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Citizens League committee report:

Troubling trends in higher education must be met with new, comprehensive vision of K-14 education

In his State of the State address on February 5, 2004, Gov. Tim Pawlenty asked the Citizens League to host a study committee that would examine higher education in Minnesota. The Citizens League accepted the challenge and assembled a 33-person committee of representatives from across the state. Meetings began in April and proceeded throughout the summer and into the fall. The committee recently completed its work and issued a report on its findings. A summary of their conclusions follows. The full report is available at www.citizensleague.net.

by Vance Opperman and Rondi Erickson

Global economics and local demographics threaten the competitive advantage in higher education that Minnesota has built over the last 50 years. For an inland state with as many as six months of winter, Minnesota's economy has thrived on the benefits of a world-class higher education system. The problem is, a lot more of the world is joining our class.

Education is Minnesota's most significant competitive advantage, but we are becoming also-rans in a rapidly changing global economy. In a world where knowledge is the primary economic and strategic resource, Minnesota's current success in higher education is not sustainable if we maintain the status quo.

Troubling trends

Global trends indicate that other countries are surpassing the United States in higher education participation. The United States' ranking in higher education participation has slipped from second to 15th in just 12 years. The United States ranks low among G-8 indus-

trialized nations in the number of higher education degrees in math and science.

Demographic trends indicate that the supply of potential new workers coming through the K-12 pipeline will shrink just as the baby boomers begin to retire. Students of color and low-income students will make up an increasing percentage of this pipeline, and their current achievement in high school and higher education is miserable. Minnesota's future success in higher education depends on their success.

Education trends indicate that Minnesota is slipping in several ways. We are currently ranked eighth in the country as a "high-tech state" but we are having difficulty getting junior high and senior high students to take higher-level math and science. As a result, Minnesota is in the bottom half of states in terms of science and engineering degrees as a percentage of total degrees granted. In addition, the percentage of Minnesotans age 18-24 enrolled in college but not yet graduated *declined* from 43 percent to 36 percent between 1992 and 2002.

Fiscal trends are also troubling. Minnesota faces another anticipated budget shortfall of up to \$1 billion in 2005. At recent spending rates, long-term structural budget trends show that as much as 90 percent of the state budget will be consumed by K-12 education, healthcare and human services by 2030. We are going to have to make difficult long-term budget decisions again very soon.

Amidst these troubling trends, higher education is rapidly changing. Base tuition costs are rising. New providers and new technologies are changing how and where Minnesotans obtain higher education. The value of higher education,

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Sex offenders: Are they treatable?

by Dr. William Seabloom

Are sex offenders treatable? The simple answer is, "Yes." From a social work perspective, all human conditions can be dealt with successfully and humanely when addressed in a thorough, appropriate, sensitive and professional manner that engages the individual client or community as full partners in the process.

The same is true with regard to those who commit sex crimes.

In Minnesota, we can find evidence to support this contention in three sources: federal research, reported by the *Star Tribune* ("Study: New take on sex offenders. While legislators propose dramatic increases in sentences, researchers suggest that, in fact, sex offenders are less likely to commit new crimes," May 3, 2004), showing that sex offenders are the least likely of all felony offenders to re-offend. The research documented rates of recidivism as low as five percent.

An analysis of data drawn from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension by S. Margretta Dwyer, a Sister of Mercy, licensed psychologist and international authority on research and treatment of adult sex offenders, found that adult sex offenders who underwent treatment had zero recidivism five years after treatment; approximately nine percent recidivism 17 years after treatment; and 12.9 percent recidivism 23 years after treatment. Interestingly, 64 percent of Dwyer's subjects were convicted for sexual behavior with minors. They had a nine percent recidivism rate.

The third piece of evidence showing that sex offenders are treatable comes from a longitudinal study my colleagues and I undertook of adolescent sex offenders who underwent treatment through the Lutheran Social Service Personal/Social Awareness (P/SA) program during the 1970s and 1980s.

The study tracked 122 adolescent sex offenders (ages 12-18) and over 400 family members from 14 to 24 years after they participated in an intensive outpatient treatment program. The results showed no arrests or convictions for sex-related crimes among the participants who successfully completed the Personal/Social Awareness program. The average amount

of time spent in the program was 15 months. According to the study, those who completed the program were also less likely than participants who were referred out of the program (average 11 months) or withdrew from treatment (average eight months) to be arrested or convicted across all crime categories.

While the low number of convictions or arrests for sex-related crimes in the rest of the population precludes the use of statistics for comparison, it is interesting to note that the highest conviction rate (eight percent, in the group that withdrew from treatment) is similar to that of recidivism rates for other adolescent sex-offender treatment programs.

While some of the youth in the program came because they had committed sexual offenses (criminal behavior such as touching, exposure, incest through rape), others came because they experienced other sexual-related issues (sexual orientation, sexual victim of an older person), or medical-related issues (cerebral palsy, hormonal or congenital conditions). However, their reasons for coming into the program were not relevant as to whether or not the youth successfully completed the program. Data from the federal study reported in the *Star Tribune* is public knowledge. Dwyer's analysis and the P/SA longitudinal data are also available to state officials and the public. And our report, which was presented this month at the International Association for the Treatment of Sex Offenders in Athens, Greece, was made available to the appropriate legislative committee chairs and Gov. Tim Pawlenty last November. Most recently it was provided to Eric Lipman, sex offender policy coordinator for Gov. Pawlenty, at his request.

With all of this research available, one might ask why there has been no apparent change in the general public and governmental position that sex offenders are untreatable. When I asked a wise and perceptive friend and colleague this question, his response was: "Bill, you have the right answer. But, unfortunately, it's the wrong answer!" It isn't the answer people want to hear.

But one might also ask, if the state chooses to ignore the facts, to abandon proven treatment methods, and to ignore the evidence, based on solid data available

for years, that sex offenders are treatable, isn't the state then choosing to be complicit in criminal sexual behavior?

Mending hearts

Personal/Social Awareness was an intensive, comprehensive treatment program for adolescents in sexual crisis and run by Lutheran Social Service, which has served adolescents in crisis for more than a century. It was the first treatment program for adolescents with a full range of sexual problems including those who committed sexual crimes as determined by the courts or child protection. The P/SA program was located at agency headquarters in Minneapolis and served an area with a radius of more than 90 miles with consultation services throughout the state. It was funded by county governments, the United Way and by user fees. The program served 122 youth and over 400 family members during its first eight years.

Youth in the program were not labeled as sex offenders, but rather adolescents who had sexual problems. The purpose of the program was to address and positively impact issues of criminal sexual behavior and sexual health in the adolescent clients and their families and to provide a therapeutic community that would foster interdependence, responsibility and compassion for each other.

The focus for each youth was to learn about their own sexuality. Thus the ultimate goal of the program was that each participant would "learn to be better lovers, first of themselves," then of their own gender and then of others. They learned to speak for themselves and the staff learned to listen to them. When the staff did so, they learned that the youth had important lessons for the professionals, even if some of the youth had been identified with negative labels.

The adolescents participated in weekly group and individual psychotherapy sessions and biweekly family therapy. They were also required to participate in bimonthly 27-hour group therapy marathons at a retreat center, and twice-a-year, two-day family educational/sexual awareness seminars called the "Family Journey."

The parents/foster parents and other significant adults participated in weekly two-

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Viewpoint

The revolution will not be televised

by Sean Kershaw

What has roots in the pamphlets of the American Revolution, is distrusted and despised by the traditional media (most recently Tom Brokaw and David Broder), and has the power to help transform politics and political thinking in Minnesota and the country?



Blogging.

