



Written by [Brian Farmer](#) on May 3, 2013

TNA Interviews High-school Student and Conservative Activist Benji Backer

Political correctness in the world of academia is creating an environment that is becoming increasingly oppressive to students with a conservative world view. Teachers are becoming ever more brazen in their attempts to intimidate, harass, and bully students into accepting the liberal or progressive view of how society should operate. One particularly shocking example is that of Benji Backer (shown with 2012 Republican vice-presidential candidate Paul Ryan), a high-school student in Appleton, Wisconsin, who was featured in the local newspaper. When it was revealed that he was working the phones in support of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker during last year's recall election, Benji found himself on the receiving end of intense verbal abuse from several angry teachers. But the abuse had been going on even before then. *The New American* recently sat down with Benji, to find out what it's like being a conservative and politically active student in a liberal school system. Here is his story:



Q: How did you get so enthusiastically involved in politics at such a relatively young age?

A: I got involved when I was 10 years old. My parents were never involved, never active, and never shared their views with me. But when I was 10 years old, I decided that I was interested in politics when I watched the presidential debates [in 2008] and I thought it was really interesting. So, I decided to put yard signs in our yard and bumper stickers on our cars. My parents put up a little bit of a fight with that, because they were never really active and they didn't want their political views out there in front of our yard. In 2010, when I was 12 years old, I got involved with [Wisconsin State Assembly Representative, Republican] Roger Roth's campaign making phone calls and going door to door. Eventually I decided to get more involved in the election campaign and helped Scott Walker [Wisconsin Governor], Ron Johnson [U.S. Senator], and Reid Ribble [Congressman, Wisconsin's 8th District].

Q: Have you considered working with other political parties, such as the Libertarian Party and the Constitution Party?

A: I've worked for Republican Party candidates locally, even though I've been disappointed with some of the national Republican candidates and what they've been voting on. They have not been voting for conservative, Tea Party values that they supported in the past. It seems that they are just voting to get reelected. That has disappointed me, so I've decided to work for conservative organizations that are



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non-partisan.

Q: What do you think of Ron Paul?

A: I'm not the biggest Ron Paul fan, but I do like some of the things he stands for. Some of his supporters who I've met do not agree with some of the things I stand for. Rand Paul is someone who I really like a lot. I'm a strong conservative, so if there is a Republican candidate who is a strong conservative, then I will support him, like Scott Walker. I won't support someone just because he's a Republican. I consider myself to be a conservative, not just a Republican anymore.

Q: When you say that you are a conservative, what does that mean, in your mind, compared to what you view a liberal to be?

A: A conservative is someone who defends gun rights, the Second Amendment, defends every form of human life, is pro-life, someone who defends real marriage. I'm a little bit more moderate on the issue; I believe that if people want to be together then they can be together, but just don't call it marriage if it's not between a man and a woman. I believe in low taxes, small government, no budget deficit. We need to control government spending, unlike the liberals, who want to increase government spending. No real American, in my opinion, would want that. Liberals are anti-gun, pro-choice, which is one of the weirdest things you can say, to be pro-choice but you can't choose to have a gun. There are so many things out there that liberals don't want you to do. "Pro-choice" is not what you should use to talk about human life. Liberal positions are just so anti-American, which really frustrates me, so that's why I'm conservative.

Q: What influence did your parents have in developing your political views?

A: They did not have much effect. When I looked up the liberal and conservative views on the Internet, it seemed that the conservative side was best for me. They have always been conservative, but I didn't know that because they never showed it until after I became active. My parents are really proud of me, but they never told me what to believe. I disagree with them on some things and they disagree with me on some things, but that's how it is and they don't really care about that. My one sister and I disagree and my other sister and I disagree. They are fine with it, and they are always willing to drop me off when I want to volunteer, when I have a speech, or when I have an interview. They are always there to help me, because they believe in what I am doing.

Q: Given the liberal spin in academia and the mainstream media, how did you come to accept the conservative view?

A: I decided to go to the Internet because it is less biased and gives you more options to look at. But I am a conservative for a few reasons. I am a Tea Party supporter, because I like what they stand for. I think that small government, low taxes, rewarding successful people, and helping the poor are good ideas. I'm pro-life, pro-marriage, and believe in what my research revealed about conservatives.

