



 **COMMENTARY** EDUCATION

Teacher Tenure Panel Featuring TCF's Richard Kahlenberg

JANUARY 15, 2016

Senior Fellow Rick Kahlenberg participated in a panel on teacher tenure on Wednesday afternoon, hosted by the Albert Shanker Institute. While acknowledging that there is some room for reform in the way that teacher tenure is applied, Kahlenberg presents a nuanced and convincing argument for why tenure is necessary in today's education system. In the K-12 system, tenure does not guarantee a "job for life" but rather provides due process to teachers who have demonstrated competence after a probationary period. Teacher tenure also helps protect the academic freedom of teachers inside the classroom, protects the ability of teachers to politically organize outside of the classroom, and augments civil rights and labor laws in important ways.

As important as teacher tenure is to efforts to recruit new talent and to retain good instructors, Kahlenberg acknowledges that there remain opportunities for reform. Kahlenberg praised teacher peer assistance and review programs as a way to train, and if necessary, terminate ineffective teachers, and encouraged states to be thoughtful about the duration of the probationary period before granting tenure. Ultimately, however, tenure frees teachers to better perform their job, to resist political and social pressures that might inhibit their ability to make sound pedagogical decisions, and to undergo transparent and impartial proceedings if their employment is called into question.

Watch the video of Kahlenberg's remarks at the panel titled "Teacher Tenure: An Outmoded "Job For Life" or Essential Right to Due Process?"

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