

Education Is The Key

Sometimes when researching what seems like the obvious, one finds a complete outlier that dispels all of one's preconceived notions. While looking for a list of the countries that had the highest number of college graduates per capita, I came across a few surprises. In my preconceived notion, I would have put all five of the Scandinavian countries in the top ten. It is clear that I missed that day of schooling.

Turns out, Russia leads the pack of the most college graduates by population. Following along behind Russia are: Canada, Japan, Israel, United States, Korea, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Ireland. Wow, I really proved my lack of knowledge there, not a Scandinavian country in the bunch.

The news carries the announcement today that during President Obama's administration, high school graduates have risen once again. The White House announced today that the highest high school graduation rate set a record at 83.2% for the 2014-2015 school year. The report also states wide disparities between the white graduation rate and blacks and Latinos, but all groups have advanced during the Obama administration. More high school graduates equals more college candidates.

My interest in higher education is multi-pronged. First off, it's just more fun to talk to educated people. There's a lot more to learn. Next is a concern for where the United States will find itself in the next decade or so if we don't keep up with the other countries in terms of educating our youth. It's very easy to see how multi-national companies would be more interested in placing regional offices in countries where there is an educated populace.

My next big concern is for the long term well being of our country. Generally speaking, the better educated people are more tolerant. They realize that while others may have different life experiences, those life experiences don't disqualify them from being good citizens, neighbors, friends or even family.

Many on the far side believe that education is the problem, not the solution. They believe that only by keeping their children in the dark regarding disparate views to their own that they are keeping their children pure to the family's belief systems. I say give them all of the views there are and then let the child prove or disprove the theories as an exercise in academic discipline. If man has only been on the Earth for six thousand years, gather the evidence and present the proof. "I believe" is not a proof. I might believe three plus four equals eight, but I am certainly unable to prove it.

Ensuring our children get the best education possible is one of the most important challenges facing a parent. We can see from the list above that four other countries are guaranteeing that their children are better able to negotiate the future than the United States. The fact that the United States is fifth on the list in spite of the enormous debt placed on the students and parents is

remarkable.

For all of those who want to "Make America Great Again", and are determined to make the U.S. number one in every measurement, can there be a better place than college graduates? Of course we'd have to make education from pre-K through graduate school free to all to attain the number one spot, but isn't that a small price to pay for world dominance?