

# OPINION

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## The LEADER

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### GUEST VIEW | HENRI J. BARKEY

# The trouble with political dynasties

**L**iz Cheney, daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, announced this week that she was giving up her campaign to unseat an incumbent U.S. senator in her father's home state of Wyoming. Her campaign had angered many as she had sauntered from her longtime home state of Virginia to Wyoming. She certainly is not unique. Today in America and around the world, families cling to power, passing the baton from one generation to another or from spouse to spouse.

We have had two Bushes in the White House and one in the Florida governor's mansion. More may be coming. Soon the United States could experience another run at the presidency by former President Clinton's spouse, Hillary. And there has been talk that Chelsea, their daughter, could consider a run for Congress in the future.

There also have been many dynasties that have not made it to the White House but have dominated state legislatures or state congressional delegations; think of the Udalls and Sununus.

The rest of the world is also afflicted. Out of the 1.3 billion people in India, it seems there is only one family that can run the country, the Gandhis. Surely India does not lack talent. In India's neighbor, Pakistan (population 190 million), the Bhuttos have dominated the landscape: father Zulfikar was hanged by the military, his daughter Benazir fell victim to assassins, her husband, who became president, served out his term in disrepute. Their son is now at the helm of the family's political party.

The British seem to have avoided this fate, perhaps because they have a genuine monarchy. The French too. Our Canadian neighbors have proved not to be immune, though, despite their fondness for the British monarchy. Former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's son has assumed the reins of his father's Liberal Party, although he has run into some criticism for smoking marijuana while a sitting member of Parliament (maybe he did not inhale).

There are institutionalized republican monarchies. Bashar Assad took over when his father died; never mind that he was only 34 and the constitution (yes Syria has a constitution) stipulated that one had to be at least 40 to be eligible. Not a problem. Parliament quickly convened and magically the age limit was reduced to, not 30, not 35, but to 34 exactly. As a friend of mine remarked then, it would have been easier to simply change Bashar's age; why go to the trouble of convening parliament?

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As for Egypt, among the reasons the people rebelled in 2011 was the fear that Hosni Mubarak, despite opposition from many quarters in society, including the army, planned to have his son, Gamal, succeed him. And we, of course, remember Saddam Hussein and his murderous sons, Uday and Qusai. Nor should we forget Moammar Gadhafi, whose sons occupied all levels of power in Libya.

In democracies, family control of political power is a real problem. In the age of multiple and diverse sources of news, information and ads, name recognition matters a great deal. The Hillaries and Chelseas and Georges and Jebbs tend to emerge as front-runners and suck up a great deal of air and contributions in political campaigns because of name recognition. They do not have to go to the trouble of introducing themselves to the electorate the old-fashioned way.

Hence, dynasties discourage and handicap newcomers. In a country of 300 million Americans, there are many who are perfectly capable of executing the responsibilities of elected office. Some do get elected but are often sidelined when it comes to the most visible races.

The most bizarre of family dynasties is North Korea's Kims. North Korea is owned and operated by the Kims. The third Kim to lead the nation has just distinguished himself by having his uncle executed. He had good reasons, we're told, including the uncle's failure to clap heartily for his leader. It is difficult to see the Kims leaving power any time soon. Let us just hope that when a new Kim assumes power, the American president is not a Clinton who will have defeated another Bush for the chance to live in the hereditary White House.

*Henri J. Barkey is a professor of international relations at Lehigh University. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.*

### WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

# On Monterey, Common Core



SEN. TOM O'MARA

**I** hope I made it clear in the immediate aftermath of Governor Cuomo's fourth State of the State message last week that while the governor's speech covered a lot of ground, as this annual address is traditionally meant to do, the following message from it deserves top billing: upstate manufacturing needs to make a comeback.

We're smart, I believe, to grab hold of this possibility this year and take it as far as we possibly can. I'll be doing just that. We haven't had an opportunity like this one in a long, long time in New York government to change the game for upstate manufacturers—and, in turn, for local workers and families. We can't afford to waste it.