I had heard of this new technology trend, and even participated directly through the League's website, but the real meaning didn't hit home until I attended a house party during the second presidential debate. Generously invited by the host to join a group of unknown partisans at an "undisclosed location," I enjoyed great Italian food and good beer and watched in fascination as a dozen people on laptop computers huddled around a television and a wireless router. The interactions in the room were as interesting as those on TV.

Gathered together were the publishers of at least a half-dozen political weblogs ("blogs"). Weblogs are literally web-based "logs," or journals, updated regularly using simple new software and standard hyper-

links to comment on and connect to other blogs or websites. These dynamic websites produce regular commentaries and postings, listed in reverse chronological order. The postings are usually short, always topical, and generally with a clear point of view.

The evening was a multi-tasking extravaganza. These 12 people talked and argued with each other and the TV screen. They e-mailed people around the country and tracked the postings of other bloggers. They watched the debate and simultaneously posted live updates, instantaneously interacting with thousands of people all over the country, and influencing politics in a way that was technologically impossible 10 years ago. For many of them, this personal expression of their ideas and the opportunity to connect to other people was equally difficult just five years ago.

Democracy and politics

As this presidential race winds down to the inevitable triumph and tragedy on Nov. 3, it is essential that we remind ourselves of the real purpose of politics, the real demands and opportunities of democracy, and the need to transform politics.

Politics is simply the practice of power. It is the way anything gets accomplished in government, communities, families, congregations and work places. Politics is, or should be, what all of us as *citizens* do—not just what politicians do. We see examples of good politics and bad politics daily. (And we have had more than our fair share of both this election season.) Politics depends on ideas, debate, relationships, and on the "town squares" and common spaces available to practice these skills. Democracy demands that we create these spaces, and that we all practice the best politics possible.

We have been infected with a corrosive politics of passivity: a sense that politics should be left to professionals; that citizens are passive and silent consumers; and that politics itself is inherently bad. Political thinking itself has become lazy and unoriginal. Little wonder that people began to

disengage, and that we have struggled to find common solutions to common problems. Little wonder that there has developed a pent-up demand for new ideas and for new opportunities to express those ideas and connect with other people.

Civic technologies and transformations

Right now weblogs are similar to email eight years ago: a technology mostly used by the ideological extremes, the young, and the technologically-connected. But we shouldn't be surprised by their growth and popularity. It may be a great thing for politics and for democracy itself.

The first chapter of the Pulitzer Prize winning book *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* mentions the role that pamphlets played in the American Revolution. "It was in this form ... that the solid framework of constitutional thought was developed; it was in this form that the basic elements of American political thought ... appeared first."

Weblogs are a tool, not an end. They have many of the weaknesses inherent in our citizens and society. But like pamphlets, their ability to create new "town squares" for debate and interaction, for airing new ideas and exploring new relationships cannot be discounted or discredited. We desperately need all of these.

This revolution will not be televised. However, it may be "wi-fi web-cast" from living rooms, coffee houses, and chat rooms. Technology has given us new opportunities. Our challenge and our opportunity is to support and build the citizens, institutions, and the new common spaces that will move us past this latest election and into the next phase of our American democratic experiment—our ongoing democratic "revolution."

For links to all of the references here, go to www.citizensleague.net, and click on the link to this story. **MJ**

Sean Kershaw is President of the Citizens League. He can be reached at skershaw@citizensleague.net or 651-293-0575 ext.14.

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Publisher—Sean Kershaw

Editor—J. Trout Lowen

Managing Editor—Bob DeBoer

Contributing Editor—Ted Kolderie

Sketches—Ray Hanson

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research and knowledge creation is increasing significantly. This includes both the private value to individuals and the public value to Minnesota.

Examining these trends gives Minnesota the opportunity to reform and improve higher education institutions and outcomes, and to meet these challenges head-on. Otherwise, we jeopardize the economic success and quality of life that we currently enjoy.

