

# OPINION

COMMENTARY | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## Was oldest woman really a fraud for the ages?

For years, Jeanne Calment has reigned as the oldest documented person to have lived. She supposedly died in 1997 at age 122.

But now Russian mathematician Nikolay Zak has exhorted that claim and startled researchers with a challenge: He argues that Calment was actually Yvonne Calment, Jeanne's daughter, The Washington Post reports. Zak says Yvonne took her mother's identity to elude inheritance taxes in the 1930s. If so, Yvonne Calment would have been 99 in 1997 – not 122.

In a paper published on a research-sharing portal, ResearchGate, Zak offers evidence – though it's not conclusive – to buttress his theory. For instance: Calment was nearly the same height at age 100-plus as she had been at a younger age; older people usually lose height as they age. A passport for Jeanne in the 1930s shows a different eye color entered for

her than what was noted in later life. Zak cites a litany of discrepancies in her accounts of details of her life over time.

Zak's claim drew a strong rebuke from Jean-Marie Robine, who wrote a book about Calment around the time of her death, the Post reports. "All of this is incredibly shaky and rests on nothing," Robine told Le Parisien.

We don't know if Calment was 99 or 122 when she died. But we all naturally seek clues from the habits of those who are healthy into old age. We want to believe that a personal regimen of diet, medical treatment, exercise or genes will carry us well into the ninth or 10th decade of life in relative good health.

If that fails, we hope scientists discover new ways to intervene and forestall the inevitable. During the 20th century, American life expectancies bounded ahead, adding decades to the average

life via medical breakthroughs, therapies and better preventive care.

Scientists now debate the natural limits of the human body. Can people live to 150? To which a pragmatist who fears decades of decline might retort: Would anyone want to?

Whether she lived to 99 or 122, at least one of the Calments defied the odds in many ways: She smoked until she was so old she had to quit because she couldn't light a cigarette without assistance.

Whatever the outcome of this tempest, here's what we remember: Calment rode a bike until she was 100. She loved chocolate and reportedly ate 2 pounds a week. In 1995, this page noted that Calment was blind, almost deaf, and used a wheelchair, but still proclaimed that "everything in life" interested her. That's a fine example for the rest of us – at any age.

ANOTHER VIEW



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

## The high cost of overregulation

In his 2014 State of the State address, Governor Andrew Cuomo called for the establishment of a joint commission to kick-start a comprehensive, state-wide regulatory reform initiative with the stated goal of comprehensively and significantly reducing New York's regulatory burden.

Unfortunately, the governor has never pursued this goal with any gusto.

Beginning in 2014, State Senate Republicans undertook a comprehensive regulatory reform initiative that identified more than 2,000 specific state rules, regulations, and practices that put New York's businesses and manufacturers, large and small, and other industry sectors at a competitive disadvantage.

The foundation of our reform effort was a series of public regulatory forums, held state-wide, that focused on agriculture, construction, small business, tourism and, in a hearing I hosted in Corning, upstate manufacturing. At the Corning hearing, 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.

The testimony from these leading Southern Tier manufacturers and economic development leaders reaffirmed the absolute importance of revitalizing the manufacturing sector as the

key to turning around the upstate economy. 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.

This important work still needs to move forward. In fact, our forum process helped identify 2,219 specific regulatory burdens. A subsequent Senate report, "Cutting Red Tape to Create Jobs," noted that while it is difficult putting an exact price tag on the economic cost of New York's more than 750,000 regulations, studies have gauged the negative economic impact of government overregulation. A study commissioned by the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, for example, found the total impact of federal regulations on the U.S. economy in 2008 was \$1.75 trillion – over 12% of the economy. More directly comparable to New York, a 2009 study found that regulations in California – a state with a similarly burdensome regulatory structure – cost the Golden State's economy \$493 billion annually and resulted in a loss of 3.8 million jobs.

My recent appointment as the Senate Republican representative on the Legislature's Administrative Regulations Review Commission (ARRC) will offer the opportunity to continue providing direct input into the Legislature's regulatory reform responsibility. The ARRC is a legislative oversight committee charged with monitoring the state's regulatory process and, specifically,

with reviewing proposed state rules and regulations to assess their economic impact, as well as their effect on local governments, businesses and industries, and all other regulated parties. The ARRC is also responsible for ensuring that rules and regulations comply with legislative intent.

It's a responsibility I have tried to prioritize throughout my time in the Senate, consistently pointing to overregulation as one of the key roadblocks to sustained economic growth and job creation throughout the upstate region. The ARRC can have an impact on creating a more business friendly climate in New York State by encouraging lower taxes, fewer mandates, and less regulation. It can help inject some common sense, fairness, and, maybe most importantly, restraint on state regulatory agencies. We need to keep working against a regulatory climate that puts our businesses and manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage, strangles local economies and investment, and encourages higher taxes, outrageous mandates, and burdensome overregulation.

State government must stay focused on the most important job at hand: turning around the upstate economy. We know that we need to cut taxes. We also know that upstate manufacturers, small businesses, and industries across the board are overburdened with far too many unnecessary state regulations.

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.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Trump's leadership is the real crisis

To the Editor, If protecting our country from terrorists is your priority and you like Trump's border wall, consider this: 15 of the 19 hijackers that attacked us on 9/11 plus Osama Bin Laden were Saudi Arabian.

Attackers came through ports of entry – not by sneaking over our Southern border.

In 2011, Donald Trump called Saudi Arabia the "world's biggest funder of terrorism" and on

"Meet the Press" in 2015, when asked why the US should have diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, Trump said we had needed their oil but "Now, we don't need the oil so much."

Trump's Muslim ban did not include 'any' of the nations who supplied 9/11 attackers. Congressman Reed writes in his fear mongering "Newsletter" – "We should also never forget the lessons of 9/11 and the terror, heartbreak and pain it brought upon our fellow Americans."

Ask Tom Reed why

Trump is now ignoring the Saudi terrorist threat to squander American tax money on a border wall that Trump promised Mexico would pay for?

Likely Trump and his criminal family have worked some lucrative deals with the murderous Saudi Crown Prince that replaces any concern over Saudi terrorism.

Trump and his political enabling traitors are selling out Americans who really need Health Care, infrastructure, education and environmental concerns prioritized.

Wake up people – the real crisis our nation faces is the self-serving, incompetent moron in the White House.

**Wayne Wells**  
Veteran and former Republican  
**Cameron Mills**

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PG-13   REPLICAS	1:30	4:20	7:15	9:25
PG-13   ESCAPE ROOM	1:15	4:05	7:10	9:15
PG-13   AQUAMAN	1:10		6:55	9:45
PG-13   AQUAMAN 3D			4:00	
R   THE MULE	1:20		7:10	
PG   SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER VERSE			4:25	
PG   MARY POPPINS RETURNS	1:25	4:10	7:00	9:30

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