

Setting the Record Straight —

# An Open Letter On Public Employee Salaries

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On Saturday, April 30th the Albany Times Union and the New York Post published articles based on a study by the Citizens Budget Commission (CBC) that claimed the salaries of public employees are too high to justify their health insurance and pension benefits.

The study compares state and local government and private sector employees' salaries nationally and in the New York City metropolitan area. The articles give the false impression that those salaries reflect the pay of all state employees.

The basis of the articles, the CBC study, is misleading and at best disingenuous. The most telling information concerning the CBC study lies in the very same federal Bureau of Labor Statistics report the CBC relied upon. For reasons known only to them, the CBC failed to report that for employers of more than 2,500 employees, like the state of New York, the city of New York and most large

municipalities and school districts in the state, public employees make on average only 92.7 percent of what their private-sector counterparts make.

The comparison is even worse for white-collar employees such as those represented by the Public Employees Federation. In those occupations public-sector workers make only 87

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percent of their private-sector counterparts pay. In New York city white-collar workers make just 76.3 percent as much as their private-sector counterparts.

Additionally, the CBC conveniently failed to report the average New York state pensioner receives an annual benefit of \$14,651 from the Employees Retirement System, only \$1,821 above the poverty line for a two-person household.

The CBC had a result they wanted – to make a point that public employees don't need a “generous” pension or health insurance benefits anymore because they make so much money. Clearly, any data that contradicted their desired result was quickly discarded.

Unfortunately, some newspapers are quick to accept without question the propaganda

big business produces. The CBC counts on the media to simply print the trash it gives them, hoping no one will look carefully at their reports and find their distortions and mistakes.

The Public Employees

Federation will continue to fight for fair salaries and benefits for state employees. Our members have earned the benefits the corporate funded interests such as the CBC seek to take away.

If you attack PEF you need to be correct, because if you are not, we will continue to set the record straight.

*Roger E. Benson*