

COMMENTARY

State must widen the safety net for HIV-positive New Yorkers

By Harry Bronson and Brad Hoylman-Sigal

As members of the LGBTQ community, we witnessed the horrors of the AIDS epidemic that ravaged our community from the late 1980s through the 1990s. We have also seen firsthand the impact of highly effective HIV treatment that sustains health and prevents the spread of HIV to others.

We know that in order to benefit from this lifesaving HIV

care, it's essential to have the safety and security of a stable home. For New Yorkers with HIV, housing quite literally can mean the difference between life and death. People with HIV experiencing homelessness or housing instability are unable to benefit from the medications that keep people with HIV healthy and stop transmission of the virus. Ample research shows that safe, stable housing is the single biggest predictor of health outcomes for people

with HIV/AIDS.

That's why for years, we've fought in the Legislature to provide support for housing-insecure New Yorkers living with HIV. Government can and should play a role in funding public health and housing equity — and there's a straightforward step New York can take to increase housing stability.

Some 20,000 extremely low-income people with HIV in New York City rely on the New

York State HIV Emergency Shelter allowance program and affordable housing protection in the form of a 30% rent cap. These supports enable recipients to achieve and maintain viral load suppression, stopping ongoing HIV transmission and saving millions in Medicaid costs on avoidable crisis care and new infections.

It's cruel and unjust that this life-saving support is not available to low-income New Yorkers with HIV outside of NYC.

There are an estimated 2,500 HIV-positive New Yorkers experiencing homelessness or housing instability and living outside of New York City. With a simple fix, the governor can extend the reach of this safety net and end homelessness for people with HIV in all communities across the state.

Monroe County, for example, has the highest rate of people living with HIV in central New York. Those in Monroe County
See HOUSING, A11

America's gain is Florida's big loss

Ron DeSantis and his money-firepit of a presidential campaign didn't even make it as far as the New Hampshire primary. Somewhere, in some magic kingdom, Mickey Mouse must be laughing.

As Florida's governor, you will recall, DeSantis has waged a ridiculous war against his state's biggest tourist attraction,



Eugene Robinson
WASHINGTON POST

Walt Disney World, to show Republican voters how pugnacious and "anti-woke" he is. That is his idea — his only idea, really — of a winning political message. His state, DeSantis loves to tell

crowds, is "where woke goes to die."

His candidacy died pretty much everywhere. DeSantis' campaign and the technically independent super PAC that supported him, Never Back Down, burned through an incredible \$150 million. For all that cash, DeSantis got a crushing 30-point loss to Donald Trump in the Iowa caucuses and a grand total of nine GOP convention delegates.

He dropped out Sunday after reportedly deciding that a likely distant third-place finish Tuesday in New Hampshire, behind Trump and former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, would further damage his political "brand." That's rich, given the way DeSantis has used his office not as an opportunity to serve the people of Florida but as a branding exercise. In positioning himself as the cowboy-booted crusader of anti-woke-ness, he did real damage to his state and its institutions.

DeSantis launched his senseless fight against Disney, which has over 80,000 employees in Florida, after the company criticized his "don't say gay" legislation barring discussion of sexual identity in public schools. Rather than simply ignore a press release that hardly anyone would have noticed, DeSantis sought to punish Disney for daring to speak out. He seized control of the governing district that controls land use and services in the 25,000-acre Disney World complex, a move
See ROBINSON, A11



Nadzeva Haroshka/Getty Images

EDITORIAL

Checkoff program needs overhaul

With too many options and a lack of oversight, this charitable tax initiative is not living up to its potential.

New York taxpayers clearly want to contribute some of their income tax refund to various charitable causes and the state's fledgling public campaign finance program: They donated roughly \$3.2 million last year alone. But due to the need for a simpler donation process and better oversight, the 40-year-old effort is foundering.

The office of state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli found that less than half the charities among the 27 checkoff options audited showed disbursements from their funds in the past five fiscal years.

