

# OPINION

COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA, R-BIG FLATS

## How long will they wait?

How long will they wait? That's the big question in state government at the moment. Governor Andrew Cuomo and the extreme-liberal, down-state leaders of the Legislature continue to shrug at making any changes to New York's newly enacted bail reform law -- despite ongoing and repeated warnings from regional and statewide district attorneys, sheriffs and other law enforcement agencies, judges, and many elected officials that the law is a threat to public safety and unworkable.

In fact, not a day goes by without another warning from another county sheriff that another dangerous criminal has been set free. Not a day goes by without another news report about another repeat offender.

It should be clear by now to any reasonable person that bail reform as it stands puts public safety at risk. Still, the Democrat majorities in both houses of the state Legislature keep shrugging off the warnings. That's irresponsible, to say the least.

Governor Cuomo failed to say even one word about it as part of his 2020 State of the State message to the Legislature last week. The governor stayed silent.

The Democrat majority leader of the Senate from downstate Westchester County said, "We want to

see if (the law) is doing what we want it to. We will make tweaks if necessary." Tweaks? The law is not doing what it should be doing, unless what you want the law to do is unlock the cellblocks and send potentially dangerous criminals back into our communities, day after day, with no safeguards.

The Democrat Speaker of the Assembly from the Bronx sees no need for change. Many advocates of the disastrous new bail reform law, in fact, are now aggressively speaking out against making any changes to it at all.

They take these positions while over the past few weeks since the law took effect, it has been like a statewide jailbreak and there have been far too many real life examples of serious crimes committed by individuals released under this new No Bail reform.

Remember that the list of crimes for which judges are now required to release defendants from custody without bail include: manslaughter in the second degree; criminally negligent homicide; assault in the third degree; robbery in the second and third degrees; A1 felony drug sales with no weight limit; grand larceny of more than \$1 million; aggravated vehicular homicide; promoting or possessing an obscene sexual performance by a child; aggravated cruelty to animals; imprisonment

in the first degree; specified felony drug offenses involving the use of children; failure to register as a sex offender; promoting prison contraband in the first and second degree; and many, many more that are equally troubling.

Bail reform, as it stands, needs more than tweaks. When the law was enacted, not a single Republican in the Senate or Assembly voted for

it.

Last week, I joined Senate Republican colleagues to call for a vote on repealing the law, which would allow for comprehensive public hearings that could lead to a reform done right. It could lead to a strict and sensible system of criminal justice that recognizes public safety above all, which it should, instead of a system that willingly fails to

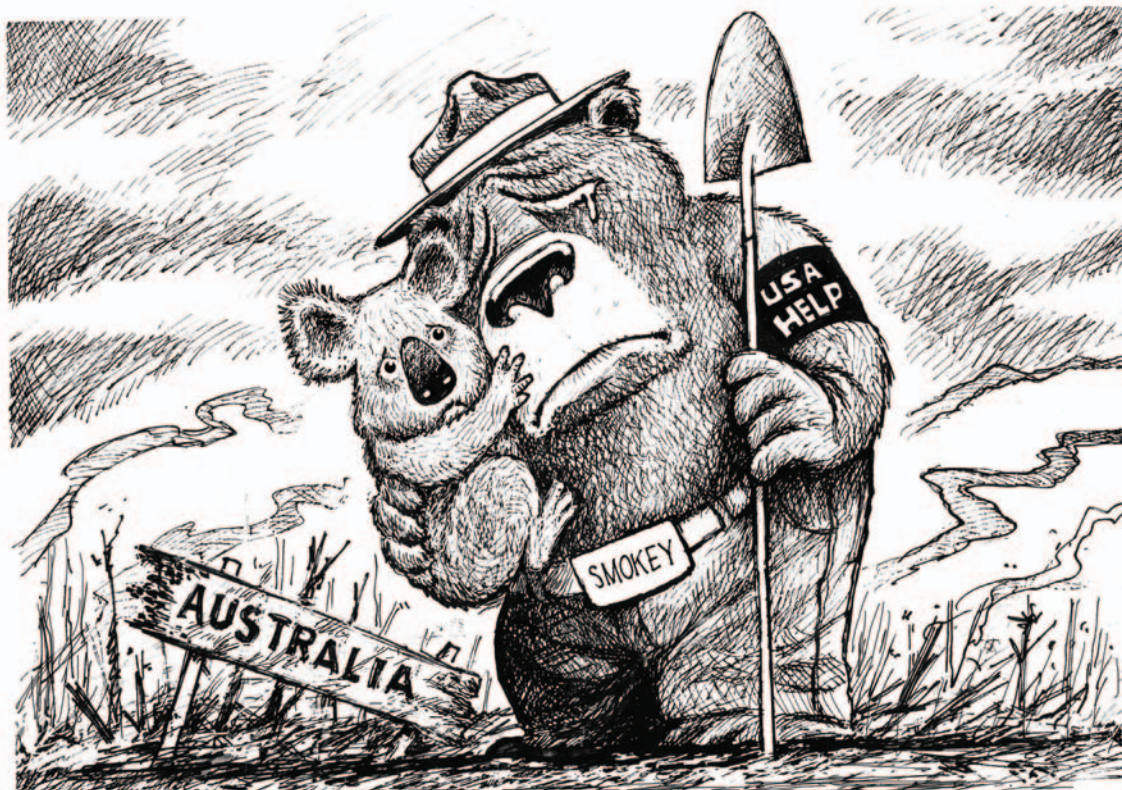
recognize that some criminals belong behind bars.

Our amendment was defeated along party lines.

Our communities deserve better than a radically redefined criminal justice system that comes at the expense of victims and their families and loved ones, communities and neighborhoods, and taxpayers.

How long will they wait?

