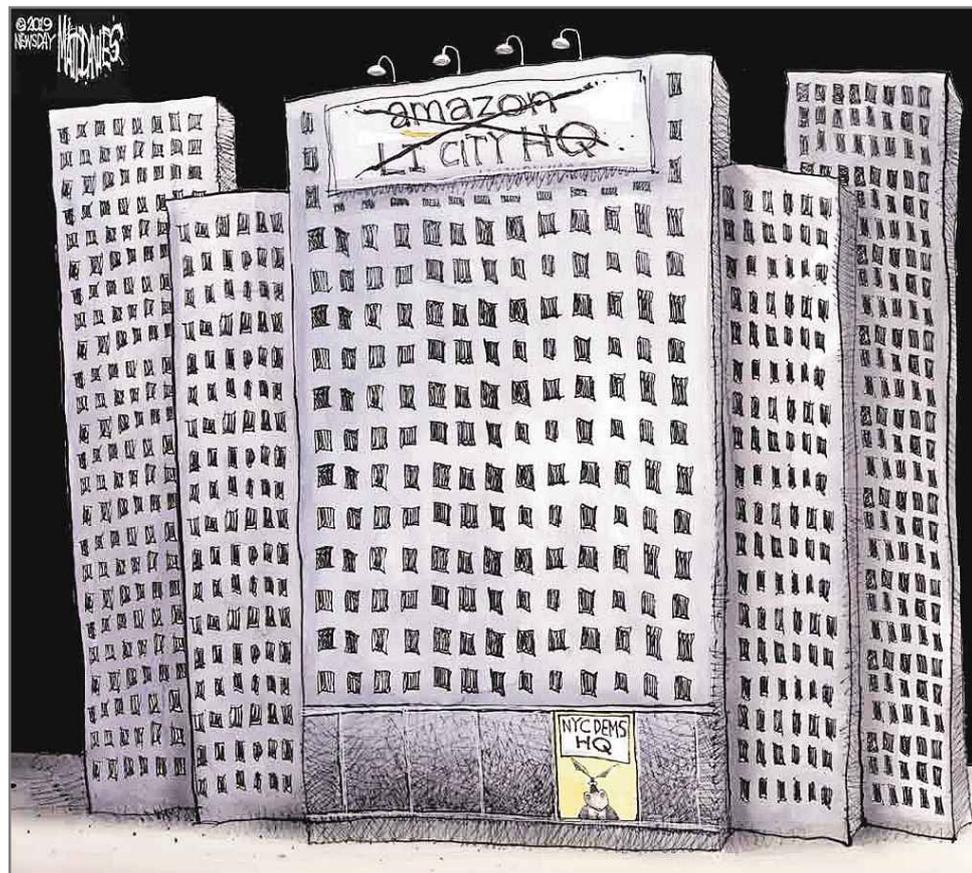


MATT DAVIES



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LETTERS

Don't repeat Calif. error on vaccines

I recall the days of disabled polio victims, miscarriages from rubella, friends deafened from measles, fear of lockjaw from tetanus, as well as chicken pox, mumps and more. You can bet that when vaccines for these diseases came out, we were first in line to get them as children and, later, for our own children as well.

Today's parents lack these experiences, or some would not make foolish decisions against vaccination — some rooted in fraudulent British medical research in the 1990s that linked them with autism, but was then retracted.

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New York State should eliminate its religious exemption for vaccines and allow only medical exemptions ["End religious exemptions for vaccines," Editorial, Feb. 8].

However, New York should be aware that after California banned personal belief exemptions in 2015, the number of medical exemptions for children more than tripled, cutting into an increase in compliance. The journal *Pediatrics* reported in November that some doctors were granting exemptions without medical justification, and one was making money by granting temporary exemptions costing \$300 per renewal. Further, *Pediatrics* points out that Mississippi and West Virginia, the two other states allowing only medical exemptions, require them to be reviewed by state health officials.

*Margaret Regensburg-Drowns, Yaphank*

**Editor's note:** The writer is an adjunct instructor in social policy at the

School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook University.

Happy with refund on 2018 taxes

I just filed my 2018 income taxes, and with a slightly higher income from savings interest, this year I am getting a refund approximately \$1,700 higher than last year. (I am retired. My wife works, but her income stayed steady and she did not change her withholding. We file jointly.)

Thank you, President Donald Trump, for your tax reform law.

Now if we could get Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and state politicians to cut spending and taxes, we all would benefit. Cuomo should stop blaming the new tax plan for the state's revenue shortfall and take responsibility ["Cuomo: Tax revenue down \$2.8B," News, Feb. 5].

*Bernard L. McGrath, Holbrook*

Activists 1, Amazon 0, NYC -25,000



Mark Chiusano

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It's a new reality for Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio and other supporters of Amazon's now-revoked deal in New York City.

What's so wrong with Amazon's 25,000 jobs? They are asking the young progressive flank that helped scuttle the pact.

It's a reasonable question. In a speech on Long Island last week, Cuomo touted the 357 jobs created by auto-industry software company Dealertrack in exchange for \$12 million in state tax credits and grants. Amazon was bringing far more, which explains the higher incentives — which were not condition-less cash up front, but rather performance-based and partially available to any company.

Deal supporters might have done a better sales job, making a better argument than, "Trust us."

But there is an anger about Amazon that was missed by the deal's supporters, a general unease among many plugged-in younger New Yorkers about the power of perhaps the world's richest man and his company, which they see as having made a business encroaching on lives and homes.

It's a company that has from the beginning been brash and happy to break things. It has not exactly been a model corporate citizen in Seattle, where the juggernaut campaigned against a \$275 per-full-time-worker annual tax on larger businesses to help homeless people. What a radical idea.

Maybe the opposition on social media and among New York's corporate-skeptic cadre of activists and organizers would have been shaped differently if it were, say, Budweiser that wanted to build big and bring 25,000 jobs to New York City. Maybe there would have been skepticism, but less opposition, if it were a tech company that wasn't dabbling in facial recognition software or delivery drones.

Then the normal city negotiations would have commenced, a little bit of this in exchange for a lit-

tle bit of that, maybe leading to real transit improvements and big job-training programs for locals.

But deal opponents didn't leave themselves room to compromise, and Amazon was tired of weathering the heat.

Maybe that's a sign of a wider frustration building, too, among these young activists who have lately been lumped under the "progressive" or "democratic socialist" labels for lack of a more specific name. These young people grew up in or experienced the Great Recession and Occupy Wall Street and are critical of big companies, even as they use the companies' services. Why would it be a full love-fest when wages are stagnant and jobs are far less secure and student debt is a debilitating worry and economic inequality deepens?

This cadre is rethinking the inherited wisdom that states and cities should compete against one another to rebate tax dollars to businesses whose main purpose is to make a profit, not necessarily be friendly to their neighbors.

Maybe Amazon's departure will prompt a rethinking of that system. Maybe if no one offered state or local tax incentives, companies would use different factors to figure out future locations.

But for now, that isn't the case. So how will New York fare if nearby states don't also ditch tax incentives and join the revolution? Then it's New York's greatness vs. others' billions of dollars.

That's a bold experiment, not exactly a concrete win. So why the unequivocal celebration by city politicians who opposed the deal? For now, New York is simply out a lot of potential jobs, and strategies about tax revenue and economic development are up in the air.

What seems clear is that there is a new young and left-leaning nexus here that isn't staked to real estate or labor interests or one of the Albany-based "three people in a room" that have traditionally wielded power. Meaning it's a beginning, for better or worse, of politics not-as-usual in New York.

*Mark Chiusano is a member of Newsday's editorial board.*