



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of September 25, 2023 -- 'Albany keeps looking to taxpayers on migrant crisis'

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 25, 2023

| ISSUE: **MIGRANT CRISIS**



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Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature, as well as on legislative actions, local initiatives, state programs and

policies, and more. Stop back every Monday for Senator O'Mara's latest column...

This week, "**Albany keeps looking to taxpayers on migrant crisis**"

The chaos continues in New York State.

With upwards of 60% of New Yorkers pointing to New York's border crisis as a "major problem" in the most recent statewide poll from the Siena Research Institute, there remains no true response from state and federal leaders to address it.

And it keeps getting more expensive by the day. It's overwhelming New York City, where since the spring of 2022 more than 100,000 migrants have swamped the city's ability to provide shelter, food, and other basic services. The city's mayor recently said the crisis threatens to "destroy" New York and will already cost upwards of \$12 billion over the next three years -- and that's before the arrival of thousands upon thousands of additional migrants.

It's a disaster. It's building towards a tidal wave of asylum seekers threatening to sweep across Upstate New York communities.

What's the answer for some leading, self-proclaimed Socialist Albany Democrats? Raise taxes. That's right, just keep raising taxes and keep providing whatever desperate, unworkable handout it takes.

In other words, the insanity continues. The very same Siena poll that found more than 60% of respondents declaring the migrant crisis a "major" problem also revealed that more than 80% of these same respondents cite the cost of living as a top concern.

Let's raise taxes, say the Socialist Democrats of New York -- who, make no mistake, have secured a strong foothold in New York State government over the past several years.

"We should increase taxes because it's economically just policy to offset all costs for our state to function," one leading Albany Democrat said recently in proposing what's being called a "Migrant Tax." Dozens of migrant advocacy groups continue to pressure Governor Hochul to take unilateral, executive action to overrule any county-level orders attempting to block the state from relocating migrants. President Biden appears to have gone AWOL on the border crisis.

In the meantime, state Senate and Assembly Republican conferences have repeatedly called on Governor Hochul to convene an emergency session of the Legislature to address this crisis and begin taking the initial steps necessary to address it, including revoking sanctuary status, ensuring local decision-making, and protecting taxpayers from the unsustainable costs of an uncontrolled influx of asylum seekers.

In the wake of last week's call from some leading Senate Democrats to impose a "Migrant Tax," Senate Republicans immediately sent a letter to the Senate Democrat leadership urging that it be outright rejected.

Our letter stated, in part, "We have seen our local resources drained and not only chaos, but danger unfolding. It is deeply offensive that we would force New Yorkers to continue to foot the bill for the failures of Washington and Albany politicians as this crisis grows. ... New Yorkers have already been forced to shoulder this burden in an already tenuous economy."

I remain fully supportive of a safe and responsible system of legal immigration in this nation. However, the current crisis is a complete failure of leadership and common sense at the state and federal levels. Upstate localities have every right to try to protect our

communities from an onslaught of asylum seekers that threaten to overrun local resources, social services, schools, and budgets, to mention nothing of the public health and safety concerns.

The migrant crisis threatens to spread across this state as fast as Governor Hochul can find shelters and Mayor Adams can fill buses with migrants off the streets of New York City.

There's no end in sight, yet true to form, the only answer from some leading Albany Democrats is to want taxpayers to foot the bill for endless handouts and continuing chaos. That's one line we simply can't afford to cross. New York State taxpayers should never be forced to bail these sanctuary city Democrats out of a disaster of their own making.

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