

**EDITORIAL**

# Spend opioid money wisely

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There's one fact about the cash Suffolk County will receive in the settlement of its lawsuit against opioid drug manufacturers and distributors that can be taken as either discouraging or encouraging. The money, expected to total \$180 million and intended to fight addiction and its effects, will be distributed over 18 years, starting with \$25 million this year.

That's discouraging because it implies the storm of opioid addiction and the waves of death and destruction it is leaving in its wake won't end anytime soon. It's encouraging because the structure of the payout, for which Suffolk is now accepting grant applications, indicates the difficulty and endemic nature of this battle are finally coming to be understood.

Over the past two decades, thousands of Long Islanders have died from opioid overdoses. In 2016, Suffolk became the first county in the United States to file suit against drug companies for their role in many of those deaths, a lawsuit Nassau County and the state of New York soon joined. It had become increasingly apparent that manufacturers

of prescription pain pills, and oxycodone in particular, knowingly lied to the federal Food and Drug Administration, doctors, and patients about the addictive nature of new painkiller formulations.

The drug companies' aggressive marketing and dishonesty led to an avalanche of prescriptions being written, dispensing pills to patients who didn't understand the risks of addiction and succumbed in heartbreaking numbers. As the scope of the addiction crisis grew and states like New York took steps to cut down on the availability of both legal and black-market pain pills,

the supply of those pills declined and the street price skyrocketed.

A lot of those addicts moved to street drugs, and the street drug market for heroin boomed — even as extraordinarily deadly and potent fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 100 times stronger than heroin, made its way into the supply. The problem, though difficult, was not intractable. Progress on cutting deaths and new addictions was made . . . until the pandemic left too many people lonely, depressed, isolated, bored, fearful and hopeless. Now the numbers, of lives ended and families torn asunder, are worse than ever.

It's good that the money is there, but it won't be a panacea and it can't be wasted.

The best possible practices on addiction prevention, treatment and recovery must be pursued. An eagle-eyed accounting of what does and does not work in the programs this new money funds must be compiled, and must inform future action. And along with education, addiction prevention, treatment and recovery, the practice of harm reduction, in which addicts who are not ready to quit are helped to lessen the danger and ill effects of drug use, must be a focus.

Addiction is a disease of the mind, body and spirit. Many suffer from it because of the crimes and lies of pharmaceutical companies. And all who do, deserve help.



JAMES CARBONE

**Legis. Kara Hahn and other Suffolk officials speak of opioid grant funding.**

**MATT DAVIES**


NEWSDAY / MATT DAVIES

■ **EDITORIAL CARTOONIST MATT DAVIES'** opinions are his own. You can see more of his work at: [newsday.com/matt](http://newsday.com/matt)

**LETTERS**
**Civics classes more important than ever**

I stand with Gloria Sesso, co-president of the Long Island Council for the Social Studies, in arguing for retaining the U.S. History Regents examination ["New look at exams," News, July 24].

In 1848, Horace Mann deemed it imperative that "citizens of a Republic understand something of the true nature and functions of the government under which they live."

At a time of grave threats to our rights, our Constitution, our democracy and our planet, it's hard to see what is gained by telling citizens that knowledge of U.S. history and government is expendable.

— **ANDREA S. LIBRESCO, MINEOLA**  
*The writer is a distinguished professor in teaching excellence at Hofstra University.*

Everyone does not always do "a good job." Failure must occur if for no other reason than demonstrating lack of proficiency requiring remediation. Laboratory experiments are subject to failure, and experience is gained.

Yes, there are those who are not academically inclined and instead vocationally directed. It is necessary for society to aid them in their pursuits, but all must be taught not only the three R's but also our history, civics, and evaluation techniques. This is so our democracy, now under attack by internal reactionary forces, can survive.

The Regents requirements must remain as a cornerstone, and certain proficiencies must be demonstrated for granting an academic diploma. General diplomas can and should be granted to those who complete a

minimum course of study and pass on a non-Regents exam level.

— **RICHARD M. FRAUENGLASS, HUNTINGTON**

I studied for days preparing for the Regents exams from 1965-67. I had notes, texts and research papers. It was a test to see what I had actually learned from classes.

It enabled others to assess my learnings. It is the only exam that can equally judge all students from all areas across the state to see what they have learned.

Other assessments can possibly be factored into graduating from high school, but eliminating the Regents exam would give too much subjective judgment to the schools and not fairly give a chance to succeed to those who learned the necessary material.

— **ADRIENNE HOROWITZ, OLD BETHPAGE**

# Condemn the haters, not just hate

Republican leaders shouldn't ignore the roots of antisemitism in Nassau flyers



**Randi F. Marshall**

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It was no surprise that hours after Rockville Centre residents found horrific, hateful flyers outside their homes, village and town officials arrived, denouncing the missives.

Friday, it was Rockville Centre Mayor Francis X. Murray, Hempstead Town Supervisor Don Clavin, and town councilman Anthony D'Esposito. By Monday, as antisemitic leaflets spread to Long Beach and Oceanside, it was Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, with Nassau Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder.

"We're not going to tolerate hate. We're not going to tolerate antisemitism," Clavin said. "We are united in our outrage."

"There is no place for hate in Nassau County," Blakeman said.

Blasting antisemitism from a podium isn't hard, whatever your political party.

And the abhorrent flyers

deserved the blasts. Decorated with Jewish stars and Israeli flags, they featured awful, tired antisemitic tropes, describing "The Jew's Plan for World Domination" and advertising a platform produced by the Goyim Defense League, a conspiracy theorist network featuring grotesque antisemitic postings and videos.

