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# 150 Women Lawyers Plan Brigade to Oklahoma Capitol Over Teacher Pay

Through Facebook, attorney Becki Murphy organized the group, made up mostly of women lawyers with children.

By **Angela Morris** | April 06, 2018



<https://images.law.com/contrib/content/uploads/sites/292/2018/04/Teachers->

## **Strike-Art.jpg) Teachers and demonstrators rally inside the Oklahoma State Capitol building on April 3. Photographer: Scott Heins/Bloomberg.**

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A group of 150 women attorneys is set to descend upon the Oklahoma State Capitol on April 9 to help negotiate a deal between lawmakers and teachers over school-funding woes.

Teacher walkouts across the state since April 2 have ground schools to a halt, prompting Tulsa lawyer Becki Murphy to organize the group, made up mostly of women lawyers with children. The effort has received support from men attorneys as well, she said.

“It puts heat on this legislature to get something done,” said Murphy, whose practice focuses on family law.

Oklahoma educators are protesting to demand better teacher pay and hikes in public school funding. Oklahoma lawmakers did give teachers a 16 percent raise ([https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=223&article\\_id=41720](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=223&article_id=41720)) and passed a \$2.9 billion education spending bill ([https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=223&article\\_id=41924](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=223&article_id=41924))—a 19.7 percent increase from the last budget—but teachers say it’s not enough in light of cuts over the last 10 years.

Murphy coordinated her group of lawyer-moms on an online network, Girl Attorney, before making a Facebook post that’s gone viral—nearly immediately setting her phone to beeping and pinging incessantly, she said, and flooding her law office with calls from trade associations, superintendents and hordes of teachers.

Lawyers have a special skillset to help end the impasse—they can listen to the problem and work with both sides to find a solution, Murphy said.

“That’s what we do every day. We’re offering our services free, to go see if we can be part of the solution—bring the two parties together, find a solution that works for our state and children,” she said, noting that the lawyers who are joining the effort have decided to cancel everything—ask judges to continue hearings, or reschedule mediations—because they think that the state is now in “crisis mode.”

She vowed in her Facebook post that if lawmakers don’t listen, some of the women attorneys will run to unseat any uncooperative incumbents.

Murphy’s two children attend public school in wealthy south Tulsa, where parents are financially able to fill gaps between state funding and school needs. This option is not possible for many of Murphy’s own clients—poorer parents who work two to three jobs just to support their kids.

“Our state needs to be doing better,” she said.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin’s press office did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

*Angela Morris is a freelance journalist. Follow her on Twitter at @AMorrisReports*

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