Critique On School To Work Programs Essay, Research Paper

A Critique of Phyllis Schlafly s

Opinion on School to Work Programs

On September 4, 1997, Phyllis Schlafly wrote an article titled School-to-Work Will Train, Not Educate. The article discusses the cons of the school-to-work program and that states that it is portrayed as a cradle to the grave. The article says that the school-to-work program will train and not educate. Schlafly is the president of the Eagle Forum, a organization that stands for the fundamental right of parents to guide the education of their own children, thinks that school-to-work is a direct threat to the individual student, his or her privacy, his or her goals and his or her acquisition of an education that can help him reach them. Schlafly s opinion wrong and will not pass in today s society.

In Schlafly s criticism, she states that the school-to-work program deemphasizes or eliminates academic work and substitutes mandated vocational training to better serve the workforce. She also says that instead of the focus being on developing the child, the focus is on developing a labor force. Schlafly thinks that school-to-work is training rather then education. In contrast to Schlafly, Olson says that school-to-work give students motivation which will help students because students in today s society are not motivated enough. Surveys prove that students describe education as boring. Schlafly believes that the STW law stating that vocational training starts at the earliest possible age is wrong. The reason is that she believes that elementary or middle school children do not know what career they want to fulfill. The last point in Schlafly s article is she states that big businesses support school-to-work because they think that vocational courses in high school for illiterate or semi-illiterate students will train young Americans to compete in the global economy with people in the third world willing to work for 25 and 50 cents an hour. She is basically saying that big businesses are supporting school-to-work because they want some cheap labor. In conclusion to her article, Schlafly says that all those who value freedom must defeat and defund school-to-work. She thinks that school-to-work is oppressing the students from their freedom to learn and receive a good education.

Schlafly s article says that Marc Tucker s plan for school-to-work is to train children in specific jobs to serve the workforce and the global economy instead of educate them so they can make their own life choices. She also says that it is designed on the German system. Where did she get the idea that school-to-work is based on the German system? She does not know what she is talking about and the information she is spreading is invalid. She also states that the program is to train children but she also does not give the option of training and educating together. Olson shows how training and education goes together by showing kids why they have to learn and by creating a desire to learn. Schlafly is absolutely wrong about training children.

Beginning school-to-work at the earliest age possible does not mean that elementary and middle school students are going to choose their lifetime career. Giving the children vocational training will give them an option in what they want to do in the future. Children will see if they like the field of training and study and decide whether or not they want to pursue that vocation in the future. In comparison to what Olson says, school-to-work activities can provide choices and opportunities for young people, many of whom are not now well served y our education system.

Schlafly says that big businesses support school-to-work because it will provide them with cheap labor. Where did Schlafly get this information? Throughout the whole article there is no proof of justifying this idea. She also mentions that governors support the program because it gives them control of a pot of money for which they don t have to account to the state legislature. This statement also lacks evidence and cannot be used to prove that the program is a failure. School-to-work is not for businesses or governors, but rather for the children themselves and their goals for their future. Like Olson says, school-to-work can encourage young people to pursue education and training beyond high school.

Is Schlafly criticism valid at all? Absolutely not, she bases her information on nothing, such as the German system. Schlafly proved that school-to-work is training for a lifetime career but this argument is wrong because training can also be compatible with education. Big businesses and governors may support school-to-work for cheap labor and for the money but there is no proof and even if there was any proof not all businesses and governors would think that way. Until Schlafly gives some proof to her information and can prove that training and education are not compatible, she is not to be taken seriously. School-to-work is a very good idea and to agreement with Olson, done right school-to-work can be a powerful tool in the effort to achieve higher academic standards and a more educated citizenry.

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