



Mike Reed
Gannett CEO

Dear Mr. Reed:

The Florida Times-Union Guild could not agree more with a statement Gannett Media President for News Maribel Perez Wadsworth gave to Congress about hometown journalism.

“Our newsrooms are the heart and backbone of our business,” she said. “They know their communities better than anyone. They are of these communities – they live and work and worship and raise their families there. They work tirelessly to uncover the truth and to be the watchdogs for their communities because they are not just any place. They are home.”

Our TU Guild is absolutely committed to hometown journalism as a career that enables that kind of community bond. It is essential for keeping the Times-Union as a go-to media source.

Pay, health insurance and jurisdiction remain three of the outstanding issues in the TU Guild negotiations with Gannett on our first labor contract. We strongly believe that with your support of a fair agreement, we can reach a resolution that values our hard work and keeps the Times-Union as the “heart and backbone” of Gannett in Northeast Florida.

You said in the second-quarter earnings call “we are committed to making the investment in our newsrooms.” Our newsroom is the people in it. Investing in newsrooms must include the financial well-being of the front-line workers who are helping to drive the company’s success.

We have indisputably earned a pay raise after going three years without an increase while delivering award-winning journalism in the midst of a pandemic. You know how challenging these times have been. We’ve coped with working from home, absorbed three weeks of unpaid furloughs to help the company navigate the pandemic, and learned new skills to advance the Times-Union in its digital subscription goals.

We’ve offered common-sense proposals for pay raises that help experienced employees make up for lost ground over the course of their careers, help all employees keep paychecks in line with the rising cost of living, and establish salary scales that will motivate employees to devote their talents to the Times-Union because they know their work will be rewarded. Our proposal would cost a fraction of what Gannett has “saved” in newsroom costs by reductions in staffing levels the past three years. (We do appreciate the recent move this year to rebuild the newsroom by hiring more journalists.)

Health insurance is a serious matter for us. Gannett has proposed premium increases that will add hundreds and even thousands of dollars to our annual costs. We can reach agreement on



reasonable premiums that are in line with the actual trends for health insurance claims, but it must not shift costs for essential health care onto our backs when we already are straining to make ends meet. As the cost of living goes up for everyday necessities like rent and groceries, the buying power of our paychecks goes down. Gannett's proposed increases would worsen that struggle.

We also deserve your confidence in our ability to carry out our vital work without having a shadow hanging over our heads that Gannett can outsource our jobs by replacing us with less experienced, less knowledgeable and less committed fill-ins.

We understand the turbulence that daily newspapers have faced. Indeed, we have been on the spear-point of those changes. We've seen friends lose their jobs in waves of layoffs.

Management has said it needs flexibility. Our proposal on jurisdiction gives you that leeway, while also providing much-needed assurance to us that we can focus on our jobs without worrying the company will replace us with free-lancers, part-timers, or even use other Gannett employees outside of the Jacksonville area to cover the community where we have put down our roots.

Our proposal embodies what Ms. Perez Wadsworth conveyed to Congress when she stated: "Our readers want to know that their local news organization is not just going to survive, but also thrive, not just for the sake of our business but for strength of democracy itself."

Sincerely,

Florida Times-Union Guild members

David Bauerlein
Emily Bloch
Scott Butler
Beth Reese Cravey
David Crumpler
Clayton Freeman
Gene Frenette
Katherine Lewin
Juston Lewis
Nate Monroe

Steve Patterson
Cherri Pitzer
John Reid
Dan Scanlan
Bob Self
Garry Smits
Matt Soergel
Teresa Stepzinski
Tom Szaroletta
Mark Woods