

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lester right choice for Avoca district

Let me urge voters in the Avoca Central School District to vote in the May 20, 2014 election. Voting shows active support for this very vital school, a school which provides rich benefits to all residents of the district, including parts of the towns of Howard, Bath, Cohocton, Freemont, Prattsburgh, Wheeler, Avoca, and the village of Avoca, as well as to its students, faculty and staff.

Let me further suggest that voters choose Don Lester as the candidate to support in the election.

Choosing Don creates new dynamics on the board, provides for new thoughts in the decision-making processes and recognizes the need for thoughtful, compassionate and ethical leadership.

For the entire time I have known Don, he has demonstrated unwavering support for young people and their education and he has always advocated working for educational system improvements in positive and productive ways. The combination of experience as an educator and positive, compassionate support for students uniquely qualifies Don to serve on the School Board.

As a taxpayer in the District, Mother to two students who graduated from Avoca Central School, and wife of a District Teacher, I am familiar with the School, its place in the life of the community, and the need for strong and sound leadership in the school.

The election is May 20, 2014 from noon to 8 p.m. Again, I urge you to vote, and to vote for Don Lester.

Joni Fish-Gertz
 Avoca

Success at May fundraiser

I am excited to announce that Catholic Charities' recent gala had record breaking success! On Saturday, May 3, The Hilliard Corp. presented The Roaring Twenties on behalf of Catholic Charities. Approximately 200 guests showed up in their '20s-inspired dress and danced the night away, raising \$18,000 for local families in need. These funds will support Catholic Charities' efforts to end local poverty, increase self-sufficiency and help individuals & families grow and prosper.

Our success can be attributed to the following community-minded individuals & businesses: Jan van de Blink, The Hilliard Corp., Dr. Thomas & Mrs. Marie Finnerty, Tara Rockwell, Simmons-Rockwell Autoplaza, Mr. James Flaws, Michael & Susan Heine, Vulcraft, Wegmans Food Markets, John S. Booth III, Marc Stemerman, Chemung Supply Co., Kevin & Julie Lauper, Lauper Electric, Dr. Mark Schuller, Thomas Gough, Gough Holding Co., Susan Chalmers, H. Strauss, Caryl Cavalier, Rachel Hart, Amani Vlasic, Cappy's, Janis Withey, Empower FCU, Jennifer Herrick-McGonigal, Elmira Downtown Development, Joe Steigerwald, Elmira Country Club, Kurt Bartenstein, Thomas Curren, Elmira Little Theatre, Dino Losito, GENO & Friends, Bethany Blanchard, and Catholic Charities' Staff and Board. Thank you all for your support.

Catholic Charities works to ensure that people have food, clothing, shelter, medical services, and the ability to achieve a decent standard of living. For more information on services, please visit www.cs-cc.org.

Catholic Charities

COMMENTARY | SEN. TOM O'MARA

US CEOs still down on NY

How's this for an assessment of New York State's economic climate, "Too many taxes, too much regulation and too much government corruption."

That was just one comment posted as part ChiefExecutive.net's "2014 Best & Worst States for Business," its 10th annual survey of chief executive officers from across the country (you can read the full survey at <http://chiefexecutive.net/best-worst-states-for-business-2014>). Over 500 CEOs responded and graded the 50 states on a variety of measures including taxes and regulations, workforce quality and the quality of the living environment. I wrote not long ago about a recent New York versus Texas dustup between Governor Andrew Cuomo and Governor Rick Perry over which of their respective states had the better business climate. Well, at least according to this nationwide sampling of CEOs, Texas comes in first while New York ranks 49th — just ahead of dead-last California.

Reports like these sure don't help. At the same time, we're smart to pay close attention to a group like this one of the country's key decision makers in business and industry — the men and women making the short- and long-term choices about where to locate or relocate, establish or expand a job creator. For America's job creators, it's always more about the right actions than the right words. Ultimately, substance always trumps



SEN. TOM O'MARA

slogan.

