



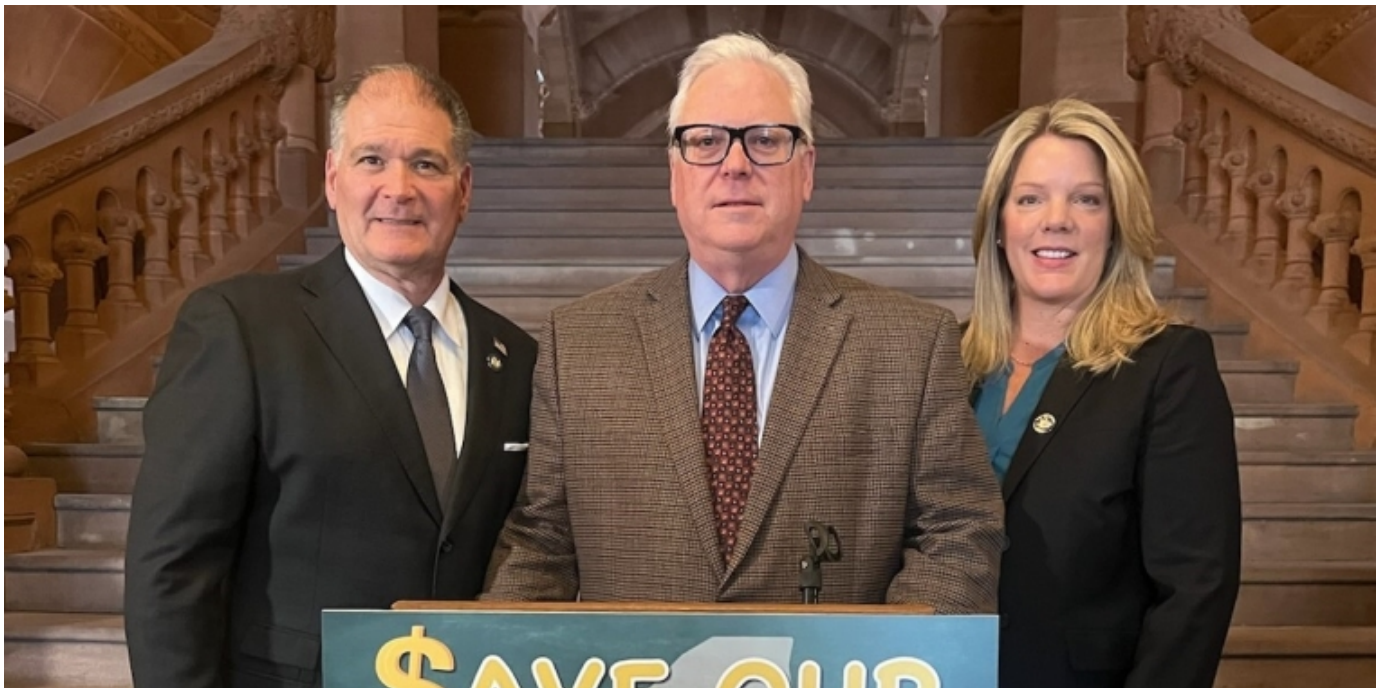
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara, Senate Republicans unveil 'Save our Schools' legislative package to keep education a priority for all New Yorkers

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 29, 2024

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At today's "Save Our Schools" news conference at the Capitol, Senator O'Mara joined Senate Republican Conference colleagues, including Senators Alexis Weik and Mario Mattera of Long Island, to reject cuts in education funding proposed by Governor Hochul.

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**Albany, N.Y., January 29**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) today joined his colleagues in the Senate Republican Conference to unveil a legislative package aimed at keeping education a priority for all New Yorkers.

Key among the plan's provisions is reversing the devastating cuts to schools that Governor Kathy Hochul included in her recently proposed 2024-25 state budget. Republican senators said that Hochul's proposed elimination of the "hold harmless" provision of the state education aid formula, which provides critical stability to local school districts, is a glaring example of Albany Democrats' misplaced priorities. They added that the governor's bloated, \$233-billion proposed budget siphons state aid away from local schools while, for example, dedicating \$2.4 billion in taxpayer dollars to provide services and other assistance to a surging number of migrants coming into the state over the past few years, bringing the total to \$4.3 billion in targeted aid to the migrant crisis.

O'Mara and his colleagues charged that the migrant crisis continues to get worse because the Democrats refuse to put an end to wrongheaded sanctuary city policies.

**O'Mara said**, "We desperately need to get New York State's fiscal house in order. But it's outrageous for Governor Hochul to target small, largely rural school districts, with small tax bases and overburdened property taxpayers, across my legislative district and throughout the Upstate region as a way to redirect millions of dollars to close budget gaps of the Democrats' own making and keep funneling billions of taxpayer dollars to the Albany Democrats' far-left, largely New York City-based agenda and migrant crisis. That's not an answer to this state's deep-rooted fiscal irresponsibility. It's just redirecting misguided priorities that won't move us any closer to fiscal stability, taxpayer relief, or long-term affordability and sustainability for most New Yorkers."

Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt said, "The Governor's budget is yet another example of the complete disregard for New York families and taxpayers. \$4.3 billion over two years will be used to address the migrant crisis that was caused by open borders and sanctuary city policies supported by Democrats. At the same time, they are stripping millions of dollars from rural and suburban school districts. We are tired of misplaced priorities from Albany's One-Party Rule, and our conference will fight to get all school districts the funding they deserve."

Senate Republicans said that education should always be among the state's top priorities and they are committed to ensuring that New Yorkers' hard-earned tax dollars help schools obtain the resources they need.

They added that their legislative package will keep students safe and improve educational outcomes in schools throughout New York. It includes proposals to:

- reverse misguided changes in the state's education aid formula proposed in Hochul's Executive Budget that, if enacted, will take resources away from local schools;
- close the pandemic learning loss gap by utilizing unspent federal emergency relief aid to support academic recovery programs, expand state grant funding, create an office in the state Education Department to track outcomes of such programs and focus on future aid increases for early education to ensure students are provided a solid foundation for future academic challenges;
- prohibit the housing of migrants in K-12 schools or on school grounds throughout the state (S.7391, sponsored by Senator Alexis Weik); and

- commit greater resources for school building security by creating a school resource officer program to permit the employment of retired law enforcement officers and provide grants to school districts and non-public schools (S.4985, Senator Oberacker).

O'Mara said that the Senate GOP legislative package outlined today is the first in a series of comprehensive proposals that will be put forth by the Republican Conference this session to try to ensure that education will remain a top priority.

Earlier this month, Senate Republicans unveiled their 2024 legislative agenda, **“A New Hope for the Empire State,”** prioritizing issues impacting everyday New Yorkers and focusing on affordability, public safety, and overall safer and stronger communities.

Watch today's news conference **[HERE](#)**.