



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 5, 2015

Feds Panic on Mass Common Core Test Refusals, Threaten Reprisals

Public resistance to Common Core is exploding across America, and officials are not happy about it. The Obama administration's Department of Education, along with pro-Common Core government officials across the country under pressure from the feds, appear to be in panic mode. Facing a [growing nationwide "opt out" movement to refuse participation](#) in the [unconstitutional federally funded testing regime](#) aligned with the [Obama-backed national school standards](#), senior bureaucrats, including Education Secretary Arne Duncan, have actually started resorting to lawless threats against parents, teachers, students, and entire state governments. Some parents were threatened by officials with jail time. Even small children are being punished by the state for "opting out" of the deeply controversial tests, with one California mother telling *The New American* that her daughter was publicly denied ice cream in retaliation.



But so far, the threats are only emboldening the opposition.

Perhaps the most outrageous threat so far came from Obama's education chief, Duncan, who [boasted in recent years of using government schools](#) to create "green citizens" with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) as a "global partner." Late last month, Duncan, who was greeted by protesters urging him to "stop test bullying," threatened federal intervention to force Americans to take the Common Core tests if states would not do the job. "We think most states will do that," Duncan proclaimed at an Education Writers Association conference in Chicago. "If states don't do that, then we [the federal government] have an obligation to step in." In reality, of course, the federal government has an obligation under the U.S. Constitution to butt out. But despite swearing an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution, including the 10th Amendment, Duncan has led the charge in recent years to finish federalizing the government school system — and to use it as what he called a "weapon" to "change to world."

Sounding oblivious to America's federalist system of constitutional government, Duncan proclaimed that he expected state governments to hold "districts' and schools' feet to the fire on this," as if state governments were mere administrative units to enforce decrees from the all-powerful federal executive branch. Hundreds of thousands of students in New York recently opted out. Almost nobody took the tests in some districts amid a full-scale uprising by teachers, students, and parents. In Chicago, [where](#)



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[even the teachers' union has blasted the federal takeover](#), school officials were threatened with the loss of more than \$1 billion in state and federal "education aid" if not enough students were successfully coerced into taking the Common Core-aligned tests. Still, few details were provided on what it might look like to have the Obama administration "step in" and force students to take the controversial tests — an outrageous threat he also made in a discussion with Motoko Rich of the *New York Times*.

Critics, however, ridiculed the threat, daring the administration to try it. "Assuming that Duncan is not planning to call in the National Guard to haul off opt-outing 8 year olds, the only possible 'sanction' would be withholding funds," observed Carol Burris, an award-winning New York principal who recently stepped down to fight back against what she sees as problems with the public education system. "That would surely lead to court challenges forcing the Education Department to justify penalizing schools when parents exercise their legitimate right to refuse the test — an impossible position to defend." Noting that students of all races and backgrounds were opting out of the testing scheme, Burris pointed out that the rates "defy the stereotype that the movement is a rebellion of petulant 'white suburban moms.'"

In a recent statement published by the *Washington Post*, the New York "2013 High School Principal of the Year" also highlighted a number of troubling government abuses targeting parents. Among other concerns, she said, citing activists and teachers, that administrators in some districts took advantage of non-English speaking parents by lying to them about the tests, saying they were mandatory or that children would be held back for refusal to take them. One critic called it "blatant discrimination at best." Burris also lambasted the Common Core tests and noted that Duncan's own children go to a non-Common Core school — as do the children of Common Core financier Bill Gates, and Common Core strongman Obama. She concluded the scathing commentary by noting that the movement to refuse the tests puts the entire "education reform" agenda in serious trouble.

Beyond targeting states and schools, education officials in some areas, responding to federal pressure, have strayed into the realm of potential criminal activity in seeking to boost participation in the tests. In one especially extreme case from Georgia, school officials, citing supposed "federal and state mandates" on the tests, said parents could not refuse to allow their children to take the tests. A meeting was scheduled for the parents to meet with the principal. However, when they arrived, they were met by a police officer, who reportedly warned them that they may be "trespassing" on school property due to their opposition to the testing regime. In the end, it was apparently sorted out without arrest, but the incident was deeply troubling to parents.

In South Carolina, education bureaucrats went even further. The officials reportedly warned parents that they could be imprisoned for 30 days for refusing to allow their children to participate in the national testing regime, which was mandated under the unconstitutional Bush-era No Child Left Behind scheme. According to news reports citing the group South Carolina Parents Involved in Education, South Carolina Education Department Chief Operating Officer Elizabeth Carpentier also threatened groups or organizations that encourage testing refusals with potential criminal charges of "aiding and abetting a crime." School officials cited in media reports downplayed the threats, saying that parents and groups were merely threatened with existing statutes on "truancy" for not sending children to school for the testing.

In California, mother Amy Watson and her husband decided that their 10-year-old daughter would not be taking the [unconstitutional federally funded Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium \(SBAC\) test](#). She was placed in an alternate classroom each testing day with other "opt out" students. In response to



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the refusal, though, on the day after testing was finished, “the three girls who opted out again were identified, ‘called out,’ and given instructions to go to the same classrooms as during SBAC testing,” Watson told *The New American*. “The girls were sent out so the ‘test takers’ could have an ice cream party. My daughter returned to her classroom with the trashcan full of empty ice cream containers. There were three ‘left over’ containers. The three opt-out students were not permitted to have them. These three containers were given to teachers instead.” The same thing happened to opt-out students in other grades, she added, calling it an “egregious act.”

Now, Watson has filed a privacy law-violation complaint with the U.S. Department of Education after her daughter and other opt-out students were “intentionally targeted.” The 10-year old is now fearful of additional retaliation from school officials, and Watson is seeking counseling for her daughter due to the emotional and psychological impact the targeting had on her. “I described the situation to the representative at the federal Department of Education,” Watson said. “He verified that ‘yes, this is a violation of FERPA [federal privacy law to protect students].’” The outraged mother is also in contact with attorneys and vowed to continue pursuing the case. Since the scandal, school officials have tried to downplay the incident as a “misunderstanding,” Watson said. But she is not buying it.

As the [rebellion against the unconstitutional Common Core testing regime continues to sweep across America](#) like wildfire, the Obama administration is certain to continue doing everything possible to stop it — including lawlessly threatening the American people. But despite those threats, as awareness of Common Core spreads, opposition will keep spreading as well. The testing regime is [crucial for enforcing Common Core](#), and for [gathering vast amounts of private data on students for the federal government](#). Without it, the widely criticized standards regime foisted on America by taxpayer-funded bribes from the Obama administration may well crumble.

The education establishment is now in a serious bind. On one hand, it can rip off the mask and resort to more outright lawlessness and tyranny in an effort to enforce compliance with its deeply unpopular machinations. Such a reaction would almost certainly backfire and produce even more public outrage and resistance. Alternatively, the Obama administration and its backers can risk having the entire Common Core scheme come crashing down around them by ignoring the mushrooming national movement to refuse the tests. Either way, the American people can still win the battle for education in the long run, if the pressure stays on.



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