

NY Dems are their own worst enemy

After scaring away Amazon, their next target seems to be wealthy taxpayers



Lane Filler

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Last week, much of New York's attention was focused on financially illiterate liberals derailing the economic future of the metropolitan area by sending 25,000 Amazon jobs and \$27 billion in tax revenue fleeing from the city.

That was worthy of notice, but it needs to be understood as part of a disturbing whole. We are seven weeks into the state's era of single-party Democratic rule. We are seeing city-centric and ultraprogressive control of both chambers of the State Legislature in Albany that many Democrats promised wouldn't happen. And it is shaping up to be more of a disaster for the state as a whole and the people of Long Island in particular than even the most frenzied Republicans warned before the election.

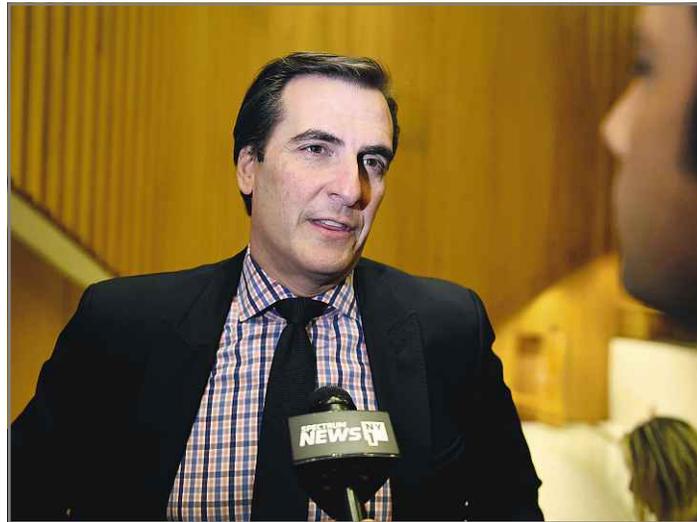
The Amazon misfire made New York a national laughing-stock. It also introduced us to

the magic-beans economic theory: When a company granted a 10 percent reduction in the massive tax bills it was going to pay upon locating here flees, the state can use all the billions captured from not reducing that (now nonexistent) tax bill to build subways and schools.

By this logic, imagine how much extra money we'd have if we could get all the big corporations in New York City receiving tax breaks (practically all of them) to leave. We'd be rolling in magic-bean cash!

The Amazon deal died for several intertwined reasons. Control of the State Senate gave Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins a pick on the Public Authorities Control Board. Stewart-Cousins hails from Yonkers and had promised to run the Senate with love for her suburban moderates. But she gave that board spot to Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, whose fear of an uberliberal primary opponent made him a fierce Amazon opponent.

So as soon as the "there will be a suburban coalition" Democrats took the Senate, the



Michael Gianaris, the State Senate's deputy majority leader, was among the most vocal opponents of Amazon's HQ2 in Queens.

most liberal voting bloc in New York City (which is to say, in the world) took over the state.

Need more proof?

While everybody was talking Amazon last week, Senate and Assembly Democrats introduced their 2019 New York Health Act, which is not to be confused with the version that has passed the Assembly four years running and died in the Senate. That version costs a measly \$139 billion a year. The

new plan adds at least \$40 billion a year by fully funding long-term health care and home health care for all.

To be fair, much of this would be paid by redirecting money that goes into existing health insurance. But even before this year's hefty additions, a study by the Rand Corp. that plan architect and Assembly Health Committee chair Richard Gottfried embraced concluded that the top 5 per-

cent of earners would pay about \$150,000 more a year.

Except many of them wouldn't. State officials say the top 1 percent of taxpayers in New York, or 93,000 filers, pay 46 percent of the income taxes. Which, starting in 2018, were mostly no longer federally deductible. Many such high-earners, faced with the kind of tax hike single-state single-payer would demand, would simply "do an Amazon" (copyright 2019), leaving the state with their often-portable income.

That suburban coalition also hasn't achieved its main priority: making the property-tax cap permanent. That's not surprising. The public employee unions that have funded the Democratic Party for decades don't want the tax cap. What they want, after all these years of contributions, is a payoff: more government spending at every level.

To achieve their progressive goals, New York Democrats need votes to empower their party and wealth to fund their initiatives. Thus far, they are driving away both.

Lane Filler is a member of Newsday's editorial board.

Many people, including members of Congress, must believe that Trump's motivation for the border wall has little to do with protecting our country. It is vanity more than anything else, which would be gratified by a 1,900-mile wall, which would be known as the "Trump wall." Also, at this stage in a long confrontation, he probably feels he must save face. What a predicament for our country!

Did those who voted for Trump ever think that he would conduct his presidency in the extreme way that he has? I believe that if he is nominated again, those who voted for Trump in 2016 will vote for whoever runs against him in 2020, which means there will not be a truly competitive election.

Robert Wilson,
West Islip

When the president visited McAllen, Texas, on Jan. 10, Raul Ortiz, the Rio Grande Valley acting chief of the Border Pa-



U.S. agents detain asylum-seekers in McAllen, Texas, in June. Women and children had rafted across the Rio Grande from Mexico.

rol, told him that agents in his sector had apprehended people from 41 countries, including India, Pakistan, China, Romania, Nicaragua and Ecuador. He said 90 percent of illegal crossings occur where there is no barrier. Agents talked about human smuggling, sex trafficking and the drugs coming over the border. All this in addition

to caravans determined to enter the United States.

However, Newsday's editorial board said this crisis is merely in the president's imagination ["Trump's imaginary emergency," Editorial, Feb. 17]. I suppose the board knows better than our border agents.

Tom Santoro,
Holbrook

The failure to get your way does not constitute a national emergency. What is an emergency is President Donald Trump's creeping authoritarianism. The Constitution gives the power of the purse to Congress — and a bipartisan agreement on funding was just reached in Congress. By declaring a national emergency to try to obtain more money for his wall, Trump is threatening the balance of power between the institutions of our democracy and jeopardizing the well-being of military families and border communities. The president's own security advisers made clear they do not see immigration at our Southern border as an emergency.

By separating children from their families and decreasing the legal avenues to apply for asylum, the Trump administration has created a humanitarian crisis at the border, not a national security emergency. Our members of Congress

must immediately condemn Trump's gross overreach and pass a resolution to strike down his bogus declaration of a national emergency. Our democracy depends on it.

Al Chazin,
Flushing

The border situation is not a national emergency. The only national emergency — actually a global emergency — is climate change. However, our president has his head in the rapidly warming sand about this scientific phenomenon. The president's obsession with the wall is a tactic to divert attention from the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller. Declaring an emergency is the reaction of a spoiled child who did not get his way.

Carol Rogoff,
Bethpage

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