A timeline of teacher tenure

In response to growing concern about the spoils system of employment, Congress passes the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act, which required that government jobs be awarded on the basis of merit and not political affiliation. This legislation laid the groundwork for future teacher tenure laws.

Nearly all U.S. colleges and universities have provisions for tenured faculty.

The National Education Association publishes a report advocating for public school teachers to receive tenure to protect against political favoritism and discrimination based on race and gender.

Massachusetts allows schools to contract with teachers for more than one year.

Teacher tenure is one of the main discussion topics at the NEA conference in Chicago.

New Jersey passes the first comprehensive statewide K-12 tenure law in the U.S.

A Nation at Risk is published and includes the accusation that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." Initiates many efforts at tenure reform, introduction of learning standards, and more use of standardized testing.

California voters defeat Proposition 74, which would have extended from two years to five years the amount of service required before a teacher could be tenured.

Washington, D.C., schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee proposes that teachers give up tenure in favor of pay increases. 80% of DC teachers support the proposal in a vote in 2010.

The U.S. Department of Education introduces Race to the Top competitive grants, which encouraged states to embrace certain education policies, including performance-based evaluations of teachers and principals.

A majority of U.S. adults (59%) say they oppose tenure in PDK poll on education.

18 states modified their teacher tenure laws. Many required demonstration of effectiveness, not time of service, before granting tenure and introduced periodic professional reviews.

Amid Capitol protests and the exit of 14 Democratic senators, Wisconsin legislature passes Act 10, at the behest of Gov. Scott Walker, which severely restricts collective bargaining for public employees. After court challenges, the law is upheld in 2013.


"Waiting for Superman" is released, invigorating the debate about teacher tenure.

Sources


