

Letters & Opinion

Out Of Control Spending Digs Ever Deeper Into Taxpayers’ Wallets

To the editor:

I read with interest a recent newspaper article concerning remarks made by Maggie Hassan, the former Democrat NH Senate Majority Leader at an Amherst gathering.

Ms. Hassan, an Exeter resident, seeks the Democrat nomination for governor in the November, 2012 election. It is common practice to be critical of political opponents, and point out differences one thinks will resonate with voters. A core theme she expounded is that NH has a “revenue problem”, not a “spending problem.” It is clear the prior Democrat controlled legislature would agree given the 23% growth in spending over the two previous budgets under their control from \$9.36 billion to \$11.5 billion. To pay for this spending Ms. Hassan and her colleagues raised nearly 100 taxes and fees, including the job killing LLC income tax, higher rooms and meals taxes, multiple hikes on tobacco products, bonding of current expenses, and even a new tax on camping. Then, the final gift to voters in November 2010 was a deficit approaching \$800 million dollars.

The consequence of this governance was a return to substantial Republican majorities in the NH House and Senate, which has resulted in the current State Budget which has eliminated the deficit and reduced state spending by 11%, passed pension reform, and reduced policy burdens on business to give them the confidence to invest and expand... all without raising taxes and fees.

So it is curious to me why Ms. Hassan thinks a return to out of control spending would be an improvement over the current fiscal restraint which provides essential services and stops digging ever deeper into taxpayer's wallets.

*Respectfully,
Bill Belvin
Milford/Amherst State Representative
Hillsborough District 6*

Thank You for Your Belief In Our Mission And Impact!

To the editor:

On behalf of the Souhegan Valley Boys and Girls Club, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make our 11th Annual Fall Auction held on November 19th a huge success. For the first time in its 11 year history, the auction sold out! The success of this event was due to the individuals and businesses that supported the event as well as the hard-working auction committee, volunteers, staff and board of directors who made the event a special night for all.

I would like to thank our sponsors: Alene Candles, Cirtronics, Hitchiner Manufacturing, Apple Therapy Services, Centrix Bank, Lake Sunapee Bank, Winer and Bennett, Ameriprise Financial, Ciardelli Fuel, Eaton & Berube Insurance, Edward Jones Investments, IPG Employee Benefits, Kenny, Dennon Lague, CPA, Law Office of Tom Quinn, McLane Law Firm, Monarch Instrument, St. Joseph Hospital, and St. Mary's Bank. In addition, I would like to thank every local business and individual who donated an item, and our guests whose support was extraordinary. Fundraising events like this are increasingly critical to the Boys & Girls Club as state and federal grant support has been all but eliminated over the past few years. This event will help the Boys & Girls Club keep fees low and insure that all children in our community have access to our programs regardless of ability to pay. Every dollar donated goes directly to the Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley, a local, independent nonprofit organization located in Milford. Thank you everyone for your support and your belief in our mission and impact!

*Helen Leach, Auction Chair and
member of the Board of Directors
Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley*

Department of Public Works Amherst Transfer Station Hours

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Saturdays, December 24 and 31.

Letters To the editor:

The Amherst Citizen is eager to serve as a community forum. We welcome your letters, opinions, and commentaries and make every effort to run them in their entirety. We do reserve the right to edit. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the position of the staff of *The Amherst Citizen*.

Please direct your letters, views and commentary to the Editor, *The Amherst Citizen*, P.O. Box 291, Amherst, NH 03031-0291, or e-mail your submission to: news@amherstcitizen.com. We will attempt to run your letter as submitted (space permitting) providing it is signed and phone number is included.

Earn It

To the editor:

Last Saturday I attended a rally in Manchester for Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney. Former Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, Former Utah Governor Mike Leavett, and our own former Governor Sununu were also in attendance to support and campaign alongside Governor Romney.

The rally kicked off his Earn It Campaign and almost 500 supporters flooded Manchester and surrounding areas with an army of people including the Governors campaigning door to door to prove to NH voters that Mitt Romney is willing to “Earn” every vote from the New Hampshire citizens in the NH Presidential Primary to be held January 10, 2012.

Several thousand doors were knocked, several thousand phonecalls were made within the state, and thousands of yard signs were put together and distributed during this Super Saturday campaign event. The NH Headquarters Office on Elm Street in Manchester was organized like a fine tuned machine with their NH Staff overseeing the events and hundreds of supporters there to pull up their sleeves and be willing to work to see their candidate elected.

I have been to events for some of the other candidates throughout this year and I have yet to see a candidate draw the crowds of enthusiastic supporters over and over again like the Romney Campaign.

Mitt Romney appeals to many because of his strong sense of patriotism, his experience in the private sector, as well as the fact that he was the Governor of Massachusetts and has proven political success. Americans are looking for someone who has leadership ability in business to lead us into a better financial place than we are currently experiencing. We are looking for a leader with experience governing and he did just that as the Governor of Massachusetts. We Americans are looking for a leader who believes in America and doesn't go around the world apologizing for America. That leader is Mitt Romney who assures us over and over again that he believes in America.

I believe in America as well and I believe in a bright future for all of us and I support Mitt Romney for President.

