiting to liberals, black as well as white.

Indeed, "Not Yet Free At Last" accuses the American Left of "covertly pulling the strings" of many civil rights groups and being "quick to chastise and slander any black leader who veers from the party line." Mr. Holt recounts a conversation he had with Roger Quindel, a leftist Milwaukee County supervisor. "It's obvious you're confused, and you apparently don't know what you're involved in," Mr. Holt quotes Mr. Quindel as telling him. "You need to come aboard; we know what's best for y'all."

"History has shown," Mr. Holt writes, "that when a black organization comes under the philosophical control of whites, the black voice is muted or misinterpreted." The "ultimate example of this double-bind," he says, "is the NAACP's recent association with the People for the American Way, an organization founded by Norman Lear and other Hollywood players that espouses the liberal/missionary agenda." Though People for the American Way intervened on the side of teachers unions this year in Milwaukee's school board election, local voters instead overwhelmingly elected a pro-school choice majority.

Milwaukee's experience shows that after choice is successfully tried out in one school district, it soon becomes accepted and supported by parents. That's why the kind of paternalistic groups that Mr. Holt indicts in his book—those like the NAACP whose leadership has no place for the Willie Breazells of America—vigorously oppose any experiment that would expand vouchers. The good news is that increasingly these opponents of choice are finding themselves discredited by the very people whose interests they claim to champion.



BOWDEN AIMING FOR WIN NO. 300

FLORIDA STATE COACH WILL HAVE TO BEAT HIS SON, CLEMSON'S HEAD COACH, TO DO IT, IN FOCUS, 3C

WITH QUICK WIN, YANKES FORCED TO PLAY... THE WAITING GAME 4C

ibby Bowden: For No. 1 Semifinal, national title is at stake, 3C

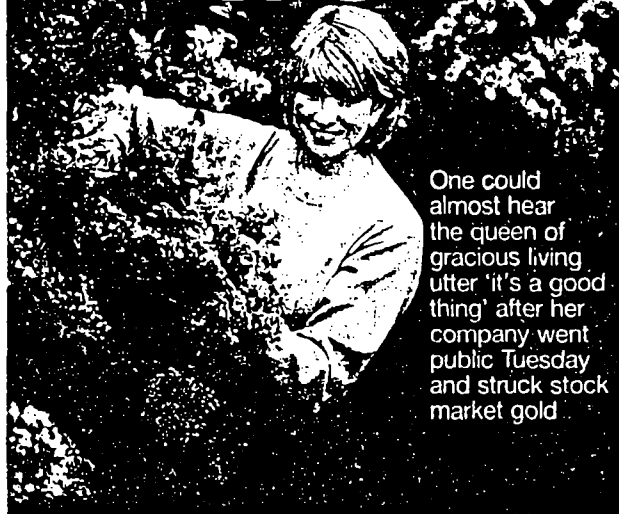
ur dream within reach for Casey Martin
sabled golfer Casey Martin successfully sued the PGA for the right to ride a cart in competition. With a decent showing in this week's Nike Tour Championship, he'll finally earn a Tour card he's so doggedly fought for. Cover Story, 1C



NOTE IN THE USA... FIRST IN DAILY READERS

AMERICA'S NEWEST BILLIONAIRE

Living well



One could almost hear the queen of gracious living utter 'it's a good thing' after her company went public Tuesday and struck stock market gold

Photo by Kenneth Entenmann. Photo illustration by Kevin Kautz, USA TODAY

Martha Stewart's ingredients for success

Publishing
Two magazines, Martha Stewart Living and Martha Stewart Weddings, that together reach about 9.9 million readers a month
27 how-to books, which have sold 8.5 million copies
Syndicated newspaper column reaching 43 million readers a week

TV/radio
Weekly segment on CBS This Morning and Emmy Award-winning Martha Stewart Living TV program that airs six episodes a week on affiliates of the four major networks
From Martha's Kitchen, a cable TV program
Radio show that airs five days a week on 270 stations and reaches about 1.5 million listeners a week

Cyberpace
www.marthastewart.com
Online Martha by Mail store with more than 750 products

Merchandising
Retail partnerships with firms such as Kmart and Sears
Direct-mail catalog, Martha by Mail, that offers 400 products per catalog

By Gary Strauss
USA TODAY

Martha Stewart, the queen of lifestyle advice, was crowned one of the world's wealthiest women on Tuesday.

