

Students Matter

Defending students' rights through impact litigation

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Manny Rivera

Mrivera@WeAreRALLY.com or (323) 892-2080

Renowned Constitutional Law Scholar Laurence H. Tribe Joins Students Matter as an Advisor Prof. Tribe Will Advise on Legal Strategy as the Organization Expands its National Footprint

LOS ANGELES, CA – Today, Students Matter, the organizational sponsor of the landmark education equality lawsuit, *Vergara v. California*, announced that Laurence H. Tribe, the Carl M. Loeb University Professor and Professor of Constitutional Law at Harvard, is joining Students Matter as an advisor. In this role, Prof. Tribe will counsel Students Matter on legal strategy as the organization continues to promote quality public education through impact litigation.

"I am thrilled that Prof. Tribe has accepted our invitation to join forces with Students Matter," said David F. Welch, the organization's founder. "As we look at bringing additional education litigation in states across the country, Prof. Tribe's remarkable experience as one of our nation's foremost constitutional experts will provide a unique and important perspective. We look forward to his advice as we continue our efforts to ensure our nation's education systems place the needs of our kids above all else."

"There is no more important function that state and local governments serve than providing the next generation with an education," said Prof. Tribe. "As someone who attended public schools from elementary school through high school, I know first-hand the profound impact that our public school teachers have on a child's education. My own life was shaped by the guidance of inspiring, dedicated teachers who helped me realize my potential. Every student deserves teachers like that. By working with Students Matter, I plan to do my part to ensure that our education system encourages quality teachers in every classroom, every day."

"Our nation's public school students have a powerful ally in Prof. Tribe," added Theodore J. Boutros, partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, and lead co-counsel for Plaintiffs in *Vergara v. California*. "No legal scholar has had greater influence on the understanding and development of constitutional law. His passion for the law and his fierce and vocal support for progressive causes make his voice an incredibly valuable addition to the team."

“Prof. Tribe is one of the most respected authorities on constitutional law in the United States,” said Theodore B. Olson, former Solicitor General of the United States and partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. “I look forward to working with him on this critical civil rights issue that crosses party and ideological lines. The needs of our nation’s children must rise above politics.”

Born in Shanghai, China to Eastern European parents, Prof. Tribe attended public schools in San Francisco, CA until the age of 16, when he began his undergraduate studies at Harvard University in 1958. He graduated from Harvard summa cum laude in Mathematics in 1962 and magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1966. After graduating from Harvard Law, Prof. Tribe clerked for the California and U.S. Supreme Courts until 1968, when he began teaching at Harvard Law School. As *Northwestern Law Review* has described, no-one else “in American history has... simultaneously achieved Tribe’s preeminence... as a practitioner and... scholar of constitutional law.”

In 2010, President Barack Obama—a former law student of Prof. Tribe—appointed him to serve as the first Senior Counselor for Access to Justice at the U.S. Department of Justice. In that position, Prof. Tribe suggested ways to improve legal services for the poor, find alternatives to court-intensive litigation and strengthen the fairness and independence of domestic courts. Prof. Tribe served as a primary liaison to the federal judiciary, and worked with federal, state, and tribal judiciaries in strengthening fair, impartial, and independent adjudication.

Studies have confirmed that the key determinant of educational effectiveness is teacher quality. Students taught by effective teachers are more likely to attend college, attend higher-ranked colleges, earn higher salaries, reside in higher socioeconomic status neighborhoods, and save for retirement.

Students Matter is the sole organizational sponsor of *Vergara v. California*. The historic decision in *Vergara* struck down five harmful provisions of the California Education Code as unconstitutional. According to the Court, the laws in question—laws that govern teacher tenure, dismissal, and layoffs—impose substantial harm on California’s students by forcing administrators to push passionate, inspiring teachers out of the school system and keep grossly ineffective teachers in front of students year after year. To learn more about Students Matter visit www.studentmatter.org.

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Students Matter is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to sponsoring impact litigation to promote access to quality public education. Learn more at studentmatter.org.