

'Time off to vote' is smart business

Corporate America should back NY's efforts to make casting ballots easier

BY CAMPBELL STREATOR
AND THOMAS ROSENKRANZ

Employees across New York can breathe a sigh of relief.

State legislators have amended state election laws to provide workers with an additional hour of paid time off to vote on Election Days. Employees may now take up to three hours of time off to participate in their most important civic duty, regardless of work schedule.

Employers must now build on that momentum and embrace "time off to vote" on their own. As the college spring semester draws to a close, companies in all industries are courting America's best and brightest to join their ranks.

Corporate America knows a lot about its prospective employees — from personality traits to test scores and internship experience. However, many companies ignore just how politically informed young adults have become. In 2018, historically low youth turnout hit record highs, and youth activism remains

high.

That engagement affects how young adults perceive corporate brands. According to a 2018 survey, 77 percent of Americans ages 18 to 44 are "more likely to work for a company that promotes democracy," and 82 percent are "more likely to buy that company's products or services."

Young Americans want more out of their employers than growth opportunities and a 401(k) plan. They want companies to give back to society, do right by their workers and promote participation in our democracy. Whether it's a full day off or just a few hours at a time, companies should ease the path for workers to vote.

Rather than wait for government action, many employers are taking it upon themselves to help boost voter turnout. Hundreds of companies — big and small — have joined the "Take Off Election Day" movement. Last year, the restaurant chain Cava offered its 1,600 workers two hours of paid leave on Election Day to vote. Chrysler, Lyft, Patagonia, Spotify, Walmart and



BARRY SLOAN

others have joined in.

For employers, offering the time off also makes sense from a business perspective. When a company offers flexible schedules on Election Day, that company becomes a more attractive place to work by aligning its values with those of the millennial generation.

Given that millennials comprise the largest segment of the U.S. labor force since 2016 — and Gen Zers are soon to enter the workforce — keeping up with

the changing times means staying in business. Smart CEOs know that young Americans are not only future employees, but also future shareholders. Their values — and purchasing power — will exert an outsized influence on markets and corporate policy.

Investors are allocating their capital accordingly. Traditionally, the only measure of a company's success was its bottom line. Today, environmental, social and governance ratings, also

known as ESG ratings, are watched by investors who care about social welfare. In 2018, \$1 out of every \$4 of America's professionally managed assets was invested under ESG strategies. Nearly 80 percent of high net-worth millennial investors review their assets for ESG scoring.

Time off to vote is not a staple of ESG ratings, but it should be. ESG-score providers, such as Bloomberg and Dow Jones, must step in. Time off to vote needs to be taken into account, rewarding companies that promote the policy — and nudging those that do not.

Allowing time off to vote is good business and better for society — in New York and nationwide.



Campbell Streator is program director of Every Vote Counts, a student-led, nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing voter turnout and expanding voter access. Thomas



Rosenkranz is the founder of Yale University's EVC chapter.



A view of Sang Lee Farms in Peconic.

SANG LEE FARMS

much bigger than agriculture. Still, by not using chlorpyrifos or other toxic compounds on my farm, I can do my part to grow food in a healthful and sustainable manner. I am glad to do so.

Fred Lee,
Southold

Editor's note: The writer owns Sang Lee Farms.

When do candidates do their day jobs?

How are all these presidential candidates campaigning and still getting paid for their jobs ["Colo. Sen. Bennet joins crowded Dem primary field," News, May 3]?

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio reportedly wants to run. Members of Congress and governors are out campaigning. How can they do that and still get paid, or how can they conduct any business? Somebody please tell me. It is getting out of hand.

Mark Cassuto,
Huntington

Skeptical of some tax breaks for businesses

The tax breaks awarded to a developer who will turn a closed hotel in Plainview into senior housing sounds like another bad deal by the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency ["Tax breaks for senior housing," News, April 24].

Entrepreneurs promote themselves as market-smart and skilled in risking capital for future profit. But the Capitol Seniors Housing deal seems to place all of the risk on to Nassau taxpayers.

Nassau fronts a sales tax exemption of up to \$564,723, a three-year freeze on property taxes and then increases of only 2 percent a year for 17 years. Nassau bets that 38 jobs at \$38,500 each will materialize, and Capitol Seniors will succeed.

Capitol Seniors expects income of \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year from each of 111 units. Is this reasonable? Capitol Se-

niors can't lose. Nassau can.

The vision of Nassau Legis. Arnold Drucker (D-Plainview) to support mixed-use housing for young and old people should be developed instead.

Brian P. Kelly,
Rockville Centre

Another 10 years of tax breaks for Nestle Waters North America Inc., a company that sells bottled water ["Aid extension sought," News, April 30]? What's next, a tax break for the corner deli, or maybe for the neighborhood hair salon? Why not have middle-class homeowners pay for it all?

Thomas Smith,
Riverhead

News, May 2]. These include cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts and onions.

Before transitioning to organic agriculture, I was a conventional farmer for decades. As a result, I understand what some farmers face with regards to their survival and why they think chlorpyrifos is necessary to grow a crop successfully. It

was not easy for me to make the switch, but doing so has been worthwhile, although not without its challenges.

I also appreciate that some of my neighbors, whether farmers or not, use weed and grub killer on their lawns. The problem of toxic chemicals on our food and in our environment is much bigger than chlorpyrifos — and

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