

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'State of the City' tops agenda

TO THE EDITOR | Each year the City of Corning's City Manager, Mark Ryckman, makes a 'State of the City' address at the February City Council meeting. This address is an informative overview of the challenges and opportunities presenting to our city. I'd like to encourage our citizens to come down to City Hall on Monday evening, February 1, 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, and take in this important communication from the City's Administration.

Bill Boland,
Deputy mayor

Do not allow unvetted refugees

TO THE EDITOR | News that Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand wants to let 1.5 million unvetted refugees into N.Y. and America is no surprise. Even Gov. Cuomo rather have unvetted Middle-Eastern refugees in his state than gun owning, law abiding U.S. citizens.

I would like to ask these "Humanitarians" which one of their loved ones would they have sacrificed to die when the hidden ISIS elements strike out? Even if only 1 percent of these people are dangerous that's still 1,500 merciless throat cutting mutants running loose! Trump is right, in that letting unvetted refugees from this volatile area is insane.

Can we properly vet 1.5 million people with no verifiable written records?

Let me put it this way. Russia warned us about the Boston Bomber and we interviewed him and thought he was A-OK. The Boston Bomber's savage actions allowed our government to practice Marshal Law all over Boston. A wonderful training exercise.

As we have seen in California, every act of terrorism never restricts access of these crazy people to the USA, it only gives the government ammunition to call for further actions to disarm a gullible American population. You have to wonder if the actions of our leaders is sheer stupidity or a calculated, comprehensive conspiracy to create George Herbert Walker Bushes' dream of a New World Order, which he told us about 10 years to the day before the attack on the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon. Coincidence? You tell me.

Joseph DuPont,
Towanda, Pa.

Prevent dog bites: Enforce leash law

TO THE EDITOR | Did you know that more than 800,000 people seek medical attention each year for dog bites? Also about 38 percent of domesticated animals are not properly vaccinated across the United

States. With about one in 10 dogs having the rabies disease, this is a problem for everyone. All of the attacks are a major result of the leash law not being enforced. This is an issue in our community that we have the power to stop.

I am working on a project in my high school English class attempting to make a change in our community and to spread awareness about this issue that is affecting everyone. It is the lack of care that we have to not enforce this law. I have some solutions that could solve this problem altogether, and if I am heard I believe that I can make these solutions. I believe that this is problem that can be stopped if people become aware of this issue then we can make a change that will benefit everyone.

I would really appreciate your support on this issue, because I believe that if I can be heard then I can make a change that will help our community. I believe that this is a very big problem in our community and is something that can be stopped.

Cody White,
Campbell

Wage hikes bad for business

TO THE EDITOR | Dear Gov. Cuomo: I have had my building (287,000 sq. ft. at 340 Upper Oakwood Ave. in Elmira Heights) for sale for about one year. It is in excellent condition as has been fully leased for almost 15 solid years.

Now with the declining loss of jobs in the area, due to the loss of fracking jobs, company closings around us in the Southern Tier, and the declining economic (RE: CAF USA down in employment from over 800 jobs to now about 120) and retail markets here, (RE: Macy's store Closing) I have lost most of my tenants and have been unable to even find lookers for my building, to buy or even lease space.

Last week a major distribution company from Atlanta was scheduled to inspect my building, and they just canceled due to the proposed \$15 an hour minimum wage throughout N.Y. state. I am very concerned that we are unable to support this wage increase, let alone attract business into our state to even pay these wages.

I have enclosed a letter from my Realtor confirming what I just said.

I ask that you not just mandate these wage restrictions without taking into consideration the health of our State to withstand these increases and also take, just as importantly, the fact that if only New York state makes these wage demands and the other states do not, then why even consider opening a business in this, the highest taxed state for business in the United States?

Ted Marks, member,
MTM Realty, LLC, Elmira

POLITICS

Keeping more NYers in New York

Whenever there's a discussion at a local community meeting, a regional economic development forum, or a legislative hearing in Albany, at least a part of that talk inevitably turns to what steps we can and should take to keep more and more of our young people here in New York state.

The numbers unfortunately continue to warn us that more and more young men and women from all across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions will increasingly keep looking at other states with better (mostly economic) opportunities when they start to seriously consider where they're going to start a career and begin establishing the rest of their lives. Not to mention established families who go looking for better opportunities elsewhere and, of course, retirees for whom the cost of living in New York state just becomes more and more prohibitive.

The plain, hard fact at the moment is that our state needs to become more competitive in this arena. I would sure like to see New York State become a better option for my two daughters, and my son, and I do believe there's some real hope that we can become a better and better long-term choice for more and more of our citizens - if we keep building on some of the foundations we've been laying over the past several years to turn it around.

A January 27th article in *The Business Times* ("Policies explain why some states grow and some shrink") helps make the point. Written by Raymond Keating, the chief economist for the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council (www.sbecouncil.org), it sheds some important light on the challenge.

In his analysis Keating details the findings of the SBE Small Business Policy Index for 2014. From July 2014 to July 2015, New York State was the largest exporter



SEN. TOM O'MARA

of people to other states. We lost 157,992 New Yorkers during that time. The largest importer of people from other states? Florida and Texas. Extend the time period from April 2010 to July 2015 and, again, New York was the largest exporter state with a net domestic migration loss of 653,071 citizens. The states with the highest gains in net migration during this same five-year period? Again, Texas and Florida.

