

Current Events

California Teacher Tenure Found to Violate Student Rights (12.3)

For Discussion

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Readability Score: 12.3

1. Define: statute, Silicon Valley, tentative, disproportionately, impact litigation, mandate, undermine, tentative, tenure, implications

2. Why does the judge think students have a right to equality of education?

3. Why does he think tenure laws violate that right?

4. Why might David Welch have concluded that litigation is more effective than politics in bringing about the changes he desires? What might prevent him from achieving political success? What might allow him to achieve success through the courts?

“The two California teacher unions...have said the case was part of a broader effort to undermine organized labor.”

5. If organized labor backs teacher tenure, does that tell us that it is good for education? If a “Silicon Valley millionaire and a corporate PR firm” favor less protection for teachers' jobs, does that show that it is bad for education? Explain.

6. The judge “found that low-income and minority students are disproportionately stuck with 'grossly' ineffective teachers...” If ineffective teachers were spread more evenly, could he have found tenure unconstitutional? Why or why not?

7. Why did those bringing the case think that tenure lowers teacher quality? Why does the state of California disagree?

8. Why don't all employers give workers tenure? Does it help attract high-quality employees, low-quality employees or both? Explain.

9. According to the article, a law firm representing the students cited an estimate that 3% of California teachers are “highly ineffective.” How could you evaluate such a claim, or arrive at such an estimate?