



John Skretta

## Fwd: Groene email exchange

Bert Peterson &lt;br\_peterson@charter.net&gt;

Thu, Jan 19, 2017 at 10:47 AM

[REDACTED]

This is the series of emails with Senator Groene - rather than trying to answer each request for the transcript - I should have included this for everyone - sorry.

Bert

----- Forwarded Message -----

**Subject:**Re: Grand Island Independent - Guest Op Ed  
**Date:**Sat, 11 Jul 2015 21:44:41 -0500  
**From:**Mike Groene <mgroene@leg.ne.gov>  
**To:**Bert Peterson [REDACTED]

By all means. Bye. I just wish you really meant it!

On Sat, Jul 11, 2015 at 8:42 PM, Bert Peterson <br\_peterson@charter.net> wrote:  
 Like I said - Bye!

On 7/11/2015 8:31 PM, Mike Groene wrote:

My influence is growing. I use sound research, I do not reference the work of a corrupt international agency (UNICEF), or data gathered by those who directly profit from the taxpayers dollars (NSEA or any School Administers organization).

Since the sixty's we have allowed the animals (educators) to run the Zoo. They took care of themselves. It is time for the citizens to take back their schools and remind the employees, if you don't like it, Wal-mart is hiring.

The facts are true, Work hard, take advantage of a free education, personal responsibility, and respect others and you will not live in poverty no matter where you started from.  
 That is the message I tell youth. It resonates with them, because they do not hear it from educators. I tell them there are no excuses.

On Sat, Jul 11, 2015 at 5:12 PM, Bert Peterson [REDACTED] wrote:

I was a big fan of Ayn Rand when I was in high school. But by the time I got to college and worked as a police officer I quickly learned that there are no supermen in this world only fools that believe they

are the "defenders of freedom." You are an elected official and I will send you anything that I believe you should know - please use your spam filter if you wish to remain ignorant of your job on the ed committee. I'm sure they out vote you regularly.

Bye -- Bert

On 7/11/2015 4:49 PM, Mike Groene wrote:

It seems I got under your skin as I planned. I have an economics degree. The difference between me and you is I am a doer and you are a talker.

In the future keep your hateful, mean, comments to yourself. I do not represent you and I resent you trying to influence a senator who is not from your district.

I understand where you are coming from, that if Americans just turned the country over to the self appointed intellectual class we would be better off. Read Atlas Shrugged for starters, you would fit right into the ruling class in that great work of fiction. You should run for office, but I suppose that the average Nebraskan would not be able to comprehend your superior intellect! Besides it would be beneath a great mind like yours.

On Sat, Jul 11, 2015 at 10:53 AM, Bert Peterson [REDACTED] wrote:

You said that you always know when you have won an argument by being called names -- so far you have called me a jerk, a progressive, a socialist, not a defender of freedom and a coward; all with absolutely no information about me. It should be clear to you who is winning the discussion.

You don't know me, you know nothing about me. In fact I and my political views are irrelevant to the facts I have presented and you ignore. You know nothing about me and are just trying to divert this conversation to some irrelevant political discussion. Stay on subject if you can -- my political views or yours are irrelevant.

I was a consulting actuary who dealt with many of the largest companies in the country with one of their largest expenditures their employee benefit programs. In that role I had to deal in facts not opinions, otherwise I could cause huge losses to my client. I did not sit in a cubical studying the past, instead I presented complex facts to senior executives or boards that involved hundreds of millions of dollars and believe me opinion and prejudice were not allowed only strongly supportable facts. My billing rate was \$325 per hour and that was 15 years ago. Don't try to feed me crap about the free market; I made my living in it for 40 years ago.

You are correct -- the parents of these children that I am concerned with also came out of the same environment that these children are in today. That is true going back many generations. As I said earlier, education is not the universal equalizer for children of color, immigrant children and Native American children. Instead it is a vicious circle for most of these children. You accuse the teacher with absolutely no facts to support your position and with tons of evidence and research that says that variation in teacher quality accounts for less than 10% of the variation in educational achievement between rich and poor children. Yet you persist in your unsupported assault on teachers.

My concern is to break that cycle. I know it can be done and I am sure that the tiny investment today will pay huge returns later on in fewer welfare claims and fewer prison cells. We are beginning to see the public move in this direction and I firmly believe that trend will continue.

