

the NEW TRIER NEWS



Parents challenge “agenda” of All School Seminar

Parents take to social media and news sources to debate Seminar Day

by Maggie Curry

New Trier’s all-school seminar day coming up on Feb. 28th, about civil rights, has gotten the attention of Breitbart, Illinois Family Institute, and even the Chicago Tribune as controversy over the content of the day raises concerns for some parents.

A parent Facebook group was created called “New Trier Parents Seminar Day Review” and changed to “Seminar Day Discussion.”

The group was public but is now a closed group with 159 members. According to the Facebook page, the group caters to “people who care about the Seminar Day Program at New Trier.”

The Illinois Family Institute published an article written by Laurie Higgins on Jan 10. headlined, “New Trier High School Avoids Diversity Like the Plague.”

In this article, Higgins provided summaries of the seminars, along with a section she called, “What Can Parents Do?” In that section, Higgins advised parents to file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the names of teachers leading seminars.

Higgins said this would help disrupt the day because “leftist teachers depend on their

anonymity, autonomy, and absence of accountability to exploit their positions.”

Ten FOIA requests were made to the school from seven individuals. Each request had several individual requests within them, totaling over 50 requests, according to Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations at Northfield Campus, Christopher Johnson.

On Feb. 3, the Chicago Tribune also published an article about the seminar day, headlined, “New Trier High School parents debate planned civil rights seminar.”

Members of the Facebook group expressed concerns about students being manipulated and having one-sided viewpoints forced onto them, but many members wanted change made to the day rather than getting rid of the day altogether.

Marianne Holzhall, a member of the group, said, “The goal should be to have the students walk out thinking, ‘What skills can I use to solve this problem?’ And not ‘I am a bad person because of my racial and socioeconomic classification.’”

Other parents felt the day was a good opportunity. Member Heather Pigott said, “You are not giving our students enough credit. Those of you who feel this seminar is too one-sided have surely shared your feelings/positions with your children-- send your kid to seminar day and let them bring that perspective into the discussion. The whole point of the day is to get students thinking and talking about race.”

Senior Jimmy Lipsey expressed



Novelist Colson Whitehead will be a keynote speaker at the Winnetka Campus at this year’s All School Seminar Day on Feb. 28 | colsonwhitehead.com

similar opinions to Pigott when he signed up for the Microaggressions seminar because he didn’t agree with it.

Lipsey said, “I’m interested to hear what they have to say and I think I’m gonna bring an opposing perspective to that, which might not be exactly what the day is for. But if they’re making me come to school, I’ll do with it what I please.”

Assistant Superintendent Tim Hayes said that he has heard more positive feedback about the day from parents than negative. He also

said that teachers and staff had heard from students that “this is a topic that they’re interested in, but it’s very difficult to talk about it because what you see in the media and online is when adults start to talk about it. They generally just start arguing with one another and there’s not a lot of discussion actually happening.”

Junior Liam Murphy attended half the day last year, but left early. He said the day was “beneficial in some aspects, but to have an entire day dedicated to it seemed a little extreme to me.”

He said it would have been better to have a variety of opinions and to have these topics integrated into regular school days.

Senior Callie Fauntleroy said she was one of the first girls in her advisory to register, but she also sent an email to the parentsofnewtrier.org in response to posts on the Facebook page. She has yet to hear back yet.

She said, “I was very shocked and pretty disgusted and altogether ashamed that people would protest the seminar day.”

The website, Parents of New Trier, that Fauntleroy emailed was established this year. The subtitle of the website is “Because New Trier’s All School Seminar Day is Biased, Unbalanced, Divisive, and Costly.”

The website advises people to write to the board, attend board meetings, and suggest alternative presenters. There’s a page dedicated to panelists suggested to create a more balanced point of view for the day. There’s also a link to a petition to “Balance - or else suspend - New Trier’s Seminar Day on race.” The number of signatures and names of signers is not open for the public to view.

Another petition to show support for the seminar day was also made. This petition has accumulated 2,306 signatures.

Fauntleroy stated, “By wanting to get rid of this day, you might as well have said ‘let’s make a petition to rid the school of the civil rights movement.’”

Trump administration wastes no time with executive orders

Trump gains media attention by signing 22 executive orders in first 14 days

by Georgia Caras

In every presidency, the first 100 days are known to be the most momentous in shaping the President’s focus for the next four years.

As week three of the Trump administration comes to a close, President Trump has already hit the ground running with a flurry of executive actions that define what America can expect from him for the next four years.

As of Feb. 7, Trump has signed 22 executive actions, some more publicized than others.

In terms of how this number compares to past presidencies, AP Political Science teacher Alex Zilka said, “It’s typical for a President to issue executive orders when they come into office. I think what has been unusual about this presidency is the number of executive orders has been more than past administrations in the first couple weeks.”

President Barack Obama signed 19 executive orders in his first 100 days as president.

The content of these orders, “Are dealing more with partisan, more polarizing, and more sensitive



Trump has kicked off his presidency by signing 22 executive actions | flickr

issues than we’ve seen in the past,” said Zilka. “Typically, the executive orders people issue in the first couple weeks are often dealing with bureaucratic management and small types of issues that don’t really receive a lot of public attention,” he stated.

Trump’s first executive order was signed on the day of his inauguration, and paved the way to repeal the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan later made a statement on the issue, stating that a plan to replace the ACA will be developed before it is repealed.

Trump’s first order to catch media attention was signed on Jan. 24, and approved building the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines.

The order required that all materials for future pipelines be manufactured in the United States. The construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline has been under scrutiny for the past few months because of its proximity to the land of the Sioux tribe. Its building was halted by President Obama in his last month in office.

On Jan. 25th, the Trump administration attracted media attention after signing an executive

order to cut funding to sanctuary cities, which are cities that choose not to prosecute illegal immigrants for violating federal immigration laws.

The text of the order declares its purpose is, “to ensure the public safety of the American people in communities across the United States.”

Some sanctuary cities, including San Francisco, have begun suing Trump over the order, claiming it to be unconstitutional.

Trump’s most publicized order yet was signed on Jan. 27, titled “Executive Order protecting the nation from foreign terrorist entry into the United States.”

The order placed a ban on people from 7 majority-Muslim countries from entering the U.S. for 90 days, except for Syria, which is banned for an indefinite amount of time.

The barred countries are Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, and Syria.

On Feb. 3, U.S. District Court Judge James Robart suspended the ban, declaring it unconstitutional. This decision was taken to the The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for review.

On Sunday, the court denied the U.S. government’s emergency request to resume with the ban. The circuit court asked both sides to file briefs before a decision is made.

Along with executive orders, the first 100 days mark the period of

determination for the makeup of the federal government’s 15 different executive departments. For these departments, there are nearly 700 positions that require a nomination from Trump and a confirmation from the Senate. As of Feb. 7, there are 657 positions awaiting nomination, 28 awaiting Senate approval, and seven that have already been confirmed.

As of Feb. 7, the confirmed department secretaries are Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State, General Jim Mattis for Department of Defense, General John F. Kelly for Department of Homeland Security, Elaine Chao for Department of Transportation, Michael Pompeo for the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education. Additionally, Nikki Haley has been confirmed as the U.S. representative to the United Nations.

In addition to bureaucratic nominations, on Jan. 31, President Trump put forth a nomination to fill the ninth seat of the Supreme Court. The seat has been vacant since late Justice Antonin Scalia’s death on Feb. 13, 2016. To take Scalia’s place, President Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch, who is currently a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

If confirmed, Gorsuch, 49, will become the youngest justice to ever serve.