

Editorial

Spitzer License Plan Defeat Is Victory For Democracy

The people have spoken—and the politicians listened!

Governor Eliot Spitzer last Wednesday announced to an audience mostly consisting of the New York state delegation to the House of Representatives that he is scrapping his proposal to provide illegal immigrants living in New York with drivers' licenses. Spitzer pushed for providing licenses to illegal aliens because, he maintained, so doing would have enabled keeping New York's Upstate economy viable, would meet the demands of federal travel requirements, make the state's roads safer and bring more New Yorkers into the system. This last would help law enforcement officials fight crime and terrorism, he said.

"[The program] would have restored the practice of licensing immigrants who do not have Social Security numbers, something New York had done for years, something eight other states—both 'red' and 'blue' states—do right now and something I continue to believe is principally the right thing to do to make our roads safer and our state more secure," Spitzer said in explaining his reasons for pushing the proposal.

The program's defeat, according to Spitzer, means that many of the one million undocumented immigrants who live in the state of New York are driving without a license and without insurance. Reflecting on this fact had citizens across

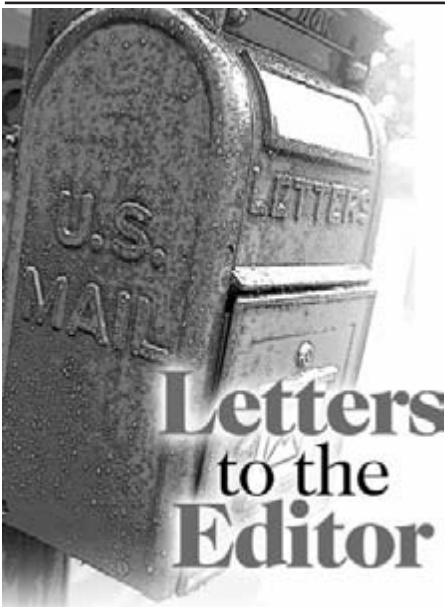
the state making phone calls and writing and texting their elected representatives. What good will issuing drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants do, they wanted to know, if those licenses do not require proof that the individual whose picture appears on the license has had some sort of driver training, has some knowledge of the traffic laws of New York state or has managed to obtain some sort of insurance? The same rules should apply to everyone who holds or aspires to a driver's license in the state of New York.

In the course of acknowledging defeat of his proposal, Spitzer declared that the federal government has lost control of its borders, has allowed millions of undocumented immigrants to enter this country and now has no solution to the problem of illegal aliens. "When the federal government abdicates its responsibility, states, cities, towns and villages still have to deal with the practical reality of that failure. And we face that reality every day in our schools, in our hospitals, and on our roads", he said.

Spitzer noted, and we agree, that a consequence of the federal failure is that New Yorkers, and Americans in general, are demanding a comprehensive solution. Grassroots protests and citizens' activism brought about the defeat of Spitzer's proposal to provide drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants. It appears

logical to us that plugging the holes in our borders is the responsibility of the federal government. Concerned citizens should take a page from our book. Write, text message or telephone Congressmembers and Senators, our elected representatives, there to serve the citizens who put them in office, and demand comprehensive legislation that will deal with the problem of illegal immigration.

We cannot and should not hermetically seal our borders, but by the same token, the privilege of living and working in this country should not be taken lightly. That privilege should be earned by taking the steps needed for legal residence and undertaking the process necessary to become a citizen of the United States. Those individuals wishing to become citizens of this great land of ours should note well the lessons inherent in the defeat of the Spitzer proposal. Elected officials are in office to serve their constituents is one such lesson; ordinary citizens can raise their voices in legitimate and lawful protest and achieve their desired objective through those elected representatives is another. The protest against the Spitzer proposal by the citizens of New York state demonstrates that our system of representative democracy is alive and well. That system will provide a just and equitable solution to the problem of illegal immigration because we, the people, will have it so.



Give All Their Daily Bread

To The Editor:

I just heard on the radio that the food pantries in our city are not well stocked with food, especially for Thanksgiving, and thus so many needy families with children, homeless people and elderly people will go hungry as a result.

This is the time of year when families get together and thank God for their blessings and for their food, and to me, it is our obligation and commandment to help others enjoy the holiday season.

More publicity should be given on the radio and TV as well as in the print media as to the need to give to food pantries.

I applaud City Meals on Wheels for sending frail, elderly Meals on Wheels recipients who are homebound a big box of all kinds of food for the winter and for the holiday.

I applaud the many donors, who give large or small donations to maintain this very important need. Food is a basic need, and not a luxury and nobody in this city should go hungry. Millions of dollars are given to foreign aid, but let us look home-ward first. The Food Stamp program should be expanded.

Happy Thanksgiving to all.
Cynthia Groopman
Long Island City

Homeless Vets On Rise

To The Editor:

A report has just come out that shows one in four homeless New Yorkers is a veteran and that number is increasing. As reported, nearly 6,000 service members in the city and Long Island are homeless and are returning soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan, fighting tough economic times and sky-high housing costs. This veterans' report came from the National Alliance to end Homelessness and has pointed out these sad facts.

Well, I can feel their pain, as I was homeless in 1975 after the Vietnam War and had served in the Navy and [know] how hard that can be. I do not know all the reasons why veterans are homeless but I

do know why these men and women join the military, and that was to serve and protect this great nation of ours. It is with pride, courage and devotion to duty that most of them gave. It is a national disgrace that these people are homeless. Our country needs to come to the aid of all those who have served this country so well and have protected our lives and our personal freedoms.

Frederick R. Bedell Jr.
Bellerose

Horns Are Hellacious

To the Editor:

For the past four months, LIRR trains have been blasting their horns through the Forest Hills station, causing misery for thousands of residents who live nearby (the horns are new, extra loud ones that are on the LIRR's recently purchased M7 trains). When we contacted the LIRR, they said they had to horn us because of federal regulations. When we contacted the feds they said that was not true (there are no grade crossings here so federal regulations do not apply). Then the railroad said there were workers on the tracks, so the trains had to blast their horns. But most of the times there are no workers and the trains blast their horns anyway.

My wife and I wrote a letter that was published in the City section of the *New York Times* that explained that the horn problem could be solved with a simple

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