A new vision

Opportunities for excellent higher education should become a part of life for every Minnesotan. Many people still think about higher education as something that occurs at specific places, on campus, for example, and at specific times in life, like right after high school. Changes in technology and the economy mean that higher education no longer needs to be place-bound or time-bound; it can and should occur throughout every

Minnesotan's life.

Minnesota needs at least three key outcomes from its higher education spending to succeed in the future:

- ▲ the best-educated workforce in the world
- ▲ world-class excellence and innovation in research
- ▲ national leadership in the transfer of new knowledge and advanced skills from higher education to the state's citizens, communities and workplaces.

All Minnesotans need to be prepared to compete globally. The education and training will come from a variety of sources at a variety of times throughout their lives: from high school, to traditional campuses, to instruction in the workplace, to online learning late at night. Higher education is a public good for Minnesotans and for Minnesota, no matter where or how it is provided.

Recommendations

To achieve this vision, the committee

makes the following recommendations.

1. Raise expectations to "K-14" and reform high school. We must raise the expectation that *all* students will complete *at least* two years of post-high school education. A high school diploma is no longer sufficient in a knowledge economy.

We must also reform and improve the time spent in high school. More than 30 percent of graduates from Minnesota's high schools need remedial classes as they begin higher education. These reforms include a standard higher education preparatory curriculum for *all* students, greater access to higher education opportunities for students who are ready, expanded post-secondary educational options, and greater remediation and access for students that are not yet prepared for higher education.

Minnesota should also increase its investment in college readiness and access programs.

2. Improve accountability and innovation. Create a new Higher Education Performance Council to monitor the results Minnesotans receive for their \$1.3 billion annual investment in higher education and to advise the governor and Legislature on outcomes and trends in higher education.

More tools must be provided for parents and students to find success in K-14 education. Services such as on-line reports on all higher education institutions will improve transparency and accountability and provide information parents and students need to make better choices.

3. Improve institutional focus. The University of Minnesota should continue to enhance its role as a world-class public research institution. Minnesota should also increase its investment in research, with greater participation from the private sector. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system must continue to promote greater specialization and centers of excellence among its campuses. Minnesota must also continue to encourage the significant contribution that its private colleges and universities make.

An immediate step for the governor would be to lead a "higher education trade mission" to Asia to spotlight key international efforts to increase performance and

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Signed, Sean Kershaw, publisher. October 8, 2004

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Sex offenders *from page 2*

hour group psychotherapy, in addition to family therapy and Family Journey seminars. The program was successfully completed when the adolescent and family met agreed-upon criteria for growth and change identified in a quarterly review protocol.

The language of the program was positive, clearly descriptive and nonjudgmental, and the boys, the families and the staff were taught to speak in these terms. What was truly significant was that this group of boys could come to share extremely intimate details of their life conditions, feelings and experiences with each other and with the staff.

At one point, a group of the participants expressed themselves in writing, and with the help of a playwright, published a booklet of poetry and essays about their view of themselves (*The Firefly Jar*, 1980). In the introduction, a 15-year-old participant wrote:

"Here, we have gathered, written, and drawn works of expression to share with you, hoping that you can see that sex offenders are beautiful people. ... I hope that as you journey through our book you will see that sex offenders aren't just "perverts," but we're real and we're especially *real with our expression.*"

On the back cover of the book was a drawing by one of the youth of a torn heart in the process of being sewn together. This "Mended Heart" illustrated better than any words the purpose of the P/SA

program. In the same book, staff wrote: "...we are privileged to be able to work with such articulate, sensitive, and passionate young people. We have always been able to learn a great deal from what they have to teach."