So my overriding reaction last Wednesday focused, first, on Governor Cuomo's focus on tax and regulatory reform actions to turn around the upstate economy, with a special emphasis on upstate manufacturing.

Now, a few other observations.

One, criminal justice. Governor Cuomo enlisted the help of a power point presentation to stress the salient points of his speech. When he came to criminal justice, the following phrases scrolled across the screens in the room, "The good news is crime is down and our prisons have fewer people in them ... We are reducing the madness of an incarceration society ... Ending a system of unnecessary human and financial waste ... The bad news is there is a revolving

door where 40 percent wind up back behind bars ... Reduced recidivism means less crime, safer communities, and fewer taxpayer dollars spent on incarceration."

At which point I thought to myself, the governor himself is making a strong argument for keeping open the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility. It was striking because, as we know, the Cuomo administration has targeted Monterey for closure later this year.

Unfortunately, the governor didn't announce a plan to keep Monterey open at the end of his power point. But he may have reinforced our case to achieve that goal.

For months now the case we've made for saving Monterey and the shock program hinges, to a great extent, on the fact that Monterey has helped to end, in the governor's own words, "unnecessary human and financial waste."

We've more than documented that the staff and administrators of Monterey have turned around so many lives that were once at a dead end—and have done so while helping New York State save more than \$1 billion. I'd say that's helping put an end to unnecessary human and financial waste.

We've highlighted reduced recidivism as a primary reason for keeping, not discarding Monterey. As the governor reiterated in his State of the State, "Reduced recidivism means less crime, safer communities and fewer taxpayer dollars spent on incarceration." That's precisely what Monterey has already done for more than 25 years. The governor highlighted a 40 percent recidivism rate for state prisons; the recidivism rate for Monterey is less than half that. It's a proven success.

Additionally, we know the great value of Monterey inmate work crews to infrastructure and other community enhancement projects across Schuyler, Chemung, Steuben and Yates counties — a benefit to local property taxpayers to the tune of more than \$6 million over the past six years alone!

Governor Cuomo himself made a clear and convincing case for saving Monterey. To his credit, Governor Cuomo and his administration responded to our grass-roots efforts to save the Elmira Psychiatric Center.

We made a case on the merits. We're making a similar case for Monterey, and we won't give up on achieving the same result.

Lastly, for now, the governor was roundly criticized for failing to address the controversy swirling locally and throughout New York around the state's new Common Core educational standards. This controversy is real and citizens in the Southern

Tier and Finger Lakes regions are loud and clear about their opposition to Common Core.

While the governor stayed silent on Common Core last week, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver did not.

He said, "I think the case has been made, if nothing else, for a delay and a reevaluation of the implementation of Common Core."

I highlight the speaker's comment because it strongly signals a growing consensus in the Legislature: Common Core goes too far, too fast. Senate leaders have already delivered the same message. In early December, I joined Assemblymen Phil Palmesano and Chris Friend at a public hearing in Corning where several hundred educators and parents let it be known that the implementation of Common Core has been a disaster.

