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Course: EDAL 560 K-12 Law
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Case Analysis

Hortonville v Hortonville

Case Analysis Relevant Facts: During the 1972-1973 school year, negotiations to renew a collective bargaining contract between teachers and the Wisconsin School Board did not come to an agreement. On March 18, 1974, the teachers then violated the Wisconsin law by going on strike. Afterward, the Board held disciplinary hearings and fired the teachers for going on strike as public employees which is against the Wisconsin law. The teachers argued that the Board was not impartial enough in their decision to revoke their employment. The teachers sued the Wisconsin School District stating that the hearing, which led to their termination, “was inadequate to meet due process requirements. The state trial court granted the Board's motion for summary judgment” (JUSTIA, n.d.). Additionally, “The Wisconsin Supreme Court reversed, holding that the procedure followed by the Board had violated federal due process requirements since an impartial decision maker was required to resolve the controversy, and the Board was not sufficiently impartial” (JUSTIA, n.d.).

Legal Issue: Whether the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protects teachers from termination of their employment for engaging in an illegal strike against state law.

Opinion of the Court: The court rejected the teachers’ claim that they were denied due process. Following an appeal, the Wisconsin Supreme Court reversed its opinion.

Reasons for the Court Opinion: The court’s first decision was due to the fact that the teachers admitted to receiving adequate notice and a hearing before they went on strike. Furthermore, they were warned that, as public employees, going on strike was a direct violation of Wisconsin law. The court’s decision to reverse its opinion was because according to the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Federal Constitution required that an impartial decision-maker evaluated “the teachers’ conduct and the Board's response” (JUSTIA, n.d.) and not the Board members themselves. In addition, the court stated that even though the teachers admitted to violating Wisconsin law by going on strike, the Board could have taken other steps to prevent the strike and not revoke the teachers’ employment such as getting an injunction, continuing to bargain, and calling for mediation.

References

Hortonville Independent School District No. 1 v. Hortonville Education Association. (n.d.). Oyez. Retrieved September 19, 2021, from <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1975/74-1606>

Hortonville Joint School District No. 1 v. Hortonville Education Assn. (n.d.). JUSTIA. Retrieved September 19, 2021, from <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/426/482/>

Grade (A)/Comment: Your case analysis was excellent It was very well stated. The Reasons section (#4) was great. Well worded. Keep up your very good work Nicole