

# OPINION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### I really enjoyed middle school production

**To the Editor,**  
Last Sunday I attended the Corning Middle School play - 'Mary Poppins Jr.' I've never been to a middle school play before but this was an awesome performance. I can't believe these were Middle School students - amazing talent, direction, music, back-stage crew and so many costume changes!! "Mary" even stopped to take a picture with my granddaughters after. I'll make sure to attend the next one! Bravo!

**Hilda Lando, Corning**

### Police need thanks for drug arrests

**To the Editor,**  
I enjoyed reading "Three arrested in raids on Bath residence." Why I like it is because it shows me that the cops are trying to stop drugs, so more people can stay alive and learn not to do drugs. We should all look up to the cops and thank them for trying hard. If kids learn not to do drugs then more people will stay alive and they can teach other people not to do drugs and the world can be better without people doing drugs. I am 12 years old, I am a Boy Scout and I do not do drugs.

**Donovan Weatherby, Lawrenceville, PA**

### Don't wait to run for office

**To the Editor,**  
As this new year begins, people need to know that there have been changes to the state's election law. In order to combine the state and national primaries into one day, the petitioning period for candidates to collect signatures to get on the ballot will begin earlier than before, starting February 26th and ending April 4th. This is a major change

that frankly has thrown all political parties into disequilibrium, but it is important that people who are considering running for local office are aware of this change. Now more than ever, we need new and truly independent candidates to run for office. New ideas are needed in this time of political change and turmoil. Therefore people need to seriously start to think about running now rather than wait and see.

