

## Braveheart In High Heels? More On DC's Rhee And Imported Teachers

Posted By [Rob Sanchez](#) On 12 November 2009 @ 9:27 In [General](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

Michelle Rhee, Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools, is portrayed in a recent *Education Next* puff piece as a modern day [Braveheart](#) in high heels because of the way she ruthlessly chops the jobs of union teachers.

Most of her layoff victims are older teachers. Suspiciously, the race or ethnicity of the teachers who lost their jobs is not yet available. The [rumor mill](#) has it that most of the teachers who were cut were black women over the age of 40. The racial mix can be seen in these two youtube videos of a protest march ([here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#)). In addition to lots of people with gray hair there are a few black and white males, perhaps a Hispanic or two — BUT NO ASIANS!

DC schools are following the same pattern I have observed in many states, Louisiana being the most [recent example](#):

1. First, a [shortage of teachers](#) is declared. Rhee was hired by DCPS to solve the shortage. But many feel that chancellor Michele Rhee caused the shortage by firing teachers because it served the purpose of her former organization ([Teach for America](#)) which was supposedly going to solve a shortage problem that didn't exist.
2. Then layoffs of a few hundred older teachers takes place. It's a shell game designed to replace older teachers with younger teachers and American teachers with younger H-1Bs.
3. Foreign teachers on H-1B visas are hired once most of the Americans have been let go. It's a sure bet that Rhee, who was born in the USA to South Korean immigrants, will be hiring mostly Asians. Labor Condition Applications can be viewed by going to the [DOL FLC data center](#). It reveals that Rhee wants H-1Bs for jobs that could obviously be filled by Americans:

District of Columbia Public Schools SECONDARY TEACHER \$73,844/yr

District of Columbia Public Schools ESL TEACHER \$44,988/yr

Rhee claims that the Oct. 2 layoffs of 266 teachers and educators were needed to help pay for \$43.9 million budget deficit for 2010. Union leaders have denounced the action as an illegal mass firing designed to purge older educators. The two sides have taken the [dispute](#) to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia (*WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION, LOCAL # 6, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO*).

The *Washington Examiner* just published a [column](#) by Barbara Hollingsworth that made the connection between two seemingly unconnected events — the replacing of American teachers with Filipinos in Louisiana with the recent firings of teachers in Washington DC. It's a great op-ed but this paragraph could be confusing:

According to the federal government's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center, D.C. Public Schools submitted 46 labor condition applications in 2007 and 2008, giving Rhee authority to import hundreds of foreign teachers on H1B visas without having to make any attempt to find eligible Americans.

While it's correct that Washington DC has filed LCAs for foreign teachers, the total number of applications is probably the tip of the iceberg. That's because, like most school districts, the DC public schools are probably using bodyshops for most of their hiring of foreign workers. A similar situation occurred in Louisiana, where a couple dozen LCAs were filed to hire H-1Bs directly, while at the same time a bodyshop called Universal Placement International was used to hire the bulk of the Filipino teachers.

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Be sure to read [Patrick Cleburne's](#) excellent blog concerning the *Washington Examiner* article.

H-1B visas aren't the only way to import foreign teachers, so counting LCAs can lead to undercounts. The J-1 visa with an Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorization can also be used to hire them as long as they are considered "**student teachers**". J-1/OPT work authorizations don't require an LCA, so we have no way to know how many of them DC schools are using — and the number of OPTs allowed into the U.S. is *unlimited*.

So where are the [teacher unions](#)? The answer is probably two-fold: the liberal [apparatchiks](#) who run the unions are reluctant to touch the H-1B (or any other immigration) issue. And the odds of winning may be drastically reduced if H-1B is mentioned. So far, the only way lawsuits have been won when H-1B was a factor was to drop the immigration issue in favor of age discrimination ([AIG](#)).

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