

Causality of the May 17, 1954 U.S. Supreme Court Decision in Brown, Economist Milton Friedman's school voucher plan, segregation and the current political voucher fervor.

Sixty-nine years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark decision, *Brown v Board of Education*, ruled segregation of races in public schools denies minority children the equal protection of law guaranteed by the 14th Amendment; hence *de jure* (legally allowable) segregation had to be eliminated. *Brown* overturned the 1896 *Plessy* Decision, which upheld a state law that allowed for "equal but separate" accommodations for white and black races. *Brown* requires that public education is a right which must be made available on equal terms.

About the same time the *Brown* Decision was handed down, Economist Milton Friedman was recommending that the only role of government in education is to provide school vouchers for private use. Later in 2006, Friedman (speaking before the American Exchange Council) proposed that parents should pay for the education of their own children.

After the *Brown* Decision was handed down, some public officials in various states did an end run around the *Brown* Decision by using Friedman-style vouchers to fund private education as an alternative to the public common school system, thus avoiding integration.

One of the hallmarks of the contemporary voucher scheme is the separation of the students along religious, racial, economic and social lines. State officials are plunging into universal vouchers without giving thought to the consequences. The end game of the business oligarchs promoting vouchers is a public policy requiring parents to stand the cost of education for their children, just as they do for food, clothing, and housing.