

2 ex-Calif. governors come out against teacher tenure

By Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle

Former Govs. Pete Wilson and Arnold Schwarzenegger and constitutional scholar Laurence Tribe joined the legal attack on California's teacher tenure laws, telling a state appeals court the job-security and seniority statutes leave some of the state's neediest students in the hands of incompetent teachers.

It is "nearly impossible to remove ineffective teachers from classrooms" because of the state laws, lawyers for Wilson and Schwarzenegger said in a filing to the Second District Court of Appeal in Los Angeles. After 15 years of legislative inaction and an unsuccessful 2005 ballot measure backed by Schwarzenegger to change the tenure law, it is time for the courts to act, they said.

No other state allows "such lopsided school laws which favor teacher interests over the rights of students," said a second brief coauthored by Tribe, a Harvard law professor with liberal leanings whose students have included future President Barack Obama and U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts. Other academics who signed the brief included Rachel Moran, a UCLA law school professor and former dean.

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