

COLUMNLEFT

Are Teachers at Odds Over Prop. 74?

BY LARRY CABALLERO AND
TONY MENDOZA

We were both by Sunday's *Los Angeles Times* front page story entitled "Prop. 74 Has Some Teachers at Odds."

Apparently, there are some teachers in California who support it while the overwhelming majority of public school teachers do not. According to the story, teachers "are nervously wondering who among them will lose their jobs." If 74 passes, it would supposedly lengthen probationary periods for teachers and ease the rules for firing poor-performing veteran instructors.

The story also mentions how 74 "could rid California schools of ineffective instructors who curse at students, or talk on cell phones and show the movie *Legally Blonde* during class."

Frankly, we don't understand why some teachers are not opposed to 74 since it is a poorly drafted initiative that will not do anything to improve education in the classroom. It will also make it harder to remove poor teachers because schools must first find a qualified teacher to replace the one they want removed.

Even State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell said, "The governor won't improve education with his half-baked ideas" since 74 will only make teaching less attractive in our state.

It's amazing to read that some teachers even believe that without 74, lazy and incompetent teachers will continue to teach in our classrooms. The reality, of course, is that very little good will come out of this

proposition for several reasons.

First of all, the local school site administrator already can remove a poor teacher by simply documenting the infractions and by allowing the teacher a certain period of time to improve. If the teacher does not, then he's removed from the classroom.

The problem is not unqualified teachers as much as it is lazy administrators who don't do their jobs. It's like blaming the illegal immigrant who crosses over the border for wanting a job, but not blaming the employer who hires the immigrant.

As for these teachers remaining in the classroom, we can assure you as veteran teachers that very few poor teachers survive very long in the classroom. No, they are not removed by the administrator – they choose to leave after their students confront them, and they will.

We're sure you remember when you were a young parent raising your small children. If you didn't keep them occupied and busy doing something relevant, they would make your lives miserable with their behavior. It's the same in the classroom.

Teachers who are disrespectful to students or show movies every day hardly exist in today's classroom. The students would not tolerate it.

Even one of the few teachers who support 74 had to admit that teaching "is really a draining kind of job. You put so much of your heart and soul into it. I am exhausted every day."

At least, we agree with her on that, but to think that Proposition 74 is the answer is wrong. In order to improve our public schools, we need a state legislature and the community to work with the teachers and administrators.

Using ways to divide us all will not strengthen our public schools. This proposition will only cause more qualified people

to leave teaching or not to enter the profession in the first place.

Vote NO on Proposition 74.

Larry Caballero is a teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Tony Mendoza is also a teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District and is a member of the Artesia City Council.

Text of Article

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By LAUSD Teachers Larry Caballero and Tony Mendoza

Caballero is also the Newsletter Editor, and Mendoza is also an Artesia city councilmember

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Apparently, there are some teachers in California who support it while the overwhelming majority of public school teachers do not. According to the story, teachers "are nervously wondering who among them will lose their jobs". If 74 passes, it would supposedly lengthen probationary periods for teachers and ease the rules for firing poor-performing veteran instructors.

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