Neither the Gift for New York State Veterans' Homes nor the New York State Campaign Finance Fund has spent *anything*, though in the case of the campaign finance dollars there may be an explanation: That money may be used only for state-level elections, which haven't

happened since 2022.

While the audited funds totaled some \$13.7 million on hand last year, less than a third of that sum over the past six years has been spent. Only two programs had spending every year.

At a time when Giving USA reports Americans are giving the lowest percentage of their disposable income to charity since 1995, and with trust in government at historic lows, this is not a good look for the Empire State, or any other.

States across the country followed Colorado's lead after its successful 1970s-era effort to allow taxpayers to donate a portion of their income tax returns to a wildlife program. Currently, 42 states that impose a personal income tax offer programs for taxpayers to support — in all, there are 400 such programs nationwide. And New York offers the

most options (of course), with 34 entities ranging from cancer research to wildlife conservation efforts.

Even so, fewer New Yorkers participate today than in 1984 when the first checkoff option was offered. That is partly due to taxpayers now being required to file an additional form to participate. An extra form is required because New York has so many options. It would seem that state legislators' desire for an easy win — taking credit for getting yet another worthy charity added to the checkoff options — has ultimately made the program less useful to everyone.

Moreover, even when the funds spend money, most aren't following annual reporting guidelines. The comptroller's office also found that fewer than half of the charitable funds that spent money last year had filed the required dis-

closure reports.

After Mr. DiNapoli's office found similar lackluster performance by the funds in 2014, the Legislature reformed the process to require uniform annual reports. But here we are a decade later, with a system that remains bloated and buggy.

New York should certainly make it easier for people to contribute to these worthy causes, but it first must fix a system that allows the funds to sit unused and undocumented.

The audit suggests state agencies "should improve compliance with reporting requirements to provide greater clarity on why spending from the funds may be lagging."

Indeed. We would add: Unless this program is significantly reformed, the state might need to get out of the fundraising business, which is what we said in 2014.

VIEWPOINT

Another game of chicken: House averts shutdown, for now

The following editorial appeared in the New York Daily News:

With two funding bills passed just under the wire, the House under Speaker Mike Johnson has ensured that the federal government won't run out of operating funds until ... March 1 and March 8, depending on the agency. His wacko right flank, predictably, was not happy.

We suppose it's better than the alternative of shutting the

government down, in the same way that having a stale old bagel is technically better than having nothing to eat. It's not going to really fix the underlying issue here and it's certainly not something to take a victory round over.

While some observers might be confused as to why Congress is struggling mightily to do something relatively routine which is necessary for the government to continue operating, this befuddlement stems

from a misunderstanding of the role of House Republicans as it exists now.

