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Letters: Raise basketball goal, government workers are privileged, city leaders should come together

By Press-Register Editorial Board
April 07, 2010, 5:23AM

Raise basketball goal to 12 feet, call 'walking'

Reflecting on "March Madness," can they really call this basketball or just a crowd-pleaser — like watching the Globetrotters?

I was fortunate enough to be picked on an all-star team to play against the original Harlem Globetrotters in Blackwater, Mo., in the 1950s. It was big fun, but also humiliating. They were very good.

What does it take to be a referee — a whistle and a striped shirt? Players are allowed to walk, carry the ball and double-dribble.

The goal should be raised to 12 feet and a foul should be called on anyone touching the rim. There was a game played for third place in the NAIA in Kansas City, Mo., back in the 1950s (I don't remember who the teams were) with the goals at 12 feet.

If they want to increase the number of teams in the tournament, they should consider double-elimination instead. Give teams like Kansas a second chance.

BOB MULL

Fairhope

Kudos to the mayor for taking on 'privileged'

Mayor Sam Jones has taken a lot of heat in recent weeks as he struggles with the city's budget shortfalls.

Very few citizens not on the government payroll realize that



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city workers are in the most privileged class of unionized employees in the country.

Recent articles in major business and economic publications have included reports released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) covering the period from 1998 to 2008. They show that public employee compensation grew by 28.6 percent.

This compares to a 19.3 percent growth in the private sector.

Even more remarkable is that in 2009, with negligible inflation, over half the states awarded pay raises to their employees in the face of record budget deficits.

Unlike many other elected city and state politicians, Mayor Jones has the courage to reduce these pay inequities that enrich these union workers/leaders who (especially in Alabama) wield vast political power.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2009 the average government employee at the state and local level received \$39.66 in total compensation per hour compared to \$27.42 for private workers. The report details the differences, showing that 45 percent comes from salaries.

But it is in the area of benefits that the gap surges to 70 percent for government types.

Government health benefits are twice as generous as in the private workforce.

So, if Mayor Jones and the City Council find that the city is broke, they should cut pay/benefits. According to the Cato Institute, such action rarely leads to high attrition rates. Indeed, the study reveals that private workers are three times more likely to quit their employment than government workers.

NICHOLAS H. JONGEBLOED

Irvington

City leaders should work together to fix problems

In recent years the eyes of the world have turned to Mobile and taken notice of a city that was not on the proverbial map.

Our port has grown to become a major player with global ports that heretofore would not have given Mobile a second glance. We are poised to contend for major contracts coming up for bid in our nation's capital and major corporations throughout the world.

Let us not forget the blessings that have been bestowed upon our area as we navigate our city through the financial crunch we find ourselves in. Let us not resort to the small-minded finger-pointing and bickering that many muni- cipalities and organizations choose when things get tight.

Most business entities' largest expenditure is personnel, so when cutbacks are warranted, naturally you look to personnel cost. That ought to be totally understood as we maneuver through our current situation.

I would hope that our city leaders would work harmoniously to find ways to fix our financial woes and not use this occasion to

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position themselves to advance their careers.

The people of Mobile are some of the finest people anywhere, and that's coming from a person that has traveled extensively throughout the world. Mobile, especially our city leaders, and the teams of the various departments that have "City of Mobile" on their paychecks, please do not lose the greatness we have attained as we wade through this financial hardship.

DAVID A. RICHEY

Senior Pastor

Gulf Coast Christian Center

Mobile

**Thanks to those who
support MS Society**

Every hour, someone is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a chronic disease of the central nervous system, for which there is no cure.

MS interrupts the flow of information between the brain and the body and stops people from moving. My wife, Sue, was diagnosed with MS 20 years ago and it has affected all aspects of our life.

MS Awareness Week was in early March (the MS Walk was March 20), and this summer the MS Lemonade Stand fundraisers will kick off.

Although these are visible events that result in fundraising and awareness of MS, every week numerous people, for lack of a better word, keep Sue "moving."

From the valet at the Mitchell Cancer Center who unloads her scooter, to the kind people at the west Mobile Target who "unload her" from her car so she can shop, to Rick's Sporting Goods for their "curbside shopping," to the numerous department stores that shop for her and bring the clothes to her car, to our neighbors, church, school, friends, family — all of these businesses and people keep Sue moving.

Their kindness makes the day that much brighter for us and it keeps us churning forward one day at a time.

This letter is to thank the people who support the MS Society's events. With all of this support, one day there will be a cure.

WIN STUARDI

Board Member

Alabama National MS Society

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