### ANOTHER VIEW



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Bernie is a sure loser

To the Editor,

There are several Democratic presidential candidates who support Medicare for All who also happen to be viable general election candidates (unlike Bernie Sanders, who has no realistic chance of being elected president). If you actually want to see Medicare for All implemented, vote for Elizabeth Warren. Senator Warren can win, whereas Bernie Sanders is a sure loser.

Until these myopic, naive Bernie Bros. can satisfactorily explain how Sanders would be able to successfully defend his anti-American political activities during the first half of his life (which would certainly be highlighted and scrutinized by the GOP in a general election), non-Democrat Bernie Sanders should end his doomed presidential candidacy now.

For instance, Bernie Sanders is on the record repeatedly having unreservedly and uncritically lauded lavish public praise on a number of anti-American communist dictators, like Daniel Ortega and Fidel Castro. (Have you ever watched Bernie's infamous videotaped interviews on these subjects from August 8, 1985 and from June 13, 1988? You should.)

Then of course there was Bernie Sanders' still inadequately explained 1988 marital honeymoon in the Soviet Union, where upon returning to Vermont the Marxist socialist Sanders predictably and pathetically voiced his unabashed praise for the Soviet system.

Less well known is the fact that in 1963 Bernie Sanders lived and worked for several months on a Stalinist commune near Haifa in Northern Israel that explicitly saw the

Soviet Union as its political role model.

And then there's that bizarre, incredibly disturbing "rape fantasy" article that Sanders wrote which was published in 1972 when Sanders was a 30-year-old far-Left Marxist gubernatorial candidate in Vermont.

Get a clue, Bernie Bros. Senator Sanders is a sure loser in a general election, which is why (in addition to the 78-year-old's recent heart attack) Bernie Sanders should drop out of the presidential race immediately.

Losing in 2020 is not an option. Democrats must nominate a candidate who can actually win.

**Jake Pickering**  
Arcata, Calif.

#### Requests to raise flag ignored

To the Editor,  
On the morning of January

6, I observed the American flag at the Painted Post Village Hall at half mast.

Now I know that the President had not called for a half-mast flag as I am signed up on my computer by the American Legion notification.

So, I called the highest-ranking law officer for Steuben County, the district attorney's office, and informed the person answering that my three brothers had served in WWII and that the fourth could not pass the physical, but later sent his first born son to West Point Military Academy and he served in South Korea as a company commander.

Additionally, I informed her that I had served my military obligation during the end of the Korean War and that my son Thomas had served as a combat infantryman in Germany, Iraq and Afghanistan for three tours.

Subsequently, I informed the female that I wanted the law obeyed and to have that flag raised to the top of the mast immediately. Twenty-four hours later, it was again still at half mast.

I again called the highest-ranking law officer of the county with the same requests. I told the person that they could send three sheriff vehicles out like they have when I am alleged to have broken the law.

On Wednesday, I again observed that the American flag was still at half mast, and of course, I called again.

The Honorable District Attorney Brooks T. Baker should be discredited by the next highest-level - the U.S. Attorney General, as well as all persons who have had someone killed and all those who have served their country.

**Anthony Savino**  
Painted Post

### OTHER VIEW | THE WASHINGTON POST

## We can't ignore Australia's wildfires, or what they mean

If a Hollywood producer ordered up these images, they might be dismissed as too dramatic: orange skies; ash-filled rain; fire tornadoes; flames jumping as high as 230 feet; people huddling for shelter on the beach. Australia's wildfires are a disaster on a scale hard to fathom, charring an area roughly the size of West Virginia. California's massive 2018 blazes hit a sixth as much land as Australia's have so far this fire season. Government officials report that a third of the koalas in New South Wales might be gone. The nation's eucalyptus forests may be damaged for good.

This is the future humanity is writing for itself, right

**Conditions over the past 20 years have been hotter and drier than in the 20 years before that, and the 20 years before that, and the 20 years before that, and so forth.**

now, every day world governments waste failing to respond to climate change. Yes, not every natural disaster has a climate-change link. And, yes, there are forces at work around Australia that preexisted climate change. But the context in which every natural variation in temperature or precipitation now plays out is hotter, making dangerous conditions and deadly results more likely.

Specifically, southern

Australia's temperatures have risen about 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit since 1950.

Conditions over the past 20 years have been hotter and drier than in the 20 years before that, and the 20 years before that, and the 20 years before that, and so forth. December saw the nation's hottest day on record, an average of more than 107 degrees Fahrenheit — a threshold surpassed just the next day. Heat and drought have toasted the land, turning Australia's countryside into a tinderbox.

A major factor worsening Australia's fire season is a natural cycle known as the Indian Ocean Dipole, which can make water in the western Indian Ocean warmer and in the eastern

Indian Ocean cooler. This results in less rainfall over Australia. This phenomenon has dried out the nation for two years. Though it is too early to quantify any link between climate change and the dipole's recent behavior, scientists have warned that global warming is shifting the cycle, making extended Australian drought more likely.

Australia has become a poster child for the ill-effects of breakeck fossil-fuel burning. Its iconic Great Barrier Reef is in peril as ocean temperatures rise and atmospheric carbon-dioxide emissions acidify the seas. Its sky-high temperatures and raging fires are a warning that land and sea are vulnerable to climate disruptions. And

yet it is the world's largest coal exporter, and its government has dragged its feet on curbing planet-warming emissions.

Even without human help, Earth can be at times inhospitable. All the more reason to avoid priming the planet for worse — extreme weather, intense heat waves, more drought, more flooding, rising seas, species die-offs, disease proliferation, and more foreseeable and unforeseeable consequences. Australia, which has profited off fossil fuel extraction and use, has a responsibility to help lead the world. So does the United States, which under the Trump administration is every bit as complicit.