



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of January 29, 2024 -- 'Tune into state budget adoption process'

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 29, 2024

| ISSUE: **2024-25 STATE BUDGET; LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS**



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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, "**Tune in to state budget adoption process**"

Budget adoption season is underway at the State Capitol, which means, first, that joint Senate-Assembly public hearings on Governor Kathy Hochul's 2024-2025 Executive Budget proposal have started and will remain underway until mid-February.

Conducted jointly by the Senate Finance Committee and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, these forums examine and critique the governor's proposal in detail and solicit testimony from state agency officials, public policy and fiscal experts, local government representatives, business leaders, educators, farmers, law enforcement, and many other advocates.

I have served as the Ranking Member on the Finance Committee since 2021 and continue to welcome having a direct voice on the legislative committee most responsible for overseeing the adoption of the state's annual budget. These hearings highlight the course that New York government is looking to set for short- and long-term fiscal practices and responsibilities. They also begin setting the stage for the Legislature's negotiations with the governor over a final state budget.

Most importantly, they are a chance for the public to learn more about what's being planned by Governor Hochul and legislative leaders for the future direction of New York State. On that note, you can also find the Senate Republican Conference analysis of the governor's proposed budget [HERE](#).

Remember that the governor has proposed a 2024-25 budget that starts at \$233 billion, already an approximately *\$4 billion increase* over the state's current, record-setting budget. In other words, the governor and the Democrat leaders of the Senate and Assembly majorities -- the biggest-spending Legislature in state history -- will start final negotiations over a new budget looking to increase state spending by at least \$4 billion. In other words, it's likely to go significantly higher.

My initial reaction to the Hochul proposal was the following: "This state already faces multibillion-dollar deficits well into the future because the Albany Democrats can't stop spending and Governor Hochul still proposes a spend, spend, spend strategy. It's been uncontrolled spending to the point that having put in place massive, long-term spending commitments -- and with massive commitments looming in the Democrats' pursuit of a radical climate agenda and the provision of untold services to an ever-surging migrant population -- New York State taxpayers already face multiyear, multibillion-dollar deficits. It ignores the reality that New York remains one of America's highest-taxed, least-affordable, most debt-ridden, and overregulated states that leads the nation in

population loss.’’

Senate Republicans will continue to be a voice for lower taxes, less regulation, greater accountability, economic growth, job creation, and more common sense on state fiscal practices. I welcome this year’s budget hearings, at this critical time, to put a spotlight on a range of policies and programs that will decide the future and strength of our local communities and economies.

In my view, we need to keep working against a New York State tax and regulatory mindset that puts our businesses and manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage, imposes red tape that strangles local economies, or prioritizes higher and higher spending, overtaxing, outrageous mandates, and burdensome overregulation.

Our Senate conference also recently unveiled a “New Hope for the Empire State” legislative agenda that proposes a range of policies focusing on public safety and security, economic growth and job creation, tax relief and regulatory reform, and affordability initiatives to try to reverse New York’s nation-leading population loss.

The first budget hearings were held last week and covered Health/Medicaid, transportation, and public protection. During the week ahead, we’ll examine economic and workforce development, human services, and elementary and secondary education. Archived videos of each hearing will be available on the [state Senate website](#).

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