At least on paper. Her huge stake in Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia is worth about \$1.2 billion after Tuesday's initial public stock offering. Priced at \$18, the stock quickly soared to \$52 before profit-taking cut it to \$35.

The 97% gain propelled Stewart into the wealth elite. Her personal net worth was estimated at \$250 million before the IPO. She's now one of the richest female self-made entrepreneurs, easily eclipsing television talk show host Oprah Winfrey.

"It feels great," said a euphoric Stewart, who dashed from the New York Stock Exchange after ringing the opening bell to television interviews before being inundated with scores of telephone calls from reporters, friends and well-wishers. "It really shows that people aren't just happy with our products but the company as well."

One almost expected Stewart to utter "It's a good thing," a motto familiar to millions of her avid followers. Stewart's career as an advice maven and lifestyle guru began nearly 20 years ago, after she abandoned a successful career as a stockbroker to open a catering business and later serve as editor of House Beautiful. Stewart's 1982 book Entertaining was the first of many how-to books on gracious living, hosting, cooking and gardening. Since then, Stewart has aggressively turned herself into a media baron with Martha Stewart Living magazine, television and radio shows, a syndicated newspaper column and in-



Opening bell: Stewart at the New York Stock Exchange Tuesday

Please see COVER STORY next page

SUZANNE FARRELL'S BOLD NEW LEAP 1D

LEGEND OF BALLET UNVEILS OWN COMPANY

HITTING WALL STREET LIKE A BODY SLAM: WWF GOES PUBLIC 3B



Farrell: Tour includes historic 'Meditation'

FBI: Militias a threat at millennium

By Kevin Johnson
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — With some extremists attaching apocalyptic significance to the new millennium, the FBI is quietly warning local police about possible threats posed by anti-government militias and hate organizations.

The campaign includes the national distribution of a report titled Project Megiddo in which federal authorities assess threats posed by hate groups and explain the significance of biblical references the groups use to discuss Y2K. The project, which is named for an ancient battleground in Israel associated with Armageddon, will be the centerpiece of an FBI seminar this month before the International Association of Chiefs of Police in Charlotte, N.C.

Unlike the rest of the meeting, the seminar will be closed to the public, a sign of how sensitive the subject of militias has become.

One workshop is titled "Millennium, militias, and mayhem: what to expect in the coming year."

A senior government official said the 40-page report was meant to heighten awareness among local police departments to the possibility that militias might use the new millennium as an opportunity to initiate acts of violence or general disruption.

The FBI has urged police to be alert to changes in behavior of known militias and cult groups and to the possible stockpiling of weapons.

Anti-government groups, particularly the loose network of militias, drew considerable attention after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, which killed 168 people.

Convicted terrorist Timothy McVeigh and his accomplice, Terry Nichols, shared the anti-government views of militia organizations, and Nichols attended militia meetings.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the militia movement reached its peak in 1996, when there were 858 such organizations across the country. By last year, there were 435.

What concerns officials now, however, is the possibility that extreme members of militias might undertake missions of their own.

The cite as an example Buford Furrow, who belonged to a white supremacist group and is accused of killing a mail carrier and shooting six people at a Jewish community center in Los Angeles this summer.

E-mail use may force Postal Service cuts

By Mike Salder
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Competition from online transactions could threaten the U.S. Postal Service's ability to provide universal service, according to government research to be released at a congressional hearing Thursday.

More bills are being sent and paid electronically over the Internet. Such e-payment competition, as well as that from mail parcel companies, is expected to cause an "unprecedented" drop in first-class mail beginning in 2003.

