



Just in case it matters to you:

CLIENT / CONTACT BULLETIN 10-06

- "IT IS HARD TO KEEP A STRONG DEMOCRACY WITH A CITIZENRY THAT IS INCREASINGLY UNEDUCATED AND ILL INFORMED... American schools have been slipping for decades (now 32nd internationally in math scores, 12th in reading, 10th in science) and it will be impossible to rebuild our economy – to create the sophisticated, high-paying jobs we need – as long as we have an archaic, industrial-age school system." But we do. Teachers unions and their political minions continue to be a negative, reactionary force through limits on school choice, classroom time, course assignments, and in absolute rejection of teacher evaluation or accountability. In New York, school authorities are "forbidden by state law to evaluate teachers by using test results," while the NYC Union "makes it nearly impossible to fire a teacher – even one accused of a crime, drug addiction or flagrant misbehavior. The miscreants are stashed in 'rubber rooms' at full pay, for years, while the union pleads their cases." Last year's federal 'Stimulus' package included a \$4.35 billion fund available to states "on the basis of their willingness to reform their schools" but, since teacher accountability is one of the requirements, the New York union is actually "thwarting" the state's claim for \$700M of funding. It's sad and shameful. [TIME – Feb 8, 10]
- ANOTHER PROFOUND DIMENSION OF THE DEFICIENT EDUCATION PROBLEM is that today's teens and tweens spend "literally every waking moment outside of school" consuming media. A recent study of 2,000 kids between ages 8 and 18 by Kaiser Family Foundation found them spending a daily average of 7-1/2 hours "on the internet, watching TV, listening to music on MP3 players, texting, or using some other electronic device... and, because of multitasking, actually consuming close to 11 hours worth of content in that time." Although 30% said their parents "set limits on the use of electronic devices," around half admitted they use media regularly when doing homework – and (big surprise!) the study found "those who spent the most time consuming media had markedly poorer grades and more behavior problems." It's now the "Always-on Generation...as the grip of digital diversions is now complete." [THE WEEK – Feb 5, 10]
- IN DESPARATION FOR REVENUES, CALIFORNIA HAS INCREASED MOST TRAFFIC VIOLATION FEES PRETTY DRAMATICALLY. Beware: Parking in a bus-loading zone fine is now \$976; same for Unlawful Disabled Parking with 2nd offense now up to \$1,876. \$214 for missing 'complete' stop at a sign, and \$436 if it's a red light. \$328 if speeding 16 to 25 miles over the limit. \$178 for window tinting or wearing a headset or earplugs over both ears. \$148 for not buckling your seatbelt, using a wireless device to read or text, and for using a non-hands-free cellphone (with 2nd offense now \$256). Also, failure to show "evidence of financial responsibility insurance" now gets a \$796 citation. The cost of regulation is expensive...
- POLITICAL CORRECTNESS SURGES ON: A British government-run jobs center recently notified a company that "it could get sued for discriminating against *unreliable people*, after rejecting it's ad specifying that 'applicants must be very reliable and hard working'."



- AMAZING NEW TECHNOLOGY: vPike.com provides Google street views, driving directions, maps, and panoramic photos of areas, including a simulated drive-by of your planned route. Check out their [You Tube Video](#).
- THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK:
"It is better to be a failure at something you love than to be a success at something you hate." - George Burns

Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp is the quasi-gov't agency which insures payouts to (predominantly union) workers when their company goes bust without having funded pension obligations. At the end of 2008, potential losses approximated \$47B. A year later, the liability has increased more than 3-1/2 times to \$168B. Another looming bailout.