

## thinking out loud

# Exchange

Police credit broken plastic from a rearview mirror with leading to an arrest in the December hit-and-run death of a tow truck driver on Interstate 95. The tragedy offers another reminder to move over for emergency and hazard vehicles. It's the law in New York, and it's common sense.

### COMMUNITY VIEW

## Repealing ACA would hurt economy, health care



**WILLIAM M. MOONEY JR.**

Be careful what you wish for when it comes to possible repeal of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. I would say

Congress should not repeal it. Coming from a businessman, that may seem surprising. So why am I being so cautious? I'm thinking of Westchester.

First of all, if the ACA is repealed, New York State will be at risk of losing close to \$4 billion in Medicaid reimbursement, under the proposed Medicaid reduction or block funding. This impacts not only health care providers but every single New Yorker. To keep Medicaid funding whole, the lost ACA dollars would have to come from program cuts elsewhere and/or increases in our taxes. Many people think that Medicaid only impacts the underserved in our state, yet nearly everyone has a family member who receives long-term care through a Medicaid-funded facility. In fact, about 79 percent of Medicaid funding in New York State goes for care of the elderly and the

disabled. The cuts will affect us all.

Second, the dominant business infrastructure in our region is health care and the life sciences. We're talking about \$15 billion of cash flow and almost 50,000 workers. Clearly a loss of close to \$4 billion dollars would have an enormous negative impact on the economies of Westchester, New York City, and other regions of the state. Do we really want layoffs instead of the unprecedented growth we are enjoying? And do we really want our underserved populations to be left without health insurance?

If the ACA is repealed, maybe our insurance rates will get better, maybe not. That's a matter of debate. To me, the real culprits here are not the government and the ACA, but the five companies that insure over 100 million people. Can you imagine what it would be like if we only had five banks or five energy companies? We would be screaming about lack of choice.

The facts are pretty simple. Just look at what these five insurance companies have done since 2010 when the ACA was implemented. Managed care companies have seen nearly 300 percent growth compared with

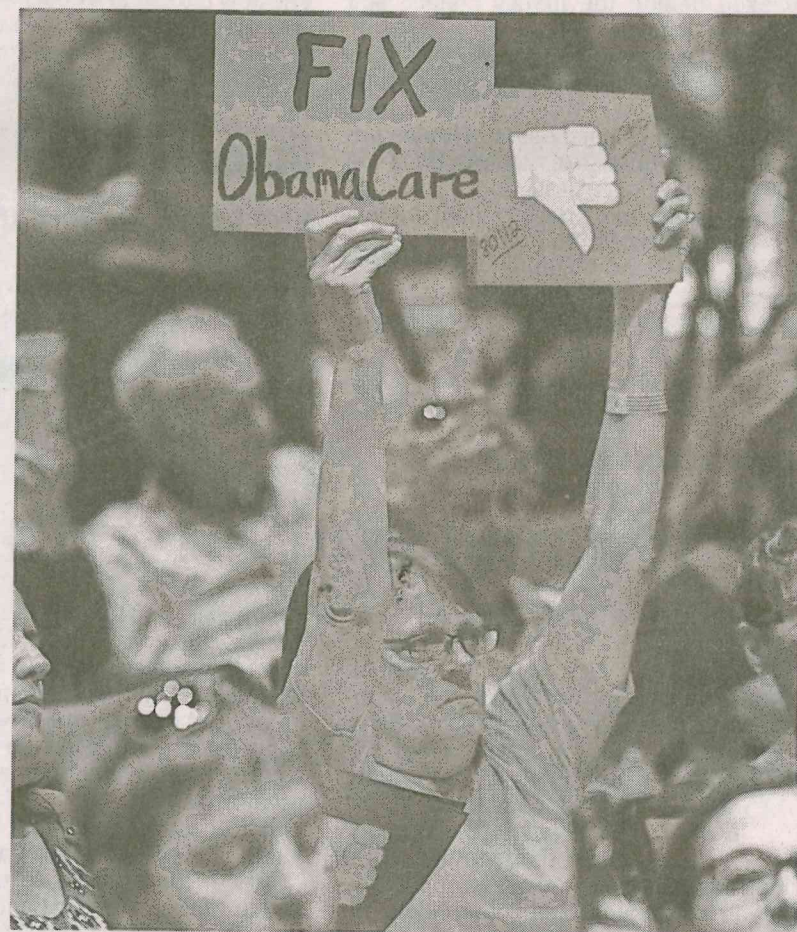
the overall S&P growth of 135.6 percent. The bottom line is that insurance companies are not in business to keep you healthy; they're in business to make a profit.

Think about how many of us have serious problems dealing with the cost of our insurance premiums and getting insurers to pay claims. What decisions do you think they make when Grandma is trying to place a claim for surgery, and the person making that decision answers to shareholders first?

It almost makes Wall Street look like a not-for-profit industry. And by the way, these insurance firms are very generous to our government friends.

So, regardless of what Washington does, we could wind up the losers and the insurance companies could walk away the winners — counting their loot all the way to the bank. To my mind, this is where the abuse starts and ends; we need to address the root of the problem.

*The writer is president and CEO of the Westchester County Association.*



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI, AP  
A constituent holds up signs calling for repair of the Affordable Care Act during an April town hall meeting held by U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo.