

BROKEN GROUND

John F. Kennedy and the Politics of
Education

Lawrence J. McAndrews

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Lawrence J. McAndrews

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To Mother and Dad

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PREFACE

Scholars, not unlike Madison Avenue hucksters, seek to be the "firstest with the mostest." I am not the first to explore the subject of federal aid to education in the Kennedy years, and I would certainly not ascribe to myself the "last word" on it. There are many other works which discuss the matter from different angles and to varying degrees. None, however, employs all of the sources or addresses the central questions of Kennedy versus Congress and Kennedy versus Kennedy upon which this study solely yet comprehensively focuses.

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INTRODUCTION

Former Kennedy White House deputy special counsel, Myer Feldman, recalls that the President subscribed to the adage that the best education is "Mark Hopkins sitting at one end of the log and the students sitting at the other end."¹ If only it were that simple.

Throughout United States history, and particularly from the 1930's through the 1960's, education was a sensitive political issue which preoccupied Congresses, Presidents, and interest groups. As the nation and the federal government grew, so did the consensus for federal aid to education. By the time of John F. Kennedy's Presidency, most of the American people, inside and outside of the national government, supported federal aid. Opposing viewpoints and interest groups were no longer instrumental to the federal aid debate. Federal aid was all but inevitable; only its form and extent remained to be decided by its supporters.

But, if a complex subject seemed suddenly simple, there remained an abundance of complications and contradictions. The disproportionate influence of federal aid adversaries on the House Rules Committee had blocked education legislation during the Eisenhower era, and would permit the Kennedy Administration no margin of error. The National Catholic Welfare Conference and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, ostensibly federal aid proponents, had redrawn the parameters of the federal aid debate, the former seeking to include nonpublic schools, the latter working to exclude racially segregated institutions.

Kennedy's legislative agenda on federal aid and other issues dictated the reform of the Rules Committee, which would help deprive him of a honeymoon with Congress. Kennedy's Roman Catholicism would contribute to his overzealous public disassociation from and errant private rapprochement with the NCWC on federal aid. Kennedy's sympathy with the aims of the NAACP would exacerbate his estrangement from the association over federal aid. All of these factors would contribute to Kennedy's failure to enact federal aid to elementary and secondary education.

These procedural, religious, and racial considerations acquired such visibility and engendered such controversy before, during, and after the Kennedy Presidency, however, that they obscured the role of Kennedy himself. The conventional wisdom, echoed in all previous scholarship,² is, therefore, inaccurate. For had Kennedy supplied the proper mix of

ideological congruity and legislative acumen which the National Education Association, the American Federation of Labor, and his fellow liberals on Capitol Hill failed to provide, he would have needed neither a honeymoon with Congress, a deal with the NCWC, nor peace with the NAACP, to enact federal aid.

The crucial conflicts over federal aid to education from 1961 to 1963 were, therefore, those within Kennedy himself and between Kennedy and Congress. Both centered upon the dilemma confronting American liberalism in 1961: whether to fill the remaining gaps in the thirty-year-old New Deal recovery plan, such as temporary federal aid to education, or to create a new rubric to conform to changing needs in changing times, such as permanent federal reform of education.

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was a response to a national emergency. Roosevelt had inaugurated the New Deal as governor of New York, but realized that the states were not equipped to adequately address the emergency. When he became President in 1933, he rapidly altered many of his states' rights principles and resolved to meet the crisis which the states had failed to solve. Paul Conkin writes:

The great hope of almost everyone in 1933 was recovery--the most attractive but elusive god of the thirties. This was Roosevelt's greatest commitment. If he had succeeded here, much of the later New Deal, including the vast relief programs, would have been unnecessary.³

Roosevelt thus argued coherently and forcefully that the federal government must confront those problems which the states are unable to solve, and he mobilized federal resources accordingly. The ideology of the New Deal was as expansive, yet as limited, as that. The Social Security Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act were the only long-term social welfare reforms of the New Deal. James MacGregor Burns writes of Roosevelt's celebrated leftward drift after the 1934 election:

Roosevelt, in short, made no consciously planned, grandly executed deployment of the left. He was like a general of a guerilla army whose columns, fighting blindly in the mountains through dense ravines and thickets, suddenly converge, half by plan and half by coincidence, and debouch into the plain below.⁴

In education, Roosevelt supported temporary federal aid to meet a crisis of classroom and teacher shortages, but remained wary of a permanent federal presence. He observed, "I don't think that the Federal Government ought to undertake running the education field. A great majority of states have pretty good educational systems. And certainly the richer states do not need any more money."⁵ Congressional proposals for federal aid for school construction and teachers' salaries in the Roosevelt era lost to ideological battles at home and impending conflicts abroad.

