

## Teachers Deserve More

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The accusations by several letter-writers and by former Rep. David Stringer<sup>1</sup> of Prescott, that Arizona teachers make too much money compared to other professions and that teachers have an easy part-time job, are truly disingenuous. Diane McQueen's letter, "Teaching is part time?" makes that very clear.

Education is like a business. To retain a professional teaching staff, teachers need to be paid a salary commensurate with teachers in other states. It is painfully obvious that Governor Ducey and the AZ legislature have ignored this business practice and thus Arizona teacher salaries are still among the lowest in the nation. This has led to a 40% job turnover (46<sup>th</sup> of 50 states) leading to increased costs and lower test scores.<sup>2</sup>

It has been shown that it takes 8-10 years for a new teacher to reach his or her potential. Thus, many of our teachers never become effective as they flee the state for higher pay.<sup>3</sup> The future "19%" teacher pay increase over three years, dependent on a robust economy, is a start, but will not solve Arizona's education dilemma.

Adams, Jefferson, and Horace Mann all said words to the effect that, "the basis for a strong democracy is a well-educated citizenry."<sup>4</sup> I say a well-educated citizenry depends on excellent public education. Neither the Governor nor the legislature has shown strong support for public education. Thus, we must support teachers and help give them get what they deserve, a pro public-education government in Phoenix.

<sup>1</sup> Quote from Jesus Rubalcava, a special education teacher at Bales Elementary School, at the May 4<sup>th</sup> 2018 monthly AZ Business and Education Coalition luncheon, after hearing David Stringer say, "Teachers aren't paid badly considering they have an easy part-time job with two months off during the summer." <sup>2</sup> Dr. Berliner, ASU Professor and president of the American Education Research Association. <sup>3</sup> Dr. Berliner, ASU Professor and president of the American Education Research Association. <sup>4</sup> Mann: "citizens cannot maintain both ignorance and freedom...this education should be paid for...by the public." Biography.com. Jefferson: "a well-informed electorate is a prerequisite to democracy." Jefferson: "An enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic." Wikipedia Adams: "The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be willing to bear the expenses of it." Adams: "Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people." Jefferson: in a letter to John Adams: hope that public schools will become "the keystone in the arch of our government." Libertarianism.org George H. Smith, April 3, 2012