A copy of the Government Accounting Office findings was obtained by USA TODAY.

The market shift could cost the Postal Service \$17 billion in revenue over the next decade, it might have to close some of its 32,000 post offices or reduce hours. Other possibilities: higher rates with premium charges for remote destinations.

"The GAO's testimony paints a pretty disturbing picture. They even describe it as an end of an era for the Postal Service," says Rep. John McHugh, R-N.Y., chairman of the subcommittee expected to hear the testimony Thursday.

The Postal Service is expected to have record revenue of just more than \$62 billion for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. Net income is expected to be about \$200 million.

First-class mail volume is predicted to peak in 2002 and then decline at an annual rate of 2.5% from 2003 to 2008.

Consumer bills, statements and payments sent by "snail mail" will drop as electronic payments rise. Similarly, more advertisers will take their business to the Net.

Priority Mail and Parcel Post deliveries could increase as "consumers embrace electronic commerce and more packages are shipped by Internet retailers," the testimony says. But the overall declining revenue could "create financial and performance challenges and make it difficult to maintain service."

Postmaster General William J. Henderson's office declined comment on the testimony.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1999

NEWSLINE

A QUICK READ ON THE NEWS
WALL STREET: Dow Jones Industrial average jumps 88.65 points to 10,204.93; Nasdaq index slips 0.97 points to 2,683.18; 30-year Treasury bond yield rises to 6.35%. 1, 4B.
USA TODAY: Internet 100 climbs 1.84 points to 98.18. 4B.
Japan's Nikkei: average is up 249 points to 17,503 midway; yen is 105.28 per dollar. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index is up 248 points to 12,382 early today.

STARR REBUTTAL: Attacks on new Whitewater independent counsel deserve "sharp and immediate condemnation," says Ken Starr, left, the man who formerly held the job. 2A.
► Conversation with Starr. 19A.



Starr: Job was 'unparalleled challenge.'

SCHOOL SHOOTING: Columbine High shooting victims' families and parents of one killer say they plan to sue county sheriff, the school district or both. 3A.

NEW COIN: U.S. Mint unveils dollar coin today featuring portrait of Sacagawea, Indian guide to explorers Lewis and Clark. 1A.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE: Senate fails to get votes to bring action on bills to rewrite political fundraising rules, effectively shelving the issue for this year. 8A.

BUDGET TALKS: GOP congressional leaders, President Clinton say meeting to end stalemate is productive. 8A.

INDONESIA: Before legislature votes for new leader, President B.J. Habibie withdraws his candidacy. 13A.

TODAY'S DEBATE: Side-impact air bags. In USA TODAY's opinion, "National Highway Traffic Safety Administration acknowledges potential risk of side air bags." 18A.
► "A consumer advisory is not enough," says Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen. 18A.

MONEY: Salvation Army criticized for using telemarketers who pry and solicit contributions. 1B.
► Nissan will soon offer clean-air car. 1B.

SPORTS: Body piercing is nothing new. But now the NCAA is getting involved. College Extra. 12C.

LIFE: Elementary school teachers will soon face tougher licensing exams on subjects and classroom practices. 1D.
► Female engineers envisioning change. Tech Extra. 7D.

COMING FRIDAY



Test Drive

Volvo unveils a new little sedan, left, and wagon priced low to lure young buyers. But not without a few tradeoffs.

Written by John O. Buckley

Inside USA TODAY



Crossword 11D
Editorial/Opinion 1B-19D
Lotteries 11D
Marketplace Today 10-11D
State-by-state 9A
Stocks 4-6, 9-11B

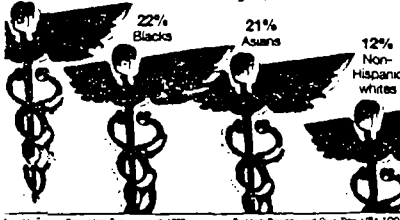
©COPYRIGHT 1999 USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co., Inc.
Subscriptions, customer service: 1-800-USA-0001

