



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senate Republicans: New state budget must address key economic, public safety, affordability priorities

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 6, 2024

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Senator O'Mara serves as the Ranking Member on the Senate Finance Committee.

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**Albany, N.Y., March 6**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats), Ranking Member on the Senate Finance Committee, today joined Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, Deputy Republican Leader Andrew Lanza, Senator Bill Weber, Ranking Member of the Budget and

Revenue Committee, and their Senate GOP colleagues in a letter to Democrat Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins urging the adoption of the Senate Republican Conference's priorities that are included in their comprehensive "A New Hope for NY Agenda."

With the Senate and Assembly expected to vote on their respective one-house budget resolutions next week, negotiations will accelerate on the enactment of a final 2024-2025 by April 1. Consequently, the Senate Republican Conference is urging the adoption of several key economic, public safety, and quality-of-life proposals that would directly benefit millions of New Yorkers.

**O'Mara said**, "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. The Executive Budget is a budget of misguided and misplaced priorities that puts at risk fundamental and longstanding state commitments to education, local roads and bridges, health care, community safety, and so much more. We can't afford to let this budget stand. 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, control spending, address affordability, and start truly rebuilding stronger and safer communities."

**Senate Republican Leader Ortt said**, "The lack of affordability in the Empire State has clearly reached crisis proportions, with thousands of New Yorkers fleeing to more affordable states. The high taxes in our State have exacerbated this crisis, while also directly contributing to our poor business climate. Our conference has put forward common sense recommendations as we enter the budget process. We must address the challenges that are

currently confronting the hardworking, law-abiding citizens of our state.”

At the start of the 2024 legislative session in early January, O’Mara and Senate Republicans unveiled “A New Hope for The Empire State.” Their 2024 legislative agenda outlines a plan prioritizing a commitment to responsible stewardship of tax dollars, jump-starting a statewide economic recovery, and restoring common sense to New York’s criminal justice system. It also stands in stark contrast to Governor Hochul’s proposed budget, a misguided plan that taxes too much, spends too much, and reflects the wrong priorities, they said.

In their letter to the Senate Majority Leader, the following measures were highlighted as key budget priorities:

Rejecting the additional \$2.4 billion in funding Hochul has proposed for migrants — \$4.3 billion over two years;

Withholding resources and funding to schools that do not protect Jewish students and/or support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. The Senate GOP prioritizes working to provide safe learning environments on college campuses to combat antisemitism;

Rejecting the Governor’s plan to alter the state school aid formula to eliminate the “save harmless” clause for Foundation Aid – a misguided change that would result in direct funding cuts for 337 largely rural and suburban school districts across the state;

Rejecting Hochul’s budget language allowing for the closure of five more state prisons, which would undermine public health and safety, destabilize local economies, and lead to more dangerous working conditions for New York’s correctional officers;

Rejecting the inadequate and inequitable funding levels the Governor has proposed for New York’s critical transportation infrastructure and ensuring funding parity between Upstate

and Downstate infrastructure funding by putting NYSDOT and MTA capital programs on an equal footing, and by supporting investment in local roads and bridges through increased Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) base aid.

[The attached copy above of today's letter includes a list of proposals that the Senate Republican Conference believes should be included in the Senate's One-House Budget and enacted as part of this year's final budget.]