

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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COLUMN

STEPS to end child poverty

Much has been written and spoken within the last several months about the great challenges presented to our county and our community about the decline of the middle class, the working poor and the pervasive poverty that surrounds us. While unemployment is down, more and more workers have difficulty finding a job that pays a living wage. The number of working poor in our community continues to grow.

Children are the most vulnerable and make up the highest segment of our population living in poverty. One in four children live in poverty based on the Federal Poverty Line Guidelines. About 45 percent of students in Steuben County are eligible for free or reduced meals at school; 50 percent of all SNAP (Food Stamps) participants are children.

Most children living in poverty have parents who work, but low wages and unstable employment leave those families struggling to make ends meet. The low wages paid by businesses, including some of the largest and most profitable companies in the country, are costing American taxpayers nearly \$153 billion a year to pay for public assistance programs going to working families who need Food Stamps, Medicaid or other support to meet their basic needs. In New York state it is \$3.3 billion.

Over 50 percent of the more than 5,000 families living in poverty in Steuben County are headed by a single parent. Of these households in poverty, only 15 percent are headed by a single father in poverty, while 44% are headed by a single mother in poverty. Almost half (45 percent) of all households headed by a single mother live at or below the poverty level, a shocking figure created or supported by policy choices - federal child

care subsidies have been cut to the point where it is impossible for many single moms to work before their children are in kindergarten.

Low-paying jobs and lack of transportation are also major causes of poverty and child poverty. Poverty can impede a child's ability to learn and contribute to social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Children in poverty are 33 percent more likely to have developmental delays or learning disabilities than other non-poor children. Poverty can contribute to poor health and poor mental health and cause children to become more likely to suffer from poverty as an adult.

The National Center for Children in Poverty estimates that a single mom with two children needs an hourly wage of \$22 an hour to cover a basic needs budget.

Despite the myths and misconceptions regarding poverty, the vast majority of our friends and neighbors living in poverty are suffering because of circumstances and decisions over which they have no control. The poor in our community are not sponges, leeches, lazy, unwilling to work, or underserving of our help. Granted there are some who are abusing Public Assistance but they are the minority. Despite well-publicized stories of those who commit fraud for public assistance dollars, the food stamp programs, Medicaid, and other programs actually are so well-managed and have such frequent re-enrollment verification requirements that they have lower rates of abuse than comparable programs in private insurance or bank lending. We spend our public assistance funds wisely in the U.S. Catholic Charities of Steuben embraces the challenge of helping the less fortunate among us but we need your help. Our 8th annual STEPS

SEE STEPS, A5

COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Raising a glass to reform

The fact that it's Finger Lakes Craft Beer Week from now until next Sunday presents a perfect opportunity to celebrate one of New York's most highly successful and ever-growing new industries - but to also make a larger point about how getting government out of the way can help businesses and industries grow and create jobs.

Late last year a new report found that in the three years from 2012 to January 2015, the number of craft breweries statewide more than doubled. The craft beverage industry now accounts for more than 6,500 jobs in New York and has a \$3.5 billion economic impact.

The study highlighted that the industry grew by nearly 60 percent between 2013 and 2014 alone - and that the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier regions are now home to more than half of New York's breweries, brew pubs and related outlets. The Finger Lakes Beer Trail includes more than 100 breweries and brew pubs, beer stores, tap houses and tasting rooms. For more information on the Finger Lakes Beer Trail, including this week's regional Craft Beer Week, visit www.fingerlakesbeertrail.com.

It's been remarkable. It's helping to enhance and strengthen the foundations of local agriculture, local business, local tourism and local economies overall. And state government has proven a strong partner in supporting the industry's growth which, in turn, increases demand for locally grown farm products and



SEN. TOM O'MARA

expands industry-related economic development and tourism. It's been a bipartisan effort to recognize vibrant industry and take important steps toward solidifying the state's commitment to helping it grow, create more and more jobs, and strengthen other key industries.

But the larger point is this: over the past several years, state government has enacted numerous regulatory reforms, tax incentives and other initiatives which have encouraged the steady and successful expansion of the craft beverage industry regionally and statewide. If we can make it work within this industry - and we have - why can't we make it work within any number of other industries? The answer's simple: we can, and we should.

