

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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COLUMN

Bad policy, bad result

Every religion has a creation myth. For progressives, it's FDR and the New Deal, which is more than a blueprint for economic development; it is an article of progressive faith. In reality, though, FDR never fixed the depression; he prolonged it and made it worse. No depression or recession in U.S. history lasted as long as the Great Depression. While other countries recovered, we remained hopelessly stuck. The stock market did not recover its 1929 highs until the mid-1950's. Unemployment during FDR's first two terms (1933-1940) averaged 18%; mass unemployment only declined when the draft began in preparation for WW2. Roosevelt taxed oppressively, regulated mercilessly, spent lavishly and created a veritable alphabet soup of government agencies.

Testifying before a Congressional committee in 1939, FDR's Treasury Secretary and confidant Henry Morgenthau said, "I say after eight years of this administration we have just as much unemployment as when we started and an enormous debt to boot." In spite of FDR's abject failure, the myth that government creates jobs and a vibrant economy lives on, with grave results for upstate New York.

Upstate has been mired in its own Great Depression for decades. Our leaders, like FDR, see the solution in government and "experts". We have our own alphabet soup of economic development agencies: Regional Economic Development Councils, Start-Up New York, ReCharge NY, Excelsior Jobs Program, Upstate Revitalization Initiative, Empire State Development. The list goes on and on. We are awash in economic development "experts", paid handsomely by the taxpayers.

Even Republicans have bought into the myth that government and experts can fix it. Senator Tom O'Mara says he is a "believer" in the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC), Cuomo's economic development scheme wherein he taxes huge sums from us, and then we compete in a grotesque contest to get a little of it back (if he so decides.) The power resides in Albany with Cuomo. Local "experts" are props in Cuomo's political theater. Why are Republicans collaborating with this?

What a lost political opportunity this is. Politics is a contest of ideas. Where are the opposing ideas? Republicans are not in the game. Cuomo's vision is that so-called smart people redistribute tax dollars to favored businesses. This approach has failed time and time again. Why not cite history, recount the multiple failures, and educate people about the founding



MIKE MORRONGIELLO

principles of our country, which put people first. This is a unique inheritance, that people come first, government last. It has worked whenever it's been tried. It is smart and commonsense, and it empowers average people. But when elected Republicans like Tom O'Mara endorse Cuomo's program, they're endorsing Cuomo's vision.

Meanwhile Joe Hauryski, chairman of the Steuben County Legislature, says he wants to make economic development "a top priority." Because of state mandates, the Steuben County Legislature controls only 7% of its budget. Hauryski wants to meet with "economic development partners" (read: more so-called experts.) Both O'Mara and Hauryski have swallowed whole the progressive line that government and experts can grow upstate out of its generations-long depression.

Who are these experts? How do you become one? What school do you attend? What degree do you take? And the big question: what have the experts delivered? According to the NYS Department of Labor, the state generated a paltry 129,900 new jobs so far this year. Downstate garnered most of them; upstate gained just 3,200 jobs. And yet, our elected leaders tell us to trust the experts, that prosperity is just around the corner.

The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, issued its annual report on freedom in the 50 states. New York ranks last in personal freedom and first in people leaving the state. We spend four times the average state in business subsidies (your tax dollars at work.)

So who are the real economic development experts? They are small business people, entrepreneurs, ordinary New Yorkers. Our political class has forgotten conservative principles: faith in the average guy or gal to dream big and realize that dream. The elected class needs to cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship. But who can start a business in the highest-taxed, most regulation-heavy state in the union? And if we're relying on so-called "experts", we're not encouraging individuals. Reliance on government and experts causes people to be passive, to wait.

This is not a recipe for a growing economy. Our elected class has chosen experts over the people. It's a sure sign that they have been in office too long.

— Mike Morrongiello is a Town of Corning resident and a member of New York State's Conservative Party.

POLITICS

Matching jobs with workers

Over the past few years a number of reports have indicated that a significant number of jobs regionally, statewide and across the nation go unfilled because of persistent skill gaps and an aging workforce.

The Democrat and Chronicle in Rochester, for example, has detailed how 23,000 jobs in Monroe County in 2013 went unfilled, including many that remained open because of the lack of a "middle skilled" workforce in the region qualified for health care, tech, manufacturing and other skilled labor, including welding and mechanics. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 5 million job openings nationwide at the beginning of 2015 yet many of these jobs were likely to continue to go unfilled due to ongoing skill gaps and an aging workforce.

