

Testimony of the California Federation of Teachers delivered by William D. Plosser, CFT Legislative Advocate, to the Subcommittee on School Personnel and Teacher Qualifications of the Assembly Education Committee, February 1 & 2, 1966, San Diego, California.

Gentlemen of the Committee, we are here today to present in detail the cases of four teachers -- four persons who applied for credentials and thereby underwent an experience which frankly should not occur in this democratic country of ours.

As you will see after we have discussed the cases, the Credentials Committee of the State Department of Education not only acted in an arbitrary fashion unwarranted by the issues involved but harassed the teachers with no other object in mind but to attempt to impose upon them (the teachers) the political views held by members of the committee and its chairman, Dr. Max Rafferty.

At the conclusion of our remarks we will suggest to this Assembly subcommittee what we think you should do and what we as a professional organization of classroom teachers intend to do to protect academic freedom in California.

Hopefully you will take a moment at this time to review the profiles before you.

First let me point out that all four teachers are fully qualified to teach. That is, they have completed all of the requirements for a credential including the signing of the loyalty oath commonly referred to as the Dilworth Oath.

As you can see from the profiles, each in varying degrees has outstanding attributes over and above the minimum qualifications. For example, more than one of the four has had volunteer experience working with children, in one case with the Girl Scouts, in another with nursery school children.

You will see that one of the applicants was president of his class in junior college. Another received a top secret clearance to work overseas for the U. S. Government. All four have traveled fairly extensively. Two were honor students attending the University on scholarships.

Still in the area of experience over and above the minimum, one of these teachers has valuable volunteer experience with the Catholic Interracial Council. Another has worked with Richmond Neighborhood House, a local endeavor with an admirable record in helping children from poverty areas.

I think it is safe to say that some of these achievements indicate that the applicants are especially qualified to teach; certainly they are better qualified than many of those people who routinely receive credentials every day of the year.

The one common denominator in these cases is that each teacher was involved in the Free Speech Movement at the University of California in the fall of 1964. All of them sat-in at Sproul Hall on December 3, 1964 and this is the reason we are bringing the cases before you today.

Two of these teachers (Mr. Broadhead and Miss Gravalos) recently were granted credentials at a hearing of the Credentials Committee. They were represented by the attorney for our organization. Each is an AFT member in the Berkeley Federation of Teachers.

What is startling is that the other two teachers (Mrs. Kepner and Miss Bozman) have been denied credentials by the committee ~~on the grounds~~

I understand that the attorney for these two ladies has appealed the decision and hearings have been set for late March -- one full year after the original applications were filed.

To return to the point. Though the cases are exactly the same legally, two teachers were granted credentials while two others have been denied. Why?

From a close examination of the facts, it is clear that the reason the Credentials Committee approved the applications of the Berkeley interns was that publicity was generated over the cases. The decision of the committee was forced from out of the shadows into public print.

Additionally, both teachers were represented by our organization. For example, the President of the CFT issued a press release one week before the hearing, urging the committee to approve.

Also, the Berkeley Board of Education (the employers of the two) unanimously adopted a resolution saying that both teachers "have demonstrated real promise as classroom teachers" and should be granted the credentials.

With the CFT attorney representing them and with the eyes of the press focused on that January 18 hearing, the two interns received their credentials to continue teaching.

What about Mrs. Kepner and Miss Bozman?

Since last March when they first applied, the Credentials Committee has stalled, has taken weeks to answer letters, in short it has prevented two fully qualified applicants from entering teaching solely on the ground that it disapproves of the applicants interpretation of what it means to participate in our democratic process.

Furthermore, until today neither of these ladies has desired to have her case publicized for fear that it would jeopardize her chances. This tactic now appears to have played into the hands of the Credentials Committee.

I can not stress too heavily the fact that these ladies have been under investigation by the committee for nearly one year. Remember, they were both fully qualified to teach this fall semester. Each wanted to teach. One has been forced to take odd jobs to meet the bills. The committee is preventing them from teaching.

It should be pointed out that sociological studies conducted since the FSM activities have revealed that those who actively participated in FSM tended to be high achieving students, in many cases leaders both scholastically and socially. You should note that two of the four cases we have presented are honor students.

Our recommendations to the Subcommittee are as follows:

1. No investigation by the Credentials Committee into the political beliefs of the candidates
2. Due process in all proceedings of the committee
  - a. some indication of charges from committee before applicant has to appear the first time
  - b. before the first hearing, applicant should be notified that he or she has the right to have legal counsel, the power to subpoena witnesses, and the right to have others appear on his or her behalf

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