The youth in the program expressed themselves in other ways, too. A boy with hypospadias (congenital malformed urethra

The language of the program was positive, clearly descriptive and nonjudgmental, and the boys, the families and the staff were taught to speak in these terms.

requiring a surgical opening on the underside of the penis) gave an illustrated lecture on his condition to his group. A 13-year-old boy told of crying on the steps of a foster home, at the age of three, as his mother walked away leaving him with strangers. A whole group decided that they were curious to experience having a female body, as long as they could return to their own in a month. Most members of one group indicated that they had experienced homoerotic arousal. Another group reached out to a fellow group member who was unable to speak intelligibly because of severe cerebral palsy and within a few weeks he could

speak clearly. One boy was only able to express his longing for a caring mother in guttural moans. And the boys felt free to challenge the staff when they felt that program principles had been violated.

Emphasizing family

As in all quality programs, staff training and development was considered key. Staff members were recruited who had open minds, a commitment to the philosophy and methodology, the strength to deal with cultural and professional challenges, a mature sensitivity to their young clients, and a readiness to walk beside them through their most intimate and difficult journey.

Clinical staff were Masters level social workers and psychologists. The clinical director was a certified sex therapist and diplomat in sexology and social work. All of the staff had intensive university training in human sexuality and participated in frequent in-service training, often led by authorities in child sexuality and other fields from the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, Sex Education and Information Council U.S. and from other countries.

During the early years of the program, word of it spread to Europe. Television stations in Norway and Germany filmed documentaries of the program which were made available for professional training seminars. County social workers and probation officers had a strong support role in the treatment team and were frequently

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production in higher education.

4. Improve value and financial leverage. MnSCU should have the authority to negotiate and approve all employee contracts, and it should take a two-thirds vote by the Legislature to reverse a vote by the MnSCU Board of Trustees regarding the allocation of resources and facilities. Minnesota also needs to reexamine its system for ensuring access to affordable higher education in light of all these changes.

Opportunity to change

Given the importance of higher educa-

tion to Minnesota's quality of life and economic health, we cannot afford to ignore the coming realities. We must reform our current system and make the most of existing resources.

There are costs to not improving achievement and outcomes, and there are costs to ignoring future challenges, sticking with the status quo, and accepting institutional reluctance to change. We must not allow these factors to inhibit these reform efforts.

The reforms that are discussed in this report can start us on a more productive path, but in the long term they are unlikely

to be sufficient to achieve the vision of available and excellent higher education. Minnesotans must be prepared to look beyond the immediate "profit and loss statement" to ensure adequate investment in higher education to maintain our quality of life and economic competitiveness as a state. That is our "balance sheet." **MJ**

Rondi Erickson and Vance Opperman are co-chairs of the Citizens League Higher Education Study Committee.

OnBalance

Views From Around the State

Gov. Pawlenty's proposals to increase ethanol in gasoline are revving discussion across the state.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty's proposals to increase the use of ethanol in gasoline drew praise from the **Worthington Daily Globe** (9/28). Pawlenty called for raising the required percentage of ethanol in gasoline from 10 to 20 percent; allowing hybrid-fuel cars to use carpool lanes, adding 20 hybrid buses to the Metro Transit fleet and halving the use of gasoline in state vehicles by 2015. "Minnesota is already the only state that mandates ethanol in gasoline. But that's not enough for Gov. Tim Pawlenty," noted the paper. "Pawlenty wants to be known as the 'Ethanol Governor,' it would seem. In announcing his plan, which still has to be approved by the Legislature to take effect, he declared Minnesota the 'renewable fuel capital of America' and promised that our state will lead the nation in renewable fuels someday." To become a national, long-term energy solution, however, the paper cautioned, "farmers who produce it will need to be assured they will continue to benefit, and non-Midwest states will need to buy into the idea with ethanol factories of their own."

The **Fergus Falls Journal** (9/28) also praised Pawlenty's ethanol proposals as good for the state's economy, the environment and for reducing America's dependence on foreign oil. "Increasing the percentage of ethanol, processed from corn in 14 plants around Minnesota, is important to the future of agriculture in this state. Increasing the percentage of ethanol in gasoline will mean increased production, which will increase jobs and pump money into the local farm economy."