USA SNAPSHOTS®

Look at statistics that shape the nation

Minorities are most uninsured

More than one-third of Hispanic Americans have no health insurance, the latest Census Bureau survey shows. Percentage of racial and ethnic groups who are uninsured:



Source: Census Population Survey, March 1998. By Mike Pearson and Quan Tran, USA TODAY

Rescued South Pole doctor says her 'spirit is strong'

Cancer is now confirmed; friends say she continued treating others while awaiting airlift

By Jack Williams
USA TODAY

The doctor who was flown out of Antarctica after she found a lump in her breast confirmed Tuesday that she does have breast cancer and will undergo treatment.

In an e-mail statement to the National Science Foundation, which runs the South Pole research station where she was working, Jerri Nielsen thanked her colleagues and the public for "their encouragement and best wishes during my ordeal." "It's good to be back with my family and friends in the United States," she said from an undisclosed location. "I am grate-

ful for the many people who have helped make my homecoming possible."

Nielsen, 47, of Youngstown, Ohio, discovered the lump in her breast in June but could not leave Antarctica until last Saturday when temperatures rose to minus 38 degrees, high enough for a plane to land.

The moment of rescue was dramatic and emotional as a C-130 arrived in the severe South Pole weather.

"We were shocked when without warning we heard the distinct sound of props in reverse, a roar much louder than the blowing wind," recalled Joel Michalski, a scientist at the pole, in an e-mail report and



Nielsen: Found lump in breast

weekly Internet report from the pole.

"Immediately, everyone realized the plane had landed. We started cheering, clapping and

throwing our hands in the air!"

Colleagues describe Nielsen as calm and resolute during the icy months before the rescue. Nielsen "maintained a sense of normalcy and energy," Michalski said.

Nielsen treated herself with medical supplies dropped to her in July. She began chemotherapy, performed her own biopsy and e-mailed photographs of slide samples of the tumor to doctors in the USA.

At the same time, "people who needed medical attention still felt comfortable," Michalski wrote. "She treated anyone's problems as if it were the most important issue of the moment." Research team mem-

bers who spend the polar winter in Antarctica "share deep, emotionally committed friendships," Michalski added.

"Now we hope the emotional support which we provided to Dr. Nielsen and each other will be followed by excellent and successful medical treatment for Dr. Nielsen."

In her statement Tuesday, Nielsen once again requested privacy. "The diagnosis of breast cancer has been confirmed and I will undergo treatment," she said.

"My spirit is strong." More information is available on the Web at <http://www.usatoday.com/weather/polelife.htm>

Now earn miles faster than ever before at over 1,600 hotels worldwide.

MARriott REWARDS

DOC -
Joules

WHY VOUCHERS WON'T WORK

May 17, 1999

All parents should have high-quality choices for the education of their children. A wide variety of options can help all students achieve to high standards and can promote family involvement in education. However, private school vouchers – which spend taxpayer dollars without improving the public schools – are not part of any constructive school choice proposal. **At a time when the public is demanding better schools, more accountability and higher standards for all students, voucher programs would take public education in the opposite direction.**

- **Vouchers undermine public education.** Vouchers offer a quick fix for a few students without helping to improve the public schools that serve the vast majority of America's students. Public schools serve about 46 million students today, while private schools serve only 6 million students. Our nation's taxpayers cannot afford to pay private school tuition for all public school students, and private schools do not have the capacity to serve all students. According to a California study, less than one percent of the public school students in that state could expect to find spaces in existing private schools. [Corwin and Dianda, "What Can We Really Expect from Large-Scale Voucher Programs," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 1993.] Any serious attempt to improve educational options for all students must work through the public schools.

Vouchers siphon scarce resources from the public schools, while the demands on the public schools are constantly increasing; enrollments are rising and more students are coming to school each year with serious educational disadvantages including poverty, limited English proficiency, learning disabilities, and non-traditional family situations. For example, the voucher program in Milwaukee cost the public school district \$22 million in taxpayer dollars this year.

