THE REAL LAW

The true law behind every story
in Tales of Laws, Volume 1



Book owners only.

CASE FILE #01

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

He Cried All Night. She Suspended Him.



U.S. SUPREME COURT

WHAT HAPPENED

A boy shows up with red, puffy eyes and falls asleep at his desk. His teacher decides he must be on drugs and slides a suspension form across the desk. She won't let him finish a sentence. The truth: his dad left the night before, and he and his mom were up all night crying.

THE LAW

Goss v. Lopez (1975)

Before a public school suspends a student, it has to tell him what he is accused of and give him a chance to tell his side of the story.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The teacher never let him speak. That alone breaks the rule, no matter what she thought his red eyes meant. Once he could explain, the suspension was gone.

DID YOU KNOW?

This rule only binds public schools. A private school can set its own discipline rules.

CASE FILE #02

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

He Promised Every Kid a Whole Pizza



CALIFORNIA

WHAT HAPPENED

A principal promises 300 kids they'll each get their own pizza if they hit an attendance goal. They hit it. Pizza day comes and it's two slices each. One boy refuses his slices and gets others to refuse too. The principal threatens detention.

THE LAW

California Education Code § 48907

Students in California public schools have the right to free speech, unless it's obscene, a lie about someone, or seriously disrupts the school.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

Quietly refusing pizza is a peaceful protest, not a disruption. The principal can't punish him for it.

DID YOU KNOW?

The law even covers school newspapers: students, not principals, decide what goes in them.

Stories are dramatized. Laws differ by state and change over time. This is not legal advice.

CASE FILE #03

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

His Principal Tried to Suspend Him for Makeup



PENNSYLVANIA

WHAT HAPPENED

Costume day has one rule: no masks. A boy asks the principal a week ahead whether makeup is okay and is told yes. He shows up in full movie makeup. The principal says it's basically a mask and tries to suspend him.

THE LAW

22 Pa. Code § 12.6

A public school board has to write down and publish the kinds of behavior that can get a student suspended.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The rule said masks. Makeup isn't in the rulebook, so the school can't suspend him for it, especially after telling him it was fine.

DID YOU KNOW?

Suspension in Pennsylvania means 1 to 10 school days. Anything longer is an expulsion and needs a formal hearing.

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CASE FILE #04

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

His School Tried to Suspend Him for Calling 911



OHIO

WHAT HAPPENED

A six-year-old has a seizure on the living room rug. Her fifteen-year-old brother calls 911. The dispatcher is asking for the address when the stepdad grabs the phone and smashes it. He wants to drive her himself and doesn't want anyone in uniform in his house.

THE LAW

Ohio Revised Code § 2909.04

It's a felony to purposely stop emergency services from responding to an emergency, in any way.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

Killing that call is a crime on its own, even though the phone was his. The ambulance was already on the road with no address.

DID YOU KNOW?

In a real Ohio case, a man smashed the phone his nephew used to call for help. Police had to search a whole apartment complex. The Ohio Supreme Court upheld his felony 7 to 0.

CASE FILE #05

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Wanted $75,000 From Him



CALIFORNIA

WHAT HAPPENED

A man sees a two-year-old falling from a fifth-floor window and catches her with his bare hands, dislocating his own shoulder. Three weeks later the mother sues him for $75,000 because the girl's collarbone was fractured in the catch.

THE LAW

California Health & Safety Code § 1799.102

If you help someone in an emergency, in good faith and without being paid, you're not liable for ordinary mistakes. Only for gross negligence or doing harm on purpose.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

A fractured collarbone from a fifth-floor catch is not gross negligence. It's what a catch like that looks like. The lawsuit goes nowhere.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every U.S. state has some form of Good Samaritan law. They exist so people aren't afraid to help.

CASE FILE #06

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Stole a Kid's Birthday Present



FLORIDA

WHAT HAPPENED

At an eight-year-old's birthday party, a guest takes a wrapped bracelet off the gift table and leaves $20 in its place. Her own daughter opens it. The birthday girl recognizes it: it was from her grandma.

THE LAW

Florida Statutes § 812.014

Taking someone's property, meaning to keep it from them, is theft. A sale needs the owner to agree.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

Nobody agreed to sell that bracelet. Leaving money on a table isn't permission. It's still theft, $20 or not.

DID YOU KNOW?

