



November 13, 2018

Dear Gazette employees,

I wanted to talk to you today about a very important development. It's my understanding that a union is trying to come into our business. Be clear, we, and I personally, strongly oppose the union coming into our newspaper, particularly now.

As a family owned newspaper, we've always tried to do what's best for you and the communities our publications serve.

Clearly we stumbled this year - otherwise, there wouldn't be so many of you who met with me yesterday with concerns. This has been a very hard year, and while we've been focused on the New Hampshire press project (a critical investment to lower production costs and increase revenue), things have gotten off-track at the Gazette.

In the face of stiff financial and industry headwinds, we've held onto this family group of newspapers rather than selling to a larger organization because we believe we can treat our employees and communities far better than a remotely owned chain would. But if we're doing a poor job of communicating with you, then we're not fulfilling that mission. Our meeting helped alert me to that failing.

So I'd like the chance to work with you again, to restore a sense of shared goals. Critically, I'd like to be more open about our mission for the Gazette, and how the hard decisions we've been making are all with the intent of keeping our papers independent.

I know not everyone is or will be happy with the process we've followed - and there will be tough decisions to come. But we are trying to do things humanely and fairly, in a way that creates a sustainable business that makes it possible to invest in equipment, systems and all of you. We've done everything possible to have papers we can all be proud of, something that lasts, something that makes the world better.

We're one of the few family-owned daily newspaper companies remaining in Massachusetts. To stay that way, both employees and the owners have made sacrifices.

I strongly believe that adding a union to the mix will erode this newspaper. Among other factors, it would mean we no longer have the ability to deal directly with you about your

employment terms and would inject an outside third party into our relationship. I fear that a union would demand that we treat everyone the same, insisting that we eliminate what I believe is the critical flexibility to treat each of you in a way that's sensitive, as much as possible, to your situation. Not to mention that a union brings the risk of strikes (which is the last thing we need here) and the almost certainty of your paying them monthly dues.

Of course, in the end, this is your decision. But please consider that there are very few owners that would commit to what we've done, in mission, in employees, equipment and local ownership.

We're committed to you and the communities we serve, and we believe that you and the communities are best served dealing directly with us, as we always have.

Please let me or your supervisors know if you have any questions. We need more communication now, not less.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AJ', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Aaron Julien