

Louisiana Hiring Filipino Teachers, Firing Americans—Where Are The Teacher Unions When We Need Them?

By [Rob Sanchez](#)

“It should be recalled that nurse migration to the U.S. began as a small and seemingly innocuous trend in the 1950s. In 2002, one in three nurses hired in the U.S. was foreign educated. Such trends in the health sector may foretell what is to come in education without thoughtful intervention.”

[Importing Educators Causes and Consequences of International Teacher Recruitment](#), p.5, American Federation for Teachers, 2009 [pdf.]

Will the teaching profession be debauched by H-1B “temporary” workers as the nursing profession has been?

The above statement by the AFT might seem to suggest that the [notoriously powerful teacher unions](#) are aware of the danger. Here’s another from the rival union, the National Education Association, in its 2003 paper *REPORT TO THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION ON TRENDS IN FOREIGN TEACHER RECRUITMENT*, by Randy Barber (it’s vanished from the NEA website, but it’s still available on the [Waybackmachine](#)):

“In at least one egregious situation, a “bodyshop”—the Teachers Placement Group—that was both the sponsor and employer of nonimmigrant teachers illegally withheld significant amounts of teachers’ pay, an action that led to large Labor Department fines and back-pay awards.”

But American teacher displacement is happening anyway. And the teacher unions’ response has been distinctly suspicious.

For example: on October 1, the national AFT and its state affiliate, the Louisiana Federation of Teachers (LFT), filed complaints to the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Louisiana Attorney General against the contract agency Universal Placement International (UPI). The complaints allege that UPI engaged in illegal practices in order to defraud Filipino teachers who contracted to work for the Recovery School District (RSD). (This was created by the Louisiana Department of Education in 2003 to reform “**low performing**” schools.)

But what the complaints fail to mention is that the Recovery School District used those Filipino teachers *to replace their senior American teaching staff—and the unions did nothing to intervene.*

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Universal Placement International is a contract agency that specializes in importing guest workers on H-1B visas from the Philippines to work as K-12 teachers. Businesses of this kind are called “**bodyshops**”.

The president and owner of UPI is Lourdes “**Lulu**” Navarro. She is a native of the [Philippines](#) who immigrated to California. She is also a convicted felon who has been charged with many other serious crimes including fraud. This is what the attorney general of California had to say about her in a June 05, 2000 press release:

[Attorney General Lockyer Announces Four Arrests, Two Convictions in Crackdown on Medi-cal Fraud by Blood Laboratories](#)

“In the earlier case, Shams and Navarro were convicted on felony counts of Medi-Cal fraud, grand theft, money laundering, and identity theft for using the names of legitimate physicians without permission and filing thousands of false claims with the state for medical tests never performed. The Attorney General's Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse seized approximately \$1.1 million in uncashed warrants, which were returned to the Medi-Cal program.

“Clinic owner Navarro was sentenced to five years in prison upon entering her guilty plea and ordered to pay \$200,000 in restitution by the end of the year. Navarro also was required to surrender her license as a clinical laboratory scientist and prohibited from owning or working in any health care business. Orange County Superior Court Judge Robert Gallivan suspended the prison sentence under a plea agreement.

“Navarro's partner Shams remains in custody pending sentencing in October after pleading guilty to charges of Medi-Cal fraud. A third laboratory owner, Zubair Younis, 42, of Brooklyn, N.Y., is being sought on a felony warrant.”

UPI is almost certainly a Minority and “[Woman-Owned](#)” Business Enterprise (I say “**almost certainly**” because I haven’t been able to confirm that UPI is registered in a state as such—and that may be because it is being delisted). Affirmative action rules give these companies a huge competitive advantage when seeking government contracts. The rationale is that minority owned companies add to the “**diversity**” of the workforce—look at this picture to see the [face of diversity at UPI](#).

Here’s a timeline of events in Louisiana:

2003: The [Recovery School District \(RSD\)](#) was created by the Louisiana Department of Education. The purpose was to reform “**low performing**” schools.

August 29, 2005: [Hurricane Katrina](#) strikes Louisiana. The hurricane destroyed or severely damaged thousands of schools and universities

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in the Gulf coast states. Over 250,000 students had no school to attend. Thousands of teachers were instantly jobless.

November 2005: Over 107 "**low-performing**" schools were put into the RSD.

May 4, 2007: Louisiana Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek appointed Paul Vallas to be superintendent of the RSD.

Summer 2007: RSD superintendent Vallas says his operation is suffering a severe teacher shortage. (Note carefully: less than two years after Katrina displaced thousands of teachers.)

May 30, 2008: A memo sent out to board members about a junket to the Philippines [to hire teachers](#).

June 20, 2008: School officials go on an all-expense paid junket to the Philippines.

July 15, 2008: Board members send around emails about the Filipino teachers.

August 5, 2008: Caddo Parish schools notified that Filipinos with advanced degrees are being [hired for low-performing schools](#). The implication: Filipino geniuses [would replace the incompetent American teachers](#). Low-performing schools would now become academic havens.