Theft under $750 in Florida is petit theft, a misdemeanor. It can still mean up to a year in jail.

CASE FILE #07

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Thought His Scar Was Makeup



CALIFORNIA

WHAT HAPPENED

A boy has had a scar down his face his whole life. A substitute teacher decides it's Halloween makeup, grabs his face and starts scrubbing it with a tissue. The class tells her it's real. She says she wasn't trying to hurt him.

THE LAW

California Penal Code § 242 (battery)

Battery is any willful, unlawful use of force on another person. You don't have to injure them, or mean to.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

Grabbing his face and scrubbing it against his will is the unlawful touching. 'I thought it was makeup' is not a defense.

DID YOU KNOW?

Battery and assault are different crimes. Assault is the attempt or threat; battery is the actual touching.

CASE FILE #08

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Graded the Name, Not the Essay



FEDERAL LAW

WHAT HAPPENED

A boy is sure his teacher favors the girls. He pays a classmate $20 to swap names on their essays: his bad one gets her name, her good one gets his. The bad essay scores 97. The good one scores 43.

THE LAW

Title IX (20 U.S.C. § 1681)

No school that gets federal money may treat a student differently because of their sex.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The only thing the teacher graded was the name at the top. Grading a boy down for being a boy is exactly what Title IX forbids.

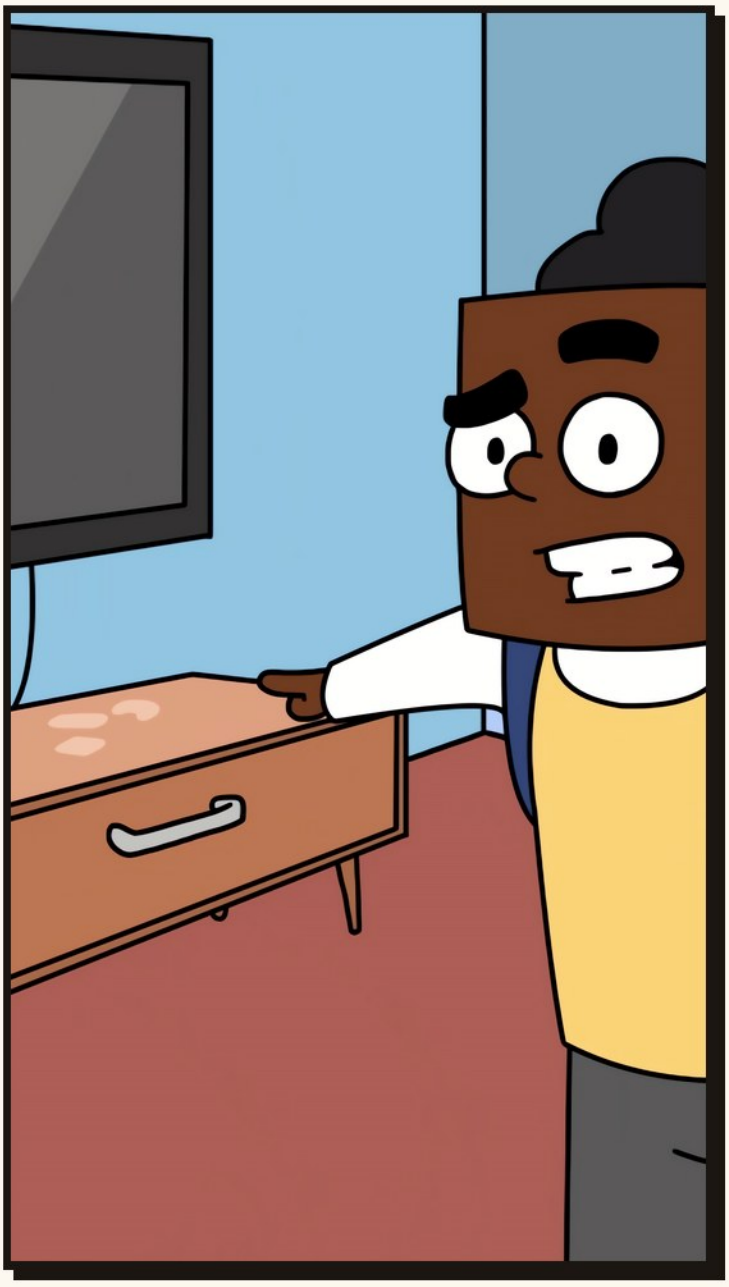
DID YOU KNOW?