*Lisa Hansen
Amherst*

Souhegan’s Community Council, a Model For Other Schools

To the editor:

The opportunity to spend time at a reunion of alumni from Souhegan's first four year graduates, the Class of 1996, affirmed that the school's commitment to personalization and its strongest programs, Senior Project, Advisory, and Community Council, resonate with our students long into their adult years. Crista Case, now an editor for the Christian Science Monitor, remembered that when a classmate with dyslexia struggled to read the African names in a novel, her teacher, Marcey Rawitscher, color-coded each of the characters' names to help him access the text. One student remembered that I withdrew the privilege of his calling me by my first name when he did something that dishonored my trust. In his senior year, he came to me to relate all the actions he had taken to restore my trust, and then asked permission to call me by my name before he graduated. We laughed as Jon Wasson recalled that he was the first student to use a fax machine, as he met a research deadline despite being on a trip with his dad.

The alumni peppered me with questions about the school and their former teachers. They wanted my assurance that the essential aspects of the school remained true—that Senior Project was still a very big deal, that Advisory was still a cornerstone, and that Community Council was still charged with debating important issues. Allison Ferraro wanted to know if Souhegan was still part of the Coalition of Essential Schools; she cared that her high school was part of a national organization.

I had a great time catching up with these wonderful graduates and wished these creative and thoughtful adults still lived in town. They have become computer specialists, and scientists, and physician assistants, and accountants, and bankers, and teachers and musicians. In their memories and in their questions, they told me that Souhegan High School still mattered to them.

One big reason that Souhegan matters to these students and to our communities is that the school's mission is to prepare students to be active citizens of our democratic society. The staff knows that most of the students will become voters before they graduate from high school. The faculty takes their responsibility to hone students' skills in grappling with important global, national, and local issues. The school's Community Council, comprised of students, staff, and adult residents of our two towns, is the primary vehicle for exercising the tenets of the school's democratic culture. It serves as a microcosm of the complex society students will enter when they leave high school; it is imperative that they learn how to make important decisions while they are surrounded by caring adults who help them to consider ideas from multiple perspectives.

Souhegan's Community Council has been a model for other schools throughout the country. Students and faculty members have been asked to present their work on the Council at national education conferences. We have written about Community Council in our book about Souhegan High School. Standards of Mind and Heart: Creating the Good High School, can be ordered through The Toadstool in Milford.

I wish everyone in town could have shared in my pride in listening to these remarkable young adults who began their journey towards adulthood in our school.

I retired from Souhegan in 2010, and remain extraordinarily proud of Souhegan High School, whose Mission states that it “aspires to become a community of learners born of respect, trust and courage.” In their work, the administrators, staff, and students honor the commitment of the residents of our town to educate the next generation of active citizens of our democratic society.

*Peggy Silva
Amherst*

Confiscating The Riches Of A Few Billionaires Will Not Solve Our Deficit Problems

To the editor:

In response to the letter in November 22 issue of the Citizen from Tom McKinney of Mont Vernon, I would like to point out some errors of fact and of omission. First of all, comparing deficits under Bush and Obama doesn't tell the whole storey. The deficit of \$1,413B in FY2009 (including the TARP under Bush) is larger by about \$100B than the deficits in FY2010, 2011 or projected for FY2012. What has been going on during this time? The greatest recession since the “great depression” of the 1930's, lowering tax income and lowering GDP. In addition, the cumulative debt of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which was kept off the books of the Bush administration, got passed on to Obama. To say that Obama has run up the deficit by overspending is just not fair. I should also point out that praising Reagan for reducing unemployment and increasing tax revenues because he “reduced the top tax bracket from 70% to 28% in 1981,” is not historically accurate. Reagan reduced the top rate to 50% in 1981. The top rate was reduced to 28% in his last year, and was raised again two years later, under George H. W. Bush.

Mr. McKinney's point, that simply confiscating the riches of a few billionaires will not solve our deficit problems, is well taken. Nevertheless, it does not follow that, “raising the taxes on the top 5% is not such a good idea.” This group has a combined income of over \$2.9B, and is paying about \$600B in taxes. That is a tax rate of 20.6%. It is this low because the capital gains rate is 15%. If they were paying at the ordinary income rate, that would add \$350B in revenues, cutting our current annual deficit by a third. Allowing the Bush tax cuts to expire, for all but poor, would be a start, but adds only maybe \$70B.

Besides changing the tax code, the way out is to grow our economy. That requires government spending to increase demand. We can make up for this by spending less in some areas, and closing corporate tax loop holes. But if it means deficit spending, would we rather have deficits due to creating jobs and building infrastructure (which we sorely need), or from reducing revenue through tax cuts, which have doubtful economic benefit?

*John G. David
Amherst*

Hate Speech: We Should Take a Stand

To the editor:

As is my habit on most days, I stop at the Amherst Post Office to pick up my mail. During the course of the year, I may encounter Lyons Club members, Girls Scouts or folks running for local offices. What I did not expect to encounter the other day were two young women who had set up an information table which included a picture depicting our President as the worst tyrant and murderer in history; Adolf Hitler.

Perhaps this depiction and the accompanying material is not legally considered hate speech, but to me, there is nothing that invokes more hatred then the reminder of one of the worst periods in modern history. As an American, I can never abide any such reference to Hitler or Nazi Germany. We have become used to throwing out epithets without any regard to their impact or their meaning. We should take a stand.

These two young women who were representing the Lydon LaRouche organization are fortunate that they live in a country where our Constitution allows this form of political free expression. These two young women are lucky that they live in a country where people are not rounded up and jailed or executed for their political or religious beliefs. And most importantly, these two young women are fortunate to live in a country where they are able to spew their hatred of a duly elected president of these United States.

However, I hope that whatever your political views, when you encounter this kind of “hate” speech, you will have the courage to speak to the offensive hatred it spews in our community.

*Sincerely,
Marilyn Peterman
Amherst*

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