

# OPINION

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## The LEADER

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### GUEST VIEW | JAMES B. FLAWS

## Investing in our children's future

With a new school year under-way, I can't help but recall my own back-to-school days. One year in particular stands out in my mind. My family had just returned home to Connecticut, following my dad's four year job assignment in Europe. I was excited about rejoining my friends in fifth grade, but nervous about fitting in after so many years away. Fortunately, I received a lot of support from my family and community.

I'm sure our local students are filled with their own mixed feelings about the new term – regret that summer is over, excitement about the experiences in front of them, and questions about whether they'll be able to master their new coursework. But they also face new challenges than the ones I faced years ago.

First, they have less certainty than recent generations that they'll find good jobs upon graduation and the skills they will need are increasingly complex. There is greater emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) as more companies rely on innovation to distinguish themselves in a global marketplace. A U.S. Department of Commerce report shows that growth in STEM jobs has been three times greater than that of non-STEM jobs over the last 10 years. And throughout the next decade, STEM occupations are projected to grow by 17 percent, compared to just under 10 percent growth for other occupations.

At the same time, school districts are dealing with a serious funding crisis. It's tough to enhance educational programs while struggling with budgetary issues that impact staffing and core curricula.

Taxpayers are doing their part, but cannot bear the burden alone. That's why partnerships between businesses and local educational institutions are so important. After all, the entire community has a stake in our children's future.

As a 162-year old company that plans on being around for another 162 years, Corning cares deeply about the next generation. We believe that, after family, a strong education is the primary building block for success. And because we like to hire from the communities where we operate, we also have a practical stake in ensuring that tomorrow's workforce is armed with the skills necessary to compete in today's global economy. That's why we have a long tradition of investing in



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education.

Over the past four years, the Corning Foundation has provided grants totaling more than \$14 million to the Corning-Painted Post School District. We also support a broad range of initiatives such as the International Baccalaureate program, the Full Option Science System (FOSS), scholarships at Notre Dame High School and, of course, the Alternative School for Math and Science. Our people also contribute their time and talent through programs such as Partners in Education, which sends scientists and engineers into classrooms to provide demonstrations and bring science concepts to life.

We believe these investments are paying off. After just one year of FOSS in grades 6-8 in the C-PP school district, mastery rates on standardized tests improved by 42 percent. The International Baccalaureate program has provided access to new opportunities such as Chinese language classes. At ASMS, approximately 75 percent of graduates pursue STEM courses of study, which is well above the 15 percent national average. And our grants to the C-PP school district were used to maintain staff and programs that would have been eliminated otherwise, impacting the quality of education.

We may not see the ultimate payoff for several years when today's students advance into tomorrow's workforce. But I like to imagine a future when these students not only secure good jobs, but are driven by passion for their work, inspired by life-long curiosity, and proud to know that their individual contributions really do make a difference in the world. So Corning will continue to partner with the school district to identify areas where we can help, and do our part to ensure that the students in our community have the best educational opportunities possible.

On behalf of Corning Incorporated, I wish our students and teachers the very best for the 2013/2014 school year and beyond.

*James B. Flaws is vice chairman and chief financial officer of Corning Incorporated.*

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### GUEST VIEW | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA

## Letting your voices be heard

Talk about getting knocked around every which way but loose.

First it was the July 10th announcement by the Cuomo administration that in the next year it was planning to shut down inpatient services at the Elmira Psychiatric Center, as well as diminish the facility's overall role within the state's mental health system.

That was followed a few weeks later by a second Cuomo administration announcement, this one on July 26th, that 2014 would also bring the closing of the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility in Schuyler County as part of an overall rightsizing of New York's correctional services system.

To say the least, it's been a stretch of hard knocks for our region, which was already reeling from job losses at Sikorsky Aircraft and elsewhere. The goals of downsizing and cost-effectiveness in government are moves in the right direction. But the Cuomo administration's approach appears to be taking a particular toll on our region and other upstate communities – without making fiscal or programmatic sense.

Which means we have our work cut out for us to try to save these facilities.