Title IX is 37 words long. It's the same law that made schools offer girls' sports teams.

CASE FILE #09

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Sold the PS5 He Saved Up For



CALIFORNIA

WHAT HAPPENED

A boy saves birthday money and allowance for over a year to buy a PS5. After a fight about his grades, his mom sells it online while he's at school. He comes home to an empty spot under the TV.

THE LAW

California Family Code § 7502

A parent, just by being a parent, has no control over the child's own property.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

She can take the console away as punishment. She can't sell it, because he bought it with his own money and it's his.

DID YOU KNOW?

Gifts to a child, like birthday money, belong to the child, not to the parents.

CASE FILE #10

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Shamed Him for Not Showering



FEDERAL LAW

WHAT HAPPENED

A teacher tells a boy, loudly, in a hallway full of students, that he hasn't showered in a week. He begs her to keep it down. When asked what's stopping him, he admits it: he and his mom live in their car.

THE LAW

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Every school district must have a liaison for homeless students and must connect their families to housing, health and other services.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

A kid living in a car is homeless under this law. The school's job isn't to shame him. It's to get his family help.

DID YOU KNOW?

The law also lets a homeless student stay at the same school even if the family moves, with transportation provided.

CASE FILE #11

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

His Babysitter Lied to Get Him Sent Away



NEW YORK

WHAT HAPPENED

A babysitter tells a boy's mother that he hit her, hoping to get him sent to boarding school. He confronts her while recording on his phone, and she admits he never touched her. Then she says the recording is illegal.

THE LAW

New York Penal Law § 250.00 and § 250.05

In New York you may record a conversation you're part of. You don't need the other person's permission.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

He was in the conversation, so his recording is legal. Her lie is on tape.

DID YOU KNOW?

This is called a 'one-party consent' rule. About a dozen states need everyone's consent instead; California is one of them.

CASE FILE #12

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

He Called a Delivery Driver a Thief



CALIFORNIA

WHAT HAPPENED

A home baker leaves a cooler of cake pops on his porch under a sign that says 'Treat yourself'. A delivery driver takes one, waves at the doorbell camera and leaves. The baker posts the clip, calls him a thief and reports him to his company.

THE LAW

Mistake of fact (CALCRIM 3406)

Theft needs the intent to steal. If you honestly believed something was free, you didn't have that intent, even if you were wrong.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The sign said treat yourself. A man who waves at the camera isn't hiding anything. He honestly believed it was free, so it's not theft.

DID YOU KNOW?

For theft, the mistaken belief doesn't even have to be reasonable. It only has to be honest.

CASE FILE #13

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Refused to Pay for Her Wedding Cake



FLORIDA

WHAT HAPPENED

An hour before the wedding, the baker wheels in the finished cake. The bride takes one look, says she's not paying and tells him to leave. She expects him to cave. Instead he starts wheeling the cake back out.

THE LAW

Florida's Uniform Commercial Code (sale of goods)

If you reject something you bought, you can't keep using it as if it's yours. Using it means you accepted it, and accepting means paying.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

She can refuse the cake, or she can keep it for the wedding. She can't do both. The approved design in the baker's hand shows it's exactly what she ordered.

DID YOU KNOW?

The UCC is a set of rules almost every U.S. state has adopted so that buying and selling works the same way everywhere.

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CASE FILE #14

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

He Trashed a Kid's Lunch Over $15



MINNESOTA

WHAT HAPPENED

A boy is in the lunch line with a hot lunch already on his tray. The kitchen manager sees his account is $15 behind, takes the tray and scrapes the food into the trash in front of everyone.

THE LAW

Minnesota Statutes § 124D.111

Once a meal is on a student's tray, the school may not take it back, whether or not the student owes money. No dumping meals, no announcing names.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The food was already his the moment it was on the tray. Throwing it away over a debt is exactly what the law bans.

DID YOU KNOW?

This is sometimes called an anti-lunch-shaming law. Several states passed one after stories like this went viral.

CASE FILE #15

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

They Took His PS5 Back Off Camera



NORTH CAROLINA

WHAT HAPPENED

At an NBA game a boy is pulled onto the court. The mascot reads his wish out loud: a PS5. A cheerleader hands it to him, the crowd cheers, the cameras stop. Then a staff member takes the console back and gives him a jersey instead.

