

StudentsMatter

MEDIA CONTACT:

Danielle Kelton
dkelton@griffinschein.com or (323) 892-2080

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 2, 2013

Students Matter Welcomes Teachers Unions' Participation in Statewide Education Lawsuit

LOS ANGELES — Today, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Rolf Treu granted the California Teachers Association (CTA) and the California Federation of Teachers (CFT)'s motion to intervene as defendants in *Vergara v. California*. The lawsuit seeks to protect the Constitutional rights of California public school students to equal access to a quality education.

The legal team representing the Plaintiffs did not oppose the Unions' motion to intervene.

"We welcome the CTA and CFT's participation in this lawsuit," said Marcellus McRae, legal counsel for the plaintiffs. "We are dedicated to a timely and transparent process that brings all stakeholders to the table to have an honest discussion about how these laws are affecting California's public school students."

The CTA and CFT are joining the lawsuit during the discovery phase, as both sides prepare for trial. The trial is set to begin on January 27, 2014 and is expected to last 20 days.

Filed on behalf of nine public school students from districts around the state, *Vergara v. California* challenges the laws preventing students from having an equal opportunity to access quality teachers—laws that detract from the overriding purpose of the California education system: to serve the best interests of students.

The overwhelming majority of research shows that teacher quality is the number one in-school determinant of educational effectiveness—not class size, not per-pupil spending. With an effective teacher, every student can learn, regardless of his or her background. Equal access to quality education means equal access to quality teachers.

Yet, current laws force administrators to ignore teacher quality in personnel decisions. Quality-blind laws force administrators to knowingly place grossly ineffective teachers in front of students year after year, and push effective teachers out of California's classrooms.

"I got involved in this lawsuit after watching my child struggle through a year with an ineffective teacher and continue to struggle the following year, despite my best efforts to help her. I am worried that she could get stuck with another ineffective teacher and fall further behind," said Lauren Campbell, parent of one of the Plaintiffs. "Parents in California should not have to worry every year that their children could be assigned to teachers who deny them the learning opportunities they deserve."

The case is sponsored by Students Matter, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to sponsoring impact litigation to promote access to quality public education.

“We cannot stand by while the public education system is failing our children,” said Students Matter founder and parent Dave Welch. “The system is outdated, handcuffed from succeeding by antiquated and harmful laws that need to change. And the ones getting hurt are the kids—the ones who can’t vote, who can’t lobby, who have no seat at the table. This case is about giving our children a voice and making sure their Constitutional rights are protected.”

Vergara v. California has the support of educational experts and district leaders throughout the state, including Superintendents John Deasy of Los Angeles Unified, Jonathan Raymond of Sacramento City Unified, Xavier De La Torre of the Santa Clara County Office of Education and former Superintendent of Oakland Unified Tony Smith.

To learn more about our lawsuit or speak with a member of the Students Matter legal team, contact Danielle Kelton at dkelton@griffinschein.com or (323) 892-2080.

###

Students Matter is a national non-profit organization dedicated to sponsoring impact litigation to promote access to quality public education. Learn more at studentsmatter.org.