

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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READER VIEW | RALPH SNYDER

Who are you calling crazy?

Lunacy is in the mind of the beholder. Peter. Really, you're proud to announce to the world that you were once budget director of NYS. How many billions in debt is NYS and how long has NYS had a debt problem?

As a liberal you more than likely think that there is no problem with debt. So Peter, how much more is NYS in debt now that you're out?

You say the House of Representatives, controlled by Republicans and Conservatives, and are blocking all "forward" movement by the federal government. Really? The Democrats had control for two years under the Obama administration and all we got was more and more debt.

Obamacare is a nation killer. Big taxes will hit in 2014. The cost will be unsustainable. If it weren't for the 2010 elections and the Republicans stopping the bleeding, our debt would be \$20 trillion.

When you take (tax) money from businesses, you take away their ability to hire or expand. The private sector creates jobs, not some bureaucrat in Washington.

Small government works more efficiently — a proven fact. Another fact: when government is bloated, individual rights are in serious jeopardy. I mean they're flat-out lost, trading security for freedoms.

Many scientists are on the government dole. They receive money for "research." These scientists will tell us there is a problem with global warming. But on the other hand, scientists not receiving millions from government will tell us the temperature on earth hasn't changed

one degree either way for the past 17 years. Which is more believable?

Governments around the world would love to create a global tax on countries so as to get one step closer to a one-world government. You mention this in your statement "being supported by a new global system in whose formulation the U.S. may not play a large role." I pray we don't join the global system. Just look at the Euro since that debacle of countries decided to join together.

Now, you say the House is gumming up the works pretty bad. Really? They are working hard to try to control this \$17 trillion we owe. Yes they shoot down the Senate Democrats every time they try to pass a multibillion dollar bill that isn't paid for. The House has great ideas on reducing debt. It's not blaming who got us here, it's the way we get out of it!

So please, House of Representatives, keep gumming up the works.

The lamestream media has been in Obama's pocket since his first inauguration.

Newspapers slam Paul Ryan, Rand Paul and Ted Cruz for their great ideas. All the while Harry Reid and company didn't produce a budget for four years.

Obama has yet to produce a budget, which by law, was due a month ago. But, alas, his Final Four picks were in early.

Excuse me, but who is the REAL lunatic?

Ralph Snyder is a Lindley resident. He is responding to a column, written by Newsday writer Peter Goldmark, that ran earlier on this page.

ONLY ONLINE: YOU WEIGH IN

If you won \$338.3 million playing Powerball, how would you spend your money after the bills were paid?

- Donate some or all of it to charity 27%
- Quit my job and travel the world 21%
- Cross everything off my bucket list; make a new list 18%
- Buy my dream home 16%
- Buy my dream car or Harley 2%
- Save it for a rainy day 8%
- Blow it all on a trip to Vegas 4%

Total votes: 429

New question: Should Councilman Frank Coccho be censured for his actions and comments at a recent meeting?

Weigh in at www.the-leader.com

WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING ABOUT ...

Frank Coccho

On The Leader's Facebook page, people weighed in on our question: Should Councilman Frank Coccho be censured for his actions and comments at a recent meeting?

■ What isn't he whining about — **Dave Dann**

■ No, people should be able to speak their mind. — **Jeffrey Jones**

We also received responses to a week-long crackdown on those who don't pull over for stopped emergency vehicles.

■ I agree 100% police officers and fire fighters and paramedics risk thier life daily on the side of the roads and there are too many ignorant ppl that dont care or pay attention. — **Brandon Baker CutzofAnigma**

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

No shortage of budget reactions

Reactions to a state fiscal plan that now comes in at roughly \$141 billion (a figure that includes a little over \$5 billion of federal aid for Hurricane Sandy recovery) go in a thousand different directions.

Some might say a billion different directions.

The overriding point is that from agriculture to zebra mussels, this state's annual budget covers a lot of ground. There is — or isn't, depending on your point of view — something there for everyone and everything under the sun.

