

An Open Letter to Republican Leaders

By Samuel Blumenfeld

As a conservative Republican, I was greatly disappointed by the defeat of Gov. Mitt Romney in his bid for the Presidency. I considered him to be the logical and sensible choice between a radical community organizer with a dismal record of governance and a seasoned entrepreneur with executive political experience capable of reviving the American economy. The choice could not have been clearer. But a little more than half the voting public didn't see it that way.

What caused Romney's loss? Having spent the last forty years writing about the failures of our education system, it seems to me that much of public ignorance about simple economics is the result of wholesale miseducation, and it is obvious that miseducation affects how people vote.

Also, the changing demographics of the U.S. population means that there are many Americans who do not know how this country was founded and have not read the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States. They only know the "now" of American culture. Without knowing our historical past, they have no sense of the future.

Our Founding Fathers had a profound sense of the future, and they often spoke of their posterity and how what they were doing would affect many future generations. They had a long-range view of the future. But we Republicans are guilty of having tolerated an education system controlled by secular progressives that has destroyed the future for millions of young Americans. We have been critical of the public schools, but our solution has been to get our own children out of them.

But this has got to change. We can no longer afford public schools that refuse to teach all children to read. We cannot afford the luxury of widespread illiteracy if we are to compete in the global economy.

In 1988, Arthur Sulzberger, publisher of the *New York Times*, told his fellow newspaper publishers: "Today up to 60 million Americans—one third of the adult population—cannot read their local newspaper. As we edge closer to the 21st century, life is becoming more complex and will become more difficult for adults who cannot read."

In 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that only 13 percent of American adults are highly literate, 56 percent have intermediate literacy skills, and that 43 percent of American adults are virtually illiterate. How can we continue to tolerate this Progressive-induced insanity?

In 2007, the National Endowment for the Arts released its own survey of literacy in the United States. According to its report, *Reading at Risk*, the number of 17-year-olds who never read for pleasure increased from 9 percent in 1984 to 19 percent in 2004. Almost half of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 never read books for pleasure. Endowment chairman, Dana Gioia, commented: "This is a massive social problem. We are losing the majority of the new generation. They will not achieve anything close to their potential because of poor reading."

In other words, we are talking about a huge illiterate or semi-literate underclass in the United States, most of whom live in our urban areas. They were made that way by our public schools! Generally they have little interest in politics and don't vote. But sometimes they do vote, and that's what they did in this last election. Trained community organizer Barack Obama knew how to get these illiterates to the polls, and it made the difference in some crucial counties.

So what are we Republicans to do? If we want to win future national elections, we have got to stop the creation of new illiterates by the public schools and help adult illiterates learn to read. We must become the party of universal literacy. This can be done by launching a *Campaign for Universal Literacy*. The Party that abolished slavery ought to be able to abolish illiteracy.

We can abolish illiteracy by promoting the adoption of a reading program that teaches everybody to read. I produced such a program. It is called *Alpha-Phonics*, and since the 1980s it has been used by thousands of homeschoolers to teach their children to read. If a parent can do the job at home, why can't a teacher do it in the classroom?

Noah Webster, back in the early days of the republic, made America the most literate nation on earth with his little *Blue-Backed Speller*. We can do the same today with *Alpha-Phonics*, provided we use the power of the Republican Party to mobilize an army of young conservative activists to get these books into the hands of those who need them most: the parents of failing children. This is also a way to bring new members into the party from a large group of citizens who would welcome our attention and concern. We cannot ignore a third of our citizens who desperately need our help. Indeed, we can change America by providing that help.

Such a *Campaign for Universal Literacy* would be the noblest endeavor ever undertaken by a political party. It would give Republicans the opportunity to help millions of illiterate Americans, young and old, learn to read. By making this end run around the Democrats and their educationist allies, we would not only give millions of citizens the priceless gift of literacy, but also enable them to read the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

Our Founding Fathers embarked on the noblest political enterprise in all of human history when they created a form of government based on principles that gave human beings the freedom to create the greatest, richest, and most successful nation in all of history. This legacy also belongs to those millions of children who cannot read our founding documents because our secular progressive schools have turned them into illiterates. This has got to stop!

**The Republican Party abolished slavery.
It should now launch a campaign to abolish illiteracy!**

Sam Blumenfeld is the author of ten books on education, including: *The New Illiterates*, *How to Tutor*, *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*, *Is Public Education Necessary?* and *Alpha-Phonics: A Primer for Beginning Readers*.

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Note from Internet Publisher: Donald L. Potter

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I received the above "Open Letter to the Republican Party" from Mr. Blumenfeld on November 26, 2012. It is not my practice to become involved in partisan politics on my website, www.donpotter.net. As far as I am concerned, Democrats should be as concerned about the rampant illiteracy in America as Republicans, and I figure most are.

I would like to comment on the following very important paragraph.

We can abolish illiteracy by promoting the adoption of a reading program that teaches everybody to read. I produced such a program. It is called *Alpha-Phonics*, and since the 1980s it has been used by thousands of homeschoolers to teach their children to read. If a parent can do the job at home, why can't a teacher do it in the classroom?

I am in complete agreement with every word in the above paragraph. I have 28 years teaching experience in public and private education. It has been my privilege and joy to teach children to read with several excellent phonics programs. Quite frankly, I know of no program that is better than *Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics* for leading students to high levels of reading, spelling, and writing achievement. It is extremely easy to learn to teach successfully and as foolproof as it gets.

I deeply appreciate the facts that Mr. Blumenfeld has gone far beyond mere criticism of the current situation. He offers an inexpensive solution that has an enviable track record of success with students from a wide spectrum of cultural, linguistic, and racial backgrounds.

Please visit my *Samuel. L. Blumenfeld Reading Clinic* page on my website for more information on Mr. Blumenfeld definitive plan to solve the illiteracy problem in America.

http://donpotter.net/reading_clinic.html

I agree with Mr. Blumenfeld that taking up the crusade to eliminate illiteracy in America through phonics-first would be a supremely noble enterprise for the Republican Party. But I should hope that our Democratic friends would put aside partisan pride and the wrong headed educational policies that have created the problem in the first place and join us in *The Campaign for Universal Literacy*.