Harry Truman intensified the struggle for a New Deal in education. But Congress was generally more interested in fighting yesterday's battles over existing New Deal legislation. After a Republican majority attempted to undo the New Deal, a Democratic majority strove to preserve it. In a political climate dominated by corruption, communism, and Korea, the House of Representatives hid behind the religious issue, and Truman and the Senate lost their enthusiasm for federal aid.

Dwight Eisenhower pared the prospective New Deal for education to school construction aid, then passively observed as ideology, partisanship, race, and the House Rules Committee prevented its fruition. Largely because of the President in his first term and in spite of him in his second, an increasing number of Congressmen came to espouse a New Deal for education, and voted accordingly in 1960. But just as most Representatives joined the New Deal crusade, the NEA, AFT, and many Senators abandoned it for a more ambitious program. Without a new philosophy, however, their new formula invited difficulty. The decade ended with Congress divided and the House Rules Committee deadlocked, and without federal aid.

John Kennedy, whose years in Congress featured frequent shifts on federal aid, appropriately inherited the leadership of a movement in transition. Kennedy, the NEA, the AFT, and the Senate majority desired to transcend the New Deal in education with permanent federal support legislation. But he faced a House majority which had only recently converted to the skeletal New Deal program of temporary school construction aid. Kennedy's original proposal of permanent support fell to ideological resistance in the House Rules Committee; his subsequent introduction of temporary aid lost to partisanship on the House floor. In his second and third years, Kennedy strategically moved away from permanent support, toward what Lyndon Johnson would call the "Great Society" in his plan for categorical (non-

construction, non-teachers' salaries) measures aimed at combatting poverty and enhancing educational quality.

Johnson's "Great Society" was a vision of a good country which could be better. Johnson had served in Congress throughout virtually all of the New Deal and had fervently supported it, but he recognized that the New Deal had not adequately addressed the quality of American life. When he was elected President in 1964, he resolved to secure the quality which the New Deal had failed to preserve. Tom Wicker observes:

Johnson recognized [in his 1964 election campaign] that he had the chance to break the decade-long deadlock of American politics; he could win the overwhelming mandate Kennedy never had. . .and deal with the backlog of urgent domestic business. . . Then, like his idol, Roosevelt, he could go on to break new ground.⁶

Johnson argued coherently and forcefully that the federal government possessed the responsibility, in good as well as bad times, to protect the opportunity of every American to live a better life. The ideology of the Great Society was more carefully honed than that of the New Deal. The Great Society implemented the social welfare reforms (e.g., Office of Economic Opportunity, Medicare) which the New Deal had neglected. Doris Kearns acknowledges Johnson's ideological handiwork:

In the first years of Johnson's Presidency...special circumstances produced a blend of interests, needs, convictions and alliances powerful enough to go beyond the normal pattern of slow, incremental change. But if the sources of change were provided by the circumstances, Lyndon Johnson played the dominant role.⁷

In education, too, Johnson reached beyond the New Deal ideology. He maintained that "more classrooms and more teachers are not enough," and added: "The three *R*'s of our school system must be supported by the three *T*'s--teachers who are superior, techniques of instruction that are modern, and *thinking* about education which places it first in all our plans and hopes."⁸ By placing education on the front

line in a "war on poverty" which he eloquently declared and ardently led, Johnson helped to finally enact permanent federal support of elementary and secondary education in 1965.

In this thirty-year history of modern federal-aid-to-education debate, from Roosevelt to Johnson, John Kennedy emerges as a pivotal figure. He was the last President to attempt New Deal-type temporary aid and the first to propose Great Society-type permanent support. Yet he enacted neither. He exhibited neither the bipartisanship necessary to attack the classroom construction crisis and to complete the New Deal, nor the compelling argument needed to overcome widespread fears of "federal control" of education and to begin a "Great Society."