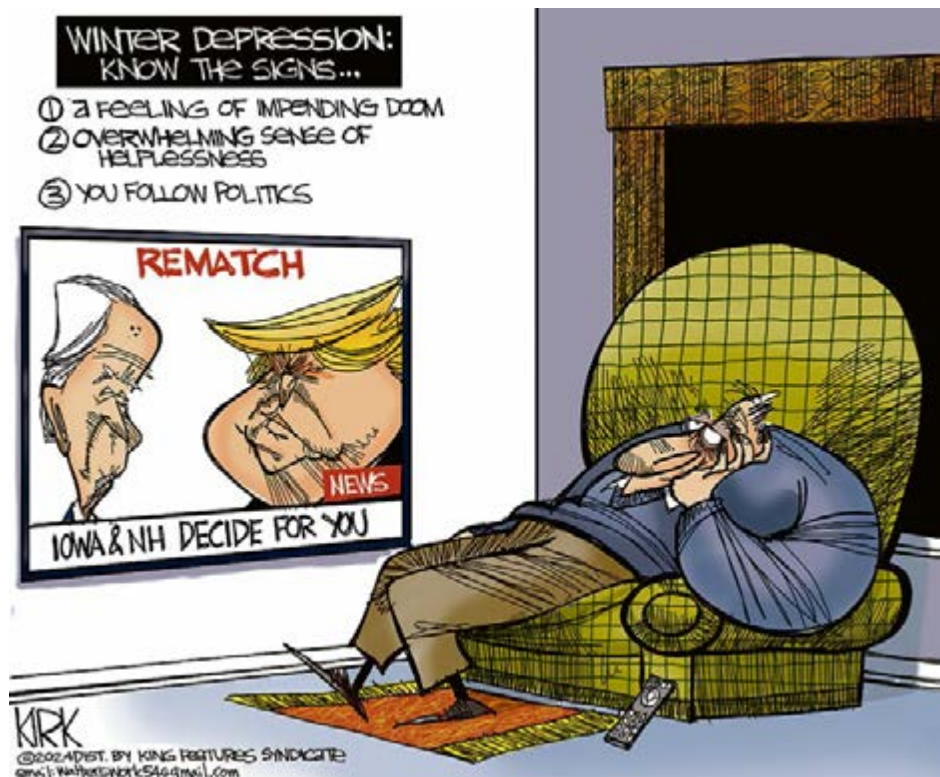
Despite their title, many of these legislators are not in that body to legislate, i.e. to engage in discussions and write legislation that will, in principle, improve their constituents' lives. They are there to wage culture war, burnish their personal image, clash with ideological opponents and fundraise for both reelection and personal projects.

We don't mean to say that anybody in the House is apolitical, but there certainly are members who are, at the end of the day, committed to finding paths to passable bills and keeping the body as a functional organ of government. Their numbers are probably dwindling, and who can blame them?

The others have made it so that this goal is all but unreachable, a self-reinforcing cycle as the body gets more and

more dysfunctional. At this stage, it probably seems like an attractive prospect mainly if you don't intend to legislate.

So we'll carry on for another couple months with funded federal agencies, and then we'll have to play chicken once again with the lives of millions of federal workers, their families, and the innumerable people who rely on a multitude of government services seeing a distant concern to the people playing this game.



LETTERS

Cap-and-invest will be too costly for consumers

The article “State’s Cap and Invest program unveiled,” Dec. 22, explained that it is intended to fund the transition to zero-emissions energy alternatives. The Hochul administration claims that the costs of inaction are more than the costs of action, but this is just a sound-bite slogan. Most benefits are to society, so they do not directly offset the costs of electrification for consumers.

The question New Yorkers want to know is: How much will this cost me? Wind and solar costs increased sharply in 2023 due to changes in commercial conditions driven by inflation, interest rates and supply chain disruptions. Cap-and-invest will add even more costs. Last year, Washington state started a similar program. At the beginning of 2023, gasoline prices in Washington were 72 cents higher than the national average. By October, prices were \$1.25 higher. The cost differential relative to the national average increased 88 percent because of the cost of their cap-and-invest program. A similar spike in gas prices will occur here. New York’s program covers all energy sectors, so all energy costs will necessarily increase.

New York greenhouse gas emissions are less than one-half of one percent of global emissions, and global emissions have been increasing by more than one-half of one percent per year since 1990. Therefore, anything New York does will be supplanted by emissions elsewhere in less than a year. That doesn’t mean we should not do something, but it does mean the state should document expected future costs to consumers.

**Roger Caiazza
Liverpool**

Affordable Gas Transition Act must be in final budget

In his column “Hold on to stretch goals for climate,” Jan. 18, Mark Gongloff sounds like a coach addressing his team after a disastrous first half. He suggests that the 2015 goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial averages was a “moon shot,” an impossibly difficult goal meant to spur nations to action.

No offense to NASA, but there is a difference. Our survival did not depend on getting to the moon. The Paris goals are an exit route out of the burning building that is our planet, not some kind of motivational device.

And our way out is narrowing. If we continue to burn fossil fuels at the current rate, we will permanently disrupt the basic weather patterns that have sustained human civilization.