Public schools are a fundamental institution in our democracy, and they are one of the only remaining sources of community in our increasingly individualistic society. Public schools do not just serve the public, they create the public by teaching children important lessons about both the commonality and diversity of American culture. The "common school" concept upon which our public school system is built has made quality public education and hard work the open door to American success and good citizenship and the American way to achievement and freedom.

- **Private Schools are not accountable to the public.** The lack of public accountability has already caused problems in two publicly funded voucher programs. **Cleveland's voucher program ran 41 percent over budget last year, and it was accused of mispending \$1.9 million state tax dollars** – the majority of these funds were used to pay for taxis instead of school buses to transport children to school. [Plain Dealer, 3/28/98]

In Milwaukee, three voucher schools closed in the middle of the 1995-96 school year amidst controversies over fraud and mismanagement. This past school year—the first in which religious schools were allowed to participate in the Milwaukee voucher program—as many as one-third of the voucher schools either failed to submit random selection plans at all, or filed plans that violated or appeared to violate the random selection guidelines, including some that discriminated on the basis of religion, academic background, or other factors. [People for the American Way, *Milwaukee Religious School Flout State Voucher Law*, 5/6/99].

- **There is no clear evidence that vouchers will improve student achievement.** The second year study of the Cleveland voucher program found no significant differences between the achievement of voucher students and their public school counterparts in reading, mathematics, social studies or the full battery, after controlling for background characteristics including prior achievement. Further, voucher students who attended newly created private schools scored significantly lower than their public school counterparts. [Metcalf, *Evaluation of the Cleveland Scholarship Program: Second Year Report*, 1998]

A recent study of the Milwaukee School Choice Program by Cecilia Rouse of Princeton University, found that **students in public schools with small class sizes and additional state funding experienced significantly faster reading score gains than students who attended other public schools or private schools through the program.** Students in public schools with small class sizes and additional state funding had the same test score gains in math as students who attended private schools through the program. [Rouse, *Schools and Student Achievement: More Evidence from the Milwaukee Parental Choice program*, 1998.]

Much of the difference in performance between public and private schools can be explained by the family background of the students. Students in private church-related schools are at least two-thirds more likely to come from high-income families (top fifth of families) than students in public schools. [Current Population Survey, 1994] Some private school administrators have acknowledged that selective admissions policies contribute to their success. *“We’ve learned that if you don’t have control over admissions, you don’t have control over your product,”* said John Holmes, director of government affairs for the 3,500-member Association of Christian Schools International. [Wall Street Journal, 1/26/99]

- **Private schools, not parents, are the ones who do the choosing.** Private schools often send back to the public schools the students who are most difficult to educate – students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, or discipline problems. For example, **forty percent of children eligible for vouchers through the Milwaukee program were rejected for admission by all 102 participating private schools, and 80 percent of all voucher students attended just three private schools.** [Worker’s World, 12/03/99]

In a 1998 survey of private schools in 22 urban areas nationwide, only 15 to 31 percent of private schools reported that they would participate in a voucher program if they were required to accept students with special needs such as learning disabilities, limited English proficiency or low achievement. [U.S. Department of Education, 1998]

- **Vouchers do not benefit the students who need the most help.** The two publicly funded voucher programs in the U.S. both provide vouchers to a number of students who were already attending private schools. In Milwaukee, more than one-third of the students who receive vouchers – 2,250 of the 6,200 students – attended private school before they joined the voucher program. [Houston Chronicle, 3/28/99] More than 1,000 of the 4,000 students who receive vouchers through Cleveland’s program previously attended private schools. In addition, Cleveland’s voucher program has no income cap for eligibility; some 30 families with yearly incomes between \$50,000 and \$90,000 have received vouchers. [EdWeek, 1/20/99]

Voucher programs often cover only part of the cost of private school tuition, requiring families to make a substantial contribution in order to benefit from vouchers. As many as 46 percent of students dropped out of the Milwaukee voucher program in the first year, and 28 percent dropped out in the fifth year, reporting that the \$3,600 voucher was not sufficient to cover hidden costs such as registration fees, books, uniforms and transportation.

