

**Nina Esposito-Visgitis' letter first accepted ... and then contested ...
(and ultimately rejected) for publication:**

(highlights indicate what paper took issue with and wanted removed)

TITLE: PFT President Responds to “Teachers strong arm their way into shots.”

My entire family has been avid Post-Gazette readers dating back to the days of the Pittsburgh Press, when my brother Tony delivered the paper in my neighborhood.

It has been especially heartbreaking to watch what’s happened to the Post Gazette’s editorial board. What was once a thoughtful, trustworthy source of balanced debate for serious Pittsburgh issues has devolved into a bitter, often extreme right wing bullhorn hell-bent on attacking unions, undermining workers and parroting the right’s bullet point of the day.

The editorial “*Teachers strong arm their way into shots*” was offensive to me – teacher unions did not “strong arm” anyone into vaccines! Our union did what we have done since our local was chartered in 1935; we advocated for the safety of our members and our students.

You might not recognize such advocacy. You are currently trying to break your union. You haven’t given a raise to your still-without-a-contract Newspaper Guild members in 14 years. You raised healthcare cost on your employees in the middle of a pandemic, eliminated rights for disputes, rejected employee overtime, allowed managers to steal union work and permitted layoffs without regard to seniority.

It is true that teachers unions fought for their members to receive vaccinations as a priority for returning to in-person classes. We want all essential workers and people at risk to be vaccinated as soon as possible. Let’s clarify that fact rather than distort the truth.

It would be a refreshing change of pace for a once-proud editorial board gone sour.

Nina Esposito-Visgitis
President, Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers

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