Q: What is it about politics that attracts you, given all of the other choices that you have in high school?

A: I like politics because I feel that I can actually make a difference in the world. I believe that our country is heading in the wrong direction, and I feel that it needs leaders like Paul Ryan and young people like me across the country to help the country get back on the right track.

Q: When you took your eighth grade U.S. history class, how did your teacher and textbook present the principles upon which this nation was founded? Did you detect any kind of bias or spin?



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A: We spent a lot of time on the newer stuff, the 20th century and the 21st century, which in my opinion is not what we should have been so focused on in our history class. I did not really see any spin at that time, but they did not spend any time explaining why our country is so great and why the leaders of the country in the 1700s were so great. But I see all kinds of spin in other classes. I did not know that the United States was a republic until maybe a year ago. I'd say 90 percent of students don't know that and that's frustrating, because there's a big difference between [a republic and a democracy]. I mentioned that in [my article for Freedom Works](#). Most people think that we are a democracy and believe things that are different from what they actually are. I stood up in class a couple of times and said that we are a republic and not a democracy and the teacher said, "Well, that's the same thing." That kind of spin is in almost every class.

Q: What happens on September 17, Constitution Day, when the history of the Constitution is supposed to be recognized in American schools, according to an act of Congress passed in 2004? What has been your experience as a student?

A: I didn't even know that that was the day, honestly. There has never been any time put aside in any of my classes. We've never, ever, spent any time observing Constitution Day.

Q: What about United Nations Day?

A: I've never actually seen United Nations Day being talked about, but I have seen the United Nations being talked about a lot in our history classes and in our government classes, how it is such a great and peaceful organization. Liberals don't promote the American view; they promote the big government view. If you asked Americans if they are fiscally conservative, I believe that most would say that they are fiscally conservative. It's the leaders who want bigger government, and that's really what frustrates me. But the United Nations gets talked about a lot, because it comes up often on the CNN Student News channel in class, in films that we watch in class, in discussions from our textbooks, and they make it seem like such a great organization that's helping our world so much and that we would be much worse off if it did not exist.

Q: What about illegal immigration? Does there seem to be a particular point of view that is being promoted, when that topic is discussed in your classes?

A: Not as much as gay rights or abortion rights, but they do present America as this place where everyone should be welcome and that how it relates to jobs doesn't really matter. We're told that if we force out illegal immigrants then we are not being the country that we are supposed to be. In my view, the liberal view is that of a perfect world where people could marry whomever they want and choose to live any way they want and everyone could come into our country and how the government could help us out with everything and give us free things. It comes across really well to the students. Liberalism is sold as something perfect. But that's not possible without hard-working people and restrictions on who comes into our country. These are deep issues but the liberals don't go in depth, which is why I think we have so many troubles.

Q: The Wisconsin state legislature has passed legislation requiring schools to teach the history of the labor union movement. What has been your experience in that regard?

A: In my history class we spent maybe two days talking about the Constitution, but we seem to spend almost every day talking about labor unions. Teachers tell us about how great unions are and how they have been protecting people since the 1930s, so what is [Wisconsin Governor] Scott Walker thinking? In my article I talk a lot about the bias in the classroom and how it's protected by the labor unions, and the



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bullying I've received from teachers.

Q: Can you talk about when that bullying started happening and perhaps why it happened?