So while we might very well be moving in some of the right directions in New York State — and, in fact, I believe we are — we can't just keep saying we are. It's more important to keep doing it. A hangover from decades of overspending, overtaxing and overregulating doesn't get wished away — sometimes it takes swallowing a few more aspirin. Further proof of that arrived late last week with the state Labor Department's latest unemployment statistics showing our region squarely in the categories of "losing jobs or no change in jobs" or, at best, "gaining jobs slower than the state rate."

We need to stay focused on curing a business climate whose reputation remains stubbornly weak, and that's just what the Senate's trying to do. The 2014-15 state budget, for example, included important tax cuts that will start to make a difference for an upstate manufacturing sector that remains at risk from high taxes and overregulation. The budget takes steps toward creating a business climate that invites private-sector job growth, welcomes manufacturers and industries, and keeps moving closer to achieving the goal of long-term economic security for workers and

their families. Groups like the Business Council, NY Farm Bureau and Unshackle Upstate have praised these moves.

But let's not forget that last fall the Senate also conducted 10 industry-specific public forums on tax and regulatory reform, including one that I sponsored in Corning focusing on upstate manufacturing. The goal was to identify and eliminate the most costly government regulations that strangle economic growth and drive up local property taxes. In Corning we heard testimony from representatives of several prominent Southern Tier manufacturers, including Corning Incorporated, Dresser-Rand, Nucor and F.M. Howell & Company, as well as leading economic development agencies including Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) and the Steuben County Industrial Development Agency. We received some straightforward and valuable input on why New York State continues to be overregulated, overtaxed and a tough place to do business, and steps we can take to change it.

Some of these tax relief and regulatory reform steps were taken as part of the 2014-15 state budget. Not all of them, though. In fact a final report the Senate prepared late last year following the hearings (you can find the full report on omara.nysenate.gov) identified more than 2,200 specific rules, regulations and practices that put New York's businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

So last week, the Senate

got back to work. We approved several pieces of legislation that continue the comprehensive regulatory reform effort still so badly needed in New York State. Last week's legislation would:

■ Establish a task force to conduct a comprehensive review of the State Administrative Procedure Act (SAPA) to determine whether the state's existing rulemaking process results in rules and regulations that are overly and unnecessarily burdensome and costly;

■ Allow regulated businesses to petition a state agency for the okay to use an alternative, potentially less burdensome and costly method to implement a state rule or mandate; and

■ Require the state to more fully consider the potential adverse impacts on existing and future jobs and employment opportunities in the rule-making process for state agencies.

They're all actions aimed at injecting some common business sense into a state regulatory framework where common sense is still lacking. We're staying focused on cutting red tape that hurts businesses, large and small, stops Upstate economic growth dead in its tracks and serves as nothing but a roadblock to sustained job creation.

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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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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Library offers more than books

Here's a shocker: Some people who use the library regularly never read a book.

The Southeast Steuben County Library offers many more services and programs than you might think. Here is a sample: Senior Personal Technology, Torn Page Teen

Writer's Group, Yoga and More, Family Movie Matinee, Civil War Hijinks & Home, Skate-n-Flick, First Friday Art Club, storytimes for various ages, Tech & Cyber library, iTunes and Portable Music Workshop, Happy Tales Therapy Dog Storytime, Anime Mange Club, Tablet or e-reader testing before you buy, Pokemon Club for Kids; Coffee, Tea,

and English, free resumé help, free technical gadget help, Teen Tech Fridays, free public use computers, voter registration info, the Little Red Bookshelf (which in cooperation with Rotary Club and ProAction provides free books for kids to keep), free conference room use, hundreds of free DVD's, etc.

I could go on!

The staff of our library is an amazingly dedicated group — happy to help in any way possible, very knowledgeable — and passionate about their work. We are very lucky to have this wonderful place in our area. It is not just a library, it is a treasure.

Anne Foster
 Painted Post