But in response to your political rant:

- -- UNICEF is not lying about CHILD POVERTY in the United States. Rest assured if they were our UN representatives would be throwing fits with them. Try reading a book or newspaper and you will see that 1 in 5 (almost 1 in 4) of our children are living in poverty. And you don't care. What a horrible public official!

- -- Secondly I was a police officer in Lincoln during much of the Vietnam War, and have been paralyzed by fear in that role. The way you throw around the term coward it is clear you have never been in life and death situations and apparently are greatly ashamed of it.
- -- Schools use to be run by local elected school boards for as long as we have had public schools. But the Bush II No Child Left Behind has turned that local control over to Washington.
- -- Lastly, if you ever took economics you would understand micro and macro-economics. At the micro level we see individual transactions and motivations (comparable to the teacher teaching to 15 individual students) while at the macro level we see the collective response to stimulus (comparable to the fact that the major driver of educational performance is poverty.) It is the macro that you seem to see as "treat human children as livestock and lump them together as a group study." You must have partied a lot in college?

I have dealt with senior business executives and policymakers at all levels most of my life, but your rants are the most ignorant that I have ever been involved in. Please don't waste my time with any more of your hate and inadequacy.

Bert Peterson

On 7/11/2015 7:49 AM, Mike Groene wrote:

Bert,

By the way , when I took statistics at UNL, the instructor urged me to be an actuary. One of the few students he had that aced his course. I declined because I did not wish to spend my life in an office cubicle, nor did I want to study the past. Instead I preferred to help create wealth for myself and others in the free market system.

So your attempt to impress with your former occupation, does not!

On Sat, Jul 11, 2015 at 7:35 AM, Mike Groene <mgroene@leg.ne.gov> wrote:

Shame on you. Fact number one the parents, who you disparage, of poor children, that you want to help with your neighbor's money are the alumni of public schools. You now want me to turn over two and three year old children to the same government education system that created their irresponsible parents? That defies logic.

Your claim that children in the United States are in worse economic conditions than most children in the world is a bald faced lie. I did not claim all government employees in the public school system are lazy ( some become that way because of tenure). The problem is that you and your kind keep them from teaching by distracting them with your social engineering.

Have you set a date yet for your estate sale so you can give your wealth to the poor children. What branch of the military were you in during the Vietnam war? I am sure you were not a selfish ass and took an education deferment. I was too young for the war, but had to endure some of the cowards who hid in public education as my teachers.

I set my view of the world on evidence, I do not, as you do, treat human children as livestock and lump them together as a group study.

My job as an elected official is to protect freedom in America. You mistake America for a socialist country where the children belong to the government. I am not a politician, I never took money from lobbyist, or special interest, nor did I court a political party's support. I ran to protect children and families from socialist like you.

Your secular humanist self righteous attitude scares me and other defenders of freedom.

On Fri, Jul 10, 2015 at 10:33 AM, Bert Peterson

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ wrote:

No where have I even hinted that teachers should be excused from teaching because the school they work in is high poverty, high immigrant or high Native American. Teachers see individual students and they teach those individual children as best they can. But education leaders and policymakers must understand the facts and build policy based upon those facts. Those facts confirm that educational performance is driven by poverty not by teacher "laz[iness] or second rate" ability. Your suggestion that teachers "who justified their lack of ability to teach and told me as a youth that I had an excuse to fail because of my families poverty" is your strawman not anything that I have suggested.

You say that you "do not judge children's success by their race or economic status" - no matter what the evidence and research says? You have your view of the world and no amount of research or evidence will change that view. We are talking about CHILD POVERTY - second highest rate of CHILD POVERTY in the economically developed world. These are children who can't escape the situation they are in - they are not the one's "who will not control their personal habits and will not do what is necessary to join the workforce" - they are helpless children.

Have you ever visited a school in an inner-city (or high immigrant school or a school in a Native American community) and seen the amazing work that the teachers are doing. Even in Wakonda 40% of the students test at proficient or above (the average at North Platte is 78% for reading compared to Elkhorn where it is 96%.) That is accomplished against great odds by very dedicated teachers; who could care less about the statistics of the district, state or nation. But it is YOUR JOB to understand that research and those statistics and to build policy based upon them instead of policy based upon your prejudices about "lazy and second rate teachers."

