



A Union of Professionals

The Washington  
Teachers' Union

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Washington Teachers' Union Files Court Motions On Confusion Over Budget Projections

**WASHINGTON**—The Washington Teachers' Union filed two motions late Thursday evening in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to reopen the union's case involving the firing of 266 District of Columbia Public Schools teachers because of new revelations of a possible \$34 million surplus.

“There is so much confusion about how much money the District actually has that it's going to take a formal investigation to unearth the truth,” said WTU President George Parker. “The teachers may have been fired under false pretenses if there was money all along,” he said. The union is asking for a reinstatement plan for the fired teachers.

The WTU electronically filed two motions late last evening in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia:

- A motion to reopen the case filed against DCPS last fall, involving the 266 fired employees, based on new budget information revealed this week.
- A motion to postpone the binding arbitration decision on the firings, which is set for April 23.

Last November, DCPS Chancellor Michelle Rhee dismissed 266 teachers, citing a budget crunch. Earlier this week, Rhee revealed to the Council of the District of Columbia that there was a \$34 million surplus to fund teacher salary increases. Last night, however, the District's chief financial officer, Natwar Gandhi, said there never was such a surplus. Meanwhile, the WTU and DCPS reached a tentative contract agreement, which needs to be certified by the city as fiscally sound before teachers vote to ratify it.

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“This week was not a shining moment for the D.C. government or the D.C. Public Schools. The Keystone Kops nature of their budget projections regarding the dismissal of the teachers and the funding of the new contract would be funny if it weren’t so tragic,” said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers.

“Three-card monte may be an acceptable game in some places, but it shouldn’t be used as a principle to guide the DCPS budget,” Weingarten said.

The WTU and the AFT are calling for the judge to reopen the case of the laid-off teachers, so that all related documents can be reviewed to bring a fair remedy to those who were dismissed.

The unions also are calling on the D.C. city council to investigate the lack of veracity and precision around the DCPS budget numbers. Weingarten and Parker said they are gratified that council Chairman Vincent Gray and Councilman Harry Thomas are exploring ways to reinstate the RIFed teachers. “It is our strong hope that they will insist upon a more open and transparent system so that the damaging events of this week can’t be repeated,” Weingarten said.

The unions also said Gandhi needs to bring clarity in order to certify the budget for a tentative contract agreement. The union presidents said they negotiated the contract in good faith, and believe it will be good for kids and fair to teachers.

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