In higher education, however, Kennedy learned from these mistakes, as his legislative and ideological adroitness helped produce legislation. Kennedy began his quest for college aid in the same disjointed manner in which he presented school aid, calling for a permanent scholarship plan to meet a temporary student population crisis. But encouraged by a lighter historical burden, a more optimistic legislative prognosis, and more constructive Congressional leadership, he evinced greater flexibility and more visible commitment than in the elementary and secondary education effort. In forsaking scholarships for a New Deal construction bill, he compromised beyond his instincts, but the legislation provided a strong foundation for a Johnson Great Society scholarship measure, and stands as the greatest monument to Kennedy's dedication to federal aid.

This account traces the evolution of a consensus between a Congressional majority and those interest groups favorable to federal aid to education, and the troubles and triumphs which that intricate consensus endured because of, and in spite of, the thirty-fifth President. Chapter I provides a brief historical overview of the legislative quest for federal aid to education from the nation's beginnings to Kennedy's election in 1960. Chapter II follows the battles waged by, and among, the principal pressure groups favorable to federal aid to elementary and secondary education from their entrances into the struggle to Kennedy's election. Chapter III examines Kennedy's formal education and his record on federal aid as Congressman (1947-1953) and Senator (1953-1961). Chapters IV through IX detail the unraveling of the consensus for federal aid to primary and secondary schools among the federal aid forces in the White House, Congress, and the educational community from 1961 to 1963. Chapter X studies the ultimately successful collaboration of

President, Congress, and interest groups toward the enactment of federal aid to higher education from 1961 to 1963. Chapter XI further explains the Kennedy federal aid experience by focusing on the successes of President Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the federal aid interests in enacting federal aid to elementary, secondary, and higher education in 1965. Chapter XII offers final insights into the significance of President Kennedy's performance on school and college aid in evaluating his Presidency.

Though a tale of politicians and lobbyists, this is also a story of ideas. When the federal aid majority achieved the delicate marriage of idea and action in the early 1960's, it could properly accept credit. But when ideological failings begat inaction, the federal aid majority and its leader in the White House had only themselves to blame.

CHAPTER I

CAMELS AND SUCH

The "camel's nose in the tent" was a familiar metaphor during the Kennedy years, employed by those who feared that the introduction of incremental federal educational expenditures would ultimately invite domination of American education by the national government. But theirs was largely a hollow protest, for the "nose" of the national government had long since protruded into the "tent" of education. By the Kennedy era, therefore, the critical debates were not over whether or not the camel would follow, but over how much space it deserved and how long it should stay.

Federal Aid's Victories

The Land Ordinance of 1785 divided public lands in the northwestern United States into townships comprising thirty-six sections of 640 acres each.¹ It earmarked the revenue from the sale of section sixteen of each township for public education.² The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which created a government for the territory north of the Ohio River, promised that "the means of education shall forever be encouraged."³

The United States Constitution omits any mention of education, but the vagueness of Article I Section 8 has proven an effective vehicle for federal aid advocates. This clause allows that "The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises to pay the Debts and provide for the common defense and General Welfare of the United States. . . ."⁴

Beginning with the admission of Ohio in 1802, the federal government adapted the Northwest Ordinance policy to the region's new states, allocating land for the support of common schools. The Census of 1840 included the first national statistics on education and illiteracy. When President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act of 1862, the United States committed itself to what Gordon Lee calls "the first attempt to establish through Congressional action a national party with regard to federal aid to education."⁵ The Act "granted to each loyal state 30,000 acres for each senator and representative then in Congress for the purpose of endowing at least one agricultural college."⁶

A four-decade struggle for a federal Department of Education culminated in 1867 with President Andrew Johnson's signature on a bill authored by Representative James A. Garfield, Republican of Ohio. The purpose of the agency, in Garfield's words, was "collecting such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and progress of education in the several states and territories, and of diffusing such information. . . ." ⁷ This new apparatus almost immediately relinquished its Cabinet status, however, as in 1869 it became the Bureau of Education of the Department of the Interior. The bureau performed the same duties, but with a much lower profile.