Each of these reports highlights a critical challenge demanding the focus, and the development of partnerships



TOM O'MARA

and cooperation at every level — public and private, local-state-federal — in order to effectively address it. That's exactly why the Senate created a special Task Force on Workforce Development in 2015. I've been pleased to serve on it as a member. In discussing what stands in the way of sustained economic development and private-sector job creation, there's always plenty of focus on obstacles like high taxes and over-regulation, and rightly so, this focus is critically important.

But so is workforce development and job training, in my opinion, which was exactly the reason for the Senate task force. Addressing the range of issues involving workforce development is

vital to the overall effort to make the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes economies — in fact, the economy of all of Upstate New York — more attractive to manufacturers, industries and other employers.

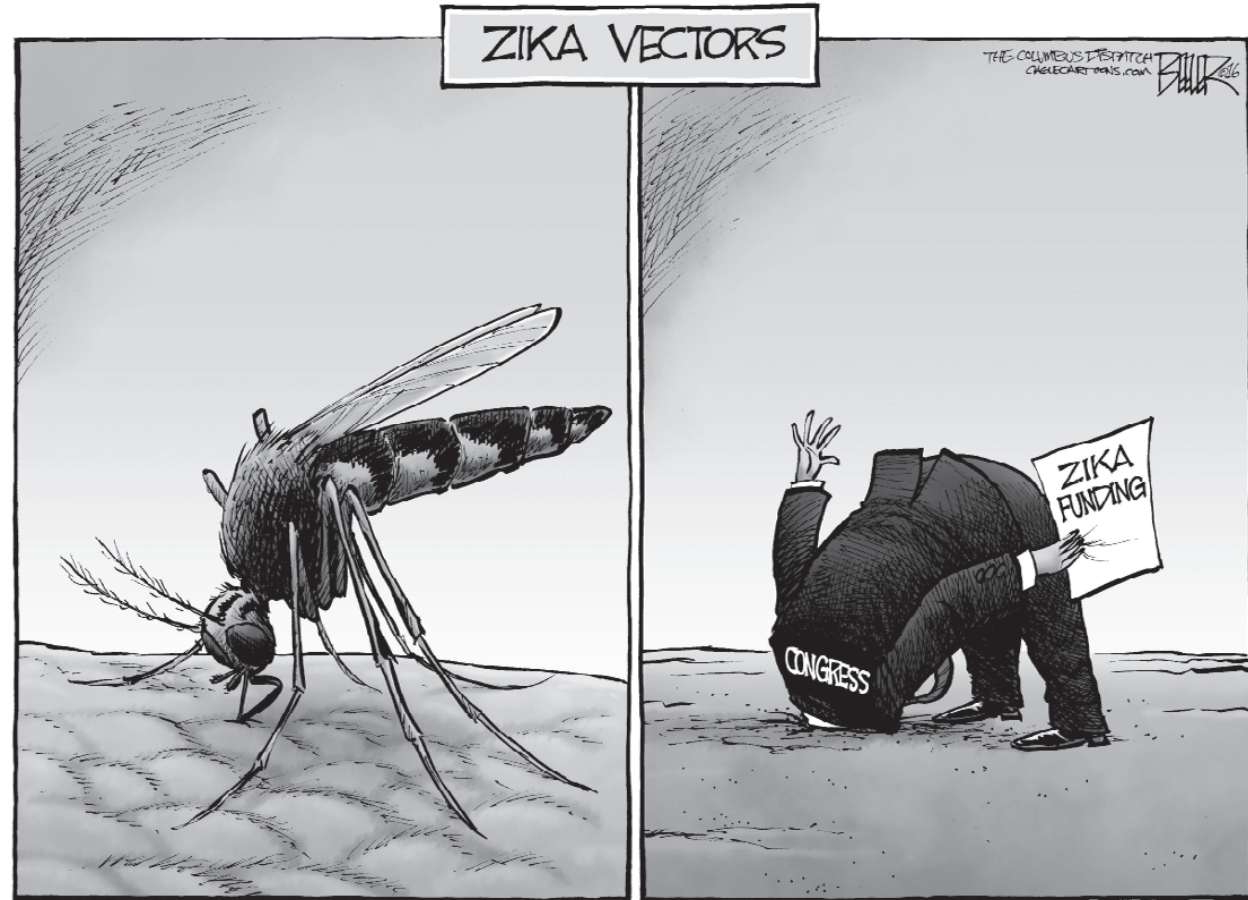
Throughout the past year, the task force has held public forums around the state to examine New York's existing job training programs and to develop new strategies to strengthen employee readiness in ways that better meet the needs of existing private-sector employers and potentially attract new ones. We've solicited input from experts representing workforce groups, labor and business organizations, government agencies, schools and institutions of higher education on a variety of topics including: — the state of the New York economy and specific sectors of the economy still lacking trained, skilled workers; — how to best address the crisis of dislocated workers and get them back into the

workforce; and — developing a better process to connect people who are willing to be trained with available jobs.

