

Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Teacher tenure petition misleading

Okay, Mr. Rex Sinqfield, you must be really proud of yourself being responsible for this initiative petition to eliminate teacher tenure in our state and making it mandatory for our employment and salary to be based on ONE TEST. Instead of using your money and "educational expertise" (you really have none...educational expertise, that is) to destroy education in our state, why haven't you tried using it to help fund school programs that are underfunded and/or cut, provide for students/schools' technology needs, help teacher pay for their on-going professional development, which is mandated and time-consuming - meaning we have to be out of our classroom...not to mention expensive - teachers don't have extra money laying around (like you obviously do) to pay for all of this.

Your entire initiative petition campaign has been conducted in a very misleading and malicious manner, making it sound like all teachers are not to be trusted with the education of our students and that we are incompetent individuals...nothing could be further from the truth!

So here is my counter proposal for your next "initiative petition"...ALL students MUST attend each class with a 95 percent or higher attendance rate during the school year...every student's parent MUST attend ALL parent-teacher conferences and necessary meetings...parents must verify that their son/daughter had the proper amount of sleep the nights before and breakfast the mornings of this "one all-important test." Since the test will be mainly used to

score teacher effectiveness, it is nothing but fair to try to level the "playing field"...and all students MUST SCORE in the proficient or advanced levels. Failure to meet any one of these criteria places the student's status on the retention level and he/she may not progress to the next grade level, with parents having no choice in the matter. Let's make ALL parties involved accountable, not just one part. No teacher should ever be concerned about his/her job security and/or salary being based on ONE TEST!

The original purpose of testing used to be to assess the strength and weaknesses of students and adjust the teaching accordingly...at least that is the way it used to be before all of you self-proclaimed "education experts" got involved and somehow convinced politicians and the general public that our education system is broken. From where I'm standing, it was and is NOT BROKEN until all you "experts" showed up, trying to "fix" something you had really no clue understanding how it all works. You wouldn't want me to come run your business without the proper qualification, would you? I can guarantee you that I would run it into the ground just as fast as you're trying to run us into the ground.

Mr. Sinqfield, your whole endeavor is moronic/idiotic at best! Your "main" reason supposedly is to get rid of ineffective teachers. I have a NEWSFLASH for you: there already is a system in place for that, and if used as designed, it will do just that. Eliminating teacher tenure serves no real purpose except to eliminate the "due process" protection teachers earn after five consecutive years of service in a district.

Your whole proposal serves only to stroke your over-inflat-

ed ego of "self-proclaimed education expert," having nothing better to do than spend your money to destroy something you really have no interest in. If you were truly interested in helping students and teachers, you would have used your money in my earlier mentioned ways.

As to all the petition signature gatherers, I wonder how you can sleep well having misled all these thousands of uninformed signers with your misguided/misleading questions/statements. To all the individuals who signed this petition, I sincerely hope that, should this make it on the November ballot, you will have the common sense this time to get ALL the pertinent information before you actually vote. (Wouldn't it be ironic if the school(s) your children attend, be adversely affected by all of this?) One way to get this information is to talk with your teachers/school personnel in your local school district, do some actual research, etc. and not just listen to someone's spiel, who's only interested in the money he/she is being paid for each signature he/she can get.

In case you're wondering, Mr. Sinqfield, my name is Ralf Trusty and I am a 32-year veteran elementary teacher, teaching in a small rural district called Iberia R-V, and darn proud of it. I am, along with thousands of teachers like me across the state of Missouri, what is RIGHT and NOT BROKEN in our education system. By the way, I don't recall seeing, or hearing about, you visiting my, or for that fact, any classroom, to gain first-hand information about what teachers do every day. You might get a real education if you did.