THE LAW

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 75-1.1 (unfair and deceptive trade p

Unfair or deceptive acts in business are unlawful.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

Handing a kid a prize for the cameras and taking it back off camera is a staged, deceptive show. The team can be held to it.

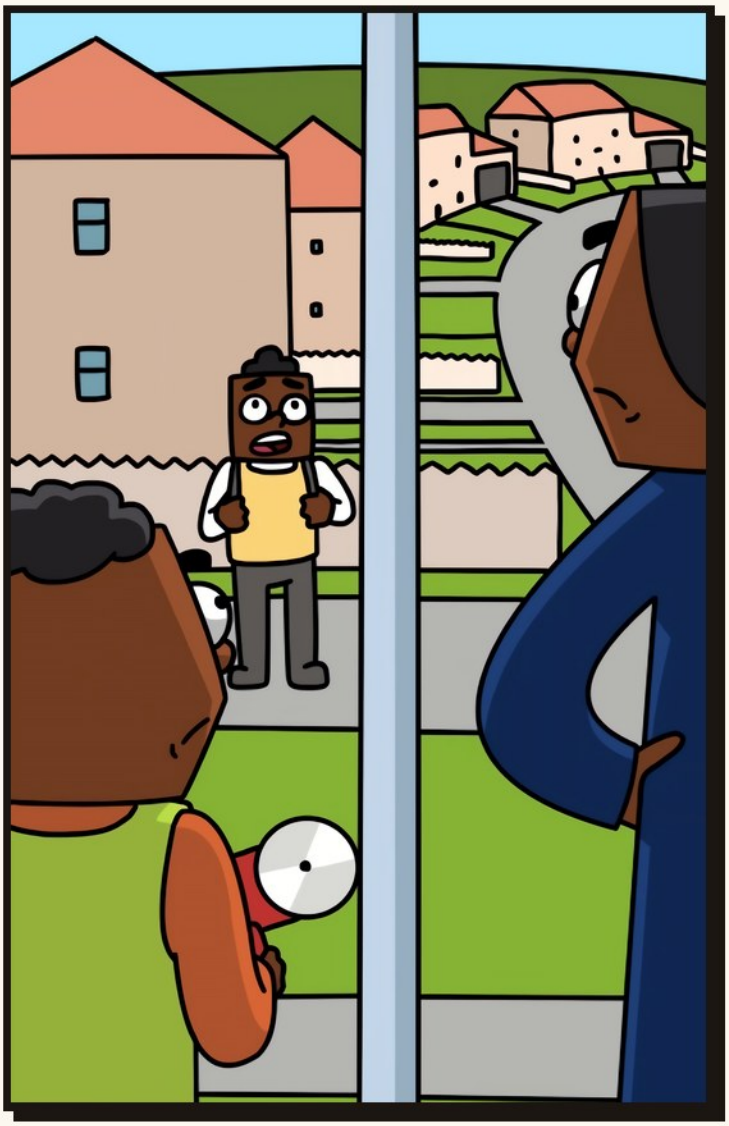
DID YOU KNOW?

Under this law, a court can triple the damages. That's why companies take it seriously.

CASE FILE #16

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

He Built a Fake School Bus Stop



FLORIDA

WHAT HAPPENED

A boy's bus stop is a mile uphill. The school won't move it. So he buys a pole, prints a SCHOOL BUS STOP sign and plants it in front of his house. The driver falls for it all week, until a neighbor calls the city.

THE LAW

Florida Statutes § 316.077

Nobody may put up a sign in view of a road that imitates an official traffic sign or tries to direct traffic.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

It's his yard, but the sign faces the road and looks official. That's banned. He can be fined and the city can take it down.

DID YOU KNOW?

The same law is why you can't paint your own crosswalk, even in front of your own house.

CASE FILE #17

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

They Thought His Sandwich Was a Bomb



U.S. SUPREME COURT

WHAT HAPPENED

An eight-year-old's lunchbox sets off the school metal detector. The principal decides it's a bomb. The sandwich's foil wrapper beeps; the bread doesn't. The principal wants to keep going and take apart the juice box too.

