

these aren't the kinds of reforms in which he is interested. I guess Governor Bush would rather take us back to the old days of deficits, debts, and recession. Tax breaks for the rich; tough breaks for everyone else.

In essence, what Governor Bush wants to do is return to the failed policies of the past. Let's move beyond that. Those failed policies of the past brought us deficits, brought us more debt, brought us recession, but the economic programs of the Clinton-Gore administration have brought us the greatest prosperity we have known since World War II.

That is the record. Those are the facts. No amount of catchy little phrases or platitudes uttered by Governor Bush can erase that record.

Lastly on education, the Rand study shows that the Texas miracle is really a Texas myth.

EXHIBIT NO. 1

WHAT DO TEST SCORES IN TEXAS TELL US?

Do the scores on high-stakes, statewide tests accurately reflect student achievement? To answer this critical question, a team of RAND researchers examined the results on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), the highest-profile state testing program and one that has recorded extraordinary gains in math and reading scores.

The team's report, an issue paper titled *What Do Test Scores in Texas Tell Us?* raises "serious questions" about the validity of those gains. It also cautions about the danger of making decisions to sanction or reward students, teachers and schools on the basis of test scores that may be inflated or misleading. Finally, it suggests some steps that states can take to increase the likelihood that their test results merit public confidence and provide a sound basis for educational policy.

To investigate whether the dramatic math and reading gains on the TAAS represent actual academic progress, the researchers compared these gains to score changes in Texas on another test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP tests were used as a benchmark because they reflect standards endorsed by a national panel of experts, they are not subject to pressures to boost scores, and they are generally considered the nation's single best indicator of student achievement. Both the TAAS and the NAEP tests were administered to fourth and eight graders during comparable four-year period.

The RAND team—Stephen P. Klein, Laura Hamilton, Daniel McCaffrey and Brian M. Stecher—generally found only small increases, similar to those observed nationwide, in the Texas NAEP scores. Meanwhile, the TAAS scores were soaring. Texas students did improve significantly more on a fourth-grade NAEP math test than their counterparts nationally. But again, the size of this gain was smaller than their gains on TAAS and was not present on the eighth-grade math test.

The "stark differences" between the stories told by NAEP and TAAS are especially striking when it comes to the gap in average scores between whites and students of color. According to the NAEP results, that gap in Texas is not only very large but increasing slightly. According to TAAS scores, the gap is much smaller and decreasing greatly.

"We do not know the source of these differences," the researchers state. But one reasonable explanation, consistent with survey and observation data, is that "many schools are devoting a great deal of class time to highly specific TAAS preparation." While this preparation may improve TAAS scores, it may not help students develop necessary reading and math skills. The authors suspect that "schools with relatively large percentages of minority and poor students may be doing this more than other schools." Other features of the TAAS also may contribute to the false sense that the racial gaps are closing.

Problems with statewide tests are not confined to the TAAS or Texas, the authors observe. To lessen the likelihood of invalid scores on such tests, they recommend that states:

Reduce the pressure associated with high-stakes testing by using one set of measures for decisions about individual students and another set for teachers and schools;

Replace traditional paper-and-pencil multiple choice exams with computer-based tests that are delivered over the Internet and draw on banks of thousands of questions;

Periodically conduct audit testing to validate score gains; and

Examine the positive and negative effects of the testing programs on curriculum and instruction.

In July, RAND released a detailed analysis by David Grissmer and colleagues that compared the NAEP scores of 44 states, including Texas. That study and today's issue paper are not directly comparable. They differ in scope, focus and data. Grissmer et al. found that Texas ranked high in achievement when comparing children from similar families. Both found at least some gains in the NAEP scores in Texas. Grissmer et al. suggested that the Texas accountability regime, of which TAAS is a part, might be a "plausible" explanation for the state's NAEP gains, but added that more research is needed before a linkage can be made. *What Do Test Scores in Texas Tell Us?* represents an important contribution to that research effort. It is also the latest in a continuing series of RAND analyses involving high-stakes testing issues.

STATEMENT OF RAND PRESIDENT AND CEO, JAMES A. THOMSON

The issue paper on Texas Education and Test Scores that RAND issued today is already the subject of intense controversy, as we expected. I want to underscore several points:

This research was thoroughly reviewed by distinguished external and internal experts. We stand behind the quality of both this paper and of our July report on the meaning of national test scores across the country, which also sparked considerable controversy.

The timing of the release of both reports was based on the same, constant RAND standard; we release our work as soon as the research, review and revision processes are complete. We don't produce findings for political reasons, we don't distribute them for political reasons and we don't sit on them for political reasons. This is a scrupulously nonpartisan institution.