Criticism shouldn't impact the governor's plan, argued the **Marshall Independent** (9/29). "The only people who reacted negatively to the governor's plan were, predictably, representatives of the auto and trucking industries, and free-market advocates. But so what? We need to take these steps, for the good of the economy and environment. Detractors are just

going to have to suck it up. This is the direction the state's heading, with the governor leading the way."

The **West Central Tribune** (9/30) was more cautious in its support of the proposals. "Certainly, Pawlenty's proposal will be welcomed by farm groups in Minnesota and elsewhere. However, the proposal also will be debated in political and environmental circles," the paper predicted. Some experts argue that ethanol-blend gasoline burns cleaner than regular gasoline, but, the paper pointed out, "other conservation experts have expressed concerns about the possible increased use of fertilizer and pesticides to grow more corn to meet ethanol demands."

"Setting into law a new ethanol standard for gasoline is a fine idea," stated the **Rochester Post-Bulletin** (10/3). "What makes the proposal less than breathtaking is its time frame for implementation. Pawlenty said the proposed standard should wait until 2010, or until half of new automobiles sold offer warranties that allow the use of the fuel blend." Instead, the paper supports Sen. Mark Dayton's proposal, which would require every automobile manufactured after 2005 to accommodate ethanol. "The sooner the state makes the switch, the better off the nation, state and, not to mention, Minnesota corn farmers, will become."

The Minnesota Supreme Court struck a blow for democracy when it ruled that Independence Party candidates would appear on state ballots, lauded the **Bemidji Pioneer** (9/29). "While the courts—rightly or wrongly—took on the image of king-maker after the polls closed on the 2000 presidential election. But the court's involvement this week in a Minnesota ballot flap has got to be scored as a victory on the side of democracy, with a small 'd.'" In September, Republican Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer, and DFL Attorney General Mike Hatch had removed the

Independence Party candidates from general election ballots across the state using a provision in state law that requires party candidates to garner at least 10 percent of vote as compared with their party's candidates in the last election. When Independence Party candidates failed to meet that threshold, "Kiffmeyer and Hatch, while reckoning along the technical aspects of state law, failed to consider the big picture of ensuring that everyone have equal and fair access to the ballot," said the paper.

The **Mankato Free Press** (9/29) also praised the Minnesota Supreme Court. "It's hard enough for a third party, even one that elected a governor six years ago, to make the ballot. Random enforcement like this—the law wasn't pressed in 2000 or in other elections—just excludes more people from democracy. Give the voters the opportunity to choose what candidates they support without elected officials from both major parties removing them from the ballot. ... Thankfully, the Minnesota Supreme Court left the decision where it belongs—in the hands of voters."

The **Bemidji Pioneer** (10/3) also criticized Kiffmeyer's decision to implement new, federally-mandated voting registration rules in time for the November election. "In an effort to make Minnesota's voting system even better, Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer may be too zealous. Changes she proposed could put the Nov. 2 election in jeopardy, as untried and untested systems come on line in this most important election year," argued the paper. "The last thing we want to see is voters turned away from the polls on Nov. 2 because of bureaucratic snafus, computer glitches or unbending administration of voter registration guidelines. That's not the Minnesota—small 'd'—democratic way." **MJ**

included in program components and in training.

Admission to the P/SA Program was intentionally heterogeneous in regard to presenting sexual issues. Our study found that participants from a wide range of backgrounds were equally successful at completing the program, the only common requirement being that the adolescent and parents or guardian identify their own sense of need, even in the case of mandated treatment. This requirement was probably unique to P/SA and it planted, from the start, the seed of personal responsibility—the ability to choose one's own response and to respond to choices.

The inclusive nature of admissions determined that the treatment program itself required an ongoing assessment dimension to determine if it was adequate to meet the needs of the individual youth. Those cases which needed additional or more intensive services were referred to the appropriate services, based on the needs of the youth and community.

