Education vs. Tenure

What is teacher tenure? Teacher tenure is a protection that public school teachers in all states receive after one to seven years on the job. Greenblatt states, “The advent of tenure, which coincided roughly with World War I and the suffragist movement, was meant to protect teachers, who, in olden days, were often fired for reasons that had nothing to do with their work, including race”(Greenblatt par 9). Back in the day tenure helped teachers keep their job for the right reasons, but the main problem now a days with having tenured teachers is that it makes it harder to get rid of poorly performing teachers. The reason why it is difficult to get rid of a poorly performing teacher that has been tenured is because it is costly and also time consuming, so schools end up not taking action leaving them to keep the bad teachers. By keeping these bad teachers, they leave the students with teachers who don’t teach well and it also results in us students from getting the right education we deserve. Tenure should be abolished and a new law should take its place to reward the good working teachers and get rid of the bad teachers.

Tenure makes it difficult and expensive for school districts to remove a teacher who is at fault of wrong doing. “It costs an average of $250,000 to fire a teacher in New York City. New York spent an estimated $30 million a year paying tenured teachers accused of incompetence and wrongdoing to sit in "rubber rooms” before those rooms were shut down on June 28, 2010” (ProCon.org par 6). A large amount of money is needed to getting rid of just one underperforming teacher. That’s why some school districts and states decide on not firing bad performing tenured teachers because of the high costs. If we lower down the cost of firing a teacher then we can solve the issue of schools not being able to afford the costs of getting rid of a teacher who is not doing their job properly.
Not only is this process expensive, but also time consuming. According to Stephey, "Tenure does make firing teachers a difficult and costly process, one that involves the union, the school board, the principal, the judicial system and thousands of dollars in legal fees" (Stephey par 3). Time is wasted when having to go through all these different districts and systems that are involved on getting rid of one teacher. In order to fire a tenured teacher the school board also has to go through a long process of re-hearings and many investigations. Scott James writes, "It is not impossible to terminate the employment of a tenured teacher, but the process is a difficult and cumbersome one, that’s why administrators would rather retain incompetent teachers than go through the time and effort involved in a dismissal hearing” (James par 5). Administrators don’t even try to get rid of bad teachers because of the amount of time and patience it takes to fire one.

From personal experience I have dealt with teachers who didn’t teach well because they were tenured and knew that it was hard to fire them. This was not fair to us the students who woke up and came to school for an education. These teachers always sat around and wasted time until class ended. I know for us students it’s nice having teachers who don’t give us work, but we don’t think in the long run it is negatively affecting us. We aren’t learning half the things we need to know in order to pass some of the standardized tests and exams. And if we aren’t learning what we need to know it results in us not getting into a college that we dreamed of or simply us not getting the job we want.

There is no need to have tenure for teachers because if you’re a teacher that knows you are teaching the material that is needed to be taught and doing your job well. Then you should have no fear of getting fired. In the other hand if you aren’t doing your job well in teaching then that is simply your fault when getting fired. Edward Krigbaum states, “You sell, you get paid, they don’t keep you around if you don’t produce” (Krigbaum). Like Edward Krigbaum there are
many other workers out there that don’t have tenure for their jobs. Many other workers work hard to get what they deserve such as high pay or just simply keeping their job. They don’t have tenure which protects their job like teachers do. Then why do we have a law which protects teacher’s jobs only? If teachers get tenured then why don’t other job holders? It should be fair to all other job holders too, that’s why we should get rid of tenure.

One way we could stop poorly performing teachers is by having random checking’s in the classrooms and evaluating the teacher’s performance. According to Kristin Olsen, “Teachers should be evaluated on an on going period, and we ought to reward effectiveness” (Olsen). The teachers who perform well should get rewarded. A few good ways to reward good performing teachers is by giving them a raise in salary, a longer vacation, or some kind of other appreciation gifts. Then those teachers who teach poorly should either figure a way to step up their game or lose their job. Education of the students should be taken seriously by the teachers because they are teaching the future generation of America.

Tenure either needs to be changed so it is easier and cheaper to fire a teacher who doesn’t do their job correctly or tenure just needs to be gotten rid of for good. I am not saying all teachers who have tenure are bad teachers, but that one percent who are, are hurting the children’s education. Those students who have these teachers lack the education other students are getting. It is not the students fault for getting a teacher who doesn’t teach well, but ours because we aren’t taking a stand to get rid of poor performing teachers. Tenure should be abolished for all teachers so it is equal and fair to every other job worker, and the students.
Works Cited


