



NEWS FROM

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TEAMSTERS LOCAL 251 OPPOSES PROVIDENCE JOURNAL'S REQUEST FOR OVERTIME EXEMPTION

(EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I.) – The Providence Journal has requested to not have to pay overtime to employees for work performed on Sundays and Rhode Island state holidays. There will be a public hearing on Oct. 17 with the state's Department of Labor & Training.

“A company with a track record of violating state law for four years, and hiring low wage, no benefit part timers, does not deserve public sympathy,” said David Robbins, Local 251 Contract Coordinator. “Gatehouse Media paid three years in back overtime pay when they were caught, while denying to pay the fourth year because the law only covers three years. They lied claiming they had an exemption and lied to the Department of Labor & Training in claiming innocence and hardship for the exemption.”

The current process of asking for an exemption under state law has been reviewed in recent years. Legislation has been submitted requiring such exemptions to pass through the Legislature. The Providence Journal also enjoys an archaic taxpayer subsidy under the law. The state, cities and towns all must pay for space in the ProJo when making public notices.

“It's about time these laws should be reviewed with vigor in the next legislative session,” said Matthew Taibi, Local 251 Principal Officer. “Requests for exemption on the law for overtime should be through the normal legislative process, so they receive the appropriate public scrutiny and lawmakers are held accountable for their votes. Also, Gatehouse Media should not be given a public subsidy in the public notices requirement under the law. In this day and age of digital media and declining print newspapers, this law is just a cash cow for Gatehouse top executives, serving no public good.”

Since taking over the Providence Journal in September 2014, parent company Gatehouse Media has:

- Violated Rhode Island state wage laws;
- Refused to hire full-time workers;
- Used non-union temporary workers to deprive union workers of work opportunities;

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- Refused to recognize seniority for work assignments;
- Refused to bargain wage or benefit increases, even though the company admits the operation is profitable;
- Admits that the workforce has high turnover because wages are too low (and that's how they like it!);
- Has given hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses and stock options to Gatehouse Media CEO Kirk Davis, while demanding "shared sacrifice" (wage freezes) from Providence Journal workers, in order to increase the employer's profits;

Workers and community allies held an informational picket at the facility on Sept. 3 demanding a fair contract. The hearing for the overtime exemption request is Thursday, Oct. 17 at 4pm at the Department of Labor & Training in Cranston, R.I.