

On Monday morning, Feb. 14, I was listening to “Coleman and Company” on WANT radio. Coleman’s guest was State Rep. Mark Pody. Although their conversation touched on many issues concerning Mr. Pody’s role as State Representative, the topic I found most interesting was Mr. Pody’s mentioning of a recent meeting with the CEO of University Medical Center.

On April 1, 2010, I retired from UMC after 31 years of service. Anyone who has worked at a place a long time will probably agree that the place becomes a second home and those within it are like a second family. Most everyone who is part of a family will also agree that although you may have your differences within the family unit, someone from the outside had better not mess with you unless they know for sure what they are doing.

I am sure Mr. Pody meant well when he met with UMC’s new CEO to share things he has heard among a few of his constituents about their “bad experiences” at UMC. But then to discuss this on live radio is, in my opinion, inappropriate. In my position as Director of Human Resources at UMC, I saw numerous letters of commendation from patients wanting to recognize staff members from whom they or a family member had received excellent care. They were praising UMC and the care they had received – often comparing it to the good, but impersonal care they had received from the much larger hospitals in Nashville.

For every bad experience, there have been thousands of good experiences and successes celebrated at UMC over the years, and Lebanon is fortunate to have a local hospital of this caliber with highly trained, specialized physicians who could be practicing in the big city, but chose Lebanon instead. I am sure there have been those with experiences perceived as negative and with outcomes other than what they were looking for; but every patient is made aware of the individuals they should speak with concerning their issues, and to my knowledge the State Representative is not on the list.

Now, to the issues that should be of concern to this newly elected State Representative, and there are many. I will admit that I was in my car while listening to this program and there were times when I got out of range of clear reception. However, I don’t recall his speaking much, if any, to the issue of education and teachers’ salaries. I am a firm believer that there should be qualified, dedicated teachers in the classroom, and there are some who are not happy with their chosen field and are doing the minimum required to keep their job. There is currently debate underway with the new administration wanting to end bargaining rights of teachers and perhaps that is not a bad idea. Teachers need to be paid what they are worth, based on their level of education and their commitment to the profession – not on bargaining rights or period of tenure

that lets the ineffective teacher stay right up there with good ones.

In this interview, Mr. Pody mentioned that he had spent time riding with law enforcement officers and recognized the good job they are doing and feels that money for law enforcement needs to be looked at. I would hope that he plans to spend an equal amount of time in the classroom with teachers and see firsthand what the day of a teacher is like and ask himself would he do this for the pay they receive.

Good teachers are the key to our future. If their job is done right it can possibly make law enforcement's job a little easier. Not only are teachers educating those future health care providers who can ensure good experiences at UMC, but they are also educating future State Representatives.

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