In May, the task force issued a report summarizing our findings and recommendations (which can be viewed on www.omara.nysenate.gov). One of our recommendations recently became law (S7967/A10578, Chapter 325). It expands the type of data collected by the state Labor Department to include forward-facing job statistics that can be used by employers and educators to accurately predict future needs and properly prepare the workforce for career opportunities. One of the critical challenges in developing the highest quality workforce possible regionally and statewide is to be able to anticipate future workforce needs and, from that, identify the most effective job training education and workforce development programs to help fill those jobs.

SEE O'MARA, A7

ANOTHER VIEW



LETTERS

Burke for Senate; Palmesano for Assembly

TO THE EDITOR | I will be voting for Leslie Danks Burke and Phil Palmesano in November for the same reason: they listen to the people in their communities. Their political parties might be different, but they have the same willingness to go to Albany and fight for what is right for the Southern Tier.

I had the pleasure of hearing Burke speak in Corning. She is a farmer's daughter with a deep understanding of the challenges facing rural communities. Burke knows exactly what must be done to bring tax relief and economic development to our area. She will fight to ensure every Southern Tier family gets its fair share — as she did on the picket line with Verizon workers last spring when they won new gains. Second Amendment rights also matter a lot to our region, and Burke's website displays her sharp criticism of the SAFE Act.

Burke believes in and respects public education. A mother of two, she will stand against the

top-down, all-test-all-the-time agenda Cuomo has pushed on our schools.

Phil Palmesano has long been a supporter of local districts. When dozens of teachers and community members talked to him about the wrongheaded education policies Cuomo wanted to shove into the budget, Palmesano listened, then went back to Albany to speak and vote against them. He'll spend hours driving back to the Southern Tier to listen to the people he represents.

Leslie Danks Burke has that same desire to serve our region, as her many miles on Southern Tier roads demonstrate. She, too, will listen to and represent us. Her opponent, on the other hand, left his constituents out in the cold. When that budget fight over education came, he talked a good game — and then rolled over for Cuomo. Unlike her opponent, Leslie Danks Burke would never sell out our schools and teachers.

We need Leslie Danks Burke to represent our district in the State Senate. With her and Phil

Palmesano on the job, we can be confident the Southern Tier will have the strong, independent voices it deserves.

Ryan Love
Bath

Many thanks to those who helped honor fallen Marine

TO THE EDITOR | It took a number special people who all made the re-dedication of the Shawn A. Lane Memorial Park possible.

I would like to thank all of the Corning Inc. Area Veterans (C-VETS), especially, Mr. Cook, Mr. Ott and Mr. Keefer for all of their dedication and their support in not only seeing this dedication in Shawn's memory through fruition but, by supporting the park by donating the funds for the new park sign.

I am grateful to the Steuben County Legislature, especially Legislator Carol Ferratella; and Congressman Tom Reed and New York State Senator Tom O'Mara for supporting the Town of Corning, Mr. & Mrs. Lane and the community through

Congressional, New York State Senate and Steuben County proclamations.

Additionally, I would like to thank Mr. & Mrs. Lane, William Hilk, Jamie Stewart, Jill Koski, Sarah Latten, The Corning Leader and the Corning Gaffer District, who are dedicated to honoring not only Shawn's memory and service to his country in enumerable ways but, to all our dedicated military men and women.

Finally, I would like thank the Corning VFW #524 Honor Guard and the East Corning Volunteer Fire Department for helping us to honor Shawn with a fitting Salute to Honor his sacrifice.

The Town of Corning took a moment to recognize Shawn's sacrifice for his love of his country, community and family. Myself and the Town Board are honored and appreciative of the service to our communities by the men and women currently serving in the military, all military veterans and those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedoms!

Kim Feehan,
Supervisor,
Town of Corning

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HISTORIC RECOGNITION

Washington's family tree is biracial

By Matthew Barakat
The Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — George Washington's adopted son was a bit of a ne'er-do-well by most accounts, including those of Washington himself, who wrote about his frustrations with the boy they called "Wash."