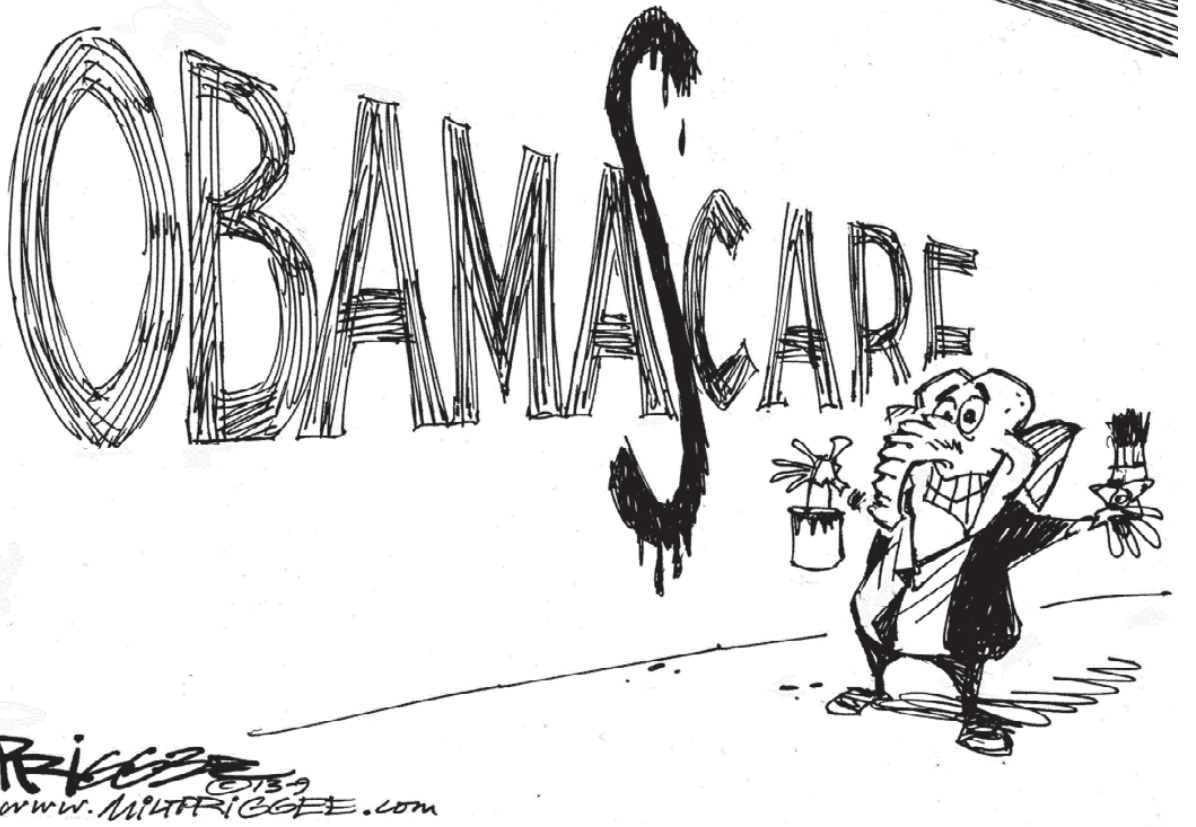
I can tell you that local sentiment is running strong against Common Core on my online "2014 Community, Jobs and Economy Survey" (which you can find on [omara.nysenate.gov](http://omara.nysenate.gov)). Nearly 75 percent of survey respondents so far are opposed to the new standards.

So the 2014 session's off to a quick start. And it promises to move even more fast and furious in the weeks ahead.

*State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, represents New York's 58th Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties and part of Tompkins County.*

### ANOTHER VIEW

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### OTHER VIEW | LOS ANGELES TIMES

# The 'dark side' of the terrorism fight

**I**t has been more than a year since the Senate Intelligence Committee approved a voluminous report on the detention and interrogation practices of the George W. Bush administration. But the 6,000-page document remains under wraps, even as defenders of "enhanced interrogation" techniques such as waterboarding continue to contend that they produced valuable intelligence, an assertion the study reportedly rejects. President Obama should move promptly to ensure

that the public can scrutinize both the report and the CIA's response to it.

Thanks to disclosures, congressional investigations and a report by the CIA's inspector general, many disgusting details of the Bush administration's treatment of suspected terrorists are already known, from the imprisonment of suspects at "black sites" abroad to the repeated waterboarding of suspected al-Qaida operatives Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and Abu Zubaydah. The public also has seen the memos

by Bush administration lawyers that used contorted reasoning to rationalize torture.

But the Intelligence Committee report would offer a comprehensive overview of what happened when, in the words of former Vice President Dick Cheney, the U.S. traveled to "the dark side" in an attempt to prevent another 9/11. The report also would shed light on whether waterboarding and other inhumane tactics were effective in preventing future plots or locating the

whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, a debate that continues to this day (not that torture would be justified even if it were effective).

We believe the committee should release the whole report, omitting details that threaten the exposure of sources and methods, not information that would be embarrassing. Obama, who prides himself on prohibiting waterboarding and other forms of torture, should make it clear that this is his preference as well, whatever the CIA says.