

# PSH Counsel Jennifer Henricks Featured in Law360 on Landmark Tufts Tenure Decision

## Description

[Jennifer Henricks](#), Counsel at [Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP](#), was recently featured in a Law360 article examining the significant verdict secured on behalf of eight Tufts University School of Medicine faculty members in a closely watched tenure and academic freedom dispute.

Following more than six years of litigation, including review by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, a Middlesex County Superior Court judge awarded nearly \$4 million in damages after finding that Tufts breached tenure agreements and violated the Massachusetts Wage Act by implementing compensation policies that reduced professors' salaries based on external grant funding requirements.

The dispute centered on a 2017 Tufts policy requiring certain tenured faculty members to generate at least half of their salaries through research grant funding or face substantial pay reductions. The plaintiffs argued that tenure protections extend beyond continued employment and include economic security and academic freedom.

Jennifer, who represented the professors alongside attorneys Kevin T. Peters and Thomas M. Brown, discussed the broader significance of the ruling in comments to Law360.

"[T]his is the first she's aware of in which a court has found that academic freedom and economic security are part of the tenure contract and that 'these types of policies that impose funding requirements on faculty once they're tenured are a violation of that contract.'"

The Superior Court ultimately agreed, finding that economic security necessarily includes financial security and rejecting Tufts' argument that tenure guaranteed only continued employment rather than salary protection.

The article also highlights the court's focus on the relationship between academic freedom and economic security in the tenure context. Jennifer stated:

"Those aren't just prefatory or meaningless terms. They are a meaningful part of the contract, and they confer rights on the professors and impose obligations on the university."

The decision may carry implications beyond the immediate dispute, particularly for colleges and universities evaluating faculty compensation structures tied to grant funding or research productivity measures. Jennifer also noted:

"I think certainly professors in similarly situated situations now have a case to point to that's at least some guidance, and hopefully that's impactful on others."

The full article, "Attys For Tufts Profs Didn't Blink In A Tenure Standoff," is available through [Law360](#) (subscription required).

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