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March 11, 2016

The Honorable Nikki Haley
Office of the Governor
South Carolina State Capitol
1205 Pendleton St.
Columbia, SC 29201-3756

Dear Governor Haley:

ACTA's latest report, *A Crisis in Civic Education* (enclosed), makes the extent of our nation's problem with civic illiteracy abundantly clear. Over half of college graduates in a recent survey failed to identify the procedure for ratifying a constitutional amendment, and nearly half could not correctly identify the term lengths for members of Congress.

The consequences of such ignorance are now playing out on college campuses. In the enclosed article, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Kathleen Parker cites ACTA's findings, which show that only 18% of the over 1,100 colleges and universities surveyed require the study of American history or government. Parker notes that higher education's "coddling culture" fails to help students understand such foundational concepts of our free society as the First Amendment.

As governor, you have the power to reverse this trend. One of those duties of those appointed as trustees of public universities in your state should be to ensure that their schools require the study of U.S. history or government.

We would be delighted to help you in this regard. ACTA has produced educational programs for trustees across the country and has provided higher education policy briefings to groups including the National Governors Association, the Republican Governors Association, and the Democratic Governors Association.

For more information, please visit our website at www.GoACTA.org or contact our Director of Trustee Programs, Armand Alacbay, at aalacbay@goacta.org.

Thank you for your service to higher education.

Warm regards,

Anne D. Neal
President

Enclosures

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The Washington Post

By: KATHLEEN PARKER | November 24, 2015

For thin-skinned students, we have nobody to blame but ourselves

It would be easy to call protesting college students crybabies and brats for pitching hissy fits over hurt feelings, but this likely would lead to such torrents of tearful tribulation that the nation's university system would have to shut down for a prolonged period of grief counseling.

Besides, it would be insensitive.

Instead, let me be the first to say: It's not the students' fault. These serial tantrums are direct results of our Everybody Gets a Trophy culture and an educational system that, for the most part, no longer teaches a core curriculum, including history, government and the Bill of Rights.

The students simply don't know any better.

This isn't necessarily to excuse them.

Everyone has a choice whether to ignore a perceived slight — or to form a posse. But as with any problem, it helps to understand its source. The disease, I fear, was auto-induced with the zealous pampering of the American child that began a few decades ago.

The first sign of the epidemic of sensitivity we're witnessing was when parents and teachers were instructed never to tell Johnny that he's a "bad boy," but that he's "acting" like a bad boy.

Next, Johnny was handed a blue ribbon along with everyone else on the team even though he didn't deserve one. This had the opposite effect of what was intended. Rather than protecting Johnny's fragile self-esteem, the prize undermined Johnny's faith in his own perceptions and judgment. It robbed him of his

ability to pick himself up when he fell and to be brave, honest and hardy in the face of adversity.

Self-esteem is earned, not bestowed.

Today's campuses are overrun with little Johnnys, their female counterparts and their adult enablers. How will we ever find enough fainting couches?

Lest anyone feel slighted so soon, this is also not to diminish the pain of racism (or sexism, ageism, blondism or whatever -ism gets one's tear ducts moistened). But nothing reported on campuses the past several weeks rises to the level of the coerced resignations of a university chancellor and president.

The affronts that prompted students to demand the resignations include: a possibly off-campus, drive-by racial epithet apparently aimed at the student body president; another racial epithet, hurled by a drunk white student; a swastika drawn with feces in a dorm restroom.

Someone certainly deserves a spanking — or psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud had plenty to say about people who play with the products of their alimentary canal.

But do such events mean that students have been neglected, as protesters have charged? Or that the school tolerates racism?

Concurrent with these episodes of outrage is the recent surge on campuses of "trigger warnings" in syllabuses to alert students to content that might be upsetting, and "safe spaces" where students can seek refuge when ideas make them uncomfortable. It seems

absurd to have to mention that the purpose of higher education is to be challenged, to be exposed to different views and, above all, to be exhilarated by the exercise of free speech — other people's as well as one's own.

The marketplace of ideas is not for sissies, in other words. And it would appear that knowledge, the curse of the enlightened, is not for everyone.

The latter is meant to be an observation, but on many college campuses today, it seems to be an operating principle. A recent survey of 1,100 colleges and universities found that only 18 percent require American history or government, where such foundational premises as the First Amendment might be explained and understood.

The survey, by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, assesses schools according to whether they have at least one required course in composition, foreign

language at the intermediate level, American government or history, economics, science, mathematics and literature. Coincidentally, the very institutions where students are dominating what passes for debate also scored among the worst: University of Missouri, D; Yale University, C; Dartmouth College, C; and Princeton University, C — all for requiring only one or a few of the subjects. Amherst College scored an F for requiring none of them.

Such is the world we've created for young people who soon enough will discover that the world doesn't much care about their tender feelings. But before such harsh realities knock them off their ponies, we might hope that they redirect their anger. They have every right to despise the coddling culture that ill prepared them for life and an educational system that has failed to teach them what they need to know.

Weep for them — and us.