



# California Teachers Empowerment Network

*Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues*

*Please note that in addition to the traditional emailing of the CTEN monthly newsletter, we will once again post it on the CTEN blog - <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/> As usual, there are several controversial issues covered in this letter and we urge you to share your opinions with other teachers.*

July 20, 2016

Dear Colleague,

The California budget is now public and there's lots of money in it for education. The \$171 billion budget includes \$88.3 billion for all K-12 education programs, a 4 percent increase from last year. Per pupil spending has increased to \$10,643, which is \$3,600 more than in 2011-12. To read more, go here - <http://laschoolreport.com/8-things-to-know-about-education-funding-in-the-new-california-state-budget/>

AB 934 is dead. The tenure and seniority bill would have placed poorly performing teachers in a program that offers professional support. If a teacher received a second low performance review after a year in the program, they could be fired via an expedited process regardless of their experience level. Also, permanence would not always be granted after two years, and seniority would no longer be the single overriding factor in handing out pink slips. Teachers with two or more bad reviews would lose their jobs before newer teachers who have not received poor evaluations. But CTA did not approve and went into action, eviscerating the bill. Ultimately it was killed off in the state's Senate Education Committee. For more, go to <http://laschoolreport.com/teacher-tenure-bill-defeated-in-committee/>

The Supreme Court has decided not to rehear the *Friedrichs* case, which was deadlocked 4-4 due to the untimely death of Antonin Scalia in February. Had Scalia lived, he would undoubtedly been the deciding vote in favor of the plaintiffs. Needless to say, Terry Pell, president of the Center for Individual Rights, the non-profit public interest law firm representing the teachers, was disappointed: "Today's decision was not a decision on the merits of our case nor was it accompanied by an opinion. We continue to believe that forcing individuals to subsidize political speech with which they disagree violates the First Amendment. We will look for opportunities to challenge compulsory union dues laws in other cases and continue our efforts to stand up for the rights of teachers and public sector workers across the country." To read the entire CIR press release, go here - <https://www.cir-usa.org/2016/06/supreme-court-denies-friedrichs-petition-for-rehearing/>

Former Florida governor Jeb Bush wrote a very interesting piece for *National Review* in which he lays out his vision for the future of education in the United States. He states bluntly that, "We

must massively disrupt our education system if we want to ensure our long-term national and economic security.” Several of his proposals:

*There are no more assigned schools. Parents of all income levels are able to choose from a robust marketplace of options, including traditional neighborhood schools, magnet schools, charter schools, private schools, and virtual schools. Information on their performance is readily available, and they are held accountable to parents and communities.*

*We have a system that rewards success, replicates it, and weeds out failing schools. It is a system based on the simple premise that all students can learn, and that it is up to us to figure out how. In this new school system, the current model of funding bureaucracies has been replaced by a new regime in which the money follows the child, guided by the decisions of parents.*

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To read the rest of Bush’s provocative ideas, go to <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/436478/jeb-bush-education-school-reform-future-disruption-technology>

Though the teacher union war against education reform-minded Wall Street hedge fund managers is not new, AFT president Randi Weingarten is ramping up the attack. The union leader has influence over more than \$1 trillion in teacher pension plans, many of which traditionally invest in hedge funds. In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, she bluntly states, “Why would you put your money with someone who wants to destroy you?” Weingarten’s #1 target is Daniel Loeb, founder of the \$16 billion Third Point fund. Loeb has been a financial supporter of the successful Success Academy charter school franchise, run by Weingarten’s avowed enemy, Eva Moskowitz. Weingarten has also accused Loeb of being involved with a group that is “leading the attack on defined benefit pension funds.” To read more about Weingarten’s war on hedge fund managers, go to <http://www.wsj.com/articles/teachers-union-and-hedge-funds-war-over-pension-billions-1467125055>

Weingarten is not alone in her offensive. She has enlisted the support of the “Hedge Clippers,” which claiming to be a “grassroots” group, is really nothing more than a union owned-and-operated entity. Writing for *The 74*, David Cantor reveals,

*Few would guess from the ragtag, grassroots feel of the protest that Hedge Clippers’ organizers have been funded with millions of dollars from teachers unions — or that the group is led by a teachers union lobbyist and based at the Broadway headquarters of that union, New York City’s United Federation of Teachers.*

*All told, the UFT and its upstate colleagues, New York State United Teachers, along with their national affiliate, directed \$5.5 million over the last five years to the groups that created and collaborate most frequently on the Hedge Clippers project — led by \$2.5 million to Strong Economy for All, a coalition of labor and advocacy organizations.*

To read Cantor’s exposé, go here - <https://www.the74million.org/article/united-front-teachers-unions-quietly-spend-millions-on-grassroots-groups>

On the subject of teachers unions, there have been some very damning videos circulating, courtesy of investigative journalist James O’Keefe. With four videos available online and several more to come, his Project Veritas has delivered a devastating blow to several union honchos who obviously were not aware that their misdeeds were being recorded. In one of the videos, a union president and VP are seen trying to help a teacher who claimed to have physically assaulted one of his students while uttering a racial epithet. Upon seeing the video, a union official became defensive and accused O’Keefe of doctoring the footage. But after watching the uncut version, the Inspector General of Yonkers, NY – the locale of the misdeed – has recommended that the involved union officers be terminated. To read more about this story, go to <http://projectveritas.com/2016/07/11/yonkers-inspector-general-vindicates-project-veritas-video-and-recommends-termination-of-union-officials/> To learn more about Project Veritas and see all their videos go here - <http://projectveritas.com/2016/07/11/yonkers-inspector-general-vindicates-project-veritas-video-and-recommends-termination-of-union-officials/>

How about a Yelp for schools? That’s the type of feedback Jacqueline Elliott, cofounder of PUC Triumph Charter High School in LA’s San Fernando Valley, solicits to improve instruction.

*The focus group-style exit interview Elliott's conducting has become part of the year-end ritual at PUC (which stands for "Partnerships to Uplift Communities"). Over five weeks, Elliott spoke with all of the roughly 260 seniors graduating from the charter network's high schools in the San Fernando Valley, including Triumph. The network's other co-founder, Ref Rodriguez, interviews the seniors at PUC's high schools in East Los Angeles.*

*Since 2010, the first year Elliott says they began the practice, their questions to the seniors have been simple: what about their school is working? What about it is not? The co-founders then share the answers with campus administrators — and those answers have even occasionally prompted changes to how PUC schools are run.*

To learn more, go to <http://www.scpr.org/news/2016/07/06/62064/like-yelp-but-for-school-how-a-charter-network-s-l/>

Strive, a unique after-school program located at 9124 S Main St, L.A., 90003, is seeking retired or currently employed teachers who have a conservative approach for part time work teaching students in grades 1 through 12. For information on all the open positions, please call Don Anderson at 323-779-7501 or email him at [don@strive-la.org](mailto:don@strive-la.org) To learn more about this terrific organization, please visit their website – [www.strive-la.org](http://www.strive-la.org)

If you are interested in giving CTEN brochures to colleagues, you can print them right from our home page - <http://www.ctenhome.org/PDFdocs/CTEN - Brochure.pdf> Or, if you prefer, we will be happy to send you as many preprinted ones as you need.

Also, anyone wishing to donate to CTEN can do so very simply through check, money order or PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.html> As a non-profit, we exist only through the generosity of others. Thanks, as always.

Sincerely,  
Larry Sand  
CTEN President