The emphasis on the importance of the family was found in our research to be the one demographic contributing to successful completion of treatment. The Family Sexual Attitude Reassessment Seminar, or Family Journey, followed the model developed by the National Sex Forum and refined by the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco and the University of Minnesota Medical School's Program in Human Sexuality. It used a combination of large and small group sessions, based on social group work principles, and an extensive use of media, including explicit media where appropriate to the topic, to address various aspects of human sexuality. It was adapted to the needs of family members from age nine through adult in the choice of media and presentation, much of which had a family theme.

Each Family Journey was attended by 50-80 people and all participants completed an evaluation of the experience before leaving. Most families attended at least twice during their participation in the program. It is particularly significant

that the Family Journey, along with length of time in the program, was the defining variable insuring successful completion. In so doing, it brought together both family and sexuality. It also confirmed the importance of sexuality in the forefront of each treatment component.

At its inception, the program invited a yearlong review of its philosophy and methodology by a group of clinical authorities outside the program staff, from the agency and from the wider communi-

The P/SA program at LSS is one of the most loving families I have ever had the opportunity to be a part of. I use the term "family," because I have gained love, respect, and the right to share my feelings, not only with my natural family, but also with families I never knew existed.

ty. The program also underwent a two-year review by the agency board to determine if it was in compliance with the theology of the Lutheran Church. The results of both studies were positive and supportive. The program was selected as one of nine top adolescent sex offender treatment programs in the nation in the first national study of all programs.

More cost effective than incarceration

The issue of cost is always a concern for government and agencies. Today, the cost per prisoner, without treatment, is \$80 a day or \$29,200 per year based on figures from the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Moose Lake's treatment program for incarcerated sex offenders costs \$310 per day or \$113,150 per year, per prisoner. Cost per day for an adolescent at the state training school at Red Wing is \$220 per day or \$80,333 per year.

In 1984, the last year covered by our study, the total cost of the P/SA program

was \$131,654, or \$5,064 per youth for services to them and to their families. In today's dollars, according to the consumer price index, the cost would be \$9,165 per youth. Perhaps we can assume the treatment results would be as positive as 20 years ago, or maybe better, as we refined our skills.

So where did the money come from? Sixty-seven percent of the funding came from Hennepin County; 11 percent from other counties; 11 percent from United Way and 10.6 percent from user fees. The program operated with a balanced budget. Presumably, with proof of success, the sources of funding would be similar today.

While the program continues today, it has been modified in terms of population served and no longer includes a critical sexual component (Family Journey) which contributed to successful completion and zero recidivism during its first eight years.

In closing, the vital importance of family is expressed in the words of one of the youth:

"The P/SA program at LSS is one of the most loving families I have ever had the opportunity to be a part of. I use the term 'family,' because I have gained love, respect, and the right to share my feelings, not only with my natural family, but also with families I never knew existed. ... The P/SA program was a very loving experience for me and I think everyone should have the chance to experience its knowledge of sexuality and its gift of loving yourself and others without hurting yourself or others."

The words of this youth confirm the reality of successful treatment for the sex offender as also expressed by federal research, Dwyer's analysis and the P/SA data, and thus answers the question "can sex offenders be treated" with a "yes!" **MJ**

Dr. William Seabloom is a psychotherapist in private practice and international consultant, and a co-author of "The Mended Heart: Predictors of Successful Completion, Subsequent Criminal Recidivism and Treatment Implications in a 14-24 Year Follow-up Study of a Comprehensive Sexual Health Model Treatment Program for Adolescent Sex Offenders." To obtain a copy of the study contact Dr. Seabloom at seabl003@tc.umn.edu or 651-415-0570.

TakeNote

Policy Tidbits

Twenty-nine million Americans live alone, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. *American Demographics* recently took a closer look at the lives of these Americans and found that 60 percent are over age 50, about 41 percent have a full-time job and 25 percent are divorced.

