

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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READER VIEW | RICHARD B. HINCKLEY

Exploited by greed

In reading the letters to the editor recently the Tea Party has tried to explain the reasons for its positions and others on the progressive end of the political spectrum have explained their thinking.

The back-and-forth dialog is interesting but neither address my concerns. We all agree that we expect our government to be fair and effective, but today it seems to be neither. Now the American people generally are fair by nature but then greed enters into the equation. When greed enters into the mix, I end up being exploited.

Seventy percent of the cost of National Football League stadiums have been paid for by our tax dollars. This by itself may be understandable. But when the NFL is designated by the government as a nonprofit organization and gets all the tax breaks of a nonprofit yet pays its CEO just under \$30 million a year I am being exploited. If I went to an NFL game, at a taxpayer-paid-for stadium, on the average I can expect to pay the average cost of \$209 for a ticket, parking, beer and a hot dog, I would again feel exploited.

I don't know if most people know that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) makes more money in a year than McDonald's. Yes, the NCAA is a nonprofit and gets all the tax breaks a nonprofit is entitled. Not bad for an organization that doesn't have to pay the producers of its product. Now let's be honest, when a national college football champion, as LSU was five years ago, consists of student athletes of which only 44 percent will graduate, something is wrong. I would suggest that this is not college athletics but college-sponsored semipro football. Today's supposed college coaches make several times more than the presidents of their institutions and the coaches' financial incentives are to win games, not to educate. The uncompensated players are being exploited. When tax dollars support this fraud at state schools the taxpayer is being exploited.

Enough said about sports-related institutionalized exploitation. The state of Wisconsin recently did a study of one Super Walmart. The study found that one Super Walmart store cost the state between \$900,000 and \$1.2 million in Medicaid and food stamps. Now Walmart last year could afford to compensate

its CEO with \$22 million. That is over a thousand times more than it pays its average employee. As a point of reference Costco, one of Walmart's major competitor which has been cutting into Walmart's market share, paid its average employee over \$20.00 per hour and 80 percent of them have medical insurance. Costco's CEO was compensating just over \$4 million last year.

This use of the social system by Walmart is the major reason why seven members of the Walton family have a combined wealth greater than the combined wealth of poorest 40 percent of people in the United States. Walmart will not pay its employees at a level consistent with the lowest living standards of the states in which they make its money.

The taxpayer through Walmart's employees pays corporate welfare. Walmart employees need the assistance of food stamps and Medicaid. I feel exploited by the institutionalized corporate Well-fare that Walmart games out of the system and thus me, the taxpayer.

Usually when people talk about exploitation they talk about the little guy gaming the system. Since 1973, the little guy has not made any progress economically. In fact the middle class and the poor have lost ground economically. The top 5 percent has made great gains economically and the middle class and poor have made no progress. Stagnant is the correct description for 95 percent of us. Now I will agree that our social programs are to be temporary for most individuals. The social programs are meant to carry people through rough times. That they are to be temporary because people are supposed to get off them and eventually pay back through their taxes. But no one talks about institutional exploitation, which I have described. Now I know many of you can add to the list I have given. Tea Party, why don't you ever address this aspect of our problems? Progressives, you talk about why social programs are needed. You do not discuss the institutional exploitation which in fairness and effectiveness cause the requirement for Medicare and food stamps, etc. In the meantime I am being exploited. Answer me.

Richard B. Hinkley is a Corning resident.

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Support Proposal One: casino gaming

“Proposal One: Casino gaming” It's been tough for a lot of pundits to resist the most obvious turns of phrase that come to mind concerning “Proposal One” on this year's statewide ballot – that the stakes are high, that voters should go all-in, or that it's about time that New York state got in on this game. And all the rest.

But it's much more serious than any play on words can express – there are legitimate, strongly opposed points of view on this proposed constitutional amendment – and so I hope voters locally and statewide will give Proposal One the careful and serious consideration it deserves in advance of Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013.

