



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.

September 19, 2018

Dear Colleague,

As we told you in the July letter, a number of lawsuits have sprung up in light of the *Janus* decision. Public-sector workers across the country are suing to recover dues they paid to unions over the last several years. The class action suits accuse individual unions of “violating workers’ rights by collecting mandatory dues payments.” The suits argue that any public-sector employee who participated in forced dues systems should receive financial “redress” from labor organizations.

Now there is a new type of litigation. The Buckeye Institute has filed two separate lawsuits calling for an immediate end to the laws that force public-sector employees to accept their union’s representation. Both cases question the constitutionality of compelled “exclusive representation” and have been filed. Now that teachers and other employees don’t have to belong to the union, why should they have to be represented by the union? The right of a union to be an “exclusive representative” – which they have always insisted on – may be coming to an end. The cases which have been filed in Ohio and Minnesota “call upon the courts to recognize public employees’ First Amendment right to free association and to end the forced exclusive representation.”

To read more, go [here](#).

Also on unions, Andrew Rotherham asks and answers a question: “What Will Teachers Unions Look Like After the Supreme Court’s *Janus* Decision? Expect Them to Be Smaller but More Political & Hard-Core.” He writes,

*Collective bargaining agreements and other union-friendly norms remain in place. Even post-*Janus*, they still have a lot of money to deploy and a lot of leverage in low-turnout school board elections and gerrymandered legislative races where the action is in the primaries. And, as union leaders like to say, management gets the union it deserves. Few observers would give education administration high marks for effectiveness, and education policy these days is an incoherent*

goat rodeo. So teachers don't have to work in schools very long before many decide it would be good to have someone looking out for them.

To continue reading, go [here](#).

And speaking about hard-core unions, the United Teachers of Los Angeles, the second largest local in the country, would seem to be heading for a strike. The issues are many, and the union is not budging. At the same time, the school district claims its hands are tied and cannot come close to giving the union what it is demanding.

To read about the issues, go [here](#). To get the perspective of a teacher who is ready to strike, click [here](#). However, there is a group of parents who are angry with the union and most definitely are not in favor of a walkout. To get their view, go [here](#).

Should teachers share their political views with students? That's certainly a provocative question in our very polarized times. David Cutler, a high school teacher in Massachusetts, recently wrote a very thoughtful piece on the subject. He says,

I once believed in concealing my political thoughts unless I couldn't in good conscience keep quiet. Trump's remarks have repeatedly crossed that line for me, and as Abraham Lincoln said, "It is a sin to be silent when it is your duty to protest."

My students asked for my take, so I told them, but rather than focus on venting what appeared to be a collective disdain, I urged them to look into why others felt differently.

To read this fair-minded piece, go [here](#).

In a very troubling video, Bode Lang describes the attempt of many schools to force sexual concepts on young school children. For example, children as young as 4 years-old are being taught about transgenderism. Whatever your stance on the issue is, this smacks of indoctrination, and parents should be able to opt their kids out of this kind of "education" if they so choose.

To view the video, click [here](#).

Some secular people don't like school choice, because they say, "Why should my tax money be spent on Catholic schools. I am not of that religion." To which a Catholic family could respond "I don't want my tax money spent on a school that teaches sexual concepts that I don't feel are appropriate." If the first case resonates, so then should the second. What to do?

The Cato Institute's Neal McCluskey has an answer.

Let people choose schools without sacrificing their tax dollars to institutions that teach things they deem unacceptable. Indeed, there is a powerful constitutional argument that if government is going to supply secular public schools, it must also supply school choice programs. It is the only way to neither favor nor discriminate against religious Americans.

To read more of McCluskey's piece, go [here](#).

Teacher absenteeism seems to be a growing problem. According to an analysis by the Education Week Research Center, 901,500 pre-K-12 teachers (28 percent) nationwide were absent for more than 10 school days during the 2015-16 school year. (Here in CA, it is 23 percent) Charter school numbers, however, were quite different.

Over 43 percent of charters were documented as having zero cases of teachers not showing up to work when expected, in comparison to only 14 percent of all other schools. States with the highest percentages, where over 62 percent of schools noted zero teacher absentees, included: New Hampshire, Florida, New Mexico, Idaho, and Arizona. This raises questions about why we see this pattern.

To learn more, click [here](#).

At the same time, student absences, at least here in California, are also a problem. As reported by EdSource, school-level data show that in 2016 more than 1 in 10 students was chronically absent – missing at least 10 percent of school days for any reason. The piece goes on to explain:

Research has shown that missing at least 10 percent of the school year, particularly in early grades, reduces the likelihood that students will read proficiently by 3rd grade, predicts poor academic performance in middle school and increases the likelihood that students will drop out in high school. Students living in poverty, students of color and students with disabilities have disproportionately higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

To learn more, go [here](#).

Also, as we mentioned last month, CTEN will do its best to keep up with post-*Janus* doings in addition to any other issues pertinent to education and teachers, and inform you as things happen. If you have any questions, or have experienced any problems because of your decision to leave your union, please let us know, and we will do our best to help you in a timely manner. We will also be able to share your concerns with other teachers across the state. And speaking of sharing, please pass this email along to your colleagues and encourage them to join us.

Finally, as you well know, data and solid information are very useful in scoring political points and making cases for various causes. To that end, CTEN has a “cheat sheet,” which has been updated on our website – all with original sources. To see it, go [here](#).

If you have information that counters what's there or would like to see something added, please let us know. As always, thanks for your continuing interest and support.

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President