Even when restricted to low-income families, voucher programs skim the students with the most advantaged backgrounds relative to others who are eligible – students who previously attended private schools, students with higher incomes, and students with more highly educated parents. A study of the privately funded voucher program in San Antonio reported that mothers of low-income voucher students were three times more likely to have had some college education than mothers of comparable public school students (55% vs. 19%). [Martinez, *The Consequences of School Choice: Who Leaves and Who Stays in the Inner City*, 1995]

- **Private schools would have to compromise their independence to receive public funds.** Receiving taxpayer dollars carries with it certain responsibilities and obligations, and private schools may not be willing to accept the oversight that is necessary to ensure that federal funding is not being misspent. For example, **64 private schools in Miami have signed a letter stating that they will not participate in the recently passed state-wide voucher program,** because they do not want to sacrifice their independence. [Miami

Common private school practices such as selective admissions and religious education could be restricted under privately funded voucher programs. About 90 percent of the nation's 26,000 private schools claim a religious identity, and Joseph McTighe of the Council of American Private Education stated, "*Many religious classrooms – Catholic, Protestant and Jewish – are designed to marry the sacred and the secular,*" and, "*these schools don't want to compromise the purpose for which they exist.*" [Wall Street Journal, 1/26/99]

A 1998 survey of private schools in 22 urban areas nationwide found that **86 percent of religious schools surveyed would not participate in a voucher program that allowed exceptions from religious instruction or activities**, and one-third to one-half would not participate if they had to accept randomly assigned transfer students from the public schools. [U.S. Department of Education, 1998]

Despite the 760 Federal programs dealing with education, educational achievement has stagnated over the past 20 years. Why create even more education programs?

- The number "760" has little merit in any discussion about the effectiveness of the Federal role in education. The vast majority of the programs included in this figure are programs created for narrow, specific purposes -- such as boating safety or health manpower -- completely unrelated to improving our Nation's overall education system.
- Virtually every budget submitted by President Clinton has included significant numbers of recommended program eliminations and consolidations, and we have succeeded in eliminating more than 60 programs over the past six years.
- However, the President's new initiatives are necessary to respond to critical national priorities and needs such as literacy, accountability, school construction, and access to college.

Cleveland Voucher Program Is Blocked at Start of School

By PAM BELLUCK

CHICAGO, Aug. 24 — One day before the start of the school year in Cleveland, a Federal judge issued an injunction today blocking the city's four-year-old voucher program, preventing several thousand children from attending private and parochial schools at taxpayer expense.

In his decision, Judge Solomon Oliver Jr. of Federal District Court in Cleveland said there was probable cause to believe that the school voucher program violated the constitutional separation of church and state. Noting that the vast majority of the private schools in the program were religious schools, the judge declared that "the Cleveland program has the primary effect of advancing religion."

In his decision today, Judge Oliver said he was blocking the voucher program until he had time to consider a lawsuit challenging its constitutionality, but he also said there was "no substantial possibility" that he would ultimately rule in favor of the program.

The decision is expected to be closely watched around the country as cities, including New York, face calls from advocates of school choice to use public money to send children to private schools.

The decision could also influence a challenge in Florida courts to the nation's first statewide voucher program, which began this year. Some of the same plaintiffs who sued to block Cleveland's program are involved in that challenge.

Judge Oliver's decision is only the second time a Federal court has ruled on the issue of vouchers, legal experts said. The first was a ruling earlier this year that denied a request by three families in Maine to use public money for tuition at a Roman Catholic School.

The Cleveland decision is considered especially significant because it halts a program that had already been under way for years and was the nation's first program to allow vouchers to be used for religious schools.

One other city, Milwaukee, began its voucher program in 1990, but did not allow religious schools to participate until after Cleveland did. The Milwaukee program was upheld by the Wisconsin Supreme Court last year, and the United States Supreme Court refused to hear appeals of that decision.