"From his infancy, I have discovered an almost unconquerable disposition to indolence in everything that did not tend to his amusements," the founding father wrote.

At the time, George Washington Parke Custis was 16 and attending Princeton, one of several schools he bounced in and out of. Before long, he was back home at Mount Vernon, where he would be accused of fathering children with slaves.

Two centuries later, the National Park Service and the nonprofit that runs Washington's Mount Vernon estate are concluding that the rumors were true: In separate exhibits, they show that the first family's family tree has been biracial from its earliest branches.

"There is no more pushing this history to the side," said Matthew Penrod, a National

Park Service ranger and programs manager at Arlington House, where the lives of the Washingtons, their slaves and Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee all converged.

President George Washington had no direct descendants, and his wife Martha Custis was a widow when they married, but he adopted Martha's grandchildren — "Wash" and his sister "Nellie" — and raised them on his Mount Vernon estate.

Parke Custis married Mary Fitzhugh in 1804, and they had one daughter who survived into adulthood, Mary Anna Randolph Custis. In 1831, she married her third cousin — Lee, who then served as a U.S. Army lieutenant.

Outside the marriage, Parke Custis likely fathered children with two of his stepfather's slaves: Arianna Carter, and Caroline Branham, according to the exhibits at Arlington House and Mount Vernon.

The first official acknowledgment came in June when the Park Service re-enacted the 1821 wedding of Maria Carter to Charles Syphax at Arlington House, the hill-top mansion overlooking the capital that Custis built

(and Lee later managed) as a shrine to his adoptive stepfather. A new family tree, unveiled at the re-enactment, lists the bride's parents as Parke Custis and Arianna Carter.

"We fully recognize that the first family of this country was much more than what it appeared on the surface," Penrod said at the ceremony.

The privately run Mount Vernon estate explores this slave history in "Lives Bound Together," an exhibition opening this year that acknowledges that Parke Custis also likely fathered a girl named Lucy with slave Caroline Branham.

Four guides were hardly this frank when Penrod started at Arlington House 26 years ago. Staffers were

told to describe slave dwellings as "servants' quarters," and "the focus was on Lee, to honor him and show him in the most positive light," Penrod said.

He said no new, definitive evidence has surfaced to prove Parke Custis fathered girls with slaves; rather, the recognition reflects a growing sense that African-American history cannot be disregarded and that Arlington House represents more than Lee's legacy, he said.

Scientific proof would require matching the DNA of Carter and Branham descendants to the progeny of his daughter and the Confederate general, because the Parke Custis line runs exclusively through the offspring of his daughter and Robert E. Lee.



ZSun-nee Miller-Matema poses July 18 for a portrait at Mount Vernon, the plantation home of former President George Washington, in Alexandria, Va. Miller-Matema is a descendent of Caroline Branham, one of George Washington's slaves who served as former first lady Martha Washington's personal maid. The National Park Service is finally acknowledging an aspect of U.S. history not often talked about: The family tree of America's first family has been biracial from its earliest branches. ZACH GIBSON/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

O'MARA

From Page A4

This new law moves us forward in this critical challenge.

In addition to this newly enacted law, the task force proposed a series of other actions which the Senate also approved, including legislation to enhance access to career and tech programs at BOCES, as well as strengthen degree or certificate programs at community colleges in order to increase successful job placements for students.

Another Senate-approved measure would improve participation in apprenticeships by promoting coordination between high school guidance counselors and local building trades councils. This move falls in line with a provision I spearheaded as part of this year's state budget to help the Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY) renew and expand apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing. Apprenticeship (along with other methods like vocational education) was once the tried-and-true way of preparing skilled trades workers. As this type of training fell out of favor, it led to a decline in the availability

of this skilled workforce. Now, with the resurgence of advanced manufacturing in New York, MACNY plans to work with manufacturers, the state Labor Department and the State University system to recreate these much-needed training programs in high demand areas like CNC machining, industrial maintenance and electronics technicians.

We're fortunate in this very respect here at home. Initiatives like the Corning Community College (CCC) Welding Center in Elmira and the CNC Hybrid Machinist training program at GST BOCES, which graduated its first class this year, are models of how local schools and colleges can work together with local businesses and industries to develop the most effective, locally based job training and workforce development strategies.

They're perfect example, I believe, of the type of locally based workforce development models and investments that the Senate will seek to encourage, enhance and expand across the board.

— State Sen. Tom O'Mara represents New York's 58th Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.



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