

# OPINION

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## ANOTHER VIEW



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Support death with dignity

If you had a terminal illness, and were in excruciating pain, wouldn't you want to dictate how you die?

Medical technology has given us the ability to prolong the deaths of patients whose diseases are not curable, whose declining conditions are not reversible, and whose pain can only temporarily be eased. Physician-assisted death provides an alternative for the terminally ill. Only five states have legalized physician-assisted death so far:

Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont and New Mexico. I believe that physician-assisted death should be legal in all 50 states.

Despite common misconceptions, physician-assisted death is not the same practice as euthanasia. Euthanasia is when a doctor personally delivers a lethal injection to his/her patient. Physician-assisted death is when a doctor provides his/her patient with a lethal dose of medication, which that patient takes when, where, and with who he/she prefers.

Physician-assisted death provides a peace of mind for not only terminally ill patients, but their families as well. Knowing that your loved one no longer has to suffer, and can die a peaceful death, is something that we all hope for.

Please help me in supporting the Death With Dignity movement, and encourage our public officials to vote in favor of physician-assisted death when it comes up again in New York State.

**Elise Cacace,**  
Campbell

### Put citizenship into practice

We as a community can have the possibility to live out a full citizenship and the American Dream. The tools we need are expanded direct democracy and the development of the commons. These tools are based on a simple idea, that the citizens of a community are the co-owners of that community, and it applies not only to a nation but to a small city as well. Democracy insures inclusion and participation in decisions that affect us, while the commons insures independence through the ownership of vital resources.

This may all seem abstract, but in concrete terms democracy and the commons can be expressed through the models of cooperatives and participatory budgeting. Other communities have used these methods to not only improve their quality of life but to actualize authentic self-determination. And that is at the heart of true citizenship.

On the other hand, the American Dream has many different parts but one important component is the idea of being your own boss. This is the point where the American Dream intersects with the promise of

citizenship. I am committed to introducing startup loans for cooperatives and participatory budgeting in our community as a way to put citizenship and the American Dream into practice. Please go to [www.corning-commonwealth.wikidot.com](http://www.corning-commonwealth.wikidot.com) to see drafts of two proposals for these ideas along with contact information for our City Council and mayor. If you agree with these ideas, please let them know how you feel.

**Darin Robbins,**  
Corning

### Shift resources to private sector

I have a novel idea! Why doesn't Senator Schumer and Governor Cuomo educate themselves? They are economic illiterates. Their policies of government picking winners and losers is a failed economic policy. Instead of following Karl Marx and John Maynard Keynes they should study the economic policies of Milt Friedman.

There are too many resources in the hands of the government class. The resources must be shifted more to the private sector through universal tax cuts, right to work legislation, reducing onerous government regulation, cutting repetitive government bureaucracies like the Departments of Energy, EPA, IRS, Education, etc. There are massive local, state, and federal labor laws and other regulations that will protect the country from private sector abuse. The private sector is 500 percent more efficient than government.

If Schumer, Cuomo and their cronies don't wake up, there's going to many more closings in New York besides the Kraft Foods plant in Campbell.

**John Rynne,**  
Rochester

### N. Conhocton unsafe at 30 mph

I am writing concerning some issues about North Conhocton Street between Woodview Avenue and Denison Parkway in the city of Corning.

It is a street with three businesses and a city park entrance. At the 30 mph. speed limit it is an unsafe street for customers and pedestrians.

A petition was signed in March 2015 by over 80 concerned people for a 10 mph speed limit and an additional crosswalk between Market Street Extension and Rite Aid. The petition was presented to the Council. It was denied because of low funds after all the street repair in the city. One councilman told us to persist. Perhaps we should present this petition at another time.

I persist before all the readers. Can you put a price on human life? Is it Christ-like to leave this section of Conhocton Street in its current condition? We who signed the petition say no.

**Judith L. Wright,**  
Corning

## WEEKLY COLUMN

# Keeping it 'Grown in New York'

In early 2013, I joined my colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee and other advocates to launch an economic growth strategy called "Grown in New York." Since then, Grown in New York has directly produced and helped prepare the groundwork for a number of critical new laws, tax breaks and regulatory reforms which have made a difference for farmers, agribusinesses, wineries, craft breweries, cideries, distilleries and the ag industry as a whole throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide.

We've continued to replant the program annually – initiating, supporting and building on actions that try to keep our next generation of farmers, and New York's agricultural industry overall, competitive for the long haul. We've highlighted the overriding fact that we cannot risk New York's farmers being taxed, regulated and priced out of business – as well as the fact that, collectively, the average age of our farmers is fast approaching 60, and we need to take steps to encourage a new generation of young New York farmers.

Grown in New York has remained a common sense blueprint to keep New York a proud and strong agricultural state.

Not long ago, figures released by the state showed the growth of New York's agricultural sales set a new record for sales in 2014 – more than \$6.3 billion in cash receipts, a nearly \$1.7 billion increase in gross income from sales of crops, livestock and other products. More specifically, several commodities showed



SEN. TOM O'MARA

production increases over the past several years far outpacing national estimates for the same commodities including poultry and eggs, peaches, honey, and hay. The wine industry remains world class and growing stronger. We've witnessed amazing growth in the number of craft breweries, cideries and distillers locally and statewide. Our dairy industry is America's third largest.

