

Opinion

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LETTERS

Do I make too much or do most people make too little?

Evidently, I make too much money, receive too many benefits, and have too much job security according to our governor, some state legislators, and much of the media.

How is it that a teacher's salary and economic position has become "excessive?" If you read the latest RI Monthly Magazine teachers are still low on the professional totem pole. On the other hand, if you read the Providence Journal's editorial section, you would think I am taking a limousine to work and eating caviar by the pool.

Amazingly, these publications are owned by the same company. Something's amiss.

Has anyone considered that teachers' wages are still average to low, but most other workers have taken a hit in the past decades? Is it that our country is just not productive and we just don't have the money to pay people a living wage and benefits anymore? Well, no. Actually our economy (GDP) has grown an average of 3.2 percent since 1957, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Therefore, money is being made, but it obviously is not going to the majority of workers.

Why haven't teachers taken such a tremendous hit comparatively? The answer is that unions have fought to protect these wages and benefits, just like they fought against child labor, for working safety legislation, retirement benefits, job security, and healthcare. The reality is that my wages and benefits are more in line with the growth our country has enjoyed all along, whereas private and non-unionized labor has been cheated.

Rather than fight against this downward trend, the public has been duped into believing that our corporations and nation just can't afford to pay living wages anymore. Americans have been sold the line of thinking that Wal-Mart wages with a lack of benefits are just the way things are today. If our economic numbers throughout the recent decades told this story too, then it would be time to tighten our belts. Instead, wake up "Joe Public" and realize that it is YOU that is being cheated and that the unions and teachers you so incessantly attack are just the people that have brought you healthcare and retirement benefits in the first place.

Because you have been giving them up for so long, you think there is nothing you can do; instead, try organizing and demand that you share in your nation's prosperity.

Join or start a union.

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