Friday, local officials stood next to a large poster board of one side of the flyer, headlined "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion," a reference to a lie-filled publication that's often used to blame Jews for the world's problems.

But the flyer's other side got little attention. It's no wonder.

"Let's Go Brandon," the flyer screamed. "Every single aspect of the Biden administration is Jewish."

A dozen names and photos followed, from Attorney General Merrick Garland to Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Two individuals received an extra label in red lettering — "TRANSGENDER."

This wasn't just antisemitism.



Hempstead Town Supervisor Don Clavin and town officials Friday condemn antisemitic flyers left at Rockville Centre homes.

NEWSDAY / ALEJANDRA VILLA LOARCA

This was right-wing, politically motivated antisemitism, along with blatant transphobia. But local Republican leadership chose not to publicly acknowledge that part. They showed no poster board of the flyer's "Let's Go Brandon" side, made no condemnation of the ugly right-wing propaganda or the anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric.

That, too, was unsurprising and speaks volumes.

Hempstead Town spokesman

Greg Blower said the town created the display, adding that town officials "publicly and unequivocally condemned" the flyer "in its entirety," and that the full flyer was distributed to reporters. "Any other tortured interpretation of the unqualified condemnation that took place is the work of small-minded people with an unworthy political agenda," Blower said.

Actually, it's the Goyim Defense League that has the "un-

worthy political agenda," even as Blakeman and D'Esposito discounted the vile display's political connections.

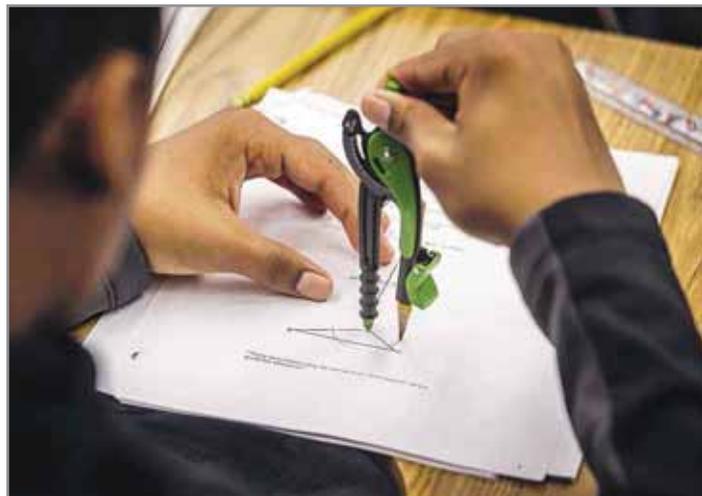
"This is not about Republican, it's not about Democrat," said Blakeman, who noted that the flyer features "government officials," but left out the political context.

But this clearly is about politics. The leaflets come after rallies in Rockville Centre by the Proud Boys, a right-wing extremist hate group, and after the right-wing Long Island Loud Majority, with which Republicans including Blakeman have stood, targeted transgender bathrooms and Pride-related library books.

Condemning the hate, while important, means little without condemning specific haters — even if they're your voters.

By ignoring the hatred's right-wing foundations, Republican officials aren't having an honest conversation about the origins of this antisemitism. Without a full-throated rejection of extremist voices, hate will continue to have a place in Nassau County.

**■ COLUMNIST RANDI F. MARSHALL'S** opinions are her own.



A student works a geometry problem in one of 10 Regents exam subjects. Students must pass four or five to earn a state diploma.

It's often been contended that the prime lesson of history is that we don't learn from history. Replacing thorough preparation for the history Regents exam, which is not federally mandated, with "mul-

tiple pathways" for high school graduation would simply exacerbate and perpetuate the dilemma.

Requiring students, instead, to simply present an oral research report to outside evalua-

tors, as proposed, is a poor substitute to truly grasping the key elements, via Regents exams, of the state curriculum. It's more relevant today than at any time.

— FRED BARNETT, LAKE GROVE

## Church and state must stay separate

The pastor who offered his opinion on the complex issue of public prayer should expand on his use of "bona fide" ["A different take on prayer decision," Letters, July 25].

Who decides whose beliefs are genuine and whose are not? Challenging personal beliefs has divided many a society, and certainly none more so than the United States.

If we accept the separation of church and state as the intent of our Founding Fathers, why are we even having this debate?

Government must stay out

of religion, and religion must stay out of government. The practice of faith and honoring beliefs belongs in the heart, in the home and in a house of worship, period.

— DOROTHY JACOBS, ISLAND PARK

## Ranked choice voting ends 'spoiler effect'

The secondary headline in Lane Filler's column "Zeldin petitions merit strong backlash" said that "legitimate third-party ballot access is an equally worrisome problem" [Opinion, July 21]. This is true and can be called the "spoiler effect."

In 2000, Ralph Nader (spoiler) probably helped

Texas Gov. George W. Bush win the presidency over Vice President Al Gore, after, in 1992, H. Ross Perot (spoiler) possibly caused Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton to defeat President George H.W. Bush.

It is important that the views of more than just the two major parties be heard and discussed. It is time we changed our voting system so that the "spoiler effect" can be eliminated. This can be accomplished by using a form of ranked choice voting, in which voters rank candidates by preference. Some states already do this in local elections, and it should be done for all of our elections.

— STEWART KARP, ROSLYN HEIGHTS

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