The statistics also show that 79 percent of people who live alone live in an urban area. A single-person household is 100 percent more likely than the average household to own a laptop computer, suggesting that technology diminishes loneliness. And television must provide good company since 60 percent of those who live alone are cable subscribers. Draw your own conclusions, but the statistics show an 87 percent increase in the number of people living alone in the past two decades.

www.americandemographics.com

Minnesota ranks near the bottom of the list in per-capita federal spending by state. Nevada ranked lowest, but Minnesota, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, and Indiana rounded out the bottom five. Alaska ranked highest, receiving \$12,000 in federal spending per person. Per-capita federal spending is impacted by things like the number of federal programs and federal employees located in the state. For instance, the states closest to the nation's capital and the Pentagon received top dollars for overall defense funding. States with larger populations of younger and older citizens draw more funds for federally mandated programs for children and seniors.

This information was released in early October by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data comes from two separate reports: "Consolidated Federal Funds" and "Federal Aid to States." www.stateline.org

The United States is an entrepreneur-friendly country, according to an article published in *The Regional Economist*. According to the article, Americans are almost twice as likely to prefer entrepreneurship over working for someone else. Several factors contribute to this mindset, the authors suggest. There is an intrinsic dynamism in the United States and willingness to take risks. Positive policy environments also affect the entrepreneurial spirit. There is tacit agreement that establishing a

business is a right of all Americans; the operation of the business is left up to entrepreneurs. Other countries impose regulations that take basic business decisions out of the hands of entrepreneurs. The World Bank catalogued cross-country differences in the process of establishing a business. In the U.S., there are fewer procedures and lower costs on business start ups, lower tax burdens, and the required amount of capital that entrepreneurs must have on hand is smaller. The article does mention potential weaknesses in the U.S.'s entrepreneurial environment, among them rising health care costs and environmental regulations.

www.stlouisfed.org

Same-sex marriage would reduce the deficit, according to the *Atlantic Monthly*. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that if America's approximately 600,000 cohabitating homosexual couples tied the knot and the federal government acknowledged their marriage, the effect on taxes and spending would cut the deficit by \$350 million to \$450 million annually over the next five years. Even though Social Security and health care spending would increase slightly with the new marriages, a large proportion of the new crop of joint tax filers would be hit with the marriage penalty, raising the government's share of their earnings. The new revenue would not have a significant impact on the federal budget, however, as the federal deficit is expected to hit \$445 billion for fiscal 2004.

www.theatlantic.com

Reading is at risk, according to a report from the National Endowment for the Arts. The drop in the percentage of the adult

American population reading literature is getting more dramatic. The rate has dropped 10 percent since 1982, but seven percent of that drop occurred over the last decade. Though Americans are reading less non-fiction than ever, fiction, plays, and poetry face the steepest decline in readership. Only 47 percent of Americans are reading "creative writing." Ironically, the number of people who claim to write fiction, plays, and poetry has risen from around 11 million in 1982 to nearly 15 million today. Consequently, seven percent of the adult population is currently writing for a diminishing pool of readers. www.theatlantic.com

Businesses that "do good" are more likely to do well. A national survey conducted by the public relations firm Golin-Harris International shows that Americans have increased expectations for companies on issues like the environment, pollution, education, human rights, and consumer rights. And consumers are willing to reward companies that place a strong emphasis on corporate citizenship.

According to the survey, 52 percent of Americans are "inclined to start or increase their business due to corporate citizenship," while 44 percent believe corporate citizenship is "heading in the wrong direction." McDonald's, Ben and Jerry's, Johnson & Johnson, Target, and the U.S. Postal Service ranked at the top of the list of companies with the best performance based on a series of 12 indicators deemed by consumers to be the most important determinants of good corporate citizenship. **MJ**

Take Note compiled by Amy Stenson and Citizens League staff.