In 1929, under President Herbert Hoover, the Bureau of Education became the United States Office of Education. Hoover also authorized the first study of the federal role in education. The National Advisory Committee on Education concluded in 1931 that virtually all of the administrative units of the federal government were "concerned directly or indirectly with education," and that "federal educational activities included liberal and vocational education for both sexes and all ages, in school and out, reaching from the earliest primary education to the most advanced graduate and professional training." ⁸

The federal government penetrated education more deeply under the New Deal of the 1930's. The Public Works Administration, created in 1933, issued loans and grants for school and college construction. The Works Projects (later "Progress") Administration, launched in 1935, supported various educational undertakings. The Civilian Conservation Corps (1933) and the National Youth Administration (1935) offered vocational training as well as employment for people of high school and college age.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, as of February 1934, was disbursing \$48 million to employ unemployed teachers and \$75 million to pay overdue salaries of teachers. ⁹ The Social Security Act of 1939 earmarked federal funds for vocational education for physically disabled children. Under President Franklin Roosevelt, the role of the Office of Education grew significantly. In 1933 Roosevelt ordered the transfer of the Federal Board for Vocational Education to the Office of Education. The financing of the educational projects of the National Youth Administration was another of the Office's responsibilities. In 1939 the Federal Security Agency became the Office's home.

In 1937 Roosevelt appointed an Advisory Commission on Federal Aid to Education. The Commission's report the following year was a

watershed in two major respects: first, its call for temporary federal aid rather than permanent federal support of education, and second, its recognition of the needs of nonpublic schools inherent in the clause, "Many of the services of the public schools should be available to children regardless of whether [or not] they are enrolled in public schools of instruction."¹⁰ The Commission added that "almost every Federal agency carries on some educational functions and engages in activities bearing a relatively direct relationship to some form of education."¹¹

John Blum calls the Second World War America's great collective experience,¹² and education serves as a focal point for this appraisal. The 1941 Lanham Act provided federal funds for "school buildings, school services, and nursery schools for children of mothers who were involved in defense industries."¹³ Under this act, from 1941 to 1946, the national government expended eighty-four million dollars and built 1,239 schools.¹⁴ In 1943, according to the Office of War Information, the United States Army and Navy were operating "the largest adult school system in the world."¹⁵ Under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, or G.I. Bill of Rights of 1944, 14.5 billion dollars sent 7.8 million World War II veterans to school.¹⁶ Among the rights proclaimed by President Roosevelt in his "Economic Bill of Rights" in 1944 was a "good education," for anything less, Roosevelt asserted, would have left Americans ill-suited to meet the challenges of the wartime industrial expansion.¹⁷

The Lanham Act and the G.I. Bill were extended in 1950 and 1952, respectively, to address the effects of the Korean conflict. Public Laws 815 and 870, enacted in 1950, provided federal funds for school construction and operating expenses in areas containing a naval or military base. Loans for college housing construction were part of the Housing Act of 1950.

In 1953, at the advent of the Eisenhower era, the Office of Education received unprecedented visibility as a component of the new Cabinet-level Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In 1955 the President convoked the White House Conference on Education, which called for temporary federal aid for school construction. Three years later came the monumental National Defense Education Act. Passed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority largely ignited by the Soviet launch of Sputnik the previous year, the act assigned "categorical" federal monies for loans to college students; research and development

at colleges and universities; mathematics, science, and modern language instruction in elementary and secondary schools; and guidance, counselling, and testing in elementary and secondary schools. By the end of the Kennedy Presidency, about 500,000 college students would have received NDEA loans; approximately 30,500 technicians would have completed their training; and the average counsellor-pupil ratio in primary and secondary schools would have diminished from 1:900 to 1:450.¹⁸

1958 marked another turning point in the federal aid story. Montana Democrats Senator James Murray and Representative Lee Metcalf, galvanized by Sputnik and disheartened by the twenty-year-old struggle for temporary assistance, returned to the pre-1938 clamor for permanent support legislation. This effort failed, but emergency aid, sponsored by Democratic Senator Pat McNamara of Michigan, passed the Senate in 1960. That same year, the House passed a temporary federal aid bill, signalling the unprecedented passage by both houses of general educational aid legislation. The House came within two Rules Committee votes--Republican Carroll Reece of Tennessee and Democrat James Trimble of Arkansas reversed their earlier decisions to let the House vote on the bill--of sending the House and Senate measures to conference. The House bill, sponsored by Democrat Frank Thompson of New Jersey, provided for grants for emergency school construction based on an equalization formula and restricted by the Powell anti-segregation amendment. The McNamara proposal allocated equalized grants for construction and teachers' salaries. A reconciliation would probably have stricken the Powell Amendment and modified or eliminated the provision for teachers' salaries.

