

From Washington, D.C., staff, submitted to CoB Sally Buzbee on 11/10

Dear Associated Press bargaining team:

The Associated Press staff in Washington cares deeply about the quality of AP journalism and works very hard to keep it at that high level. We also are very interested in maintaining a good quality of life.

We are aware the company has been looking for ways to save money in difficult times, especially in the last round of negotiations. But the current AP proposals go too far, especially in asking us to take on a large share of additional costs for health care.

_ The health care proposal would add thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket maximums that will shatter already tight budgets of AP workers. The plan to shift more than \$3,000 in potential costs for individuals and more than double that for families is simply not reasonable. Under the proposal, those go up even more in later years. This will cripple our ability to save money, plan for unexpected costs and cover needed personal expenses. There will be additional costs for failure to meet certain health guidelines, shift spouses to other plans and other fees. It's simply too much to ask.

_ The AP's offer of annual pay raises of 1.5 percent, 1.75 percent and 2 percent would cost us even more by failing to cover inflation. Not only does the proposal fail to cover inflation, it would be gobbled up many times over and then some by increased health care costs.

_ Photographers who use their personal vehicles for work essentially provide the AP with mobile offices and a shuttle service for reporters who need to get to and from assignments. Mileage costs alone don't cover that wear and tear. They need the daily allowance that would be ended by the proposed contract.

_ Another company proposal that causes us great concern would force some employees to transfer to other cities. It would create a hardship not only for those people, but for their spouses and children. Those of us who choose not to uproot our lives and have to leave the company would struggle even more if we agreed to the reduced severance proposal.

All of these proposals would take an unacceptable toll on our incomes and quality of life. We are doing our part in providing quality work to the AP, often working long hours and, for many, staying available whenever needed. We need the AP to protect our quality of life and acknowledge our work and dedication to the task.

Regards,

Staffers in the AP's Washington bureau

Washington Bureau-printsides

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