A: When I first started getting involved in politics, there was an article about me published in the newspaper, and one of my teachers took me aside one day and called me stupid, dumb, and weird. I was in seventh grade at the time, and she talked about it during class, after class, and after school. Sometimes the discussions were respectful, but sometimes they were disrespectful. And so we decided that I should get out of her class and switch schools. But the bullying and harassment never stopped, even after I switched schools. The teachers cried and complained that Scott Walker's budget repair bill would prevent them from being able to afford to have any more children. My English teacher talked for many months about how much he hated Scott Walker. He cursed and talked about how small business owners took days off, which was directed toward me, of course, because he told me that he worked harder than my dad, that my dad probably didn't work much during the summer and took off Fridays. But my father works through the summer, doesn't take Fridays off, and works on weekends. My teacher talked about how he had to paint houses during the summers. He told me one day that he worked harder than my dad and then asked me how much my parents made. I told him that I couldn't tell him, because I didn't know. Then I looked up his salary and found out that he was making \$105,000 in salary and benefits. That really shocked me that he complained how he struggled to support his family on \$105,000. So then I went down to the principal to talk with him about it. He seemed very disappointed and suggested that I go back and talk with the teacher about it and that he would talk with the teacher, too. So, I did and the teacher owned up to it and apologized, but he tried to get the last word in about Scott Walker. Then he inquired as to whether I had gone to the principal and I said that I had. He responded, "I don't give a s-t because the principal and I are good friends, so it really doesn't matter." So I told the principal about that, and he asked how the meeting went. I told him it was just horrible, because that teacher made me really upset and made my parents really upset and made other students really upset, because that teacher went on 45-minute rants about Scott Walker, even though the students wanted him to stop. The principal was upset and everyone was really upset. That was one of the main stories in my article. I've also had teachers call me racist and call Republicans racist. I've been called a weirdo because of my support for the Tea Party. It's been a roller coaster ride, for sure.

Q: Liberals and progressives love to talk about being tolerant and celebrating diversity, but when they confront the diversity that you project, they become intolerant. Have you or your classmates called out any of your teachers on their hypocrisy, and if so, how did the teacher react?

A: I've talked to many people, including the principal, about that, because the school observes a day of silence to protest bullying against gays. Many students did remain silent on that day, wore T-shirts supporting it, and it was publicized around the school. We even had a gay speaker in my English class talk about his experiences being bullied. Then the teacher stood up and told about how he had a gay nephew who never stands for the Pledge of Allegiance because he doesn't feel that he is living in a country with freedom and justice for all. Liberals want tolerance for gay people but not for conservatives, in the classroom or anywhere else.

Q: Is the bullying that you have experienced coming just from the teachers, or have you been bullied by some of your fellow students, too?

A: I've gotten a lot of negative remarks from students, especially after I was on FOX News and after my article appeared. I got a lot of criticism on social media sites, because my classmates don't want to talk with me face to face, which is kind of sad. It's worse with the upper-class students, who don't know me



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as well as the students in my own class. The bullying isn't as bad as what I've been getting from my teachers, but some of my classmates have accused me of being racist and homophobic.

Q: Have you received any support from your classmates?

A: I've gotten support from many fellow classmates in the freshman class. The criticism is always going to be more vocal than the support, but I have gotten support and respect for what I'm doing from some of my liberal classmates and even from some of my liberal teachers, because they believe that bullying and what has been happening to me is wrong. Some people have been encouraged by what I have been doing and want to get involved, which gives me a good feeling.

Q: You mentioned that you got some support from the principal. Do you think that might indicate that the administrators might have a different point of view, compared to the teachers?

A: The media sources that interviewed me said that they had spoken with the assistant superintendent of schools and that he claimed that he did not know about my situation or my article, which was a huge lie. The School Board is looking into my claims. We'll see how that goes, but the administrators are obviously liberal [the superintendent of schools signed the Walker recall petition]. I believe that the investigation will be unbiased; otherwise, it's going to make them look pretty bad.

Q: Are there any questions that I have not asked that you would like to address? Are there any other remarks that you would like to make?

A: There is one thing that I would like to mention and that is that I have a Balanced Classroom Act out right now. We just released it in an orientation for Turning Point USA. It's a resolution to be put forward in school districts or statewide. It calls for no political bias in the classroom, indoctrination has to end, and the only time teachers should discuss politics in a non-curriculum way is in a civics or history class, and it has to be non-biased. If there is a research paper out there for an English class and the teacher needs to talk about it as part of the curriculum, then that's OK. But if a student complains about a teacher being biased or indoctrinating or bullying a student about the teacher's political views, then the school would look into it immediately and take the appropriate action against that teacher. That is out at turningpointusa.net and it's something that you can sign a petition for and have it forwarded to your school board and state legislators. We really need to stand up to this stuff in the classroom, because it just should not be happening.

Photo of Benji Backer with 2012 Republican vice-presidential candidate Paul Ryan: benjibacker.com



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