In other words, great – not to mention critically important – work by so many of our farmers. According to one Cornell University study, for every dollar spent in agricultural output, an additional \$.43 is generated for non-agricultural industries.

Farming has for so long been a mainstay of upstate New York's culture and economy. So we stay focused on new tools and incentives to keep this industry strong. Through Grown in New York, for example, we've helped secure the enactment of critical new laws that have:

- limited the annual increase in agricultural assessments to no more than two percent;
- lowered the estate tax;
- dedicated resources to better promote farmers' markets, and expand outlets and uses for locally grown products;
- encouraged comprehensive regulatory reviews to eliminate outdated and duplicative

regulations; – restored funding for the Tractor Rollover Program (ROPS), a critical farm safety program; – enhanced access to viable land for beginning farmers, provided start-up grants and established a college education loan forgiveness program.

But the challenges – locally, statewide, nationally and globally – are tougher than ever. So we keep working at it. I'm proud as a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, as well as the joint, bipartisan Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, to help offer some direct input into addressing these challenges.

Locally, we know that the impending closure of the Kraft cheese factory in Campbell threatens an incredibly damaging hardship to regional dairy farmers – which remains one of the prime concerns of the local, federal and state officials working together to develop a strategic plan to find the right buyer, one committed to maintaining the jobs and overall role this facility has played in the community for so long.

Just last week I was fortunate to have toured the Campbell facility with Congressman Tom Reed and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano. We met with some of the workforce and plant management. Rest assured that the future viability of this cheese factory is our top priority and that there is reason for optimism in this effort. I also thank Steuben County Legislature Chairman Joe Hauryski and Steuben County IDA Executive Director Jamie Johnson for their efforts as part of what is truly a team effort.

Last year's state budget included funding for the Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement Program, which is now underway. Applications for funding became available late last week and can be requested from local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (see more information at <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>).

We've seen regulatory reforms make a great difference for the wine and craft beer industries, which should encourage us to build and expand on these successes in other sectors. Governor Cuomo has proposed additional tax relief in his 2016-17 proposed state budget, and that's a welcome development. By the same token, the Cuomo plan calls for cutting or eliminating funding for a number of key programs and institutions including the Wine and Grape Foundation, Future Farmers of America, Tractor Rollover Prevention, Farm Net (Farm Family Assistance), Integrated Pest Management, and the Cornell Diagnostic Lab along with other vital Cornell programs invaluable to the dairy industry among others.

I will be fighting to restore state funding for our critical agricultural programs. In the important weeks ahead it's now up to the Legislature, in these and other ways, to closely examine the governor's plans for agriculture and rural New York to determine and reestablish the priorities.

— *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.*

## VIEWPOINT

# Crestwood would bring much-needed jobs

By Bryan Allen

As we start another year, politicians and stakeholder groups are publicizing their priorities for New York state. Like years past, everyone seems to agree that jobs, a better business climate, and accessible energy should be priorities. And like years past, Crestwood's proposal to reopen US Salt's propane storage business satisfies each of these goals without costing taxpayers a penny.

The Business Council of New York announced its legislative priorities this week. The Business Council believes the state should focus on making gas more accessible to manufacturers by expediting state reviews for infrastructure, and provide a level playing field for the business community by reforming the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The Business Council says these developments would make it easier to create and retain jobs. SEQRA is supposed to elevate environmental awareness to the levels of economic and social awareness when agencies are making impactful decisions, but it's too often used today by activists to block worthwhile energy projects.

Unshackle Upstate, a bipartisan coalition of

trade organizations trying to improve the Upstate business climate, agrees that SEQRA reform will generate good-paying jobs. Unshackle also argues that SEQRA is too frequently wielded to stifle economic development, and that businesses need fair and reliable guidelines from government agencies to create jobs.

Governor Cuomo also stood before the cameras this week and said that jobs are New York State's focus, and local legislators seem to agree. NYS Senator O'Mara wants to create jobs by focusing "on strengthening the overall business climate through ongoing, meaningful tax relief, regulatory reform, and lower energy costs."

Goals are nothing more than fantasies if no action is taken, and I cannot help but wonder how much better our local economy would be if Albany would get out of its own way. You want jobs? Crestwood's project needs about 50 union construction workers and creates a dozen good-paying full-time jobs for local residents. You want lower energy costs? Crestwood's project helps lower energy costs by making cheap propane gas available to our manufacturers, farmers and families. You

want a reason for SEQRA reform? Try seven years without an end in sight, which is where Crestwood's project has been left, despite the state's experts having endorsed the storage project.

If this state wants a better business climate, we should support employers who want to invest locally. If residents want to pay less for cleaner energy, we shouldn't chase away projects like Crestwood's

propane storage plan.

It's time for the our elected officials to fulfill their perennial New Year's resolutions of job production, a better business climate and lower energy costs. Approval of Crestwood's LPG storage project is long overdue.

— *Bryan Allen is a business agent with the United Association Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 267 of Ithaca.*

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