I addressed the Elmira

Psychiatric Center in this column not long ago. In particular, a Join The Fight! petition drive I started several weeks ago has drawn thousands of supporters. It's helping to give us a strong foundation and a coordinated base of local support. That petition effort remains ongoing on my Senate website, [www.omara.ny-senate.gov](http://www.omara.ny-senate.gov) (just click on the "Join the Fight!" icon in the left-hand column of the home page).

So let's turn the focus this week to Monterey – including a reminder of the "Saving Monterey Shock Rally" taking place at 1 p.m. today at the Watkins Glen Community Center.

This public rally, together with another online petition drive that got underway in earnest last week, will be the kickoff to what we hope will be a sustained grassroots initiative to make the case to "Keep Monterey Open!" You can access the Monterey petition through [omara.nysenate.gov](http://omara.nysenate.gov) (just click on the "Keep Monterey Open!" icon in the left-hand column of the home page).

What's the value of a petition like this one? It's a way for me and for every other local, state and federal leader with a stake in keeping Monterey and the Elmira Psychiatric Center open to show the



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powers-that-be in Albany (in this case, Governor Cuomo) that our support is strong, it's unified and, maybe most importantly, that we believe there's a strong case to reverse these decisions to close.

Monterey was New York's first "shock" facility. For more than a quarter of a century, Monterey has stood as an innovative and successful corrections alternative. The unique blend of counseling, education and treatment at our shock facilities has saved the state more than a billion dollars during this time.

In particular, the participation of Monterey inmate work crews in numerous community service and enhancement projects across a four-county region for more than two decades has been invaluable. During the past six years alone, these Monterey-based work crews have saved local communities and taxpayers nearly \$6 million!

There are currently 124 locally based employees at the Monterey facility. Closing Monterey puts

local jobs (and the families and communities who depend on them) at risk. It will result in significant local tax increases. And it diminishes the effectiveness of New York State's system of correctional services. The administration and staff of Monterey, past and present, have turned around numerous lives that were once at a dead-end but that, today, are productive and successful.

So you can help Keep Monterey Open! by signing the online petition to support the my efforts and the efforts of Congressman Tom Reed, Assemblymen Phil Palmesano and Chris Friend, Elmira Mayor Sue Skidmore, Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli, Schuyler County Administrator Tim O'Hearn and numerous other local, state and federal leaders to express our belief in the fundamental importance of the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility, which for more than a quarter of a century has stood as a solid cornerstone of correctional services in New York State.

Same goes for the Elmira Psychiatric Center. For decades, the Elmira PC has been a flagship of New York's mental health system.

And we'll keep letting all of you know how you can help.

### ANOTHER VIEW



### OTHER VIEW | SEATTLE TIMES

## Congress, vote 'no' on Syria intervention

President Obama put Congress in an uncomfortable, unfamiliar position. He is asking lawmakers to make a decision and be held accountable for their action.

Obama wants Congress to endorse his plan for an airstrike against Syria for the government's use of chemical weapons against its citizens.

Turning to ask Congress for its support was a deft political move. Congress is quick to criticize the president, but reluctant to act – on anything.

Already the White House has received the support of House Speaker

John Boehner, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi. Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona has signed on, if the president will also arm rebels.

All without a hearing held or a question asked in public about the nature of the assault or what might come next. Congress, including Washington's own congressional delegation, should be willing to say "no." Did Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan teach any lessons?

The rest of the world is eager to cheer on U.S. military action, but pointedly

unwilling to carry out the attack.

Congress is obligated to ask out loud why this task falls to the U.S. military alone.

Hold hearings that take testimony from administration officials and challenge their findings, plans and expectations. Does the White House truly expect this to be a tidy, effective, one-time-only use of force to make its point?

Can Congress even write a resolution that is narrowly defined and limited to one military strike?

The pattern has been for congressional consultations, when sought, to

be exploited as open-ended permission to act as the commander in chief sees fit.

Congress also needs to explain why the heinous use of chemical weapons crosses a line not exceeded by conventional slaughter and all manner of deprivation against civilian populations in Syria and elsewhere.

If Syria must be punished, let others in the region and the world take the lead.

Congress fails to accept responsibility for its basic financial duties and oversight of government. Syria takes a diminished institution completely out of its depth.