



Update

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WHY YOU SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN VOTE-COPE

I ask you to consider our brothers and sisters in other states. Like us, they have been fighting to maintain their tenure, seniority, and collective bargaining rights at their local and state levels. Unfortunately, many have lost these rights. If you think for one moment that teachers in New York State are different, are safe and are protected from these atrocities, you'd better think again. There are only three things standing between us and losing our union rights like our brothers and sisters across this country: Vote-Cope, Election Day and our Solidarity.

Following is a sampling of state laws which have been enacted in the last few years; and lest you think that our political opponents are done, there are numerous other state bills which have already been proposed and are awaiting a vote by their respective state legislatures.

ALABAMA:

Seniority: Alabama House and Senate committees approved bills prohibiting school boards from considering seniority as the most significant factor when determining policies regarding teacher layoffs...the new teacher performance evaluation system being developed by the Alabama Board of Education will play a major role in determining layoff policies.

Collective Bargaining: Alabama has no collective bargaining law, but the practice is allowed.

ARIZONA:

Tenure: A continuing tenured teacher who has been designated in the lowest performance classification for the school year following an evaluation becomes a probationary teacher for the subsequent year and remains probationary until their performance places them in one of the two highest classifications.

Seniority: School districts are prohibited from using tenure or seniority when they lay-off or rehire staff.

FLORIDA:

Collective Bargaining: There is now a statewide evaluation system, and teacher pay is based on a statewide merit pay system.

Tenure: Teachers hired after July 1, 2011 will not be able to obtain tenure. Each teacher will be hired on an annual contract.

GEORGIA:

Seniority: Seniority may no longer be used by local school boards as "the primary or sole determining factor" when determining whom to terminate. Failure to follow this directive can result in state aid being withheld.

IDAHO:

Tenure: Teachers' tenure, hiring and job security now linked to job performance rather than seniority

INDIANA:

Tenure: Job security and salary determinations now tied to student performance and not seniority.

A teacher must be rated "highly effective" for five years before being granted tenure. A tenured teacher may be classified as probationary after one year in which they are rated ineffective.

Collective Bargaining: A new timeline for collective bargaining imposes mandatory impasse procedures for mediation and fact-finding.

KANSAS:

Tenure: Teachers no longer have a right to be told why they were fired or to a hearing challenging their termination.

LOUISIANA:

Tenure: Elimination of tenure for teachers hired after July 2012. Teachers rated highly effective for 5 years within a 6 year period will be granted tenure. Others will remain "at-will" employees. Tenured teachers rated ineffective will lose tenure.

MICHIGAN:

Collective Bargaining: Amended the Public Employment Relations Act to prohibit collective bargaining on the following subjects: policies for personnel decisions when eliminating or recalling positions, performance evaluation systems, classroom observations, parental notification of ineffective teachers, performance based method of compensation.



MISSOURI:

Tenure: A petition to eliminate tenure and require that standardized student test scores be used to evaluate teacher performance was filed and will be on the November 2014 ballot. A similar bill to end tenure and institute merit pay failed in 2011.

NEVADA:

Tenure: Tenured teachers may be returned to probationary status after 2 consecutive unsatisfactory evaluations.

Seniority: Seniority may not be the only factor considered when determining layoffs.

NEW JERSEY:

Tenure: Probationary period now 4 years, new statewide evaluation system is part of tenure decision.

Collective Bargaining: Health care contributions by employees may be increased for four years without negotiations.

NORTH CAROLINA:

Tenure: Four year contracts may only be offered to top performing teachers while others may only be offered one or two year contracts. Only 25% of teachers rated effective will be offered long-term job security.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Tenure: Tenure ended by 2012 law, grandfathered those who are granted tenure before January 1, 2016.

TENNESSEE:

Tenure: 5 year probationary period, teachers who acquire tenure after July 2011 may be returned to probationary status if they have two consecutive years of performance below expectations. A teacher will again be eligible for tenure after two consecutive years of performance above expectations.

VIRGINIA:

Tenure: New teachers on probation for five instead of three years.

WASHINGTON, D.C.:

Tenure: Tenure was abolished in 2009. Teacher evaluations are now based half on student performance and any teacher rated ineffective may be terminated.

Seniority: as of 2010 pay is based on student performance rather than seniority.

WISCONSIN:

Collective Bargaining: Public sector workers may now collectively bargain for “base wages” only.

NEW YORK:

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Brothers and Sisters, I sincerely thank the two-thirds of you who have already committed to Vote-Cope contributions. I ask, rhetorically of course... If you are one of those who have not, why not? NYSUT is 600,000 members strong. But unless each member participates in Vote-Cope, votes responsibly in November and supports their fellow brothers and sisters, NYSUT may as well have 600 members. All of our hard won rights – tenure, seniority, collective bargaining - can be undone in an instant if we, as a union, allow it. Unionism is at a very dangerous crossroads. None of us can afford to be careless or unmindful of the clear and present threats to our profession.

The adage, “United we stand, divided we fall” must be embedded in our thoughts and our actions. What should you do? That’s easy!

- **Contribute to Vote-Cope** – See your building rep or go to the SFT-NEA.org website for an enrollment form.
- **Educate yourself before the November elections** – Read the SFT PAC flyers and the NYSUT United. And get involved in phone banks, labor walks and rallies.
See your Building Rep about participating in the Election Day phone banks at the NYSUT office on October 29th.
- **Show your Solidarity** – Wear your SFT t-shirt, get involved in SFT activities, join the SFT email listserv, and support each other by treating all fellow colleagues with respect.

We are in this together.

In Unity,

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