And then vote, Yes. Make no mistake that legalizing casino gambling in New York state has been controversial from the get-go, even right up until recently when the courts made a final ruling on the proposal's very wording so that when voters head to the voting booth Nov. 5, here's what they'll find:

PROPOSAL ONE – AUTHORIZING CASINO GAMING

“The proposed amendment to section 9 of article 1 of the Constitution would allow the Legislature to authorize up to seven casinos in New York state for the legislative purposes of promoting job growth, increasing aid to schools, and permitting



TOM O'MARA

local governments to lower property taxes through revenues generated.

Shall the amendment be approved?”

Supporters of Proposal One highlight its potential to help numerous upstate New York communities compete with neighboring states for the significant local revenues generated – and the local jobs created – by the construction and operation of local, non-Indian gaming resorts. Consider the following from New York Jobs Now (ny-jobsnow.com), a coalition of business leaders, labor unions, economic development professionals, educators and citizens formed to support the enactment of Proposal One.

According to the coalition, approval will:

- Create more than 10,000 new, permanent jobs throughout New York state, especially upstate.

- Spark \$1.6 billion in construction spending in local communities.

- Produce more than \$200 million in new funding for local schools.

- Bolster the local tourism industry.

- Provide significant state and local tax relief.

More specifically, the state Division of the Budget (DOB) has estimated that the approval of Proposal One will, for upstate, produce an

estimated \$430 million annually for additional school aid, property tax relief and local government assistance.

Tioga Downs owner Jeff Gural, who also owns Vernon Downs in the Finger Lakes, recently said of Proposal One, “I think that this is a win-win for the state of New York.”

Proposal One's approval by the voters would give Tioga Downs the opportunity to compete for a casino license in upstate New York. Plans are already in the works for a \$70 million investment that would create 300 construction jobs and 200 more permanent jobs.

The head of the Business Council of New York state recently said in support of Proposal One, “New Yorkers spend more than 1.2 billion dollars a year at destination casinos in other states. It's about time we bring that kind of money home to create jobs, support schools, and take property tax pressure off towns and cities.”

The truth is that New York is surrounded by states which have already legalized casino gaming: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Connecticut. To say nothing of the across-the-border gaming attractions in Canada. It's estimated that New Yorkers spend \$1.2 billion in these other states and countries on the gaming and entertainment not offered in New York – which equals lost jobs and lost revenue to New York.

According to New York Jobs Now, “Every single dollar of revenue

generated by the new casinos will go to education aid, property tax relief, or local government aid. By law, 80 percent of the state tax revenue from these casinos will be used to fund public education or property tax relief in all parts of New York.

These new funds will be added to and not replace existing state aid, including lottery funding for schools. All of the remaining state tax revenue from these casinos will go directly to the areas in and around the new casinos. Half will be split between the host municipalities and the host counties, and half will go to surrounding counties in the area.”