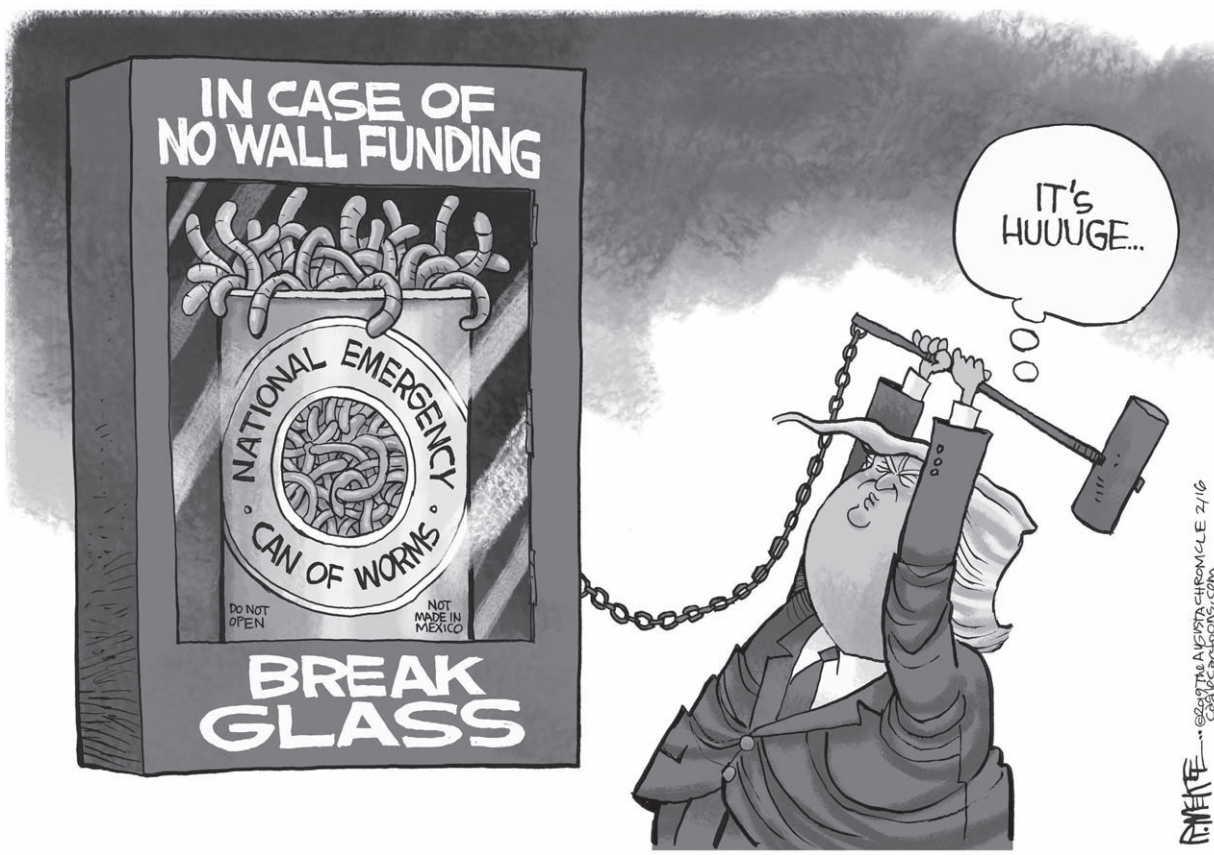
**Darin Robbins, Corning**

### New law breaking God's law

**To the Editor,**  
"Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not." Wisdom instructed in Proverbs 8:33. It then goes on to say in verses 35 and 36, "For whosoever finds me (wisdom) findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. But he (or she) that sinneth against me (wisdom) wrongeth his (or her) own soul. All that hate me (wisdom) loves death." Within our state's recent law we have broken one of the top 10 laws of the world. That is law #6. That's pretty close to the top. It says in simple words, "You shall not kill/murder." Exodus 20:13. This law does not look lightly upon disobedience. His, the Law Maker's, final decision is much higher than this nation's Supreme Court. If there is no genuine repentance and undoing quickly done, judgement will surely arrive, and it will be severe. Let's make today the day this legalizing murdering the preborn at any stage of its gestation to a newborn come to an end, and dear ones repent, or we do not know the when or how punishment will come upon us all. Allow wisdom the right in all decisions making now and all tomorrows.

**Elouise Hults, Beaver Dams**

## ANOTHER VIEW



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

### A higher minimum wage for prisoners?

Legislation called the "Prison Minimum Wage Act" was recently introduced and referred to committee in both the state Senate and Assembly. Every legislative session there are always proposals that spark a strong reaction from voters. This is one of them. The legislation (Senate Bill Number 3138), sponsored by two state legislators from Brooklyn, proposes to TRIPLE the taxpayer-funded minimum wage for state prison inmates to \$3 per hour for the work thousands of inmates do in state prisons including cleaning, maintenance, and manufacturing products. According to the measure's sponsors, the purpose of their legislation is "to end the last vestiges of slavery and embrace the spirit and the promise of the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution by providing a minimum wage of \$3.00 an hour to inmates." They say the fiscal implications of their legislation will

"be determined." Of course, we know it would cost taxpayers millions of dollars. According to the memorandum of support the sponsors filed for their proposal, "A study from the Prison Policy Institute found that inmates in New York State are amongst the lowest paid incarcerated people nationwide... They cannot form unions, do not have a right to workers' compensation if they are injured on the job, and are required to participate in programs as assigned which, if they refuse, could lead them to face disciplinary measures such as solitary confinement and loss of good-time credits... New York State must do better. Our prison system should not be one which is focused on punishment; rather, it should be dedicated to rehabilitation." All of the above, in the words of the sponsors themselves, speaks for itself about their intent and thinking. For anyone interested in reading more, including the legislation itself, I have posted a link to it on my Senate website (omara.nysenate.gov) as part of a broader "Join The Fight" petition in opposition to the "Prison Minimum Wage Act." Everyone can reach his or her own conclusions on the Act. I strongly oppose it. No, prisoners cannot form a labor union, nor should they be able to. Yes, prisoners refusing to participate in an assigned program are disciplined. They should be. Moreover, if you don't think prisons in New York State have become institutions more focused on rehabilitation than punishment, ask a local correctional officer. This state has gone out of its way focusing on rehabilitation - too far out of the way, many argue - to the risk of correctional officers and prison staff who work in these dangerous environments day after day, night after night. In my opinion, the "Prison Minimum Wage Act" is an unbelievable proposal, especially with New York facing a multi-million-dollar budget deficit and when the state is already failing to live up

to its promise of higher wages for hard-working, law-abiding employees like the Direct Service Professionals (DSPs) who care for our citizens with developmental and intellectual disabilities. As I said recently: Be fair to Direct Care before coddling criminals. There was a time when a proposal like this one would not have a chance of becoming law. However, members of the governing extreme-Liberal, New York City-centric Democratic majorities in the Senate and Assembly sponsor the legislation. In this new New York State Legislature, there's just no telling what might be approved. Consequently, I encourage Southern Tier and Finger Lakes residents who oppose the "Prison Minimum Wage Act" to sign an online petition on omara.nysenate.gov (click on the "Join The Fight" icon near the top of the home page). If you agree with me, thank you for signing the petition and raising your voice for some common sense.

