

# OPINION



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Congressman Reed needs to act

Dear Congressman Reed:

Your response to the latest massacre in a Florida school is unacceptable. Seventeen young adults are dead. Dead, Mr. Reed, dead. Your response was, "Let's not over-react."

We don't need a knee-jerk reaction." That's the same response you gave in 2012 after the school shooting in Newtown. And nothing happened. Nothing. Knee-jerk reaction Mr. Reed, really?

Mr. Reed, you should have shown leadership and advanced the passage of common-sense gun safety laws after the Newtown massacre of 26 elementary students in 2012. Congress should have passed common-sense gun control after the murder of 33 students at Virginia Tech University in 2007.

And Congress should have passed common-sense gun control after the slaughter of 13 high school students at Columbine High School in 1999. And that is not even going into the mass murders of movie-goers in Colorado, worshippers in Texas, or concert attendees in Las Vegas.

What was the common factor? The massacre of Americans by a semi-automatic weapon in the hands of an American born terrorist.

Mr. Reed, stop taking blood money from the NRA and pass responsible legislation which eliminates the ability to own AR-15 weapons, legislation that puts in place critical licensing and background checks, a system that requires registration and a three-year renewal. We are not calling for a ban on owning a gun. In fact, some of us are hunters who own guns. But semi-automatic assault weapons have no place in civilian society.

Mr. Reed, do we have to wait until a place like Bath becomes Newtown or Corning becomes Parkland?

Please act, before it's too late. Protect our children.

Your constituents,  
**Michael Gabrielli, Shawn**

**Hogan, Hilda Lando, Linda Leibhart, Bill Mattingly, Andy Mazzella, Kelly Penziul, Joe Welch**

### Teachers and students need to pray

To the Editor,  
What do most people do when they fear eminent danger or death? They pray to God.

Too late!  
They should have lived a life to prepare for it and they would need not worry then.

So the answer to school shooting and/or all shootings is prayer before.

For school, that means to have daily prayers for K-12 lead aloud by teachers and recited aloud by the students. Should any teacher refuse - fire them.

Should any student refuse, record their refusal and continue behavioural patterns. They will be your potential shooters.

Remember: "One nation under God."

Counsel them, as they are problematic as their behavior does not follow the norms of those with whom they must live.

And pray that they will learn to pray.

God Bless America.  
**Anthony Savino, Painted Post**

### The student movement on school safety

To the Editor,  
As a political activist since the anti-Vietnam War effort, I'm encouraged by the present student movement on school safety.

I imagine that most students most of the time are preoccupied with academic and personal concerns, with little time or energy for other matters... until recently.

How long their efforts last and how effective they prove to be are two main questions we can only speculate about. Sometimes there seems little connection or continuity between various political or social movements, whether about peace or gun control or rights.

To what degree do schools prepare students - soon to be voting citizens - for the

difficult tasks of not just informing themselves about issues, but how to effectively express themselves, and, more challengingly, how to organize?

Instruction and conversations about controversies are two steps. Perhaps debating clubs can sharpen their minds and articulation skills. But to more fully prepare them to become active citizens, political clubs could serve a vital purpose.

I would like to see a vigorous exchange of views about this. And when might we see student representatives on the School Board?  
**Frank Anastasio, Corning**

### Kudos to jobs well done

To the Editor, In today's venue, it is all too easy to moan and groan about what is wrong with our daily existence, including the many people with whom we share our universe. From a wheelchair bound senior citizen, may I offer some thoughts, including gestures of gratitude to these area people: • Vince Spagnoletti, Director, Steuben County Dept. of Public Works - thank you for a great job. Please continue to keep our roads safe and transit friendly. • Joseph Rumsey, Superintendent of Bath Haverling School and its Board of Education and staff - continue to do what you do best - educate our youngsters in sound information and keep them safe. • Walt Longwell, John Bryson, Julie Rock, Patricia Gurecki and the membership of the Save the Lyon Commission for preserving and protecting that fabulous historic landmark in Bath (for such a long period of time and under trying conditions). • Gary Ostrander - humble area resident who sees to the feeding of the 2-legged and the 4-legged, with nary a thought for himself. That's it, dear Editor. Thanks for listening. P.S. Reserve a pat on the back for your Meals on Wheels delivery person, as well as your area EMTs.

**Rosalie Niemczyk, Bath**

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

# Budget adoption process reaches the homestretch

The process leading to a new state budget has hit the homestretch at the Capitol.

Last week the Senate and Assembly adopted our respective "one-house" budget resolutions and convened public, joint conference committee meetings, the next step in the process before reaching final negotiations with Governor Cuomo. These one-house resolutions serve as public statements of the priorities each legislative chamber will be staking out during the budget talks.

One of the key highlights of the Senate's "one-house" is a rejection of roughly a billion dollars in new taxes and fees proposed by the governor earlier this year. New York cannot continue as one of the highest taxed and overregulated states in America. We are losing our way again after eight years of the Cuomo administration. We are not staying focused on getting residents and businesses out from under one of the nation's heaviest tax and regulatory burdens.

It is time to reorder New York State's priorities so that we tax less, regulate less, mandate less, and create more and better jobs.

On top of rejecting the governor's proposed tax and fee increases, the Senate budget includes a package of tax cuts, as well as a comprehensive regulatory reform package to eliminate unnecessary and duplicative state

rules that are obstacles to economic growth and job development.

The Senate plan also calls for shutting down the under-performing START-UP NY program and redirecting nearly \$45 million in funding for advertising to support more effective economic development initiatives.

The Senate budget also calls for increasing funding to strengthen New York's response to the heroin and opioid crisis, along with ongoing, strong support for environmental conservation, criminal justice and other key programs and services, including an overall increase of approximately \$1 billion in state aid to public schools. That would bring the state's total investment in schools to a record \$26.1 billion.

Overall, the Senate budget renews and revitalizes New York State's commitment to local job growth, local tax relief, local environments, local infrastructure, and local community safety and development. Particularly important are Senate priorities on several fronts, including:

- a record level of funding to continue to enhance the state's heroin and opioid addiction prevention, treatment, recovery, and education services;
- the full funding of the state's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), which supports critical local environmental initiatives including clean air and water projects that help create local jobs. Studies have shown that for every dollar of EPF funds invested in land and water protection,

the state and localities get back seven dollars in economic benefits; and

- a \$65-million increase in base aid for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Programs (CHIPS), the main source of state aid for local roads and bridges.

Governor Cuomo proposed upwards of \$10 million in agricultural program funding cuts earlier this year. The Senate budget says no to those cuts and restores the funding. Since 2011, the Senate Majority has initiated budget restorations totaling more than \$50 million. The last thing New York State can afford to do is to stop investing in programs and services vital to the future of farming and agriculture. That makes no sense. The governor's agricultural cuts would do great harm to many rural, upstate communities. We have to keep New York's priorities straight and that includes strong support for the agricultural industry and our farmers.

Overall, the Senate budget stays within a self-imposed two-percent spending cap, which is critical to any hope for ongoing, long-term tax relief.

The Legislature has now convened joint, public budget conference committees that will continue to meet throughout the week ahead to settle legislative differences on this year's budget and put in place a new fiscal plan by the start of the state's new fiscal year on April 1. These conference committees can be viewed live on the Senate website: <https://www.nysenate.gov/events>.

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