

# OPINION

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## EDITORIALS

### Preserve funding for Central project

The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland knows what it's up against in trying to seed a Harlem-style children's zone in Central, one of Cleveland's most impoverished neighborhoods, but it refuses to quit.

The foundation already has been denied federal planning money to get the Cleveland Promise Neighborhood project launched, while federal funding to keep the effort going is threatened. A similar project several years ago in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood faltered over a lack of community buy-in and donors, says Denise Zeman, president and CEO of the Saint Luke's Foundation, that project's sole backer.

But through sheer determination, the sisters are making progress. The foundation is getting technical assistance from the Promise Neighborhood Institute at the nonprofit PolicyLink to help it apply for federal implementation grants. And it has been holding meetings with residents, the Cleveland schools, major foundations, nearby colleges, elected officials and social service organizations in Central.

If those institutions pool resources, the foundation won't need as much grant money to get the program off the ground.

Susanna Krey, president of the Sisters of Charity Foundation, which has a long history in Central, says the initiative is important in a neighborhood where two-thirds of residents — many of them single mothers — live in federally subsidized housing.

Modeled on Geoffrey Canada's nearly 100-block zone in Harlem, the Central children's zone will try to break the cycle of poverty by shoring up poor families with cohesive social service programs and strengthened schools, Krey says.

The foundation is also teaming with the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority to get \$250,000 in federal planning money for mixed-income housing and social services in Central. These worthwhile ventures are threatened if Congress slashes the \$275 million President Barack Obama has set aside for Promise grants and the housing program. Done right, these are investments in the future. Congress should shift the ax elsewhere.

Still, the Central children's zone must show it can avoid the pitfalls that doomed the Mount Pleasant effort. Going forward, the Sisters of Charity Foundation has to make sure that this project is financially sustainable and that it builds credibility in a community that has seen too many do-gooders come and go.

### Fix East Cleveland dam

No one was injured when a century-old dam owned by the village of Gates Mills was swept away by snowmelt and fierce rains last month. But that might not be the case if a huge storm puts sudden pressure on other dams in more populated areas.

That's why dam owners and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, which regulates and inspects about 1,650 of the state's more significant or worrisome small dams — the Gates Mills dam did not fit either description — should make sure that these dams hold fast.

One of the state's chief concerns is a deteriorating 37-foot-high, 318-foot-long dam at Forest Hills Boulevard and Lee Road in East Cleveland. The dam is usually dry, but inspectors say that if it's hit by a huge storm and overflows, as many as 100 people living or working nearby could be in danger.

Of course, dam repairs are low on the priority list for this poor suburb, which would have to scramble to find money to raise the level of the dam and make other repairs. But that's no excuse for ignoring this safety problem or failing to submit an emergency plan to ODNR.

East Cleveland should work with ODNR to repair the dam or the state should consider hauling the city into court to get its attention.

## THE PULSE

Tracking the issues and attitudes that shape America

QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY POLL | I LIKE HIM, BUT . . .



CAROLYN KASTER | ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Q:** Which of the following statements comes closest to the way you feel about President Barack Obama?

	Total	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
I like Barack Obama as a person, and I like most of his policies.	41%	7%	76%	36%
I like Barack Obama as a person, but I don't like most of his policies.	33%	44%	20%	36%
I don't like Barack Obama as a person, but I like most of his policies.	1%	2%	—	2%
I don't like Barack Obama as a person, and I don't like most of his policies.	19%	41%	1%	19%
Not sure/ no answer	5%	7%	2%	6%

**Q:** Does President Obama deserve to be re-elected in 2012?



SOURCE: Quinnipiac University nationwide telephone poll of 1,887 registered voters conducted Feb. 21-28. Margin of error plus or minus 2.3 percentage points. Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

NBC NEWS/WALL STREET JOURNAL POLL | GOP CHALLENGERS?

**Q:** If you were voting today in the 2012 Republican presidential primary, which of these candidates would get your vote?

Mike Huckabee	25%	Ron Paul	6%	Jon Huntsman	1%
Mitt Romney	21%	Tim Pawlenty	3%	Haley Barbour	<1%
Newt Gingrich	13%	Mitch Daniels	3%	Other/none	6%
Sarah Palin	12%	Rick Santorum	2%	Unsure	8%

SOURCE: NBC News/Wall Street Journal nationwide telephone poll of 282 Republican primary voters conducted Feb. 24-28. No margin of error was determined.

## Presidential preliminaries

### Early-bird special:

Even though Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad called this week's Faith and Freedom Coalition forum "the first significant event of the caucus season," only five would-be GOP presidential candidates tested the waters: **Newt Gingrich**, **Tim Pawlenty**, **Rick Santorum**, **Herman Cain** and **Buddy Roemer**. If more than two of them are still running by next January, it'll be a miracle. Among the absent: **Mitt Romney**, who seems determined to downplay social issues this time out, and Indiana Gov. **Mitch Daniels**, a deficit hawk who's irked social conservatives by calling for a "truce" on abortion, gay marriage and other hot buttons. Religious conservatives usually exercise enormous power in the GOP nominating process, especially in Iowa and South Carolina. But in a new Wall Street Journal-NBC News poll, nearly two-thirds of Republicans said they'd prefer a 2012 candidate who focused more on the economy and the deficit.