"We see this as a tremendous victory," said Joseph L. Conn, a spokesman for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, part of a coalition of civil liberties and public education organizations that sued to block the Cleveland program. "Basically, this brings the voucher train to a screeching halt," he added.

Clint Bolick, the litigation director for the Institute for Justice, which argued for the voucher program, called the decision "an outrageous

VOUCHERS RANK SECOND TO AID IN POLL

Americans prefer letting government improve and strengthen public schools rather than giving parents tuition vouchers for private schools, a poll shows. Education, page A24.

abuse of judicial power."

He said his organization had already filed an appeal, and hoped to have the injunction lifted on Wednesday.

"Normally, you would see an injunction like this come with a program that had not yet started," Mr. Bolick said. "Literally, on the eve of the fourth year of this program, the court has seen fit to turn the world upside down."

With about 4,000 children expecting to start classes at 56 private and parochial schools, Judge Oliver said he recognized that his ruling would be disruptive. But he added that allowing the voucher program to continue until he had made his final decision could "cause an even greater harm to the children by setting them up for greater disruption at a later time."

The Cleveland program, created by the Ohio Legislature in 1995, pays up to \$2,500 in tuition costs for children in low-income families. For the 1999-2000 school year, about 5 percent of the 77,000 children in Cleveland's public schools were signed up

Finding probable cause of violating the separation of church and state.

for the voucher program.

William Wendling, a spokesman for the Cleveland Municipal School District, said that all the children would be welcome but that "clearly, it is going to be a scramble to find teachers and facilities and transportation for all of these students."

Mr. Wendling said the voucher students would not start school on Wednesday with the rest of the district's schoolchildren because it would take a few days to make arrangements and decide how many of the 4,000 students would stay in their private schools anyway.

Christine Sula, who sends three of her children, ages 6, 8 and 10, to Our Lady of Good Counsel School under the voucher program, found out about the ruling as she was painting hopscotch squares on the school's playground.

"I think it's discrimination against people of faith and I think the state has the ability to fund public schools and help with private schools at the same time," said Mrs. Sula, who added that her husband, a guard at the county jail, planned to work double shifts to continue sending her children to the Catholic school. "It's going to hurt a lot financially, but we're just going to have to bite the bullet," she said.

EDUC -

Vouchers

Mr. Bolick said his organization would try to drum up private donations to pay tuition costs for those in the voucher program.

The Cleveland program was challenged in court almost immediately after it began four years ago, and the legal battle worked its way to the Ohio Supreme Court. That court ruled in May that the program was unconstitutional because it was created as an amendment to the state budget rather than in a separate piece of legislation. But the court also said the program did not violate the separation of church and state, leaving the door open for state legislators to revive it.

Last month the Legislature did so, with a separate education bill, prompting opponents of the voucher program to file the lawsuit that Judge Oliver ruled on Tuesday.

Over the years, the Cleveland program has been buffeted by financial and academic problems. Most recently, state education officials recommended removing three schools from the program after a newspaper detailed potentially unsafe conditions and a predominantly unlicensed staff at one of the private schools.

Voucher opponents had seized on such flaws to claim the program did not work.

"The Cleveland voucher program was bad law, bad policy, bad education for the kids," Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said today. "Now we can make sure the money will be in the public schools, where there is a real school improvement effort going on."

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 1999

Schools Rank First As Spending Priority

Citizen support for education spending has risen over 25 years, to rank first on a list of national spending priorities, according to the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

In 1973, when the center began its general population surveys, drugs and crime ranked highest, with education sixth, when people were asked whether the country was spending too much, too little or the right amount. The next-ranking spending priorities last year were health, the environment, crime and drugs.

In 1972, the proportion of families with children under 18 was 55 percent; in 1998, it was 38 percent, noted the 1998 report, released last week.

