

[From the Ft. Wayne Journal-Gazette, Mar. 2, 1999]

PRAISE SCHOOL THAT FIGHTS DRUGS

It has long been said that one picture is worth a thousand words. Unfortunately those words do not have to be the truth or accurate. Such is the case with the Feb. 26 editorial cartoon. It infers several incorrect concepts. The first is that education will take a secondary role to drug testing at Concordia High School. One only has to look at ISTEP scores, graduation rates, percent of graduates going to college and SAT scores to refute that idea.

The second is that the testing will occupy the entire school day. Testing can be completed in a very short period of time, being minimally disruptive to the school day. For a non-drug user an inconvenience—to a drug user, surely no more disruptive than days missed because of over indulgence.

His third incorrect concept is the most damaging. His attempt to ridicule the recently announced plan for random drug testing at Concordia, by overstating his case, will give those who have a misguided belief that drug testing is evil and an invasion of privacy the belief that taking action to help prevent good kids from making bad decisions is an unworthy undertaking.

Rather than swelling up with righteous indignation over the alleged loss of privacy, I would suggest the editorial staff consider looking at the educational success gained at a high school where standards are set, expectations delineated and students and faculty are held accountable for their actions. This action to take care of a problem that occurs in every high school in this area is the act of responsible administrators and parents who are taking action rather than burying their heads in the sand.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ST. JOSEPH'S DAY BREAKFAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform my colleagues about an important event, the St. Joseph's Day Breakfast, that will be held on March 18th, and I strongly urge anyone who can be present to attend. The St. Joseph's Day Breakfast is sponsored by a truly exceptional organization called the Faith and Politics Institute.

The St. Joseph's Day Breakfast celebrates the day of St. Joseph, who is the patron saint of the worker. This event brings Members of Congress together with leaders of our Nation's labor unions. As they break bread together, they will remember the religious values and the moral imperative that underlie the struggle for economic justice.

This is a bipartisan event sponsored by our colleagues the gentleman from

Georgia (Mr. JOHN LEWIS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. AMO HOUGHTON) to honor those who have acted courageously on behalf of the working men and women of our country. The St. Joseph's Day Breakfast is also the primary event of the Faith and Politics Institute, and the motto of this wonderful organization best sums up their goals and their accomplishments: spirit, community and conscience in public life.

The Faith and Politics Institute was established in 1991 as an interfaith, nonpartisan approach to reach consensus across party lines and break down the polarization that often engulfs our body. The mission of Faith and Politics seeks to provide occasions for moral reflection and spiritual community to political leaders, and draws upon the moral lessons and religious traditions to encourage civility and respect for one another and differing opinions.

These values, civility and respect, are essential to our strong democracy, and toward this end Faith and Politics have brought Mark Gerzon to Washington for private meetings a year before he led our Members into the historic bipartisan Hershey retreat.

Since its inception, the Institute has brought to Capitol Hill a combination of theological perspective, spiritual sensitivity, and political know-how as it has undertaken projects on behalf of labor, race, economic exploitation, the environment, and kindness to all. Last June this marvelous organization kicked off, with the help of General Colin Powell, the "Congressional Conversations on Race", which is spearheaded by a bipartisan steering committee made up of equal numbers of Republican and Democrat Members.

The goal is to "evoke the potential among Members of Congress, seeking spiritual insights to provide creative moral leadership on racial issues." They have already sponsored many events to bring about a dialogue on race, and will continue to do so, understanding that the "serious of experiences to deepen Members' understandings and to strengthen their leadership in the realm of race relations" is a worthy goal.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get involved with this wonderful Institute, to go to the breakfast, if they can, because it is good for us individually and good for the country as a whole.

A NATIONAL HOLIDAY FOR CESAR CHAVEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember a great

American leader and hero, Cesar Chavez. He was a husband, father, grandfather, labor organizer, community leader and symbol of the ongoing struggle for equal rights and equal opportunity. March 31, the birthday of Cesar Chavez, has already been declared a State holiday in my State of California. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in making March 31 a Federal holiday so that our entire Nation can honor Cesar Chavez for his many contributions.

Cesar was the son of migrant farm workers who dedicated his life to fighting for the human rights and dignity of farm laborers. He was born on March 31, 1927, on a small farm near Yuma, Arizona, and died nearly 6 years ago in April of 1993. Over the course of his 66-year life, Cesar Chavez' work inspired millions and made him a major force in American history.

In 1962, Cesar Chavez and his family founded the National Farm Workers Association which organized thousands of farm workers to confront one of the most powerful industries in our Nation. He inspired them to join together and nonviolently demand safe and fair working conditions.

Through the use of a grape boycott, he was able to secure the first union contracts for farm workers in this country. These contracts provided farm workers with the basic services that most workers take for granted, services such as clean drinking water and sanitary facilities. Because of his fight to enforce child labor laws, farm workers could also be certain that their children would not be working side by side with them and would instead attend the migrant schools he helped to establish. In addition, Cesar Chavez made the world aware of the exposure to dangerous chemicals that farm workers and every consumer faces every day.

As a labor leader, he earned great support from unions and elected officials across the country. The movement he began continues today as the United Farm Workers of America.

Cesar Chavez' influence extends far beyond agriculture. He was instrumental in forming the Community Service Organization, one of the first civic action groups in the Mexican-American communities of California and Arizona.

He worked in urban areas, organized voter registration drives, brought complaints against mistreatment by government agencies. He taught community members how to deal with governmental, school and financial institutions and empowered many thousands to seek further advancement in education and politics. There are countless stories of judges, engineers, lawyers, teachers, church leaders, organizers and other hardworking professionals who credit Cesar Chavez as the inspiring force in their lives.