A 1960 poll showed that seventy-three percent of the American people wanted the federal government to finance their schools.¹⁹ Both major-party Presidential candidates and their platforms strongly endorsed federal aid.

Federal Aid's Defeats

The federal role in education had indeed expanded over almost two centuries. This expansion, however, had often come at the end of acrimonious struggles and in the form of begrudging compromises. The consensus which federal aid advocates consistently claimed was often elusive. Too often for the partisans of federal aid, as for Robert

Louis Stevenson, "to travel hopefully" was "better than to arrive."

Despite its lofty allusions to "religion, morality, good government and the happiness of mankind"²⁰ as the products of education, Paul R. Mort insists that "most historians interpret [the Land Ordinance of 1785's provision for schools] as little more than a real estate deal."²¹ Similarly, though the "founding fathers" expressed their concern for the "general welfare," they may not have included formal education in this vision. When adding the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, they not only neglected to add the word "education," but they inserted an amendment which may have sought to foreclose federal influence in the schools. The Tenth Amendment reads, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."²²

President George Washington, in his first message to Congress in 1790, proposed the creation of a national university. A bill for this purpose died in Congress in 1796. President Thomas Jefferson's wish to divert federal funds to education went unfulfilled. In 1809 the House of Representatives defeated a bill which would have channeled profits from a national banking system into education. A similar proposal failed in the Senate in 1827. A bill providing for the expenditure for educational purposes of revenue from public lands met with President Andrew Jackson's disapproval after passing both houses in 1833.

A century later, exhortations by the Hoover and Roosevelt Advisory Committees on Education to enlarge Washington's niche in education went largely unheeded. The Roosevelt Commission's call for a Department of Health, Education, and Welfare met with silence for fifteen years. The Hoover Committee's recommendation of the restoration of the Department of Education lay dormant for almost fifty.

Despite his inclusion of schools and teachers in the benefits of his welfare capitalism, and the convocation of his historic Advisory Commission on Education, Roosevelt did not promote direct federal educational assistance. Gilbert E. Smith writes, "Roosevelt's efforts to hold together a weakened coalition made it virtually impossible for him to support legislation that included such divisive issues as race, religion and federal control."²³ Without Presidential endorsement, federal aid bills in the 1930's authored by Democratic Senators Pat Harrison of Mississippi, Hugo Black of Alabama, and Elbert Thomas of Utah had little chance of passage, and none survived the committee stage.

The triumphs of the Lanham Act and the G.I. Bill, and the symbolic importance of Roosevelt's Economic Bill of Rights, could not obscure the failure of wartime general aid legislation. The shift from a campaign for permanent support to one of temporary aid among federal aid backers, as signalled by the Roosevelt Commission, had little immediate impact on the legislative outlook for federal assistance.

Harry Truman established himself as the staunchest ally of federal aid to education yet to inhabit the White House. In his budget message to Congress January 3, 1947, Truman proclaimed:

Although the expenditure estimates for the coming year are limited to recent programs, I have long been on record for basic legislation under which the Federal Government will supplement the resources of the States to assist them to equalize educational opportunities and achieve satisfactory educational standards.²⁴

A torrent of no fewer than twenty education bills followed the President's pronouncement.

Two critical developments tempered the optimism engendered by Truman's statement. The first was the enactment of the LaFollette-Monroney Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, designed to streamline a burgeoning Congressional committee system by consolidating the House Labor and Education Committees into a single entity. The result was that labor legislation assumed primacy over education bills within the new group.²⁵ The second was the Republican victory in the 1946 Congressional elections. The Republican repudiation of Truman at the polls greatly enhanced the chances that Congress would again fail to enact federal aid.²⁶

With the re-election of the Democratic President and the return of a Democratic Congress after a two-year hiatus, federal aid backers resumed their fight. On March 18, 1949, the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare unanimously reported what Robert Bendiner labels:

a skillful compromise, invoking the equalization principle but providing some flat grants, authorizing expenditures for teachers' salaries and current operating costs, but not for construction; and allowing states that already permitted

public money to be spent on nonpublic schools for transportation and textbooks to use their Federal grants for the same purposes.²⁷

