



# Letters: Benghazi, factory farms and Amgen

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Secretary of State Hillary Clinton testifies before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Capitol Hill January 23, 2013 in Washington, D.C. Lawmakers questioned Clinton about the security failures during the September 11 attacks against the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, that led to the death of four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens.

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## Accountability missing

Columnist John Farmer missed the point in his January 27 partisan rant about the congressional confrontation between a few republicans and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with regard to the tragic (and yes, avoidable) events in Benghazi.

To her credit, Clinton began by calling for greater involvement in the “messy Middle East.” However for her (and Farmer) to support the fantasy that this particular attack was even partially a result of a “cheap 14-minute video” insults the intelligence of the American people. I suppose 13 prior warnings from State Department diplomats assigned to the Libyan consulate and the fatal attack occurring on Sept. 11 are mere coincidence.

Both the White House and State Department owed it to those four dedicated servants to either re-deploy security forces from embassies and consulates, that were at lesser risk or get out of there. They did neither. Someone at the top should have been held to account and wasn't. Had the facts played out a lot sooner, the people may have gone to the polls on Nov. 4 and fired the president, and rightfully so.

*John A. Mirabelli, Monroe Township*

### **Inhumane treatment**

Please allow me to describe what life is like for pigs used for breeding on New Jersey's factory farms — and on massive factory farms throughout the country. It is a life of almost indescribable suffering. The sows are kept pregnant and confined for life in “gestation crates,” cages so small that the pigs literally cannot turn around, can barely lie down. These animals, said to be more intelligent than dogs, go mad under this confinement. I watched a video in which pigs gnawed on their cages until their mouths bled or pushed against the bars until they had open wounds. The sounds of their suffering were as hard to witness as the sight.

State Sen. Raymond Lesniak has introduced a bill—S.1921/A.3250 — that would phase out gestation crates and replace them with crates that would allow some movement. The bill has overwhelmingly passed the state Senate. Now, backed by Assemblyman Gilbert Wilson, it is before the Assembly. Unfortunately, the New Jersey Farm Bureau opposes the bill. I urge readers to ask their legislators to support the bill. We shouldn't treat animals this way, even those raised for meat.

*Nancy Goldfeder, Short Hills*

### **Take back Amgen giveaway**

Half a billion of our taxpayer dollars is a lot of money. The fiscal cliff deal included a hidden \$500 million giveaway to the drug company, Amgen. This is a company that recently pleaded guilty to fraud. The company has 74 lobbyists influencing our politicians in its

favor. Republicans, Tea Party, Democrats, Libertarians: Do you really want to give away tax dollars like this?

Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt.) has introduced a bill to get this money back. Reps. Richard Hanna (R-N.Y.), Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) and Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) co-sponsored Welch's bill.

*Frank Siwiec, Bernardsville*

### **Bad decisions**

More than 150 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court declared in the Dred Scott decision that blacks should be "considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings." Fortunately, the 14th Amendment overturned that decision.

Forty years ago, the Supreme Court declared in Roe v. Wade that a baby growing inside its mother should not be considered "human" but instead disposable.

The Constitution, in guaranteeing all citizens "right to life," assures we have the right to "be," whether in the womb or outside. The Supreme Court does not always decide wisely. It's time to overturn a bad decision.

*Carolyn Glodek, Colonia*

### **No limits**

With even some gun control advocates acknowledging additional restrictions on so-called assault weapons and magazine capacity would not have prevented the tragedy at Sandy Hook, I find it puzzling that discussion of gun laws overwhelmingly occupies the attention of the media and this administration. Mental health care and violence in movies and video games is arguably just as important. But for the same reason I oppose infringement of the Second Amendment, I do not support restrictions on the First Amendment protections of those who produce such materials. This nevertheless seems lost on many, who feel entitled to pick and choose which constitutional freedoms they like.

*Mark Tabaka, River Edge*

### **Drug rehab**

Recently, a man in South Jersey received drug rehab rather than prison for a violent robbery. Not only did he attack a restaurant employee but after a chase, he caused the death of a police dog by throwing it into traffic. What was Gov. Christie thinking when he created this program? Any criminal can request rehab instead of prison as a sentence. Prison is not rehab. Prison is supposed to be a deterrent.

*William Doyle, Clark*

## School costs

Union Beach residents who complain about spending \$47,000 a month to rent a school from the Catholic Church (utilities included) may be surprised to learn it costs the district over \$82,000 per month for “operation and maintenance of plant services” of their own Memorial school, based on the Board of Education budget numbers. Instead of complaining, Union Beach residents should be questioning why it cost so much more to operate their own school.

The article could have been a “feel good” story about church and Board of Education leaders working together to solve a problem in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. Sadly, the article portrays this partnership with a negative slant that fuels anti-Catholic bias and hatred.

*Ed McGlynn, Denville*

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