

# States should assess teachers' mental fitness

Those charged with educating our children require greater scrutiny



*Illustration on the mental fitness of teachers by Alexander Hunter/The Washington Times more >*

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COMMENTARY

By Tom Basile -- Friday, February 10, 2023

## OPINION:

A man wearing oversized prosthetic breasts and a wig. A woman who disclaims any gender and makes children pledge allegiance to a trans pride flag. Another man who thinks he's a woman and forces kids to use his preferred pronouns. A member of antifa who works to take kids and "turn them into revolutionaries."

Flamboyant makeup, cross dressing, multi-colored hair, anxiety and anger. Classrooms plastered with Black Lives Matter and sexuality-related paraphernalia. Every day, American schoolteachers are being exposed for their radical and disturbing behaviors. It goes beyond woke. It's destructive.

It's time states establish mental health, character and fitness standards for those charged with educating America's next generation. We cannot expect to sustain the intellectual attainment and emotional growth of our young when our kids are exposed to mentally unstable teachers.

In 2020, a federal appeals court in *Lopez-Lopez v. Robinson School et al.* upheld that a school district may compel a teacher who exhibits signs of mental illness to be removed

from the classroom and evaluated. This opens the door for broader policies to ensure our children are not placed under the control or influence of those with serious mental health issues or who exhibit behavior that cuts against the learning environment.

Many government and private sector workers must submit to psychological evaluations before being hired. Many are monitored to ensure their mental health is not compromised in a way that would hinder their ability to perform their jobs or endanger others. Law enforcement officers, members of the military, nuclear engineers, airline pilots, lawyers, doctors and other professions subject their members to some measure of mental health or character examination.

Ridiculously, it is not common practice for those who have access to and responsibility for the education of our children to be screened for behaviors that could do damage to young people.

States need to set standards of behavior to prevent those with radical agendas and ideologies from access to our children as well.

Socialists, communists, Marxists, racists and members of

extremist groups should be evaluated according to a set of criteria prior to employment and on a continual basis after hiring.

Radicalism, intolerance and lack of intellectual diversity have long been symptoms of higher education in this country. But now that behavior is infecting elementary and secondary schools.

This week, the Virginia House of Delegates passed Sage's law, a bill that requires school employees to notify parents if a student is self-identifying as "a gender different from the student's biological sex," and clarifies that treating children based on their sex at birth does not constitute abuse or neglect. All 48 Democrats voted against it.

The notion that this needs to happen or that principals need to be required to disclose National Merit Scholarship Awards to recipients is more proof that we've left normal for crazy. These steps in Virginia should be only the beginning.

Of course, the powerful teachers unions in states such as New York and California will never allow reforms to prevent children from being exposed to the mentally ill. They are too wedded to their leftist cultural agenda, which has been

rapidly adopted by the education establishment over the last several years.

The added challenge is people having the courage to acknowledge that teachers who suffer from gender dysphoria need psychological help, not a license to convince young people that their condition is normal.

States that take action to prevent ill and unstable people and radical activists from hijacking education will become a haven for those looking for traditional education and higher standards. Economic migration is increasingly common in this country as millions flee the dysfunction, waste, and high cost of living in blue states. Americans will escape the educational race to the bottom next.

These “standards states” will help create the stronger academic outcomes that produce more productive, thriving economies with less dependency.

It has been said that a teacher affects eternity because they can never know where their impact ends.

That is precisely the reason that the integrity of the classroom and those who are charged with leading it require

much greater scrutiny. Those who are so hobbled or compromised can cause long-term damage to the impressionable young people in their classrooms.

The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers may not care, but most children are uncomfortable discussing sex, body parts, gender transitions, pronouns, critical race theory and other leftist agenda items. They're also uncomfortable speaking out against those topics for fear of reprisal from teachers and administrators. We need to be their voice.

Too many Americans still refuse to believe that this extremism has infected our taxpayer-funded schools, but now is the time to take action to protect our children. States need to step up.

• *Tom Basile is the host of "America Right Now" on Newsmax TV, an author and a former Bush administration official.*

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