The July study—*Improving Student Achievement: What State NAEP Scores Tell Us*—also touched on Texas schools and received widespread press play. Both efforts draw on NAEP scores. The new paper suggests a less positive picture of Texas education than the earlier effort. But I do not believe that these efforts are in sharp conflict. Together in fact they provide a more

comprehensive picture of key education issues.

The July report differed in scope (it covered almost all states, not just Texas), in methodology (it adjusted states' NAEP scores for family characteristics, such as racial and socioeconomic differences), and most of all in focus. It sought to explain why student achievement scores vary so widely across the states even after those demographic adjustments are made. The team that researched the new Issue Paper on the other hand focused on Texas and its statewide testing program. Texas was studied because the state exemplifies a national trend toward using statewide exams as a basis for high-stakes educational decisions.

From the Texas standpoint, the good news is that the state ranks high in adjusted student achievement. Our July study correlates this with specific ways that resources are allocated to high-leverage programs, such as pre-kindergarten, one of the features of the Texas reform effort. The bad news is that the statewide testing system in Texas needs improvement. The Issue Paper team suggests ways this can be done in Texas and other states.

Mr. HARKIN. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— NOMINATION OF BONNIE CAMPBELL

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, as I have done every day we have been in session, I ask unanimous consent to discharge the Judiciary Committee from further consideration of the nomination of Bonnie Campbell, the nominee for the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals; that her nomination be considered by the Senate immediately following the conclusion of action on the pending matter; that debate on the nomination be limited to 2 hours equally divided; and that a vote on her nomination occur immediately following the use or yielding back of that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. At the request of the majority leader and in my individual capacity as a United States Senator, I object.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, every day I raise it and every day the Republican majority objects. It is still a shame that Bonnie Campbell has been tied up in that committee since May. She has had her hearing. She has done a great job running the Violence Against Women office. Everyone agrees on that. She would be an outstanding circuit court judge. No one doubts her qualifications. Yet the Judiciary Committee refuses to report out her name.

It is really a disservice to her and to our country, and it is really a disgrace

on this body that her name continues to be bottled up in the Judiciary Committee.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AN EXCERPT FROM PAT CONROY'S UPCOMING BOOK, "MY LOSING SEASON"

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I was recently given a copy of an excerpt from a yet unpublished book written by South Carolina native and former Citadel graduate, Mr. Pat Conroy. This essay is an insightful tribute to the men and women who served their country in times of conflict, and I would like to take this opportunity to bring this exceptional essay to the attention of my colleagues.

Mr. Conroy's composition recounts the experiences of a courageous man who answered his nation's call to serve in the armed forces during a time of conflict, and the intense pride he had in his country even during the most dire of circumstances as a POW. It also recounts how, through the author's interaction with this patriotic individual, Mr. Conroy arrived at the realization that duty to one's country is an obligation that comes with the privilege of being a citizen.

This dramatic composition honors those who accepted their duty with courage and dignity, and I ask unanimous consent that this poignant essay be inserted into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MY HEART'S CONTENT

(By Pat Conroy)

The true things always ambush me on the road and take me by surprise when I am drifting down the light of placid days, careless about flanks and rearguard actions. I was not looking for a true thing to come upon me in the state of New Jersey. Nothing has ever happened to me in New Jersey. But came it did, and it came to stay.

In the past four years I have been interviewing my teammates on the 1966-67 basketball team at the Citadel for a book I'm writing. For the most part, this has been like buying back a part of my past that I had mislaid or shut out of my life. At first I thought I was writing about being young and frisky and able to run up and down a court all day long, but lately I realized I came to this book because I needed to come to grips with being middle-aged and having ripened into a gray-haired man you could not trust to handle the ball on a fast break.

When I visited my old teammate Al Kroboth's house in New Jersey, I spent the

first hours quizzing him about his memories of games and practices and the screams of coaches that had echoed in field houses more than 30 years before. Al had been a splendid forward-center for the Citadel; at 6 feet 5 inches and carrying 220 pounds, he played with indefatigable energy and enthusiasm. For most of his senior year, he led the nation in field-goal percentage, with UCLA center Lew Alcindor hot on his trail. Al was a battler and a brawler and a scrapper from the day he first stepped in as a Green Weenie as a sophomore to the day he graduated. After we talked basketball, we came to a subject I dreaded to bring up with Al, but which lay between us and would not lie still.

"Al, you know I was a draft dodger and antiwar demonstrator."

"That's what I heard, Conroy," Al said. "I have nothing against what you did, but I did what I thought was right."

"Tell me about Vietnam, big Al. Tell me what happened to you," I said.

On his seventh mission as a navigator in an A-6 for Major Leonard Robertson, Al was getting ready to deliver their payload when the fighter-bomber was hit by enemy fire. Though Al has no memory of it, he punched out somewhere in the middle of the ill-fated dive and lost consciousness. He doesn't know if he was unconscious for six hours or six days, nor does he know what happened to Major Robertson (whose name is engraved on the Wall in Washington and on the MIA bracelet Al wears).

