

GANNETT

September 21, 2021

VIA EMAIL

jschleuss@cwa-union.org

Jon Schleuss, President
The NewsGuild
Communications Workers of America (TNG-CWA)
501 Third St., NW, 6th floor
Washington, DC 20001-2797

Re: Letter of September 17

Dear Mr. Schleuss:

I am in receipt of your letter of September 17, 2021 alleging a culture of “overwork and unpaid overtime” among Gannett employees. I write to refute your cavalier and unsubstantiated assertions, and to assure you of Gannett’s commitment to compliance with federal, state and local wage and hour laws. I also wish to make clear that your efforts to tarnish Gannett’s reputation are counterproductive and do not well serve your union or its members. Instead, false claims and attempts to manipulate public opinion serve only to create mistrust.

As you know, an editor at the Arizona Republic, in discussing experiences many years earlier in his career, recently posted online about working unpaid hours “in order to get ahead.” This gentleman’s professed experience is inconsistent with Gannett’s culture and expectations. In fact, his comments do not reflect his time at Gannett. As a journalist, you should have investigated and considered this obvious, critical fact. That you did not do so reflects ill motive and bad faith.

In any event, and even though this gentleman was not speaking of experiences at Gannett, the Company set the record straight and confirmed the Arizona Republic and Gannett are 100% committed to complying with wage and hour laws. The Company immediately and publicly reaffirmed that no hourly employee is ever expected - or permitted - to work unpaid hours. Rather, hourly employees are paid for all work performed and all hours worked - that is the law as well as Company policy, which we follow.

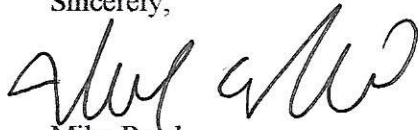
The Company greatly values employee contributions and will never ask, expect or tolerate unpaid overtime. We strive to provide meaningful opportunities and fair compensation in a challenging time for our industry and we strongly disagree that there is a culture of exploitation. We respect the law and have policies, procedures, and training to comply with the wage and hour laws and other workplace laws and regulations.

The Company takes any allegation made by current or former employees seriously and we investigate each thoroughly. As part of that commitment, Gannett previously established an ethics hotline to which concerns may be submitted on an anonymous basis, in addition to many other avenues to which concerns may be submitted.

With respect to the Guild's allegations, other than one ill-advised personal post referencing non-Gannett experiences, we believe the allegations stem from generalized complaints about work hours made by three Guild members during last week's negotiations at the Arizona Republic. Following these isolated remarks, the Company immediately began an inquiry via Human Resources and discussed all three complaints with a representative of your union. During those discussions, it was determined that two of the three employees expressed general frustration with work hours. The third employee reported his personal (albeit incorrect) belief that he was not supposed to log overtime hours. These complaints are under review but certainly do not reflect widespread intentional misconduct as alleged.

In sum, Gannett takes issue with the Guild's unsubstantiated and knowingly exaggerated claims. It is obvious the Guild is wrongly using an editor's personal description of aged, prior work experience to create a false narrative that Gannett allows a culture inconsistent with wage and hour laws. Frankly, I believe the Guild knows its claims are not true, and I suggest the Guild reconsider its counterproductive effort to tarnish Gannett's reputation. False claims and disparagement will not move us closer to a collaborative working relationship. Not only does this not serve your union well, but it also does not help your members.

Sincerely,



Mike Reed