

# OPINION

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## The LEADER

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### OTHER VIEW | LOS ANGELES TIMES

## Make Internet dog-friendly

Many large-scale commercial breeders of dogs that sell to pet stores have been criticized by animal welfare advocates and public officials as puppy mills, where female dogs are often overbred in inhumane conditions. Nonetheless, large breeders of animals for the pet trade are required to be licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and to meet very minimal standards of care set by the Animal Welfare Act. That, at least, gives the department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service the power to inspect facilities and penalize or close down bad operators.

But large-scale breeders increasingly conduct their business over the Internet, selling directly to customers rather than pet stores, and the Animal Welfare Act doesn't subject online sellers to licensing and regulation. Even USDA officials say breeders selling online - or by mail or phone - are taking advantage of a loophole that improperly exempts them from licensing. Last year, the USDA proposed a change in the rules that would eliminate that loophole. Now it's time to put such a rule officially in place.

The Animal Welfare Act, which was passed in 1966, long before the Internet, exempted from licensing very small-scale breeding operations (three or fewer female animals) and retail pet stores. The rationale

was that the stores were selling to local customers, who could see the animals in person before purchasing them as well as observe the conditions of the store.

Breeders selling online have been classified as retail pet stores because they sell directly to the public. But most of that is interstate commerce, and buyers almost never see the animal in person before ordering it or the conditions under which it was kept. And the breeders aren't regulated by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "Without consumer oversight or APHIS inspections, there is no assurance that the animals are monitored for their overall health and humane treatment," USDA officials wrote in a 2010 audit of the inspection program. The audit pointed out that some Internet breeders were very large, noting that one had 140 breeding dogs.

Allowing commercial breeders to sell over the Internet without federal licensing subverts the intent of the Animal Welfare Act and leaves hundreds of animals at the mercy of unregulated breeders. USDA officials, animal welfare advocates and members of Congress have all said as much. The government should issue a final rule that makes it clear that breeders selling online are not retail pet stores and should be regulated by the USDA like any other large-scale commercial breeder.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### A lot of things are gone from Big Flats

Big Flats residents:  
This year's Republican primary on %0 is extremely important. Notice the deluge of signs by one or two people which line the roads like a parade.

Our current Town Supervisor states she has not raised taxes for Big Flats.

True (almost) the tax rate has remained the same and the assessments have not changed, UNTIL this year when the assessment had to be trended 7%.

Your Horseheads Central School Tax bill will have a 9.9% increase of which only 2.9% is the school increase and the 7% is Town of Big Flats. Not raised taxes. Wait until you receive your bill.

Unfortunately, our Town

Supervisor has not moved our Town forward over the past four years. The concerts, gone. The old Town newspaper, gone. The community advisory boards and Board liaisons, gone. If you want to e-mail any Board member using the Town website, the Town Supervisor is the only one with an e-mail. She decides if the Board member sees it. Communication gone. Answer concerns of residents at Board meeting, gone.

Let's bring positive attitude, boots to the ground, and forward thinking/doing by voting for Ed Fairbrother, Andy Gillette and Lee Giammichele. A team that is so vital for the future of all the residents and businesses of Big Flats.

**Duane Gardner**  
Big Flats

### First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.



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

## Cut red tape, create jobs

As a kickoff to this year's observance of Labor Day, a new report released last week, from a labor-backed research organization out of Albany, spoke to the key issue facing communities, governments, employers — and workers and their families — throughout upstate New York.

The report's central finding, in my opinion, was this: Upstate New York's rate of total job growth has been 1.2 percent over the past four years, while the nation has seen a growth rate nearly three times higher.

It's not that this latest report stands as any kind of a revelation, because it doesn't. Those of us who've spent lifetimes living, working and raising families in an upstate region like the Southern Tier or Finger Lakes don't need a new report to tell us what we already know about job losses and their impact on every facet of life in our communities.

But every new report about upstate's decades-long struggle to reclaim any sort of meaningful and sustained economic foothold in this modern economy does reinforce the reality that it's not happening. Every new report like this serves up another hard-to-hear but critical-to-know diagnosis.

So as I continue looking ahead in this column at the key challenges facing the State Legislature



TOM O'MARA

approaching the start of the 2014 legislative session, this one falls right in line.