There are hundreds of studies where money improved education - free breakfast and lunch have done wonders for children who don't get fed at home due to parent income or neglect - English Language Learner programs - programs that bring parents into the school to observe the teacher and learn how they can help their child learn - The North High School (OPS) engineering program - Skills USA & Destination Imagination programs - along with so many other programs. Open your eyes, the evidence is all around you. But the best solution is not in spending in the schools, but instead in finding ways to improve the child's home life where he/she spends 90% of their life from birth to graduation. That is your job and politicians neglect of that job for over a half century is flat malfeasance.

You don't know me - you have no idea whether I'm a progressive or a conservative. But "you know" and it makes no difference what the facts are. Ignorant people don't need facts they have their prejudice and that saves them from having to think about how to solve problems. You see your job as protecting the tax payer from the waste created by schools (any extra money goes to administrators) and help to the poor (they are just lazy and want a handout.) You have a prejudice for every occasion. Shame on you and God save Nebraska's CHILDREN from such prejudice.

Bert Peterson

On 7/10/2015 8:15 AM, Mike Groene wrote:

Unlike you I do not judge children's success related to their race or economic status. I thank God that I never had a teacher in my life who justified their lack of ability to teach and told me as a youth that I had an excuse to fail because of my families poverty. You can thank past Politicians like Lyndon Johnson for destroying the 2 parent culture that created wealth. It amazes me that progressives like you lament greed but your answer is always to do your good works with your neighbors pocket book.

No where can you show me a study where money spent on education equates to better outcomes. Every time we increase aid to public schools the money ends up in higher administrative cost, better health care and retirement benefits for the government employees. So you want me as a citizen legislature to tax hard working Nebraskan's labor in order to give to those who will not control their personal habits and will not do what is necessary to join the workforce.

Here's some advice for you, I read somewhere " sell all you have and give it to the poor" . It's easier to do it by advocating taxing your neighbors hard work isn't it.

I always know, when I have won a debate with a socialist when they dismiss my facts by throwing words like "RANT" around.

On Thu, Jul 9, 2015 at 9:42 PM, Bert Peterson

 wrote:

Please see the attached pdf file in response to your rant

Bert Peterson

On 7/9/2015 7:56 PM, Mike Groene wrote:

Sir,

For 200 years we have been told that public education was the great equalizer. What happened? It was supposed to eliminate poverty. Ever since the cowardly draft dodgers of the sixties hid behind education deferments and infested our public education system our public schools have weakened.

Do you really want to blame the kids for the failure of lazy, second rate

teachers protected by tenure ?

The citizens have to take back their schools from the self righteous public school establishment. Blame the kids! what a jerk!

The administrator you quoted is the real public servant. Get out of his way!

On Thu, Jul 9, 2015 at 11:37 AM, Bert Peterson [\[redacted\]](#) wrote:

The attached is a guest op-ed from the Grand Island Independent on July 7, 2015 that I hope will be of interest to you. The objective of the piece was to contrast the role of district and state statistics for teachers and principals compared to that of our education leaders and policymakers.

I have been immensely impressed with Nebraska's educational leadership which has allowed our school systems to dodge the nightmares caused by "corporate reformers" in so many other states. But the treatment of Wakonda Elementary School in Omaha portends an ugly change for Nebraska's high poverty, high immigrant and high Native American schools:  
[http://www.omaha.com/news/education/million-grant-staff-changes-will-help-low-performing-wakonda-elementary/article\\_91cf5baa-dd59-5f1f-9733-a5ed668f11c4.html](http://www.omaha.com/news/education/million-grant-staff-changes-will-help-low-performing-wakonda-elementary/article_91cf5baa-dd59-5f1f-9733-a5ed668f11c4.html)

Just a hint for our educational leadership at OPS and at the state level – it was the students that failed the NeSA tests – not the school, not the principal and not the teachers. This failure was not the fault of the school where the children spends only 10% of their lives from birth to graduation; but instead was from the other 90% of the child's life which for too many of our children is in an environment that is not conducive to education.

Our schools are not failing our

children; instead our policymakers are by not doing something about our debilitating level of child poverty.

We need to also watch the progress Wakonda and if it doesn't quickly become (without any shenanigans) a school like those in Elkhorn or Millard we need to "hold accountable" responsible officials at a much higher level than teachers or principals along with a number of our elected officials who dreamed up this hateful concept.

Bert Peterson

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

<http://nebraskachildleftbehind.com/>