THE LAW

New Jersey v. T.L.O. (1985), Fourth Amendment

A public school search must be justified when it starts and must stay reasonable in scope.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The alarm justified a look. Once the foil explained the beep, the reason was gone. Tearing apart the rest of his lunch is no longer reasonable.

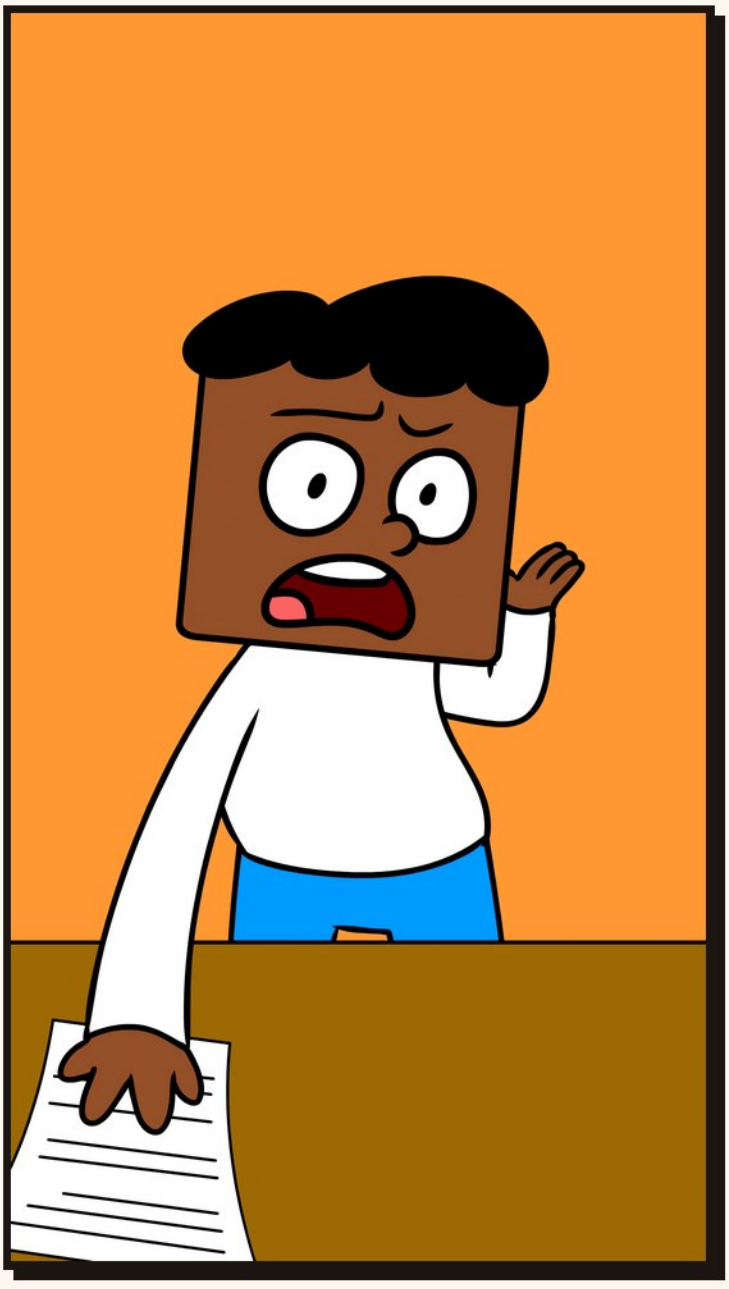
DID YOU KNOW?

Schools need less proof than police to search a student, but 'less' is not 'none'.

CASE FILE #18

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

His Principal Joined His Livestream



CALIFORNIA

WHAT HAPPENED

A math teacher hands out homework and sits behind his laptop all period. He's secretly live-streaming video games for donations. A student finds the stream, the principal donates $20 as 'YourPrincipal', and the teacher reads it out loud.

THE LAW

California Education Code § 44932

A tenured teacher can still be fired for specific reasons listed in the law. Dishonesty is one of them.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

Tenure protects a teacher from being fired for no reason. Pretending to grade while streaming for money is dishonesty, and that's on the list.

DID YOU KNOW?

