

# OPINION

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

## 'The detrimental impact is inarguable'

Andrew Cuomo began his tenure as governor back in 2011 by proclaiming that New York State cannot survive as the tax capital of America. I agreed one-hundred percent but eight years down the road, we still have not done enough to get our residents and businesses out from under one of the nation's heaviest tax burdens.

Even more troubling, the governor today appears to have truly lost his way on this focus.

Not Senate Republicans however. Our focus remains squarely focused on making this state more affordable with more opportunities -- and that begins with lower taxes. Last week we approved a comprehensive "Jobs and Opportunity Agenda" that includes legislation I sponsor aimed at reducing New York State's high tax burden. Specifically

this legislation would provide significant new tax savings for small businesses and small farms by expanding the existing Personal Income Tax exemption and reducing the Corporate Franchise Tax business income tax rate from 6.5 percent to 2.5 percent over a two-year period.

Studies continue to highlight New York as the state with the highest tax burden in the nation and, in particular, one that remains a dark cloud over every other effort to improve our business climate. In February, according to USA Today, a report from 24/7 Wall Street found New York State "leading the pack" in a variety of tax categories. In March, a new report from WalletHub ranked New York 48th - third worst - in a comparison of every state in America based upon total

state and local tax rates.

Unshackle Upstate had this to say about the Senate's approval of the Jobs and Opportunity Act, "This relief comes at a critical time. Recent data from the New York State Department of Labor clearly indicate that Upstate employers are struggling to create jobs. With the exception of the New York City area, unemployment is on the rise in every community. The detrimental impact of New York's harsh business climate - with its high taxes, onerous regulations and costly mandates - is inarguable."

High taxes remain an unfair and unreasonable burden on individual taxpayers, families, farmers, employers and workers. Even with the tax cuts we have successfully achieved over the past several years - and keep

in mind that we have achieved billions of dollars in tax cuts during this time -- we have to keep taking tax relief actions for our small business owners, farmers, manufacturers and others to ensure that they can stay in business and keep creating the jobs that our communities depend on.

Among many provisions, the Senate's Jobs and Opportunity Agenda includes legislation to:

- allow real property owned by a small business (100 or less employees) to be eligible for the STAR property tax savings program;
- establish the Unfunded Mandate Review Act to protect local governments from unfunded state mandates. Specifically, this
- legislation requires the state comptroller to conduct a continuing study of unfunded mandates upon any local government, and prepare comparative costs of proposed regulations;
- promote mandate relief and flexibility in tailoring regulatory requirements to the specific needs and capabilities of local governments;
- establish a Small Business Liaison within the state bureaucracy to disseminate important regulatory information, listen to concerns and advocate on behalf of businesses within state agencies;
- prevent "regulatory steamrolling" by curtailing state government's

overutilization of the emergency regulation process to ensure its use only when necessary to protect public health and safety; and

- direct the state education commissioner to develop guidelines for high school guidance counselors to facilitate student awareness and interest in apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and career and technical education opportunities.

There are roughly 20 days remaining in this year's regular legislative session. The Senate looks forward to using every single one of them to keep pushing the Assembly Democratic leadership and Governor Cuomo to get refocused on these fundamental priorities for Upstate New York.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I see who the enemy is

*Editor's note: The following letter has been shortened to meet our rules for letters to the editor.*

To the Editor, Sun Tzu in 'The Art of War' says "Know your enemy."

Nothing could be truer today. The enemy is Trump and his people who pose the greatest threat to democracy that has been seen in a long time.

When you have people of privilege, who are elitist and unqualified running major agencies of government, you know the very fabric

of government is ready to be torn apart. (i.e. Fake News).

A brief look at past dictators shows that they placed unqualified friends in positions of power because they knew they would be loyal. Past dictators focused on single thoughts or kept repeating the same thing over and over knowing that some people will begin to see it as the truth.

Fake News is designed to undermine the news media that doesn't agree with Trump.

The enemy is Trump and those who surround him. If we do not recognize that his attempt to destroy the

separation of powers that is one of, if not the most important pillars of our democracy, we can say goodbye to freedom as we know it today.

I know my enemy and it is not only Trump, but Media like Fox which supports Trump whether he is right or not. The enemy is those in the House and Senate who are so wrapped up in money that doing what is right is no longer an option.

The enemy is those people who fail to see Trump and his party for what it is because of blind loyalty. The enemy is apathy that is resulting from disgust with how the President conducts

himself.

We have seen in recent months how many of Trump's appointees have taken advantage of the positions they were placed in to benefit themselves at taxpayers' expense. We have seen the President admit that he was involved with a porn star right after his wife had a baby. Are these examples of what we should be teaching our young people?

The enemy is also the erosion of moral character, honesty, good judgement and the following of law.

**Jack Schamel, Chemung**

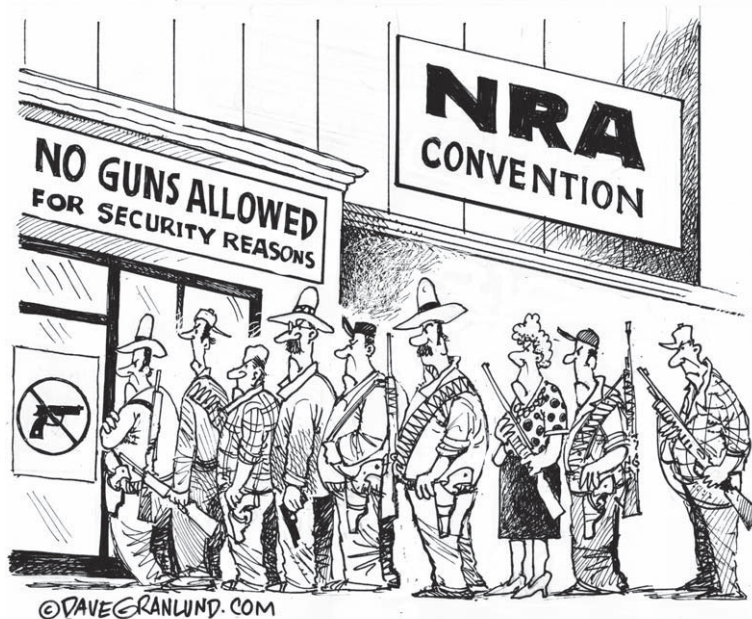
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The Leader (ISSN #10501983) The Leader is published daily at 34 West Pulteney Street, Corning, New York 14830 by GateHouse Media, LLC. Periodical postage paid at Corning, N.Y. 14830-0817. USPS code | 0586-160. Postmaster: Send address changes to The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

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