June 5, 2012

To the Editor:

Your reporters Mary Williams Walsh and Danny Hakim have managed to make headlines (*Public Pensions Faulted for Bets on Rosy Returns*) by conveniently ignoring the difference between short-term and long-term interest rates – and, in so doing, have painted a far bleaker picture than actually exists.

The fact is that pension plans' operational and system changes, legislative changes, more positive stock market performance and the phase-out of investment losses from the Great Recession are working together to increase the long-term funded ratio of public plans and put them on solid financial footing. Surveys by my organization, the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS), demonstrate that the vast majority of public plans are making a robust recovery from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. And a study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College concludes that under the most likely stock market scenario – that's the *most likely*, not the rosiest scenario – the average public pension plan funded ratio will be 82 percent by 2015, up from 75 percent in 2011.

Given your influence on public policymakers, this publication – and its reporters – have an obligation to fully inform themselves before misinforming the public.

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