Meanwhile, nations dither. Last year, the COP28 climate summit in Dubai gave the fossil fuel industry ample space to carry on as usual.

Since New York has the third-largest GDP in the nation, its 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act has become a beacon for other states and nations attempting to find realistic ways to curb fossil fuel emissions.

With her proposed Affordable Gas Transition Act, which directs utility companies to manage the transition to clean energy sources affordably, Gov. Kathy Hochul is protecting utility customers from bearing the cost of unneeded investments in fossil fuel infrastructure while also forwarding the goals of the CLCPA.

Now it is up Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins to include this act in their budgets, too.

**Estelle Bajou
New York City**

LEGALS
4410 AVENUE J LLC Filed 7/25/23 Office: Albany Co. SSNY designated as agent for process & shall mail to: 911 Central Ave Ste 214, Albany, NY 12206 Purpose: all lawful

Clearlyrated, LLC, App of Auth. filed with Sec. of State of NY (SSNY) 12/12/2023. Cty: Albany. SSNY desig. as agent upon whom process against may be served & shall mail process to Registered Agent Solutions, Inc., 99 Washington Ave., Ste. 700, Albany, NY 12260. General Purpose.

MALON VILLAS LLC Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 12/12/2023. Off. Loc.: ALBANY Co. SSNY desig. As agt. upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, C/O Kanen Law Firm, 125 Park Ave. 18th Fl, New York, NY 10017. General Purposes.

GOTHAM 225 WEST 39TH STREET LLC Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 1/17/2024. Off. Loc.: ALBANY Co. SSNY desig. As agt. upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 463 7th Ave, 3rd Fl, New York, NY 10018. General Purposes.

BEAUTY ICON NYC LLC Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 1/17/2024. Off. Loc.: ALBANY Co. SSNY desig. As agt. upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 315 W 39th St, New York, NY 10018. General Purposes.

INTEGRATED PHARMA SOLUTIONS LLC Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 1/18/2024. Off. Loc.: ALBANY Co. SSNY desig. As agt. upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 74-40 220 St, Apt A, Bayside, NY 11364. General Purposes.

LEGALS
MBBG LITTLE CLOVE PARTNERS LLC Art. of Org. filed with NY Secretary of State (NS) on 12/27/2023. Office in Albany Co. NS designated as agent upon whom process may be served & shall mail process to THE LLC, 350 NORTHERN BLVD, STE 324-1005, ALBANY, NY 12204 Purpose: General

84TH STREET PROPERTIES LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/18/23. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 58-15 58th Place, Maspeth, NY 11378. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

5E44NYC LLC filed Arts. of Org. with the Sec’y of State of NY (SSNY) on 11/9/2023. Office: Albany County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: The LLC, 5 E 44th St, PH, NY, NY 10017. Purpose: any lawful act.

MKP Ventures LLC, Arts of Org. filed with Sec. of State of NY (SSNY) 1/4/2024. Cty: Albany. SSNY desig. as agent upon whom process against may be served & shall mail process to Marshall Dworkin, Moritt Hock & Hamroff, LLP 1407 Broadway, Ste 3900, New York, NY 10002. General Purpose

Notice of Form. of REG-DENTAL LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 12/13/2023. Office location: Albany SSNY desig. as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 90 STATE STE, STE 700 BOX 10, ALBANY, NY 12207. Any lawful purpose.

Notice of Form. of NYC YEOLU LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 12/20/2023. Office location: Albany SSNY desig. as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 90 STATE STE, STE 700 BOX 10, ALBANY, NY 12207. Any lawful purpose.