When Al awoke, he couldn't move. A Viet Cong soldier held an AK-47 to his head. His back and his neck were broken, and he had shattered his left scapula in the fall. When he was well enough to get to his feet (he still can't recall how much time had passed), two armed Viet Cong led Al from the jungles of South Vietnam to a prison in Hanoi. The journey took three months. Al Kroboth walked barefooted through the most impassable terrain in Vietnam, and he did it sometimes in the dead of night. He bathed when it rained, and he slept in bomb craters with his two Viet Cong captors. As they moved farther north, infections began to erupt on his body, and his legs were covered with leeches picked up while crossing the rice paddies.

At the very time of Al's walk, I had a small role in organizing the only antiwar demonstration ever held in Beaufort, South Carolina, the home of Parris Island and the Marine Corps Air Station. In a Marine Corps town at that time, it was difficult to come up with a quorum of people who had even minor disagreements about the Vietnam War. But my small group managed to attract a crowd of about 150 to Beaufort's waterfront. With my mother and my wife on either side of me, we listened to the featured speaker, Dr. Howard Levy, suggest to the very few young enlisted marines present that if they get sent to Vietnam, here's how they can help end this war: Roll a grenade under your officer's bunk when he's asleep in his tent. It's called fragging and is becoming more and more popular with the ground troops who know this war is bullshit. I was enraged by the suggestion. At that very moment my father, a marine officer, was asleep in Vietnam. But in 1972, at the age of 27, I thought I was serving America's interests by pointing out what massive flaws and miscalculations and corruptions had led her to conduct a ground war in Southeast Asia.

In the meantime, Al and his captors had finally arrived in the North, and the Viet Cong traded him to North Vietnamese soldiers for the final leg of the trip to Hanoi. Many times

when they stopped to rest for the night, the local villagers tried to kill him. His captors wired his hands behind his back at night, so he trained himself to sleep in the center of huts when the villagers began sticking knives and bayonets into the thin walls. Following the U.S. air raids, old women would come into the huts to excrete on him and yank out hunks of his hair. After the nightmare journey of his walk north, Al was relieved when his guards finally delivered him to the POW camp in Hanoi and the cell door locked behind him.

It was at the camp that Al began to die. He threw up every meal he ate and before long was misidentified as the oldest American soldier in the prison because his appearance was so gaunt and skeletal. But the extraordinary camaraderie among fellow prisoners that sprang up in all the POW camps caught fire in Al, and did so in time to save his life.

When I was demonstrating in America against Nixon and the Christmas bombings in Hanoi, Al and his fellow prisoners were holding hands under the full fury of those bombings, singing "God Bless America." It was those bombs that convinced Hanoi they would do well to release the American POWs, including my college teammate. When he told me about the C-141 landing in Hanoi to pick up the prisoners, Al said he felt no emotion, none at all, until he saw the giant American flag painted on the plane's tail. I stopped writing as Al wept over the memory of that flag on that plane, on that morning, during that time in the life of America.

It was that same long night, after listening to Al's story, that I began to make judgments about how I had conducted myself during the Vietnam War. In the darkness of the sleeping Kroboth household, lying in the third-floor guest bedroom, I began to assess my role as a citizen in the '60s, when my country called my name and I shot her the bird. Unlike the stupid boys who wrapped themselves in Viet Cong flags and burned the American one, I knew how to demonstrate against the war without flirting with treason or astonishingly bad taste. I had come directly from the warrior culture of this country and I knew how to act. But in the 25 years that have passed since South Vietnam fell, I have immersed myself in the study of totalitarianism during the unspeakable century we just left behind. I have questioned survivors of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, talked to Italians who told me tales of the Nazi occupation, French partisans who had counted German tanks in the forests of Normandy, and officers who survived the Bataan Death March. I quiz journalists returning from wars in Bosnia, the Sudan, the Congo, Angola, Indonesia, Guatemala, San Salvador, Chile, Northern Ireland, Algeria. As I lay sleepless, I realized I'd done all this research to better understand my country. I now revere words like democracy, freedom, the right to vote, and the grandeur of the extraordinary vision of the founding fathers. Do I see America's flaws? Of course. But I now can honor her basic, incorruptible virtues, the ones that let me walk the streets screaming my ass off that my country had no idea what it was doing in South Vietnam. My country let me scream to my heart's content—the same country that produced both Al Kroboth and me.

Now, at this moment in New Jersey, I come to a conclusion about my actions as a young man when Vietnam was a dirty word to me. I wish I'd led a platoon of marines in Vietnam. I would like to think I would have trained my troops well and that the Viet Cong would have had their hands full if they