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## OTHER VIEW | CHICAGO TRIBUTE

### Trump blurs the meaning of 'national emergency'

America has survived many national emergencies. Presidents have dealt with innumerable crises. Being forced to sign a compromise-laden spending bill doesn't qualify. The announcement Thursday that President Donald Trump will declare a national emergency is an act of petulance. Trump's spokeswoman said he would approve a stopgap budget to keep the government operating. But she also said he would go around Congress after lawmakers wouldn't give him the money he wants to build a wall on the southern border. Trump was thwarted by House Democrats so he'll show them: He'll invoke the emergency powers of the presidency to tap other government sources for funding. Assuming Trump follows through on his threat, he likely faces a court challenge. Legal scholars have said that declaring an emergency could give the White House authority to divert the U.S. military from other construction projects to work

on Trump's wall. But there is no statutory definition of "emergency," and the laws that may empower Trump to sidestep Congress don't give him carte blanche. There are technical requirements that must be met in order for the military to put aside other construction duties to build a wall. That's all related to the question of whether Trump can declare a national emergency to build a wall. Our view is that he shouldn't. His threat wildly oversteps the limits of presidential powers. Congress makes the laws and approves budgets. Presidents have veto power but they aren't emperors. Trump sought \$5.7 billion in a spending bill for the wall and tangled with those unyielding House Democrats. The impasse led to the previous 35-day-long partial government shutdown. This week, all sides came together to hash out the spending bill that gives Trump just \$1 billion or so for barriers. Without this deal, the government would go back into shutdown mode Friday

at midnight. So Trump relented. Now he wants to bully his way to building a wall by justifying his action on national security and humanitarian grounds. Border security is vital to the country, but Trump's obsession with building a physical wall isn't justified by facts on the ground. This is his political preoccupation, not an existential crisis for the United States. If he declares a national emergency that survives court scrutiny, Trump claims a victory at real cost to the balance of powers between the presidency and Congress. He undermines the Constitution. In recent decades presidents have sought to expand their authority through the use of executive action. Trump's threat to assert powers previously invoked during times of military conflict or natural disaster takes presidential prerogative to a new level. If he succeeds, how will Trump next seek to impose his will on Americans? And what about the next president?

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**THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART** (Chris Pratt, Elizabeth Banks, Will Arnett) PG (1 Hr 46 Min)

Fri. 2/15	6:15, 8:30
Sat. 2/16	3:15, 6:15, 8:30
Sun. 2/17	3:15, 6:15, 8:30
Mon. 2/18	3:15, 6:15
Tues. 2/19	*SPECIAL EVENT
Wed. 2/20	3:15, 6:15
Thurs. 2/21	3:15, 6:15

**GREEN BOOK** Oscar Nominee for Best Picture (Vigo Mortenson, Mahershala Ali, Linda Cardellini) PG-13 (2 Hr 10 Min)

Fri. 2/15	6:00
Sat. 2/16	3:00 6:00 8:45
Sun. 2/17	3:00 6:00 8:45
Mon. 2/18	3:00 6:00
Tues. 2/19	*SPECIAL EVENT
Wed. 2/20	3:00
Thurs. 2/21	6:00

**THE FAVOURITE** Limited Time ONLY (Olivia Colman, Emma Stone, Rachel Weisz) PG-13 (2 Hr 10 Min)

Fri. 2/15	6:00
Sat. 2/16	3:00 6:00 8:45
Sun. 2/17	3:00 6:00 8:45
Mon. 2/18	3:00 6:00
Tues. 2/19	*SPECIAL EVENT
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