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Dear Editor:

I have noticed that over time, Bob Jones's columns have been sounding more like diatribes than thoughtful commentary. His most recent column ("Public Worker Unions Too Greedy," Dec. 19, 2012) stoops to a new low. As someone who has a weekly opportunity to offer thoughtful insight into important issues, he instead has been doling out pieces that are nothing short of baseless, nonsensical right-wing rhetoric.

Mr. Jones seems to know very little – if nothing at all – about HGEA and what we stand for. While HGEA's primary purpose is to improve the standard of living of our members and ensure that they are treated fairly, we are also cognizant of the critical issues facing our state and collaborate with different sectors and industries – businesses, nonprofits and government – to help move our state forward.

Mr. Jones may be surprised to learn that the reason for the public employee benefit structure was to compensate for the lower pay public employees received as compared to private sector employees. And this pay inequity still remains today. It was upsetting to read his statement: "We're all in tough times and public employees are not being paid sub-standard wages or benefits." For four years, HGEA members have endured pay cuts and paying a larger share – currently 50 percent (the highest cost-share of government workers in the entire country) – of their health insurance premiums. Half of our members make an average of \$35,000 a year, and those with family medical coverage pay more than \$600 per month. His uncaring attitude and lack of understanding for public employees is a shame. He clearly has the "What about me?" attitude and that's very unfortunate.

At a time when our community needs to come together to tackle the issues facing our state, it is sad to see Bob Jones attempt to perpetuate some myths about public employees in an effort to divide us. Shame on him, and shame on MidWeek for allowing him to waste valuable print space.

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