

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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GUEST VIEW

Parents, get a clue about technology

Another week has passed, and three more defendants have been charged by this Office with producing or receiving child pornography. A 14-year-old girl murdered in Virginia. These and other cases share the common trait of alleged predators luring and manipulating children over social media.

It's common to see teenagers attached to their cell phones throughout the day. Everyone knows that today's device is a powerful internet access tool capable of connecting users to others throughout the world. Most seriously underestimate the frequency with which their children are exposed to sexually explicit texts and photographs.

According to one university study, 20 to 30% of teens will send or receive sexually explicit texts. 70% of teen-age girls will be asked to send a naked picture. As our investigations demonstrate, such requests come from both peers and predators seeking contact with vulnerable youth.

Neither denial nor ignorance provide any protection for children caught-up in a perfect storm of technology and vulnerability. Rather, safety lies in constant parent/child communication, and adult education and

familiarity with computer applications, teen-age realities, and even language.

As internet dangers have multiplied, parents today must be as conversant in discussing "bytes and bits" as they are in discussing the "birds and bees." Kids are warned to avoid strangers, but they also need to know that strangers lurk online and online messages and photographs can be preserved forever. Not hitting "send" is the best defense against future regret.

I urge parents to take full advantage of parental controls to monitor usage, media activity, and who your child is contacting. Learn to detect vault applications and icons used to conceal explicit videos and photographs.

Finally, know the common social media sites and terminology used. Some are shocked when they discover what the code words and symbols being used by their children really mean.

Being a teenager can be exciting and difficult. Today's technology and social media enhance both realities. By becoming a technology expert, parents and adults help children navigate these challenges before our office gets involved.

—This was written by U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul Jr.

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Let's paint a different ending

It's time to get the paint out again for the 2016 legislative session – and what I mean is to get the costly burden of collecting and disposing of unused paint in New York state out from being largely the responsibility of local governments.

And we have a real opportunity again this year to get this cumbersome (and expensive) unfunded mandate off the backs of local property taxpayers statewide – and to get it done with the cooperation of the paint industry itself.

It's not an everyday question, but do you have any idea how many gallons of paint go unused each year in New York state? According to the national Product Stewardship Institute (<http://www.productstewardship.us>), the answer is nearly 4 million gallons. And, again, who's responsible for collecting and disposing of this unused paint and how much does it cost? The responsibility falls mostly to local governments – which always means, by extension, to local property taxpayers to the tune of roughly \$25 million a year.

So I've reintroduced and continue to sponsor legislation (S4926/A6199) that received unanimous, bipartisan Senate approval last year but never saw the light of day from the state Assembly Democratic leadership. It should have. It's a commonsense, practical, cooperative government-industry plan, and I'll continue to advocate for its enactment. Not only would it relieve local governments of a significant expense, it would deliver state-wide fiscal, economic and environmental benefits. It's worth pursuing, in my view, for two overriding reasons: 1.) for the fundamental value of the program itself, but also 2.) because it signals what can potentially be achieved when government and industry work together to address environmental and economic challenges like this one.

Specifically the legislation would establish an industry-supported "Paint Stewardship Program" to remove this mandate from local governments and taxpayers – a cost, again, which has been estimated at \$25 million statewide. It could create some



TOM O'MARA

local jobs as the industry establishes the facilities responsible for collecting, storing, transporting, reusing, recycling and otherwise properly disposing of this post-consumer paint. Obviously, it would encourage and facilitate the environmentally sound recycling and disposal of unused paint statewide.

Paint manufacturers would be responsible for managing (and paying for) the recycling, local governments would save approximately \$25 million annually, and jobs would be created. That sure sounds like a commonsense and worthwhile action to me.

It's also telling that the measure has drawn the support of a range of environmental advocacy organizations, paint industry representatives, and municipal agencies, including the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency; Madison County Department of Solid Waste & Sanitation; American Coatings Association; New York Product Stewardship Council; Citizens Campaign for the Environment; and the National Resources Defense Council. The legislation was also cited as a priority bill last session by the joint, bipartisan New York State Caucus of Environmental Legislators.

In cooperation with the American Coatings Association, paint manufacturers nationally have created a not-for-profit organization known as "PaintCare" that's dedicated to the effective management of leftover paint, with an emphasis on reuse and recycling. PaintCare partners with local governments to establish retail drop-off locations throughout states with paint stewardship laws, thereby increasing convenience for consumers and relieving local governments of the financial burden. A report earlier this year that examined California's program found it to be successful – successful in promoting the reuse and recycling of unused paint (paint recovery has increased by 20 percent), for cutting local government costs, and retailers have been satisfied too.

The New York Product Stewardship Council (nypsc.org) states, "Most leftover paint is currently disposed of in the trash. Management of leftover paint in New York results in a cost that represents as much as 50% of municipalities' household hazardous waste budgets, costing small local governments tens of thousands of dollars each year (in larger counties...these costs are exponentially greater). A statewide paint stewardship program would hold the paint industry responsible for collecting and managing leftover paint in New York...saving local municipalities tens

of thousands of dollars on paint management costs, and establishing retail collection sites to make paint drop recycling more convenient for residents."

To repeat: All of this broad-based support helps make the broader point that this legislation is an example of how government and industry can work together to implement effective environmental policies and programs in an economically and fiscally sound fashion. It would help, in a small way, give New York State a more business-friendly climate and actually result in a workable law to achieve an important environmental conservation goal.