Earlier this year I joined my colleagues in the Senate Majority Coalition to call for one of the state's largest-ever regulatory reform efforts. At that time I said, "Let's stay focused on the most important job at hand, and that's turning around the upstate economy. We know that we need to cut taxes, and we're working on that. We also know that upstate citizens, counties, school districts, manufacturers, small businesses and industries across the board are overburdened with far too many unnecessary state regulations and unfunded mandates."

"It's time to get rid of the costly red tape that keeps the upstate economy going nowhere and makes New York's businesses climate one of the worst in America."

That last sentence still frames one huge challenge facing us: costly red tape that keeps the upstate economy going nowhere. Until we seriously address it, we're going to keep right on seeing reports about upstate New York's economic decline.

So early on, the Senate Majority Coalition staked out our intention to identify and eliminate hundreds of costly and unnecessary government regulations that strangle business and job growth and drive up municipal and school property taxes. To kick of this comprehensive regulatory reform initiative, the Senate acted on numerous pieces of legislation to accomplish key regulatory reform and mandate relief goals, including legislation I co-sponsor to end the practice of unfunded state mandates on local governments and school districts.

This specific legislation (S.1294/A.4861), which the Senate approved with strong bipartisan support, would ban the imposition of any future state mandates on local governments and school districts that are not accompanied by state funding to help localities pay for delivering the required programs and services. It sends a common sense, straightforward message: the state's going to stop passing the buck to counties, cities, town, villages and school districts. If the state mandates a program or a service, the state pays for it.

Unfortunately the state's Democratic Assembly leadership didn't follow the Senate's regulatory reform lead and act on this or any of the other Senate-approved regulatory reform initiatives.

So we get back to the drawing board. We start setting the stage now for action in the next legislative session.

That effort gets underway in earnest this September and October when my Senate colleagues and I begin holding industry-specific public hearings across the state to listen to businesses and local officials on which rules, regulations and mandates are the most detrimental and should be eliminated. These public forums will give us the opportunity to listen to the challenges facing various sectors and industries, learn which regulations and state mandates are most cumbersome and, ultimately, put forth specific legislation to help through short- and long-term actions.

I'm grateful that we'll be bringing one of our statewide hearings to Corning, in early October, to focus on manufacturing.

I've said repeatedly — and sponsored legislation throughout my tenure in the Legislature — that taking steps, like regulatory reform, to revitalize upstate manufacturing is fundamentally important to reclaiming upstate New York's rightful place in this economy.

*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



### OTHER VIEW | PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

## Economy won't improve until wages do

Do you feel like you're working harder than ever, but your pay isn't keeping up? That's probably because you are - and it's not.

A new study by the Economic Policy Institute shows that while the productivity of the average American worker increased nearly 75 percent between 1979 and 2012, his real income during that period grew only 5 percent.

The New York Times interviewed a cashier at a KFC in Manhattan who, after eight years on the job, earns only \$7.75 an hour. She hasn't had a raise since 2007. Of course, that's better than

being among the millions who faced wage cuts or layoffs.

A Wall Street Journal analysis cited three reasons for wages' stagnation beyond the recession:

Economic growth, at less than 2 percent for three straight quarters, is too low. Before the recession, it averaged 3.5 percent.

Businesses are managing payrolls differently. Many firms that laid off workers rather than cut wages during the recession are coping now by cutting wages.

Globalization continues to put pressure on wages. The Boston Consulting Group predicts that by 2015, some industries will

see only a 10 percent difference between wages in the United States and in China.

Long periods of wage stagnation, even as many in corporate America are recording record profits, are a recipe for trouble. That's not an appeal for class warfare. It's an acknowledgment that current economic trends aren't good for this country.

Labor Department data show that average hourly pay for nongovernment, nonmanagement workers declined to \$8.77 an hour last month, compared with \$8.85 a year earlier.

It's time to turn that trend around. This country's consumer-based

economy won't thrive again until workers can afford to spend more of their paychecks on goods and services.

A number of economists are suggesting ways to address America's slumping wages. Among other things, former Labor Secretary Robert Reich suggests eliminating payroll taxes on the first \$15,000 in income and requiring companies to spend more of their earnings on upgrading workers' skills.

Perhaps more than anything, perspectives must change. Wage increases must be seen as investments. Well-paid consumers make the purchases needed to keep the U.S. economy humming.