But I think the very number itself, \$141 billion, draws the most immediate, gut-level response: New York State deals in big money. That's why it's so important that for three years in a row now we've put the brakes on state spending growth, held it to under two percent and adopted the budget on time.

So ongoing spending restraint has to register as one highlight of the new budget plan. In simple terms, there's just no way to sustain unbridled spending growth without generating sufficient revenues (in other words, without taxing — and we all know that New York State sure did and continues to do that, too).

Take the latest annual report from the Tax Foundation. For the second year



TOM O'MARA

in a row, New York ranks as the state with the worst business climate in the nation (defined as "a measure how each state's tax laws affect economic performance"). The new report also puts New York at or near the top of the rankings in numerous tax categories including: state and local taxes per person (1st), state income tax collections per person (1st), gasoline taxes (1), and state and local property taxes per person (5th). You can find the full report at <http://tax-foundation.org>.

So I'll stress here that one other immediate, strong reaction to the new state budget has to be that it finally includes a few future tax breaks for a variety of New Yorkers — small businesses and farmers, manufacturers and middle-class families, veterans, volunteer fire departments, and others.

Relief from taxes has been notoriously hard to come by in New York State. So while this budget keeps a 2-percent cap on state spending, it also includes a few future tax breaks.

That's critical.

In addition to the forthcoming tax breaks, there are other foundations in this budget that we can build on.

We're establishing a series of business incubators statewide, in place where they can be anchored by colleges and universities, to encourage high-tech startups and better secure our competitive position within the research and development, technology-based economy of the future.

In keeping with the underlying goals of the Senate's recently released

"Grown in New York" plan to strengthen New York State agriculture, this budget includes farm-based tax relief, marketing initiatives, research and development to promote diversity, and provisions to encourage the purchase of products grown, produced or harvested in New York.

And recognizing the rapidly changing nature of the modern economy — where jobs and careers seem to come and go in a heartbeat (or at the click of a mouse) — this budget also includes a job training initiative based on the "ready-workforce" model used successfully in other states to help attract and retain a steady workforce by providing comprehensive, targeted job training and retraining specifically tailored to the needs of industries and

other employers.

Not nearly enough will be accomplished by this new fiscal plan.

Clearly there are other actions being taken that will more than likely offset the fullest benefits of any new tax relief. Everyone's far from satisfied, including me, but that's for another time.

As I said, every state budget draws a thousand different reactions.

Good and bad. Hopeful and pessimistic. Informed and uninformed.

It's inevitably a mixed bag, at best.