LEGALS
LAW OFFICE OF DANIEL BARDEN, PLLC. Filed 1/4/24, Albany Co. SSNY for process, mail to Reg. Agent: Thomas Law Firm, 131 7th Ave #204, NY, NY 10011. Purpose: Law

JUAN RODRIGUEZ GUZMAN, MD PLLC. Filed 1/5/24, Albany Co. SSNY for process, mail to Reg. Agent: Thomas Law Firm, 131 7th Ave #204, NY, NY 10011. Purpose: MD

Notice of Form. of JAMIE DOWNIE, LMSW, PLLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 01/04/2024. Office location: Albany County. SSNY desig. as agent of PLLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 111 BROADWAY SUITE 905, NEW YORK, NY 10006. Any lawful purpose.

JKO PARTNERS LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 01/10/24. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 111 West 67th Street, #260, New York, NY 10023. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

2113 FDB LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 01/10/24. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 2113 Frederick Douglas Blvd., New York, NY 10026. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Juliette Meadows LLC, App of Auth. filed with Sec. of State of NY (SSNY) 1/11/2024. Cty: Albany. SSNY desig. as agent upon whom process against may be served & shall mail process to Registered Agent Solutions, Inc., 99 Washington Ave., Ste. 700, Albany, NY 12260. General Purpose.

Vraxos LLC, Arts of Org. filed with Sec. of State of NY (SSNY) 1/11/2024. Cty: Albany. SSNY desig. as agent upon whom process against may be served & shall mail process to c/o Registered Agent Solutions, Inc., 99 Washington Ave., Ste. 700, Albany, NY 12260. General Purpose

LEGALS
REAL FOCUS SACKETT, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 11/29/23. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 726 Sackett Street, Unit 3L, Brooklyn, NY 11217. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

TANGRAM WEST 8J LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 11/29/23. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 133-36 37th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11354. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Sarah Gauthier, LCSW PLLC, Arts of Org. filed with Sec. of State of NY (SSNY) 12/13/2023. Cty: Albany. SSNY desig. as agent upon whom process against may be served & shall mail process to The Towne Law Firm, PC, 500 New Karner Rd, PO Box 15072, Albany, NY 12212. Purpose: Licensed Clinical Social Work

265 COVERT GOLE LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/15/23. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 100 Garvies Point Road, Unit 1235, Glen Cove, NY 11542. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

1728 73ST BKNY LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/18/23. Office: Albany County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 1728 73rd Street, Apartment #1R, Brooklyn, NY 11204. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

957 FRONT STREET LLC Articles of Org. filed 01/05/24 SSNY, Albany Co. SSNY designated agent for process & shall mail to Rama Raju 3284 Bertha Drive Baldwin, NY 11510. Any lawful purpose.

HOUSING

From page A10

who are living with HIV are more susceptible to experiencing housing instability and homelessness, which affects their ability to effectively manage their HIV infection. By marginalizing people living with HIV, we perpetuate health inequities instead of supporting good health practices that benefit our entire community.

Not only will this fix increase housing stability for vulnerable New Yorkers, it will save the state money. Since research shows that stable housing significantly improves HIV health outcomes, an investment in housing will mean a reduction in avoidable Medicaid spending — reductions that will more than offset the cost of housing assistance. Indeed, a fiscal analysis by the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

estimates that investing in meaningful rental assistance for low-income New Yorkers who remain homeless or unstably housed in communities outside of New York City will generate net Medicaid savings of up to \$13 million each year.

HIV is no longer a death sentence, but the stigma, discrimination, and lack of housing people with HIV still experience can be. We need Gov. Kathy Hochul to include language in the final budget to mandate and fund equal statewide access to HIV housing assistance. By including this assistance for all low-income people with AIDS in this year’s budget, we can advance our goal of caring for marginalized New Yorkers — and generate savings in the process.

Assemblymember Harry Bronson of Rochester represents the 138th Assembly District. State Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal of Manhattan represents the 47th Senate District.

ROBINSON

From page A10

that led to state and federal lawsuits that are still ongoing. Never back down, I guess, against Tinkerbell.