Last week the Senate renewed our ongoing, broad-based effort to make it less expensive and more efficient to conduct business in New York, largely by getting government out of the way. We approved several pieces of legislation - like we consistently have done for many years despite no similar, large-scale action coming from the Assembly Democratic leadership or the executive - including calling for an unprecedented review of state rules and

regulations, as well as the rulemaking processes, to eliminate duplication, enhance efficiency and, frankly, inject some across-the-board commonsense into the state bureaucracy.

It sure could use it, and it's overdue. Two years ago, following a series of regulatory reform hearings the Senate Majority conducted across the state, including one I sponsored in Corning on upstate manufacturing, we compiled a comprehensive report identifying more than 2,000 specific rules, regulations and practices that we believe put New York's businesses and manufacturers, large and small, at a competitive disadvantage.

More specifically, our public forums helped identify 2,219 specific regulatory burdens New York state businesses and manufacturers must contend with. Each specific burden corresponds to a specific regulation or section of law, or a state agency practice that has the effect of a regulation or statute in that it creates a burden on business as if it were a validly enacted law or rule.

It's difficult to put an exact price tag on the total economic cost of New York's more than 750,000 regulations. But there are studies which have gauged the negative economic impact of rampant 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 percent of the economy.

More directly comparable to New York, a 2009 study found that regulations in California - a state with a burdensome regulatory structure comparable to New York's - cost the Golden State's economy \$493 billion annually, resulting in a loss of 3.8 million jobs and reducing industry tax receipts by over \$16 billion. In other words, government gone wild is not helpful.

We know in New York that upstate manufacturers, small businesses and industries across the board are overburdened with far too many unnecessary state regulations. We know that 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.

Right now, government's getting in the way of sustained economic growth and job creation in far too many places.

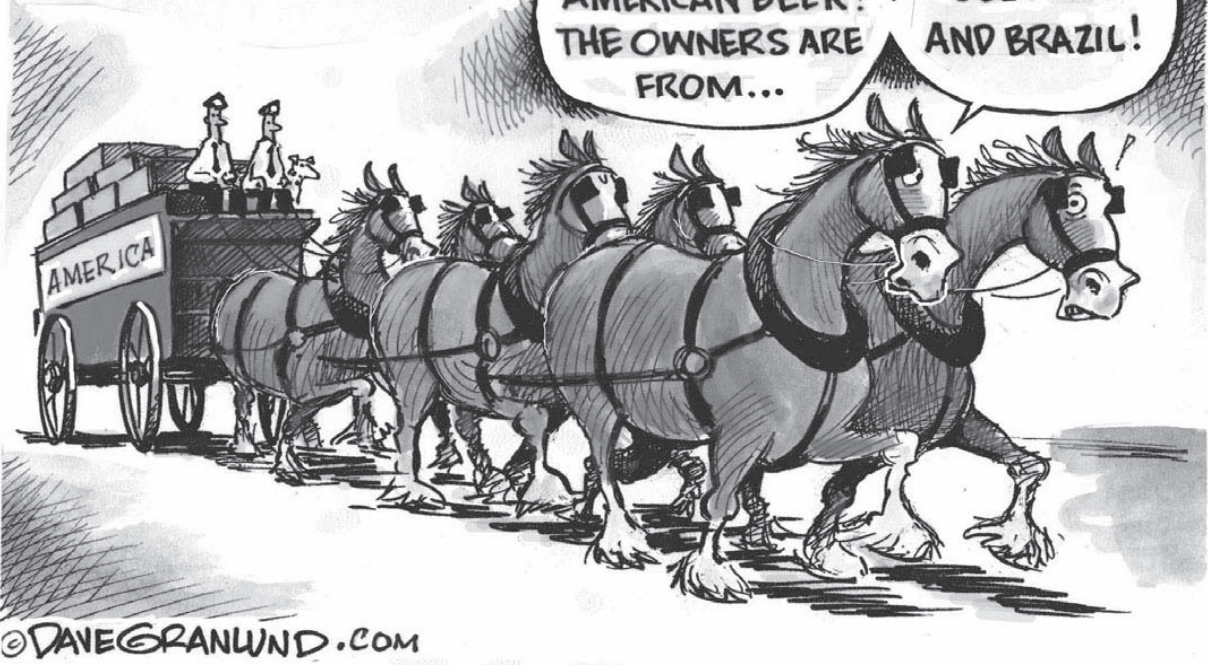
We've seen government get out of the way to encourage the growth of the craft beer industry, as one example - and it's clearly been helpful. This success should serve as an incentive - and a model - for similar efforts in so many other sectors of the economy.