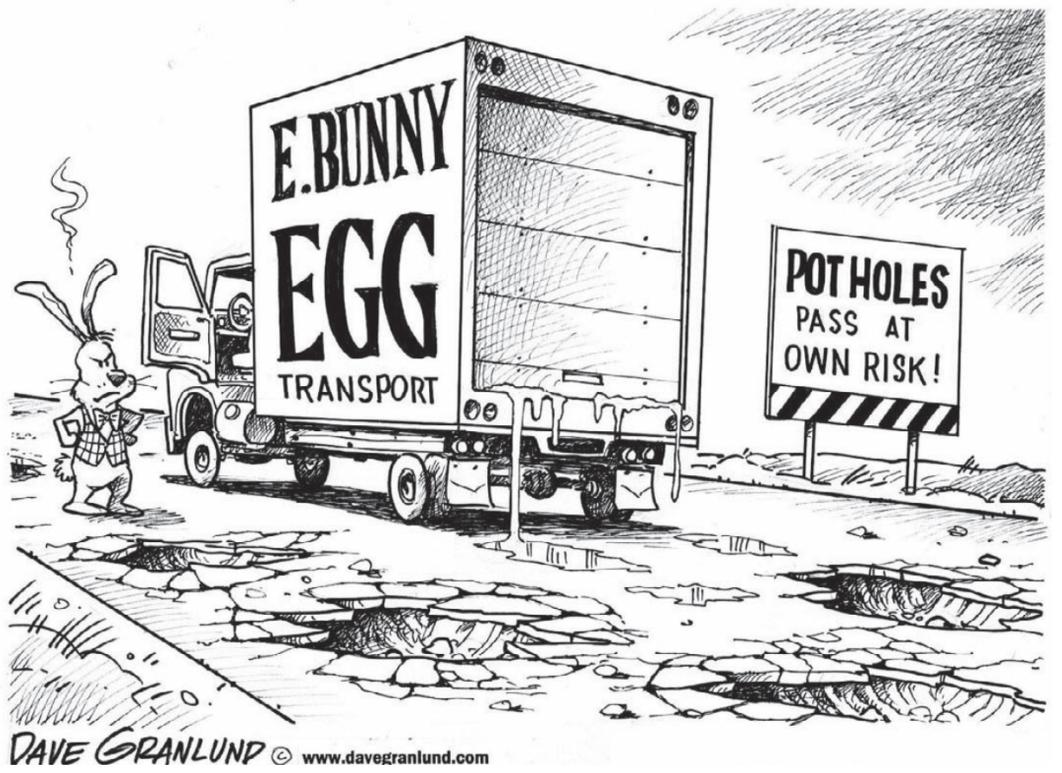
Yet I'll stress this again: those of us committed to a belief in targeted, job-creating tax cuts and other initiatives, especially in a place like New York that's been known as a high-tax state for far too long, are fully on board with a few moves in the right direction in this budget.

Equally important, in my view, it opens the door to a future focus on tax cutting. Imagine that. That's real change.

Now we have to keep finding ways to keep pushing through that door.

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.

GRANLUND'S VIEW



OTHER VIEW | LOS ANGELES TIMES

Reconsider update of computer fraud act

Congress passed the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act in the early days of the Internet to crack down on malicious hackers, but federal prosecutors have stretched the law since then to apply to computer users who merely violated a website's terms of service. Now, the House Judiciary Committee is circulating a proposed update of the act that, instead of fixing its flaws, would enable prosecutors to threaten alleged violators with dramatically bigger penalties. That's a dangerous step that lawmakers shouldn't even consider in light of the well-documented misuses of the law.

The 1986 act makes it a crime to gain access to information on a computer in an unauthorized way — for example, by

hacking through the passwords protecting a shopping website's server and copying the credit card numbers stored there. That prohibition applies to both people who aren't authorized to use the computer and to people who exceed the authority they were granted.

The problem is that the act doesn't clearly define what it means by exceeding one's authorization. As a result, some prosecutors have argued — and some judges have agreed — that simply violating a site's terms of service is equivalent to gaining unauthorized access. The draft circulated by the Judiciary Committee's staff maintains the sorry status quo, affirming that those who violate terms of service to obtain information from a government website or

"sensitive or nonpublic information" from any other site could be prosecuted. As cyber-law expert Orin Kerr observed, "the language would make it a felony to lie about your age on an online dating profile if you intended to contact someone online and ask them personal questions."

A much better idea is the proposal by Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., to narrow the law so that merely violating a site's terms of service to obtain information would not be a crime. Lofgren's proposal is backed by numerous online groups and civil libertarians. The committee's draft, however, reflects the Justice Department's desire for an even bigger hammer to use against online offenders. Among other things, it would enable prosecutors

to bring federal racketeering charges against people accused of two or more violations of the 1986 law.

It's easy to understand lawmakers' interest in more powerful tools to combat cyber criminals, who pose an ever-growing threat. But Congress' first step should be to narrow the law to protect people against overzealous prosecutors. When people are being threatened with 35 years in prison for downloading too many articles from an academic database, or sentenced to 41 years for exposing a security flaw that revealed nothing but email addresses, there's something seriously wrong with the law. Congress shouldn't expand the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act in any way until it fixes that problem.