

Forum

Our response to gun violence can and should be different

**Your Turn**

Patricia Gallagher Newberry
Guest columnist

My inbox is full of grief. My Facebook feed is filled with pain.

As a journalism educator and advocate, it's hardly surprising the horrific shooting in the newsroom of the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Maryland, is the all-consuming news of the moment.

Already, I know where I can donate, how I can assist, where I can post, what might be helpful to say.

In the coming days, I'll consume even more news, including the sure-to-come flood of analyses that stoke my anger. Even in the first hours, the script was set: The anti-press rhetoric in our current political environment has unleashed the media-haters among us and one of them took a gun into a Maryland newsroom and mowed down four journalists and a sales assistant to exact his revenge.

And I will be convinced, for a little while, that THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT. That gun violence, and mental health issues that attach to that violence, will finally, finally, please God finally, get the attention they so desperately need.

Because this time, the target was a newsroom. This time reporters and editors and columnists and a sales assistant were the prey. This time, We Are Charlie Hebdo. And we, the collective voices who do journalism and love journalism, will not shut up



until there is change.

But journalists and their promoters and protectors cannot do the job alone.

We must have the support of the people we serve – you, the readers of this page; you, the Cincinnati who benefits every time Jason Williams holds the mayor's feet to the fire; you, the neighborhood leader who wins every time Sherry Coolidge digs into city budget minutia; you, the optimist, who cheers every time Mark Curnutte brings attention to the disenfranchised; you, Mr. and Ms. Citizen, who triumph every time journal-

ists in this city and beyond employ their First Amendment rights on your behalf, whether covering City Hall, the halls of Congress, or a slaughter in their own newsroom.

Today, tomorrow, We Are Annapolis. Or we can be.

■ We can take time to meet the victims and understand the sheer loss of humanity. Rob Hiaasen, 59, loved words and mentoring younger colleagues. Gerald Fischman, 61, used a wicked wit to craft powerful editorials. John "Mac" McNamara, 56, was a go-to guy on local sports. Wendi Winters, 65, churned out

reams of community stories. Rebecca Smith, 34, supported the ad staff with good cheer.

■ We can throw a few dollars into the GoFundMe effort to support the victims' families. They will go to medical bills, funeral costs and newsroom repairs, among other expenses.

■ We can put our dollars behind any number of groups that protect and promote the press, including my favorite, the Society of Professional Journalists.

■ We can work for "sensible gun laws," the now-palatable way to suggest there are multiple ways to reduce the number and restrict the access to guns in this country.

■ We can stand up and speak out against press bashing, whether it comes out of the mouth of the president and the neighbor across the fence.

■ We can pay for the journalism we consume, to give Jason, Sherry, Mark and their colleagues the dollars they need to keep reporting.

This time can be different. But after journalists dry their tears and bury five of their own, they will need all of us to join the effort to make the killings in Annapolis a turning point in the battle against both the gun epidemic and the demonization of the press.

Patricia Gallagher Newberry is area director of journalism at Miami University and secretary-treasurer of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Ruling in Janus case is an assault on American workers

**Your Turn**

Rob E. Richardson Sr.
Guest columnist

With its ruling in the case of Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the U.S. Supreme Court added to the ongoing assault on everyday hardworking Americans, giving more power to corporations.

Our current administration wants you to believe that Janus is only a union issue. It's not. This is the strategic dismantling of all employee rights in this country. Janus will enable public institutions to lower wages, diminish healthcare and eliminate employees' rights.

This decision follows the recent Epic Systems Corp. v Lewis ruling which decided that companies can

require employees as a condition of employment to submit all workplace grievances to private arbitration and waive their right to go to court or participate in class-action lawsuits. The corporation versus the individual.

With the Janus decision, unions will have to represent public sector workers in many instances even if they do not pay a dime in dues. The Janus workers will be able to free load. Union members will have to subsidize the representation of non-union workers.

Corporate interests are spending millions of dollars to silence the collective voices of workers. It's time to wake up.

For decades corporations and their allies have strategically crafted a narrative in this country saying that unions are bad. It began with "right to work," a clever slogan to disguise cor-

porations' nefarious intent of enriching themselves at the expense of workers. Moving jobs from the north to the south, state by state, then moving them from country to country like Mexico and China and so on, while hardworking Americans are left without access and opportunity.

Without the ability to come together collectively, how are workers to fight back and protect what is in their best interest? The answer is, they can't. This is what corporations and the 1 percent want.

Throughout history, Ohio's public worker unions have provided employees an opportunity for collective advocacy requiring employer accountability, equitable treatment, decent wages and benefits. This in exchange for providing all Ohioans with services that make our daily lives better.

In 2011, a conservative, Republican-dominated legislature passed Senate Bill 5 to restrict the collective bargaining rights for public employees. That attempt to silence Ohio's public workers was overwhelmingly rejected by a referendum by the citizens. This is the answer. We have to get out to vote. We cannot let Janus discourage us from letting our voices be heard.

We have to stand up and fight for our rights. We must elect politicians who support the interests of everyday, hardworking Americans and what they represent for our country and future. It's simple. Power versus People. Where do you stand?

Robert E. Richardson, Sr. is the president of the Cincinnati Branch of the NAACP.