September 6, 2008: The first Filipino teachers report to work. Not long after, a group of Filipino teachers set up a [Pinoy Teachers blog](#) that described many abuses they suffered at the hands of UPI. ("Pinoy" is Filipino slang for "**Filipino**". The blog features extensive links to the AFT).

Nov 11, 2008: 38 teachers have arrived from the Philippines. School administrators claim the Filipinos are very good performers.

August [pb1] 3, 2009: Superintendent Vallas announces major teacher layoffs, just two years after he declared a desperate shortage of teachers.

August 17, 2009: New school year starts. By now about 200 teachers with H-1B visas are [holding jobs](#). That's very close to the number of Americans that were fired. The number becomes even closer because some of the laid-off teachers were rehired by other schools. But, sadly, most of those teachers couldn't find jobs in Louisiana schools and had to leave the state.

September 30, 2009: A year after the first Filipino H-1B was hired, the union announces complaints concerning UPI. But not about the fact that Americans were displaced by Filipinos, but that the Filipinos were being mistreated.

October 1, 2009: AFT and LFT file complaints against UPI.

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October 4, 2009: By this time 27,000 teachers in California had been pink slipped. Apparently, it never occurred to Louisiana school districts to offer them jobs, or to go to junkets in Los Angeles or San Francisco.

This is my summary of what happened: School officials took an all-expenses- paid junket to Manila. They must have had a wonderful time because they decided to hire young female Filipino teachers. So they announced there was a shortage of teachers. But in fact they already had more teachers than they needed because so many were jobless due to layoffs and the Katrina disaster. That problem was solved by initiating a large layoff of their American teachers after they hired the Filipinos.

There is nothing unusual about the strategy used by the school district. In my [study of the ongoing H-1B racket](#), I've seen it many times.

The script goes like this: First employers decide to replace their American workers with H-1Bs. So they announce there's a shortage. Then, shortly after the first wave of H-1Bs report to work, they start firing Americans.

You would think that, nearly 20 years of the start of the H-1B program, newspapers and unions would figure the script out. But they never do. They are usually dumbfounded when somebody like myself tries to explain it to them. If any of you find a newspaper article that actually explains that American teachers were replaced by H-1Bs in Louisiana please notify me. It would be the first I have ever seen.

Sometimes you can detect it by reading between the lines:

"Recovery District Superintendent Paul Vallas called any implication that the district favored hiring new, young teachers false, and said hiring authority lies with principals." ([Recovery School District to lay off dozens of teachers today](#), by Sarah Carr, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 3, 2009)

When politicians say something ain't so, then the first thing you know is that it is so! *Of course* the district favored hiring young teachers—that's why they fired their older Americans and hired young females from the Philippines.

As I have [explained](#) many times, H-1B doesn't cause age discrimination—but it makes it a lot easier for employers to practice it. H-1B is an age discrimination enabler because the program provides a huge pool of fresh, inexpensive and indentured young blood to exploit. From an employer's point of view the rest of the world has an infinite labor pool that can be used to churn older, more experienced employees out, and younger ones in.

To understand how churning works in Louisiana schools, examine this [RSD Rookie table](#):

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RSD FIELDS ROOKIE TEACHERS

Though first-year and early career teachers are common throughout New Orleans schools, both charter and noncharter, they are particularly concentrated in the noncharters run directly by the Recovery School District. Here's a comparison of teacher experience levels in the RSD and all city schools.

RECOVERY DISTRICT SCHOOLS*

Years of teaching	Number of teachers	Percent
First year	387	47%
1 to 5 years	130	16%
6 to 10	110	13%
11 to 15	51	6%
16 to 20	40	5%
21 to 25	34	4%
26 to 30	39	5%
31 to 35	23	3%
36 or more	7	1%
Total	821	

*Non-charter

ALL NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS

Years of teaching	Number of teachers	Percent
First year	628	25%
1 to 5 years	648	26%
6 to 10	356	14%
11 to 15	211	8%
16 to 20	176	7%
21 to 25	159	6%
26 to 30	226	9%
31 to 35	84	3%
36 or more	41	2%
Total	2,529	

Source: Louisiana Department of Education

THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

(Source: [Recovery School District to lay off dozens of teachers today](#), by Sara Carr, New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 3, 2009).

This table shows that almost all of the teachers in the Recovery School District have less than 5 years teaching experience. Comparing the Rookie Chart with the data from the recovery school district [salary chart](#) reveals some interesting results.

Recovery School District Yearly Salary Chart

Year	Bachelor's Degree	Special Education	PhD
0	\$43,294	\$45,094	\$46,094
1	\$43,774	\$45,674	\$45,694
30	\$54,694	\$62,494	\$64,094

RSD teacher [salaries](#) rise slowly with years of experience. For example, an entry level teacher with a Bachelor's degree earns \$43,294 per year and goes up about \$500 a year. Thus it costs the school district \$11,400 less to employ a new teacher instead of a 30 year veteran. But, by an

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amazing coincidence, the majority of RSD teachers are young and therefore tend to earn the lower entry-level salaries.