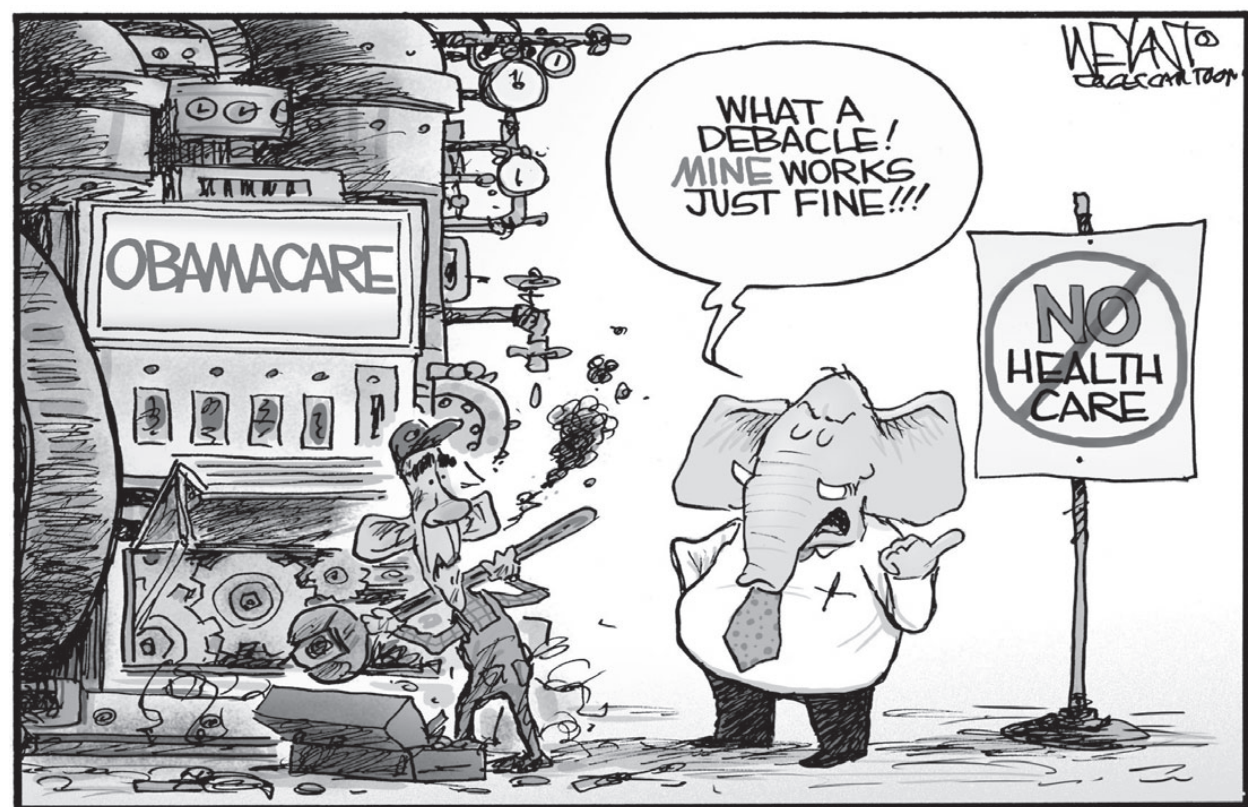
There are always two sides to every story, differing opinions on every issue. That's certainly the case here. Nor should anyone think that the enactment of Proposal One represents the panacea for the upstate New York economy. There are other – many other – more important actions that we could, should and hopefully will take to strengthen upstate.

But Proposal One could help, in my view, and it's hard to ignore the potential for new jobs, new local investment, new local revenue, new local tax relief and, at the same time, new aid for meaningful local programs and services.

Vote Yes.

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Candidate vows to land business

TO THE EDITOR | As a life-long resident of Corning, I have seen many changes over the years.

The Painted Post ‘clover leaf’ built, then torn down. Corning Inc. transformed itself from a heavy manufacturer into a high-tech leader. Businesses have come and gone. We have consistently heard the cry that we need to bring business into town.

Recently, World Kitchen was on the cusp of expanding. There's a saying that “loose lips sink ships”. Well, World Kitchen didn't sink, but it left port an “empty vessel”.

As your legislator, I will work with our community leaders and Congressman

Reed, Assemblyman Palmesano and Sen. O'Mara to bring World Kitchen back into port.

This will bring hundreds of jobs into Corning and the \$100 million that will flow into the City of Corning will be a “wind-fall infusion” into our economy. We owe it to our community to bring these jobs here; we owe it to World Kitchen to make Corning its home; we owe it to hundreds of people who are waiting for good-paying, permanent jobs, and our labor base deserves this!

I will work to protect the City of Corning's interest at the county Level – there will be no conflict of interest – when businesses want to locate here, I will work to bring

them here, and do nothing to make them leave ‘port’.

Joe Ferratella
Corning

Karam will put city over party

TO THE EDITOR | The residents of the City of Corning's 3rd Ward would be well represented by Chris Karam.

Chris is a Corning Community College graduate who served as a U.S. Army officer for 20 years and is now vice president of development for a local engineering firm.

This will be his first venture into elective office and his sole commitment in helping his neighbors continue to move the city forward

into a better tomorrow. He listens first, then thoughtfully acts. He realizes that we can only move forward through open dialogue seeking bipartisan cooperation. He will not be caught up in petty arguments, the like of which the City Council has been embroiled in over the years.

As a developer, his primary goals are to bring more jobs and economic development to the city. He will seek to upgrade the city's infrastructure and housing needs in an economically viable way.

Please join me in voting for Chris Karam on Tuesday, Nov. 5 to represent the City's 3rd Ward.

Don Creath
Corning

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