Keating writes, "How to explain these differences? Let's first understand that people effectively vote with their feet, seeking out improved opportunities and quality of life. That very much includes, of course, opportunities for improving job and income opportunities, such as starting and building businesses. Therefore, policies affecting entrepreneurship, business and investment matter a great deal."

The SBE Policy Index for 2014 ranks the 50 states based upon 42 different policy measures, including tax, regulatory and government spending measurements. Texas ranks third, Florida fifth. New York? Forty-eighth.

Why highlight all of the above? Because reports like this one from the SBE on the loss of good families, good workers, good businesses and the next generation is a central reason why so many of us continue to beat the drum (and have been for so long, with the calluses to prove it) over the need for ongoing state and local tax relief, mandate relief, regulatory reform, infrastructure development, government

spending control and so many other actions aimed at private-sector economic growth and a stronger overall business climate.

Governor Cuomo began his time as governor proclaiming that New York State cannot survive as "the tax capital of the nation." We've earned some important tax relief victories since then. As a result, for example, our manufacturing tax climate now ranks sixth nationally. The recent successes of the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Councils in the "Upstate Revitalization Initiative" competition injects badly needed optimism into the long-term job growth strategies we're pursuing. But it's critical to keep building on the progress we've made. Equally important, we need to step up the pace of achievement. The governor's commitment remains critical - not just in the distribution of financial incentives, but maybe even more importantly in the across-the-board tax, mandate and regulatory reforms that will ultimately make all the difference.

On the flip side, it's also why we feel compelled to warn about actions - such as the current push for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage statewide, an unreasonable 67 percent hike - that could risk the

economic footholds we've gained or hope to gain, both short and long term, for our small businesses, manufacturers, farmers, communities, schools, local economies and local property taxpayers.

For anyone, like myself, who was born and raised here in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions (and is raising a family here now), it's too often been frustrating trying to work to reverse the long-term consequences of population losses. Over the long run, it diminishes the work force needed for the 21st century economy. It diminishes the quality of life in too many communities. It leaves our elderly citizens having to bear unfair, unreasonable and ultimately unmanageable burdens. It's an undeniable reason why, in Keating's words, small business owners, manufacturers, workers and their families, young people, retirees and citizens generally "seek and create opportunities in other states."

We've put in place some important bulwarks to begin turning back this dangerous tide, and we can't afford to change course now.

— State Sen. Tom O'Mara represents New York's 53rd Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.

ANOTHER VIEW



VIEWPOINT | RUTH YOUNG

Learn from the mistakes of others

A proverb I learned from a Shanghai friend in graduate school comes to mind: "A wise person learns from other's mistakes. A fool must learn each lesson by himself." The Reading town board and most of the Schuyler County legislature is hell-bent to learn nothing from the errors of others. The citizens of Reading and Schuyler County who are not paying attention will be dragged into this expensive learning experience along with their so-called leaders.

Methane (natural gas) is a highly combustible hydrocarbon at least 70 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Methane is gushing from a leak in the Aliso Canyon storage facility at a rate that equates to more than 4.5 million cars on the road per day. The community of Porter Ranch, a suburb of Los Angeles,

California, close to the Aliso Canyon site, has been able to relocate 2,292 families since December 28, 2015. There are more than 4,600 applications for relocation from Porter Ranch waiting, as the concentration of gas in the atmosphere intensifies every day. The relocation is needed because of the toxicity of the mercaptans added to the natural gas so it can be detected by odor. When methane reaches a certain concentration, it can explode and burn when ignited. California governor, Jerry Brown has finally declared a state of emergency because the so-called experts indicate that the leak that was detected last October will take many months more to fix if it can be plugged at all.

The FAA has declared the area as a "no-fly zone" out of concern that an aircraft might

ignite the flammable invisible natural gas. The leaks from methane storage chambers are very common and can only be seen with infrared viewers. Southern California Gas Co. was slow to recognize the size of the disaster after it was discovered in October. They tried to plug it by filling the shaft with fluid, but the gas pressure was too great. They are now predicting they may be able to control the leak by March of 2016! "This is very big and complex," says the director of the Environmental Defense Fund's California oil & gas program. I'd bet the farm that he was one of the experts the gas company quoted as they told the people there was nothing to fear and there were jobs to be produced as dollar signs danced in their heads.

It is very interesting to see the labor leaders in our area signing letters in

favor of a similar situation in Schuyler County called Crestwood. The workers dare not say a word against this program for fear of being handed pink slips. These workers should run, not walk, to the nearest solar energy company (many of which are here now) and ask for healthy, clean, living-wage jobs for the sake of themselves and their families. Mother Jones is turning over in her grave as these people bend under the whips of the corrupt corporations that destroy our air, our water, the land we call home, and treat the workers like the new slave stratum that they are becoming.

— Ruth S. Young is a retired chemistry/biology teacher, past CTA (NYSUT union) president and retired Schuyler County legislator. She lives in Horseheads.

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