The situation can be far worse than the RSD salary table suggests. The 2003 NEA report did a good job explaining what would actually happen at the RSD years later:

“There is at least anecdotal evidence that, absent a collective bargaining agreement or law or policy, some school districts pay their nonimmigrant employees as new teachers, regardless of their experience and qualifications.”

H-1Bs are regularly paid less than entry level salaries—no matter what college degree they hold! Thus, in the Recovery School District, H-1Bs often don't receive a **“new teacher”** salary as defined by the wage tables. The DOL public disclosure website for [Labor Condition Applications](#) shows that most of these Filipino teachers get a salary of about \$36,900. That meets the minimum federal **“prevailing salary”** requirement, but it's not the same as a fair salary—according to the RSD's own wage chart, the lowest wage teacher with a Bachelor's degree should receive is \$43,294.

That \$6,394 differential in pay makes it very difficult for Americans to compete for these jobs. Americans will be required to earn the salary from the RSD table, and the difference in starting salary will increase if they have an advanced degree. The H-1B must accept **“prevailing salary”**, which in this case is less than what a comparable American can be paid. H-1B visa holders and Americans are beholden to two different rule books.

In simple terms, first year teachers get first year salaries and benefits. So every time the school hires a fresh wave of Filipinos or new college graduates, they can fire older employees and save lots of cash. A policy of churning employees is made immensely easier and more profitable when immigration programs such as H-1B provide an essentially unlimited pool of young foreign workers.

University of California at Davis' Professor Norman Matloff explained in detail in his [University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform](#) the savings that employers such as the RSD can realize by hiring H-1B teachers. He defines two different kinds of savings that are applicable – Type 1 when an H-1B is paid a lower salary because the **“prevailing salary”** rule allows it, and Type 2 savings which are attributed more to age discrimination. Both types of savings were enjoyed by the RSD. [*On The Need For Reform Of The H-1B Non-Immigrant Work Visa In Computer-Related Occupations, Fall 2003, (PDF)*]

Politicians and the media never seem to tire of the romantic notion that [unemployed engineers](#) and [scientists](#) can [go back to school](#) to get math and science [teaching certificates](#), so that they can fill slots that are supposedly in short supply. It's a trap even many unemployed techies fall into—because they don't understand that the age factor will severely harm their odds of finding a teaching job. Schools will usually choose a young college graduate with no experience versus an older professional with a new teaching certificate. And they will choose an H-1B over an

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American college graduate. The dynamics of age discrimination and H-1B are lost on almost every labor expert and economist in the U.S.

Louisiana isn't the only state that's doing this. UPI posted news videos about their Filipino teachers that have been placed in many areas of the nation. Go [here](#) to watch.

Take Georgia for example. It [lists](#) UPI as a registered supplier for foreign teachers.

The NEA report shows how widespread the H-1B teacher phenomenon is:

There were about 15,000 K-12 teachers working under nonimmigrant visas in the US during the 2002-2003 school year, 10,000 under the H-1B visa and 5,000 on the J-1 visa.

Since the NEA report, there have been many stories from schools all across the U.S. that use H-1B teachers. Many of them, including [this incredible story from New York](#) have already been [described](#) on VDARE.COM

Needless to say, the teacher unions should be commended for filing these complaints. Unscrupulous employers shouldn't be allowed to get away with the kind of exploitation and abuse that UPI is alleged to have perpetrated on their Filipino workforce. But the union complaints don't go far enough. American teachers who lost their jobs to the Filipinos are still without redress.

Arguably, enforcing regulations will help to insure equity in the labor force, and reduce the incentive for employers to favor exploitable foreign workers. But, as explained earlier though, even if the rules are followed, American teachers will still be at a competitive disadvantage. Enforcing regulations will not save significant numbers of American jobs.

During the 20 or so years of the H-1B program, teachers' unions have failed to file complaints or lawsuits on behalf of American teachers who have been displaced by foreign labor. In contrast, there have been many investigations on behalf of foreign guest workers on that were initiated by various government agencies, and as a result of lawsuits. It appears that the priority of the teacher's unions is to make sure foreigners don't get ripped off by their employers even while Americans are getting ripped off of their jobs.

The trend is getting worse. Be sure to read [New Report Shows Schools Increasingly Hiring Foreign Teachers Over Americans](#). [FAIR Legislative Update September 21, 2009]

Why are the unions so eager to help foreign workers who are imported to work in the U.S., while at the same time they are so averse to stopping the displacement of American teachers?

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My opinion—speaking as one who has been repeatedly rebuffed when seeking to explore the issue with union officials—is that this is one of those cases where the teacher unions [put their own perceived interests first](#).

Union officials don't want to challenge the liberal consensus that immigration is a Good Thing. As long as the imported teachers join the union, they are willing to sacrifice their American members.

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