KIDS â€œÐ¯â€•SCREWED

The kids are screwed. The unemployment rate among Americans aged 18-29 is 50 percent higher than the national average. More than 43 percent of recent college graduates who have jobs do work which does not require a college education.

If the Obama administration policies which keep unemployment high are reversed, for most of us the recession will end. But the kids will still be screwed, because they don't know what they need to know to survive in the global economy.

The key is STEM education -- Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics. The US used to be the world's leader. Today, we're one of just 3 of the 34 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development where the kids know no more about these subjects than their parents did.

The kids don't know much of anything else, either. They've taken Sam Cooke's 1959 hit, *Don't know much about history, don't know much about geography*, to heart.

More than half of high school seniors scored "below basic" in their knowledge of history, said the National Assessment of Education Progress in 2010. Half of Americans aged 18-24 in a National Geographic survey couldn't find New York state on a map. In Oklahoma, only 3 percent of high school students could pass the citizenship test foreigners must take to become Americans.

Only a handful of the roughly 6,000 students who've passed through his classroom know how to form a sentence or write an intelligible paragraph, a retiring high school teacher told San Francisco Chronicle reporter Mark Morford. "Recently, after giving an assignment that required drawing lines, (the teacher) realized that not a single student actually knew how to use a ruler."

"If you think education is expensive, try ignorance," said Derek Bok, president of Harvard University from 1971 to 1990.

Boy was he right! We spend, on average, $10, 615 per pupil in the public schools for monumental ignorance. That's almost 250 percent more, in real terms, than we spent in 1970, when students learned stuff.

Kids today don't even know how little they know. "Many students tell me that they are the most well-informed generation in history," said George Mason University professor Rick Shenkman.

The kids would learn more if we had more teachers, and paid them more, teacher unions say. Since 1970, the number of teachers and administrators in public schools has risen 11 times faster than enrollment. This has meant more union dues and more campaign contributions for Democrats. But students learn less.

This isn't because teachers are underpaid. Their compensation is 150 percent more than for private sector workers with similar skills, according to a study last year by the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. On an hourly basis, teachers earn more than most accountants, architects and nurses.

By far the most important factor in determining how much students learn is the quality of the teacher. If we could get rid of the worst 7 percent of teachers, that alone would vault our schools back among the world's best, says the Hoover Institution's Eric Hanushek. But it's for that 7 percent teacher unions go to bat.

About 30 percent of high school students studying math, and 60 percent studying the physical sciences, are taught by teachers who did not major in the subject in college, or are not certified to teach it.

"How in the world can we expect our students to master science and technology when their teachers may not have mastered it?" asked U.S. News publisher Mortimer Zuckerman.

The retired or laid-off professionals who could fill the gap are kept out of the classroom because they haven't taken the dreck education courses the cartel has made prerequisites.

Schools of education are by no means the only reason why things are as bad -- or worse -- at the next level. Students are more likely to leave college with massive debt than with marketable skills. We rank near the bottom in the OECD in STEM degrees.

For Democrats, support for "education" means giving teacher unions whatever they want. More Americans disagree. In Gallup's annual poll in June, only 29 percent of Americans expressed confidence in public schools, the lowest level ever recorded. That's down from 58 percent when Gallup first asked the question in 1973.

Enrollment in public school districts in big cities is plunging as more parents find ways to help their children escape from schools where they are more likely to be shot or stabbed than prepared for college.

The greed and corruption of the education establishment is made the more repugnant by arrogance, deceit and hypocrisy. "We're doing it for the children," they say as they feather their own nests. *They're not doing it for the children, they're doing it **to** the children*.

Thanks chiefly to the teacher unions and the educrats, the only thing young people today will have more of than their parents or grandparents is debt. For many if not most, a well-paying job, a satisfying career, a home of their own are beyond their grasp.

The ignorance of our youth has reached crisis proportions, endangering not only their futures and

our prosperity, but also the viability of our democratic institutions. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be," said Thomas Jefferson.

"How much ignorance can a country stand?" Mr. Shenkman asked. "There have to be terrible consequences when it reaches a certain level."

We'll find out what those consequences are real soon, Mr. Morford's teacher friend thinks. He is "very seriously considering moving out of the country so as to escape what he sees will be the surefire collapse of functioning American society in the next handful of years."

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