Too many leaders in New York government continue to demonstrate an unwillingness to work with business and industry on this and other issues that would benefit our state fiscally, economically and environmentally. Approving this legislation this year in New York State could help begin setting a different standard for stronger government-industry cooperation down the road and begin to help break the logjam of inaction that plagues too many other critical challenges.

In other words, it could help start painting a different picture in New York state.

—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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Who do we want for president?

TO THE EDITOR | Now that we have endured the debates, the interviews, the commentaries, simplistic solutions to the problems we face, the caucuses and the aftermath complete with comments and charges of this, that and the other thing, is it not time for us to consider what kind of person we want to be our president?

The real thing to think about!

William Weber,
Pulteney

Understand, protect water sources

TO THE EDITOR | Water is sacred and needs our protection. All of us in this area depend on groundwater as do 50 percent of Americans. American aquifers are being depleted, mainly from overpumping.

One negative effect of depletion is a lowering of the water table so that wells can no longer reach the water. When this happens, more

energy and expense will be needed to pump water to the surface. And, when groundwater is overused, surface water like rivers and lakes may be reduced. The Corning aquifer, which extends from Addison to South Corning, has already been described as potentially stressed by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission

Another concern is that groundwater contamination is occurring from many sources including road salt, superfund sites, hazardous wastes, septic systems, landfills, pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Without our protection, groundwater may become unfit for human consumption.

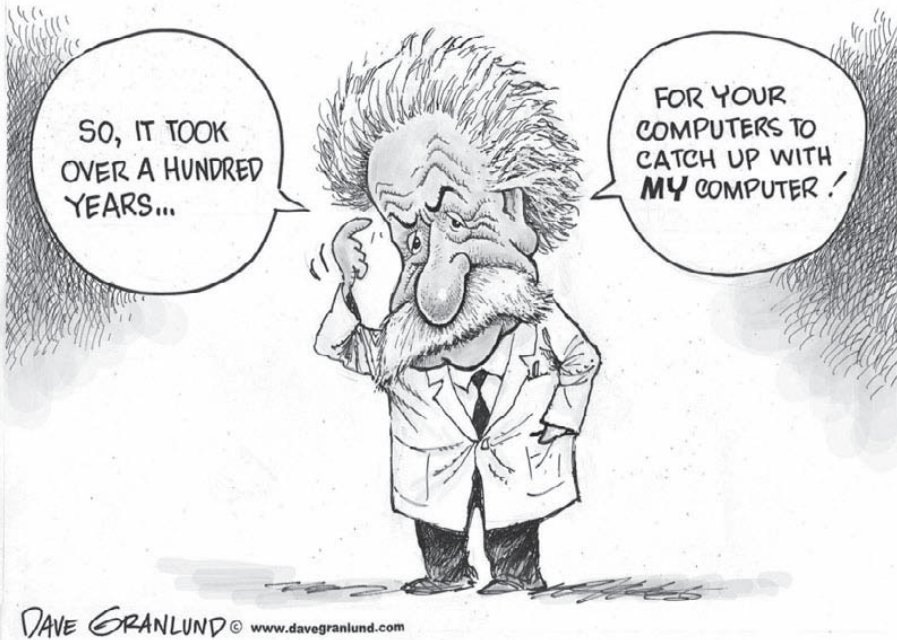
"A Public Forum on Painted Post Water Withdrawals: Understanding and Protecting Our Drinking Water Sources" will address some of these concerns.

Please consider attending on Saturday, February 27, 2016 from 10 a.m.-noon at the Southeast Steuben County Library in Corning.

Karen Biesanz
Corning

ANOTHER VIEW

Scientists: Einstein was right on gravitational waves



READER VIEW

Still no room for hyphenated Americans

In a speech to the Knights of Columbus in New York City on Oct. 12, 1915, Theodore Roosevelt stated, "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americans."

A profound statement then, a more stunning statement today.

But take away the immediate shock to one's system and scrape away the protective reaction to a supposed challenge to one's heritage, it's understandable as an immediate reaction, but think, why do people of the world want to come here? Freedom of religion? Of course. Freedom of speech? Certainly. You can go through the

complete listing of freedoms accorded citizens of America and one of many of those freedoms answers the needs immigrants desire. So why then the hyphen?

Perhaps the pledge of allegiance should be taken upon the entry of immigrants into our country. After all, I do not identify myself as an Italian-American and my wife does not introduce herself as an Irish-American. So I plead with all of you, African-American, Asian-American, Mexican-American or any other hyphenated American, come into the fold, stand proud as a proud American.

Then there is the matter

of assimilation. A dictionary will explain the meaning of assimilation to be "absorbed into the system" and "absorb into the culture or mores of a population or group." To some I fear assimilation is a threatening word. Deemed to be an explanation to separate people from their heritage. Or separate families. On the contrary, assimilation is the process by which immigrants "join the club" so to speak and unite with all fellow Americans.

As a nation, America is in mortal danger. We are at war, even if our president does not have the courage to say so. We must stand united. I am

puzzled by a prospective immigrant longing for all America offers then when allowed in, they form a tight group with others of the same heritage and enjoy the benefits of America but show no allegiance to their new home. By attaching a hyphen to their names, thus promoting the very area of the world whose practices caused them to immigrate in the first place.

It is time for all Americans to step forward. Promote your allegiance and promote yourself as an American. Show our enemies we are united and will never falter.

—Thomas R. Mayo is a Corning resident.



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