**THOMAS MORE LAW CENTER**24 Frank Lloyd Wright Dr. Ann Arbor, MI 48105PH: 734-827-2001, FX: 734-930-7160

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Catherine McMillan, 734-930-7141, 734-255-2013, cmcmillan@thomasmore.org
**Attached:** PDF version

**Common Core State Standards a Threat to Personal Liberty — Thomas More Law Center Develops Opt-Out Form for Parents**

ANN ARBOR, MI – Amidst growing concerns from parents and teachers surrounding the Common Core State Standards and the Federal government’s control of classroom curriculum, the Thomas More Law Center (TMLC) has prepared a Student Privacy Protection Request form for use by parents who wish to protect their children by opting-out of Common Core aligned curricula, data mining and the release of information concerning their children’s personal beliefs.

The Thomas More Law Center (TMLC), a national public interest law firm based in Ann Arbor, MI, designed the comprehensive opt-out form for parents concerned about Common Core and who want to protect their children’s privacy from educational data mining. The form allows parents to choose which Common Core State Standards and data driven practices they do not want their children to be a part of, including standardized testing.

The form allows parents to opt-out of sharing their child’s information with the federal government, as well as outside agencies and private contractors. Information which parents can opt-out of sharing ranges from test scores and religious and political beliefs, to biographic, biometric, and psychometric data, such as fingerprints, DNA and information related to children’s personality and aptitude.

Richard Thompson, TMLC President and Chief Counsel, commented, “The opt-out form is based on the constitutionally recognized fundamental right of parents to direct the education of their children and on federal statutes which were designed to protect student privacy. Our Founding Fathers recognized the dangers to our freedoms posed by centralized control over public education. However, today, all but a handful of state governments, enticed by millions of dollars in federal grants, are voluntarily inviting the federal government to take control of our public schools, imposing untested educational standards and obtaining personal information on children and their parents which would make any totalitarian government blush with envy. We must ever keep in mind, ‘The philosophy of the classroom in one generation will become the philosophy of the government in the next.’ Clearly, Common Core is a threat to individual privacy and liberty, and to our Constitutional Republic.”

Religious and private school educators have also criticized Common Core. In a statement the Cardinal Newman Society, an organization dedicated to the defense and promotion of faithful Catholic education said, “This school reform effort is nothing short of a revolution in how education is provided, relying on a technocratic, top-down approach to setting national standards that, despite claims to the contrary, will drive curricula, teaching texts, and the content of standardized tests. At its heart, the Common Core is a woefully inadequate set of standards in that it limits the understanding of education to a utilitarian ‘readiness for work’ mentality.”

Political Commentators Glenn Beck and Michelle Malkin have repeatedly reported on the dangers and horrors of Common Core, with Malkin saying, “It’s about control, control and more control.”

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed under the supervision of the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to ensure that education and educational outcomes were consistent across the United States. The CCSS provides a set of standards they claim are “essential, rigorous, clear and specific, coherent, and internationally benchmarked.”

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However, the CCSS have come under heavy fire since the beginning for a variety of grievances including: incomprehensible, political and inappropriate assignments; costly ties to big corporations; in-test advertising; the elimination of locally appropriate standards; and the emphasis placed on standardized testing.

In addition, with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, whose educational value has not been demonstrated, also comes an alarming explosion of data mining within the classroom. Student data are stored in databases designed to follow students from their entry into schools in pre-Kindergarten up through their entry into the workforce. These databases, through a complicated network of contracts and agreements, can then be shared with the federal government, contractors, researchers and other outside agencies. Testing corporations can then analyze the test data, produce recommendations for how to “remediate” student weaknesses, and then sell that information back to states and school districts.

These state databases, often referred to as P-20 systems, like Common Core are tied to federal funding, through the 2009 Federal Stimulus package and Race to the Top waivers, and in some instances can contain over 400 individual data points per student including health-care histories, income information, religious affiliations, voting status, blood type, likes and dislikes and homework completion. The data is then available to numerous public agencies. Despite federal student privacy protections guaranteed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the administration is paving the way for private entities to buy the data while the U.S. Department of Education is encouraging the shift from aggregate data collection to individual student data collection.

As a result of concerns expressed by a Michigan member of the TMLC regarding Common Core in March 2014, the Law Center began its study of the issues regarding the Common Core Standards. The Student Privacy Protection Opt-Out Request was designed by the Thomas More Law Center as a result of that study. It is available as a general reference and guide for all concerned parents. However, each state has different laws that may impact educational issues differently. Therefore, if parents are dealing with schools outside of the state of Michigan, it is important that they consult with a licensed attorney in their state for additional review and modifications of the opt-out form to comport with the laws of their respective states.

The Thomas More Law Center defends and promotes America’s Judeo-Christian heritage and moral values, including the religious freedom of Christians, time-honored family values, and the sanctity of human life. It supports a strong national defense and an independent and sovereign United States of America. The Law Center accomplishes its mission through litigation, education, and related activities. It does not charge for its services. The Law Center is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations, and is recognized by the IRS as a section 501(c)(3) organization. You may reach the Thomas More Law Center at (734) 827-2001 or visit our website at [www.thomasmore.org](http://www.thomasmore.org/).

**Additional Resources**

[The Common Core: A Poor Choice for States](http://heartland.org/sites/default/files/05-15-13_common_core_revised_policy_brief_version.pdf) – The Heartland Institute

[Common Core Issues](http://www.hslda.org/commoncore/analysis.aspx) – Home School Legal Defense Association

[Common Core: What’s Behind the Language](http://townhall.com/columnists/rachelalexander/2013/03/18/common-core-whats-hidden-behind-the-language-n1537017/page/full) – Rachel Alexander

[Common Core](http://www.eagleforum.org/topics/common-core.html) – The Eagle Forum

[10 Facts Every Catholic Should Know About the Common Core](http://bit.ly/1vmg0h4) – Cardinal Newman Society