

Measure would change criteria for teacher layoffs

By Laurel Rosenhall, Sacramento Bee

A ballot measure submitted by a political consultant for education advocate Michelle Rhee seeks to remove seniority as a factor when California school districts lay off teachers, requiring instead that decisions be based on performance and student test scores.

That approach has been at the core of Rhee's advocacy efforts as head of StudentsFirst, a national group headquartered in Sacramento. Rhee, who is married to Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, has said she established the group to try to counter the influence that teachers unions have in decisions about public education.

Unions generally reject the idea that teachers should be rated based on their students' test scores, and prefer contracts that call for the most recently hired teachers to be the first let go during layoffs.

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