The bill, sponsored by Elbert Thomas, passed the Senate 58-15.²⁸

In the House, Education Subcommittee Chairman Graham Barden of North Carolina revised the bill to exclude aid to nonpublic schools and preclude federal control by eliminating periodic state reports to the federal government. Education and Labor Committee Chairman John Lesinski of Michigan restored the provisions of the Senate measure, but the damage inflicted by Barden remained. A 13-12 Committee vote doused the federal aid flame yet again.²⁹

Federal aid virtually vanished from the political terrain until 1955. On February 8 of that year, Eisenhower issued a special message on education in "a broad effort to widen the accepted channels of financing school construction to increase materially the flow of private lending through them"³⁰ He proposed a three-year, \$73 million school construction program to be financed by local school bonds, federal backing for state school construction bonds, and federal matching grants.³¹ Republican Senator H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey, Democratic Senator Lister Hill of Alabama, and Democratic Representative Augustine Kelley of Pennsylvania produced a similar bill for \$600 million a year for six years.³² For the first time since World War II, the House debated a school aid proposal, the so-called "Kelley bill."³³

During the course of the spirited proceedings, Rep. Adam Clayton Powell of New York introduced an anti-segregation amendment. It was approved, stricken, and then accepted again. But while the amendment won, the bill lost.

The struggle for federal aid to elementary and secondary education reached its nadir in 1957 after a \$325 million, four-year school construction proposal very similar to the 1955 Eisenhower plan met with the approval of the House Democratic and Republican leadership.³⁴ Although burdened by neither great expense nor an anti-segregation amendment, the bill died before it could come to a vote. A 208-203 majority agreed to Virginia Democrat Howard Smith's motion to "strike the enacting clause," a parliamentary maneuver which defeats a bill by eliminating the "be it enacted" clause which enables the bill to become law.³⁵

As of 1956, with the report of the President's Committee on Education Beyond the High School recommending direct federal construction grants to public and private colleges and universities, the federal aid controversy had permeated higher education as well. In 1959 Eisenhower submitted to Congress a plan for the replacement of the college housing construction loan program with federal assistance for the construction of housing and academic facilities through payment of one-fourth of the principal on bonds floated by colleges and universities. Two omnibus housing bills which included an extension of the college housing program of 1950 and an academic facilities loan provision passed the Congress; Eisenhower twice exercised his veto. Eisenhower revived his proposal in 1960, but neither it nor broader measures presented by Representatives Frank Thompson and Lee Metcalf and Senator Joseph Clark received action.³⁶

By the waning days of Eisenhower's second term, there was widespread skepticism of his commitment, often enunciated but seldom demonstrated, to federal aid legislation. At the outset of the Eighty-Sixth Congress Eisenhower threatened to veto any school construction bill.³⁷ The Eisenhower proposal before the Eighty-Sixth Congress was a paltry \$17 million bond retirement program endorsed by practically no one on Capitol Hill.³⁸ A record peacetime budget deficit in 1959, the escalation of the Cold War, Eisenhower's lame-duck status, and the election-year climate militated against the passage of an elementary and secondary school bill in 1960.

The 7-5 Rules Committee vote in 1960 which prevented the Thompson and McNamara bills from going to conference, however narrow and unrepresentative of the will of the Congress, marked a final setback in the quest for national education legislation prior to the Kennedy Administration.³⁹ Even with the passage of the National Defense Education Act, the federal government still contributed a very small share of its revenues to education. Though Washington spent sixty-two percent of the funds expended by all governments (local, state, federal) in 1958, it spent only five percent of all educational monies.⁴⁰

Perceptions of where public policy should and would be going in the 1960's were therefore largely dependent on perspectives of where that policy had been. The task before John Kennedy, therefore, would be to navigate firmly a course between a confused past and an uncertain future in American educational policy. He would have to discover a solution to the federal aid controversy which required neither

evicting the camel from the tent of the national executive branch, upon which federal aid opponents were insisting, nor sending a camel through the eye of a needle in the national legislature, as permanent support proponents seemed to be demanding.