**Cut to the chase:** With the federal government set to run out of money next Friday,



JOE FROLIK

House Republicans and Senate Democrats probably will cut another short-term deal rather than risk a shutdown. But a self-styled "Gang of Six" senators — three from each party — wants to get defense, tax and entitlement reforms on the table rather than continue to bicker over short-term domestic discretionary spending. President **Barack Obama's** deficit reduction panel suggested that last fall, but so far he's refused to go there. Since the six-pack includes senators close to both Obama and House Speaker **John Boehner**, maybe they can move the debate.

**Words matter:** Democrats and Republicans use very different language to describe legislation about public employee unions in Wisconsin and Ohio. It's as much strategic as ideological: How you define the stakes influences public opinion. Last month, Gallup reported that 61 percent of Americans opposed taking "away collective bargaining rights" — the language of unions and their Democratic allies. More recently, Gallup used a different

phrase and found plurality (49-45) support for "state laws to limit the bargaining power" of public unions — the GOP's preferred framework.

**Old school:** Washington Post political writer **David Broder**, who died Wednesday at 81, was first and foremost a reporter. Broder could command the time of any politician, pollster or strategist, but he preferred talking to hog farmers in Iowa or Reagan Democrats in Parma. They helped him understand both politics and America. A true gentleman who treated everyone from presidential candidates to cub reporters with respect, Broder became influential because he never indulged in ideology. He did believe in the basic goodness of American politics and many of its practitioners. It showed. He will be missed.

**Do read:** The Post's **Manuel Roig-Franzia** on former Comptroller General **David Walker's** crusade against red ink. It's at: [snipurl.com/26xz42](http://snipurl.com/26xz42)

There's more at: [cleveland.com/opinion](http://cleveland.com/opinion)

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## LETTERS

### PD takes on Mason, but he takes on crime

The Plain Dealer is desirous to link Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason to corruption. This misguided and fruitless quest has resulted in a series of articles that are nothing more than thinly veiled attacks on Mason's integrity, his family and his employees. These articles, written under the guise of investigative journalism, are suspect and may fail to answer readers' real questions. Readers might like to know what prosecutors are doing to keep Cuyahoga County's streets and kids safe.

Under Mason's leadership, the Cuyahoga County prosecutor's office has a 93 percent conviction rate. Readers deserve to know that murderers, sex offenders, drug dealers and robbers are being brought to justice on Mason's watch.

While The Plain Dealer continues to tilt at windmills and chase ghosts, readers can rest assured that Mason is taking the fight to real criminals and bringing justice to Cuyahoga County.

AARON J. BROCKLER  
Lakewood

Brockler is an assistant Cuyahoga County prosecutor.

### Uncle Bill should get the boot

The Plain Dealer's article Sunday outlining Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason's nepotism is just another example of the old adage "It's not what you know, but who you know."

Unfortunately, it is also an example of the rampant, unethical actions of our county public employee system. Disgraceful.

Having been unemployed for going on four years now and never being politically connected, I only wish I had an Uncle Bill to hook me up with a cushy government job — paid for by county taxpayers.

My advice is that we vote Uncle Bill out of office the next election.

CHESTER SOSKA  
Cleveland

### Hard choice, but no regrets

Thank you, Connie Schultz, for speaking out for reproductive rights for women. No one wants abortion, certainly not I, but thank God it was available to me 40 years ago.

I was 16, a brand new mother of a baby girl and an active alcoholic and addict who was in real danger of killing herself. My parents were both alcoholic addicts themselves. I had no idea how to care for myself, let alone a child, and I had no idea how I got pregnant again because I was blacked out. I made the decision to try to live for the child I already had. I didn't have any other options, at least none that fit.

I am not proud that I had an abortion, nor do I regret it.

Today, I have a beautiful daughter with a great husband and two wonderful grandchildren; I am sober and living a life that might not have been possible had I made a different choice.

If you have no experience with the cycle of poverty, the cycle of violence and the cycle of addiction, learn about it. That is why we have abortion, and why we have children languishing in foster care, orphanages, jails or dying at the hands of their parents or people their parents know.

No one wants abortion, but sometimes it is better than the alternative.

HARRIET PETTI  
Lakewood

### Bulldoze the Stanley Block

"Save the Stanley Block," (Letters, Monday)? Really? Letter writer Jeremy Feador must have his head in the sand. No company is going to spend the money required to bring that obsolete building up to meet today's building codes. I say if someone wants to demolish the building and put up something new, let him.

Cleveland is full of obsolete buildings that nobody wants. It's time to stop living in the past. We need to embrace progress, not condemn it.

It's too bad our casino is 30 years too late to have the impact it could have had.

JOHN FINNEY  
Bay Village

## WRITE TO US

### To submit a Letter to the Editor:

**Online:** log on to [www.cleveland.com/plaindealer/lettertoeditor.ssf](http://www.cleveland.com/plaindealer/lettertoeditor.ssf)

**Fax:** 216-999-6209

**Mail:** Letters to the Editor, The Plain Dealer, 1801 Superior Ave., Cleveland 44114

**Guidelines:** Include your full name, address and daytime telephone number for verification purposes. Letters must be fewer than 200 words long. We edit for length and clarity. All submissions become property of The Plain Dealer and will not be returned; they may be published or otherwise reused in any medium.

## TODAY @ CLEVELAND.COM/OPINION

### On the blog

### In the cross hairs

It is not government that is the problem; it is people in groups. And there's not much we can do about that. Bureaucracies seek to perpetuate themselves and to expand their influence. Individuals seek to improve their circumstances.

### Letters to the editor

### Have your say

■ There's so much to love about living in Cleveland, despite what the "worst-of" lists say.

■ Ohio should solve its budget problems by legalizing, regulating and taxing marijuana.

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