It's about time we welcome the beginning of one of the largest-ever regulatory reform efforts in New York state's history.

— 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

Budweiser beer renamed "America"



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Volunteers needed for Colonial Days

TO THE EDITOR - Colonial Days, the area's largest and much-beloved summer festival, will celebrate its 53rd year June 8-11 in the Village of Painted Post.

Colonial Days began more than half a century ago as a way to celebrate the community pride and spirit of Painted Post. Over the years it grew and evolved, with many people involved in the organizing and execution of the multi-day event. Sadly, our corps of volunteers has dwindled over the years. Friday in the Square arts and crafts and bake sales are no longer viable. The softball, baseball and golf tournaments are a thing of the

past. The food booth, which helped raise revenue to support the parade, could not be sustained without volunteers to help serve and has been sorely missed in the last few years.

The Painted Post Board of Trade is the group behind Colonial Days. We are asking local residents to consider lending a hand in any one of the many areas of Colonial Days, from parade help to food service in Hodgman Park to decorating to set-up and grounds assistance. We would welcome high school service clubs, Scouting groups, sports team, etc. And helping out at Colonial Days would make a great community service project for students! The Board of Trade wants to present the

best possible Colonial Days for everyone to enjoy. With your help we can do it. Please contact Robin Gaige at 368-9998. Thank you, and see you at Colonial Days!

Robin Gaige, president, Painted Post Board of Trade

Scholarship to honor memory of beloved son

TO THE EDITOR - The Partridge Family has a genuine and deep appreciation for the support that our family, friends and the community have given during this time. Our family has lost a brother, son, grandson, true love and best friend; the community has lost a true athlete and

pillar of strength to all of those trying to accomplish their goals.

In recognizing Gregory's love for his family, friends and the community, we felt that it was only fitting to be able to do what he did best: give back to everyone. On May 4, 2016 the GREGORY WILLIAM PARTRIDGE Scholarship Fund was created at Chemung Canal Bank. This scholarship fund will service both the Corning Painted Post Area and also Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas. Donations can be forwarded to PO Box 1364, Corning, NY 14830.

Our most sincere thank you,

Dale and Pam Partridge and family



The Leader Staff

The Leader (ISSN #10501983)
The Leader is published daily at
34 West Pulteney Street, Corning,
New York 14830
by Gatehouse Media, LLC.
Periodical postage paid at
Corning, N.Y. 14830-0817.USPS
code | 0586-160
Postmaster: Send address changes
to The Leader, 34 West Pulteney
Street, Corning, New York 14830

Publisher Rick Emanuel Group Publisher 936-4651, Ext. 303	Business Office Becky Post Administration 936-4651, Ext. 306 bpost@the-leader.com																				
Editorial Stella DuPree Managing Editor 936-4651, Ext. 361 sdupree@the-leader.com	Classifieds 936-4651, Ext 651 Retail 936-4651, Ext 653																				
Circulation Corinne Mulligan Customer Service/ Sales Manager 936-4651, Ext. 328	Postal rates																				
Advertising Heather Falkey Ad Director 936-4651, Ext. 388 hfalkey@the-leader.com	<table><tr><td>Steuben County</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>One month</td><td>\$39.12</td></tr><tr><td>Three months</td><td>\$117.36</td></tr><tr><td>Six months</td><td>\$234.72</td></tr><tr><td>One year</td><td>\$469.44</td></tr><tr><td>ELSEWHERE IN USA</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>One month</td><td>\$49.47</td></tr><tr><td>Three months</td><td>\$148.41</td></tr><tr><td>Six months</td><td>\$296.82</td></tr><tr><td>One year</td><td>\$593.64</td></tr></table>	Steuben County		One month	\$39.12	Three months	\$117.36	Six months	\$234.72	One year	\$469.44	ELSEWHERE IN USA		One month	\$49.47	Three months	\$148.41	Six months	\$296.82	One year	\$593.64
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