Whether one's view of schools is liberal or conservative, based on improving job prospects or on raising standards, school spending "is a tool that everyone can navigate even though they use the tool in different ways," Tom W. Smith, director of the survey, said in an interview.

He said that unlike support for welfare spending, which rises or falls with the economy, in education spending, "the pattern of increase we've seen indicates that this is not something tied to the business cycle."

Education appears to represent a new American spending priority, important not just for its own sake but as essential to the American labor force, Dr. Smith said.

Aid Preferred To Vouchers In New Survey

By LYNETTE HOLLOWAY

An overwhelming majority of Americans prefer allowing government to improve and strengthen public schools rather than giving parents tuition vouchers for private or church-sponsored schools, according to a poll released yesterday.

The poll, conducted this summer by the Gallup Organization for Phi Delta Kappa, a professional association of educators, found that 70 percent of respondents favored the government's improving public schools, while 28 percent preferred vouchers. The poll has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points.

But the poll also suggested that the very word "vouchers" is politically loaded. When asked specifically about vouchers to pay for all of the tuition, 47 percent of respondents were in favor and 48 were opposed. Last year, 48 percent were in favor and 46 percent were opposed.

It was the second time since the poll began addressing the issue in 1993 that "vouchers" was introduced into the questions to reflect the growing trend of using government-issued notes to pay for tuition at private or church-sponsored schools. The first time was last year.

The use of vouchers has inspired considerable political and legal controversy, especially in church-related schools.

Some critics argue that issuing vouchers for religious schools violates the separation of church and state. Proponents say public schools will benefit from the competition, which will also serve poor students by enabling them to attend schools with higher standards.

A small majority of Americans continues to favor allowing parents to send their children to any public, private or church-related school if government pays all or part of the tuition. Fifty-one percent of respondents favored the voucher concept and 47 percent opposed it.

The latter findings represent a slight increase in opposition to vouchers over last year, when 51 percent were in favor and 45 percent were opposed. The figures represent a reversal of opinion since 1996, when 43 percent favored vouchers and 54 percent opposed them. In 1997 the results were almost evenly divided.

The poll also found divisions among Americans on the issue of tuition tax credits. The public more strongly supports — by 57 percent to 47 percent — partial tuition credits over full tuition tax credits.

The public showed strong support for providing public school services to children who are schooled at home. Ninety-two percent favored providing special education services; 80 percent supported allowing home-schooling teachers to take part in public school teacher development activities; 74 percent supported allowing home-schooled students to participate in public school extracurricular activities. But most expressed a strong desire to see the students adhere to the same standards as public school students.

School Board Retracts Ruling On Jewish Star

ATLANTA, Aug. 24 (Reuters) — A Mississippi school board has reversed a decision that prevented a Jewish boy from wearing a Star of David pendant because the six-pointed star is sometimes used as a gang symbol.

"When we made the decision last week, it was based on information from the security officers only," the Harrison County School Board president, Randy Williams, said after Monday's vote. "But we realized that it infringed on freedom of religious expression, and that freedom supercedes the safety issue."

The executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Mississippi, David Ingebretsen, said the boy, Ryan Green, 15, of Gulfport, went to school today wearing his Star of David.

Ryan, the son of a Jewish father and a Christian mother, has been reared in both faiths. Over the summer, the boy's paternal grandmother gave him the pendant and explained its meaning as a symbol of his Jewish heritage.

When Ryan was ordered to remove the star two weeks ago at the start of the semester, his father, Tom Green, took the matter up with the school board at its meeting last week, and the board ruled that the Star of David could be mistaken for a gang emblem.

School policy forbids the wearing of gang emblems, and the board said law-enforcement officials had advised them that a Mississippi group known as the Black Gangster Disciples used a nearly identical six-pointed star as its symbol.

On Friday, the A.C.L.U. filed a civil suit in Federal District Court in Biloxi, arguing that Ryan had a right under the First Amendment to wear the pendant as a symbol of his faith.

Mr. Ingebretsen said the civil liberties group had not yet decided whether to drop its lawsuit.

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 1999