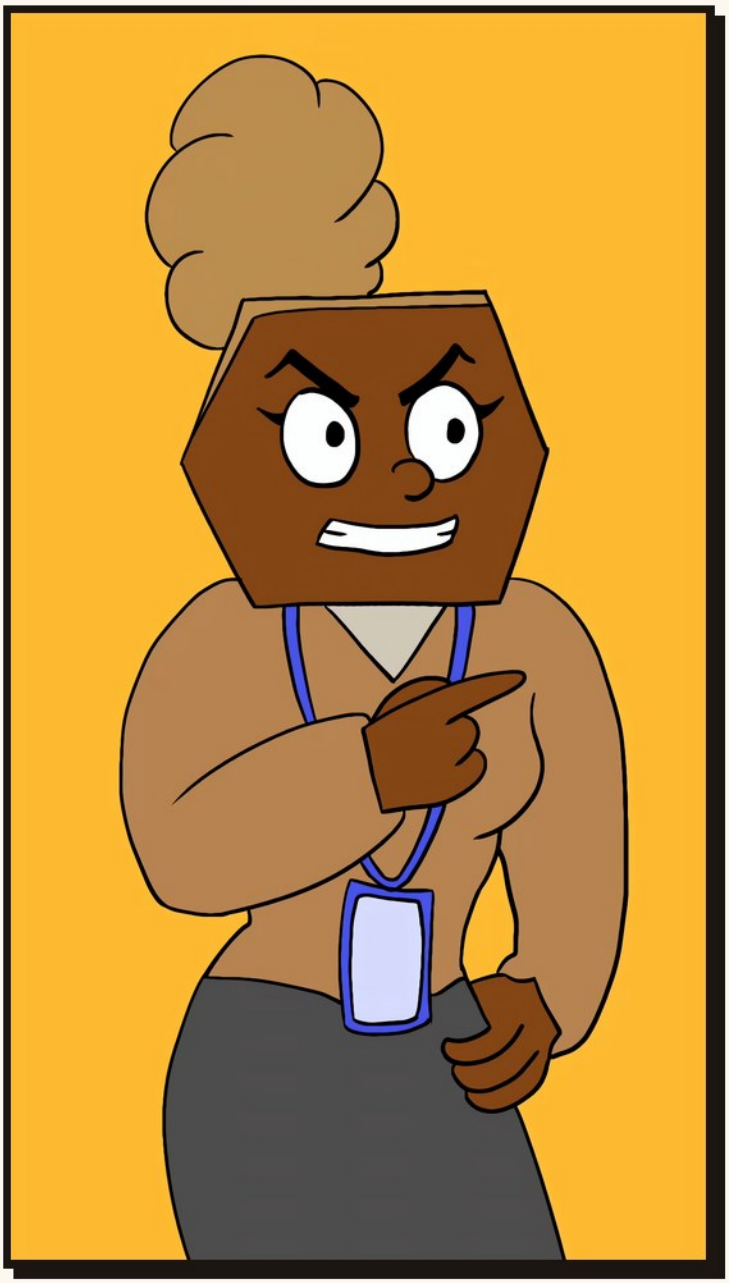
Tenure doesn't mean a job for life. It means the school has to prove a listed cause and give a hearing.

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CASE FILE #19

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

She Called Her Allergy an Excuse



CALIFORNIA

WHAT HAPPENED

A girl is severely allergic to pineapple. Her teacher brings pineapple cake to class and says either she eats it or the whole class loses a letter grade. One bite. Her throat closes. She wakes up in the hospital.

THE LAW

California Penal Code § 273a (child endangerment)

Willfully putting a child in a situation likely to cause great bodily harm can be a felony, with up to six years in prison.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The teacher knew about the allergy; the mother had warned her. 'She's okay now' doesn't undo it. She's okay because she got treatment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Food allergies send about 200,000 Americans to the emergency room every year.

CASE FILE #20

THE REAL LAW BEHIND

He Hid a Water Tap in His Backpack



WEST VIRGINIA

WHAT HAPPENED

The school's fountains are 'under maintenance' for a month. Water bottles are banned. Water is only served at lunch. A boy puts a water jug in his backpack, cuts a hole for the tap and fills cups for anyone thirsty, for free.

THE LAW

W. Va. Board of Education Policy 4321.1

Schools must make free drinking water available to students throughout the school day, not only at meals.

WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The school can ban bottles. It can't leave kids without water all day. The boy wasn't breaking the rule; the school was.

DID YOU KNOW?

Federal law only requires free water at mealtimes. West Virginia's rule goes further: all day.

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