



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of January 22, 2024 -- 'A New Hope for the Empire State'

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 22, 2024

| ISSUE: **2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**



Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature.

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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, "**A New Hope for the Empire State**"

Now it's our turn.

Over the past few weeks, Governor Hochul has had her say and put forth her priorities for New York in both a State of the State message and, most recently, in last week's unveiling of her proposed 2024-2025 executive budget.

Ultimately, she will undertake negotiations with her Democrat counterparts in the Senate and Assembly leadership to put in place a final state budget that will carry New Yorkers forth into the ongoing, all-Democrat vision for New York's future -- a future, by the way, that too many New York residents keep telling us they're not happy with.

But now there's another vision for this state's future. Last week at the Capitol, the Senate Republican Conference unveiled a plan that we're calling, "A New Hope for the Empire State." It's a comprehensive legislative agenda that, we believe, pinpoints the failings and shortcomings of New York government under all-Democrat control, which speaks to challenges and crises that one-party government is not addressing, and that begins proposing alternative priorities and solutions for where we want to take this state.

It's a legislative agenda putting forth ideas and strategies for fighting back against the high taxes and excessive cost of living that have delivered to New York the dubious and devastating distinction as the state with the highest population losses in America.

It's a legislative agenda putting forth ideas and strategies for fighting to reclaim some sense of law and order again in New York, a state under all-Democrat leadership where the criminal element runs rampant, rising crime and violence rules too many streets and neighborhoods, and a "no consequences" approach to criminal justice has made a mockery of public safety and security.

It's a legislative agenda putting forth a bolder and stronger commitment to responsible fiscal practices including spending restraint, across-the-board tax relief, regulatory reform, commonsense investment, serious mandate relief for local governments, and the value of local decision-making.

In other words, it's a legislative agenda giving voice to priorities and responsibilities in New York government that, to put it as simply and straightforwardly as possible, have been handed a death sentence by Albany's current powers that be.

In putting forth a detailed report on "A New Hope for the Empire State" last week, we wrote, "Over the last five years, New Yorkers have had a front-row seat to what unaccountable government looks like. One-party control has made New York increasingly unaffordable. Residents feel unsafe and are unsure that things will get better in the future. Far too many New Yorkers have looked at this sad reality and decided the only option was to leave the state for somewhere they can make a better life for their families."

You can find out more about "A New Hope for the Empire State" and read our full report on my Senate website, www.omara.nysenate.gov.

In announcing the plan, Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt said, "New Yorkers are deeply dissatisfied with the direction of our state, and our Conference is here to provide an alternative path forward. I have traveled throughout the state and people are tired, frustrated, and angry. They feel forgotten."

Here at the outset of the 2024 legislative session, these ideas demand and deserve a place in this government. We face an affordability crisis. We face a border crisis. Law and order are in free fall. The Albany Democrat direction for New York simply fails to produce any hope for a long-term, sustainable future for communities, families, workers, businesses, industries, and taxpayers. New York is a state in decline that continues to become less safe, less free, less affordable, less economically competitive, less responsible, and far less strong for the future.

We are at a dangerous crossroads and we must enact an across-the-board agenda to cut taxes, address affordability, and rebuild stronger and safer communities -- and we'll be fighting for this new direction and a new hope every step of the way in the weeks and months ahead.

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