His attempt to pander to the GOP base on social issues went far beyond “don’t say gay,” however. The “Stop Woke Act” that he pushed through the GOP-controlled Legislature bars teachers in the public schools from teaching critical race theory — which was not being taught to begin with — and ends all DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) programs in Florida’s public universities. It also seeks to restrict diversity training by private employers in the state.

That law is tied up in another legal battle after a federal judge blocked it and DeSantis appealed. But meanwhile, the state Department of Education, controlled by the governor, has issued rules that essentially squelch discussion of race in a manner that makes any students uncomfortable. His defense of a new Florida curriculum, in which students are to be taught that some Black people actually benefited from slavery, certainly made me uncomfortable.

All this posturing has real-world impacts. Florida school districts are having trouble hiring teachers, and Florida’s state colleges are losing prized faculty members. Ultimately, it is Florida’s students who suffer for DeSantis’s ambition.

On abortion, DeSantis apparently decided not to let any potential GOP candidate outflank him on the right.

Having already signed a 15-week ban into law, he went further and had the legislature pass a pitiless six-week ban with no exceptions for rape or incest. That law, too, is the subject of a court fight, which the state Supreme Court is expected to eventually decide in DeSantis’ favor.

The good news is that Florida voters may have the final word in November. Activists say they now have enough signatures to place a measure enshrining abortion rights in the state constitution on the ballot. If the DeSantis administration fails to torpedo the ballot initiative, and if Florida follows the pattern of other states, the issue will likely boost Democratic turnout and cause problems for Republicans up and down the ballot.

It is hard to see what DeSantis might have gained from his presidential run, and easy to see what he has lost. His appeal, in theory, was as someone who could deliver on Trump’s MAGA policy agenda without all of Trump’s baggage. But DeSantis proved to be an awkward, wooden candidate. His best weapons in Florida had been his bluster and belligerence, but he was too timid to use them against Trump. As all the failed GOP candidates have learned, primary voters don’t want New Trump — not while Trump Classic is still available.

The nation’s gain is Florida’s loss, sadly. I fear DeSantis will continue using the state as a stage to boost his MAGA profile — just like those awfully high heels on his cowboy boots.

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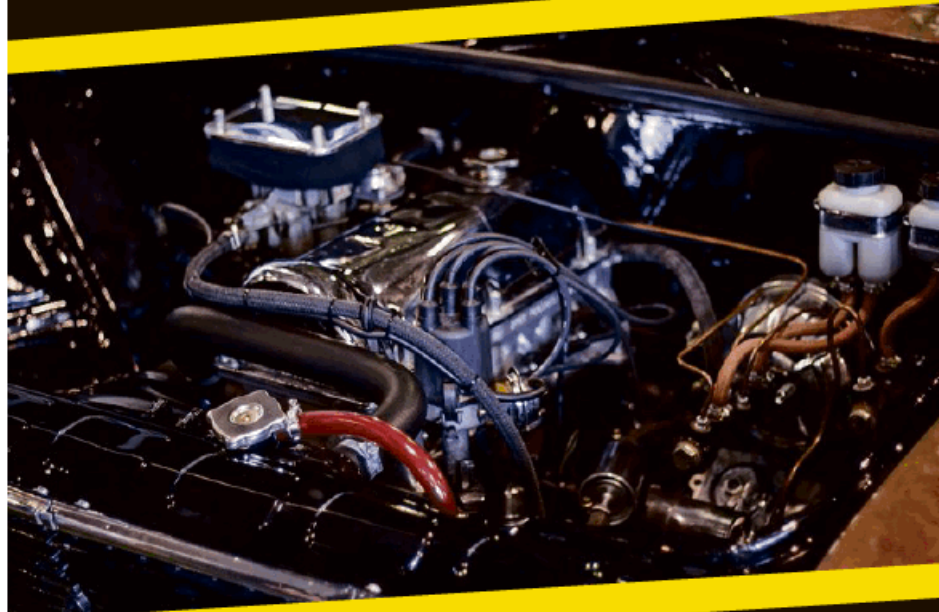
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