

CONCERNED WOMEN *for* AMERICA

The truth will set you free! Vanity Fair reporter Caleb Ecarma in a recent article [“How the Right is Turning Political Paranoia into ‘Parents’ Rights”](#) skews and takes out of context comments made by Penny Nance, CEO and President of Concerned Women for America, to the reporter directly and on a panel discussion at CPAC. We want to set the record straight and give everyone the full context of the questions and answers.

Mr. Ecarma: What most concerns you about the current American education system and cultural climate as it pertains to children?

Penny Nance: Our children [are falling behind](#) in basic educational skills, especially in math and science. Fundamentals are being replaced by some teachers and administrators in favor of gender theory, sex education, critical race theory, and Marxist ideology.

Mr. Ecarma: You and your co-panelists yesterday discussed the lack of humanity and dignity within the schools shaping the next generation of Americans. As a former K-12 homeschooler myself, I’ve been hearing more and more stories from parents looking to raise their children in a similar fashion. Do you think that more conservative parents should consider homeschooling right now, even if just as a stop-gap measure while conservative advocates like yourself work to change schools?

Penny Nance: Parents are desperate for their children to receive a quality education, but they are also appalled to learn that radical ideologues are callously overstepping their authority by undermining parents’ ability to protect their children. Any adult, even a teacher or school administrator who says, “don’t tell your parents” is not looking after a child’s best interest.

We support what parents want which is educational opportunities tailored to each child’s individual needs. CWA is very enthusiastic about Education Savings Accounts that have been passed in ten states with more looking at this option for parents to use their tax dollars to choose the school that best fits the needs of their child. Although homeschooling is a good option for some families, it’s not a possible alternative for others. As a working mom, my children attended private Christian school but it’s expensive and I grieve that it’s out of reach for many other families. My friend, whose child struggles due to special needs, literally moved in order for her child to attend a public school district that was better able to serve her child. Open enrollment would allow parents to choose from any school in their area. Our point is that families should be able to choose from a range of options: public, private, Jewish Day school, Christian, STEM charter school, home tutors, or homeschooling. No child should be trapped in a substandard school due to their zip code. My friend, Virginia Lt. Gov. Winsome Sears, says, “The new redline is the zip codes that trap poor children in failing schools.” Parents are most able to determine what’s best for their children. The money should follow the child instead of being controlled by government bureaucracies that don’t know that child. When parents are able to choose, eventually the failing schools will either rise to meet the challenge or close and be replaced by better options.

Mr. Ecarma: On the stage yesterday, you mentioned that the old gods, Baal and Moloch, are being revived in America. Do you believe this is a literal manifestation—that these religions are on the rise again and that people shaping the culture serve them—or something else?

Penny Nance: I was referencing a recent piece written by Naomi Wolf. I am quite sure the people working to expose small children to graphic, sexually explicit material don't think they are serving a pagan god or that they are damaging children, but this new culture is a cult or replacement religion where they find acceptance and belonging. Unfortunately, the Christian Church has not been there for them. As C.S. Lewis said there is a God shaped vacuum in every person, and that vacuum will be filled by something. Tim Keller wrote a book called "Counterfeit Gods" that talks about how as humans we can't help but replace God with our own version: money, fame, power, sex, drugs, alcohol. But for some it is less obvious. I believe that "gender warriors" have found their new religion, but it's not new; it's actually old. Gnosticism, which was fought by the early Christians, believed that the body and spirit were completely separate. Christianity says that you are to worship God, body, mind, and spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Add to the mix that shockingly Satanism, although rare, is becoming more openly practiced. Satanists insist abortion is part of worship. The Old Testament Canaanites sacrificed their children to Baal. How is this different? Purposefully grooming a child, breaking down their innate sense of modesty and working to introduce confusion and chaos into their little minds is abusive. The smug community of educators who feel powerful by pulling one over on parents serve darkness whether they know it or not.

Mr. Ecarma: It is often said that the Reagan revolution began at PTA meetings and school boards. Do you believe a similar nationwide movement is taking place right now? And can you detail some of the work you're doing to change what is being taught in American schools?

Penny Nance: The new freedom revolution began during Covid lockdowns at kitchen tables as parents witnessed both the lack of basic education being taught and in its place, children being served up gender ideology, critical race theory, and Marxist philosophy. Maybe some parents are okay with teachers suggesting that their elementary school child should consider with which of 72 genders they identify and conspiring to keep parents in the dark. Those parents are welcome to keep the status quo. But most parents want the ability to choose wisely for their children whom they love more than life itself. We are urging moms to be aware of what is being taught to their children, women to run for school board, and most importantly, to speak up and advocate for educational freedom. We are working in every state to break the education monopoly by passing laws that create the ability for the money to follow the child.

Mr. Ecarma: If a Republican candidate wins the next presidential election, what would you like to see them change in regard to schools and parental rights once they are in power?

Penny Nance: Education is primarily a state and local issue, but to the extent that the federal government is involved, it needs to return jurisdiction of the schools to parents and incentivize schools to better accomplish their mission. I speak to teachers regularly who are deeply dissatisfied with the status quo. Educational reform is to the benefit of hardworking teachers as well as families.