

Dear Editor:

Re: the recent Marsha Fritz op ed piece... As Paul Harvey used to say: *And now, the rest of the story!*
(Although this letter is way too short to hit all of her misstatements.)

1. Most public employees already pay into their retirement. Every month, they contribute, their employers contribute, and for decades, investment income has taken care of the rest.
2. Before the recent stock market crash, nearly 90% of all public employee retirement incomes were fully funded. You don't have to believe me; expert after expert has pointed that out in study after study (studies Ms. Fritz apparently chooses to ignore).
3. We're all in the same boat – and we know it. All public employees in California are also taxpayers. All around the state, public employees - from peace officers to recreation workers - are already tackling the tough real work to improve funding levels by negotiating appropriate changes to their benefits with their employers. In addition, employers are also increasing their contributions and/or changing retirement formulas. In fact, at the state level, most benefits are already back to the levels they were in the early 1990s. Current employees are paying a larger share of their paychecks to help immediately with budget pressures.
4. Excesses hurt all of us. The average public employee, after thirty years of hard work, makes about \$25,000 per year... not a lot to live on in California.

Real “solutions” must come from open and honest discussions – not tirades like the one you printed filled with inaccuracies which only work to inflame an angry public. This is not a good start to any discussion.

Sincerely,

Dear Editor:

Marcia Fritz's recent op-ed in Tuesday's paper was wrong on so many fronts that I don't know what to address first. That said, I'll start with one of her most obvious errors: her assertion that public employee pensions are funded, in the main, through tax dollars. That's just plain wrong. Nearly all public employees – from school teachers, firefighters, and after-school day care workers, to engineers, librarians, and appraisers- contribute to their own retirements. They contribute a portion of their earnings, their employers contribute another portion – and investments make up the balance. That formula has worked well for decades. In fact, before the stock market crash, more than 90% of all pension funds were fully-funded. But Marcia Fritz and her supporters believe that if you say the BIG LIE, loudly enough and over and over again, people will begin to believe it. And - that's the case here. Fueled by millions of dollars in campaign money from Wall Street, both Meg Whitman and Steve Poizner asserted the same lie over months of campaigning. Wall Street apologists kept up the rant and now the LA Times has given ink to another rendition of the same. Most public employees, after years of contributing to their own funds and after more than thirty years of hard work, only earn a modest \$25,000 per year in retirement – and many, like Los Angeles County employees, aren't entitled to social security. Surely Ms. Fritz knows that, just as she knows her facts are wrong. It looks as if it's up to the public to speak the truth.

Sincerely,

Dear Editor

Doesn't the Times have the responsibility of checking facts before publishing? Isn't that what you require of your reporters? I hope so, but given Marsha Fritz's rant about public employee pensions – filled as it were with hole after hole and misstatement after misstatement – it makes me wonder. Most public employees do and have always contributed some of their earnings from EVERY PAYCHECK to their retirement funds. Pensions are not the cause of our current financial woes; Wall Street excess, the stock market crash and the housing debacle have left us all less secure. Meanwhile, most public employees even after 20 – 30 years of hard work earn a modest \$25,000 in retirement PER YEAR. Spurious untrue "op-eds" have no place in the LA TIMES.

Sincerely,

Dear Editor:

The Times decision to print Marsha Fritz's rampage against public employees isn't worthy of this paper. Thousands of men and women work in and around our city and county teaching our children, sweeping our streets, fighting our fires, protecting our homes and doing the hundreds of jobs Angelinos depend on every day. Ms Fritz apparently would blame them for every single dime of budget woe, ignoring the Wall Street Crash and the home mortgage crisis, both of which contributed, more than anything else, to our current economic woes. Add to that her continued lies about what public employees do or don't do (public employees contribute to their own retirements, most make modest pensions, most are not eligible for social security, and many are already "reforming") and this op-ed is just plain garbage. I've come to expect more from the Times. Before printing garbage you should check out the facts. Hers are just plain wrong.

Sincerely,