



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.

October 16, 2019

Dear Colleague,

Andrew Biggs, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and Jason Richwine, a D.C.-based public-policy analyst, have written “The Truth about Teacher Pay,” an essay for *National Affairs*, that unmercifully destroys mountains of emotion-based clichés that are education establishment mainstays.

The authors dispel myths like the “teacher pay gap,” which allegedly leads many educators to take second jobs, as well as other tall tales of woe, including the “teacher shortage,” that “teachers are leaving the field in droves,” that “teachers work more than other professionals,” et al. For example, citing an Economic Policy Institute study, which claims that teachers are victimized by a 21 percent pay gap nationwide, they write,

Finally, if teachers were truly underpaid by 21% on average, we should expect large wage gains when they move to the private sector, especially since the teachers who would most gain from switching jobs are the most likely to actually switch. But the evidence shows nothing like these kinds of wage increases. Our analysis of the Survey of Income and Program Participation finds that teachers who switch to a different profession earn 3% less in their new jobs. Separate studies using administrative records in Florida, Missouri, and Georgia also find no average wage increase for ex-teachers.

To continue reading this eye-opening report, go [here](#).

Chris Stewart, CEO of *Education Post*, has written a series of pieces about the role of parents in education. His September 3rd entry was particularly riveting. He writes,

For decades parents have allowed the \$600 billion public education cabal to professionalize them out of the educational equation, basically demanding we shut up, hand our children over, and let the experts do their work. It hasn't worked out. Schools today remain mediocre and education policy offers little hope for systemic change.

Focusing on the three R's of parental sovereignty isn't a sly way of blaming parents or scolding them. To the contrary, it is to acknowledge their struggle, their marginalization, and admit that the deck is often stacked against their kids. The only way out that I see is for parents to fully step into their power, make demands, and be ready to do the work of saving their kids that government and its lovers have yet to do.

To read Stewart's essay, go [here](#).

On the school choice front, the Trump administration's Education Freedom Scholarships, which would create federal tax credits for state-selected scholarship-granting organizations to support a variety of educational services, are in trouble.

While Education Secretary Betsy DeVos asserts the scholarships wouldn't create or fund a new Washington program, they would “still be administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. And in order for the Treasury Department to oversee the Freedom Scholarships, Congress would have to appropriate money for the purpose; this could be done without increasing the department's overall budget.”

However, in their fiscal 2020 appropriations bills, neither the House nor the Senate make any mention of money being appropriated to the Treasury Department to administer these scholarships. You won't find any reference to the Education Freedom Scholarships in the bill language or in reports with key details about the legislation.

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

In November 2020, California could be hit with dueling propositions. The “split roll” initiative would gut Prop 13 protections for businesses, but spare individuals the massive tax hike. Since 1978, Prop. 13 has limited property taxes on all forms of property – private and commercial – to 1 percent of assessed value, and limits increases in that value to no more than 2 percent a year, except when properties change hands. Proponents claim the tax would raise \$11 billion a year for schools and local governments. But a March 2012 study from Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy showed that adopting such a “split-roll” property tax would result in a loss of 400,000 jobs and \$72 billion in economic activity in the first five years.

At the same time the California School Boards Association is pushing to get the Full and Fair Funding initiative on the 2020 ballot. As reported by *EdSource's* John Fensterwald, CSBA asserts that their initiative “would increase funding for K-12, early education and community colleges by raising income taxes on corporations and individuals earning more than \$1 million.” This initiative would set Californians back \$15 billion. And yes, it is conceivable that both initiatives could wind up on the ballot in 2020.

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

Needless to say, the California Teachers Association will be spending heavily on all the above. According to Mike Antonucci, CTA is pledging to collect 150,000 signatures once the split roll measure is ready to go. Antonucci also writes that CTA is flush with cash.

CTA has more than \$40 million available for various aspects of its political agenda, with more on the way at the end of every teacher pay period — and it can be supplemented by grants from the National Education Association.

Money doesn't always guarantee success in the political arena, but CTA will never be able to credibly complain it couldn't raise enough cash.

For details about CTA's deep pockets, go [here](#).

The United Teachers of Los Angeles is gearing up for the 2020 election by holding an “advisory vote” for president on November 13th, and it looks like Vermont socialist Bernie Sanders will be their pick.

“Sanders is shaping up to be the candidate with the best chance not just to win the White House, but to actually change the conditions of massive inequality and underfunding of public education,” UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl says. “The process approved by our Board and House makes clear our broad union leaders’ recognition of Sanders’ unique platform while also going to our most important resource—our members and chapter leaders—for dialogue and advice before making this important decision.”

“Bernie is the only candidate with a concrete, progressive K-12 educational plan, including a massive infusion of funding and a moratorium on charters,” UTLA Elementary Vice President Gloria Martinez says. “Bernie’s anti-privatization stance on education and healthcare addresses the needs of our students and the long-term viability of our healthcare and healthcare for all.”

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

Life in Local, Inc. recently announced the opening of a new online community focusing on education with a unique crowdfunding marketplace. President and co-founder David Jemison writes,

Our idea is to bring together all aspects of the offline education “community” and bring them online to help them interact better- not just the students and faculty/staff, but alumni, local businesses, residents, and other organizations. We want to make it easier for schools and members of the community to interact with each other and create new opportunities for non-traditional learning, as well as fundraising/advancement. Besides getting individual student clubs to use the site, we are looking for schools/organizations interested in having their own branded online campus community.

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

Due to union “opt-out windows,” which are very possibly illegal, this may be the time to quit if you are planning to do so. If you have any questions about the process, 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 – possibly getting you legal assistance, if necessary. We will also be able to

share your concerns with other teachers across the state. And talking about sharing, please pass this email along to your colleagues and encourage them to join us.

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