



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of June 10, 2024 -- 'One-party rule of New York keeps producing decline'

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 10, 2024

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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, **"One-party rule of New York keeps producing decline"**

To kick off the just concluded 2024 regular session of the State Legislature -- one that we believed represented a pivotal session with New York at a crossroads in so many areas -- the Senate Republican Conference put forth a comprehensive set of goals to help rebuild and strengthen local and state economies, focus on the financial challenges facing many middle-class families and small business owners, and make public safety a top priority.

At that time back in early January, I 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. 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.”

We called it “A New Hope for the Empire State” and we began rolling it out at the very start of this session -- a session that New York’s Democrat legislative leaders brought to a close last week -- with a focus on fiscal responsibility and affordability for all taxpayers, rebuilding and revitalizing New York’s local economies, and addressing rising crime and public safety.

Albany Democrats decided to keep heading in a completely different direction. It continues to put this state’s future on high alert. Their direction for New York is producing billions upon billions of dollars of short- and long-term spending commitments that will keep New York a state of high taxes, endless fees, and forced borrowing for state and local taxpayers far into the future.

The overriding goals of our New Hope agenda would have:

--Improved public safety for all New Yorkers by prioritizing actions to combat rising crime and lawlessness statewide;

--Made New York more affordable for every resident by cutting the state’s highest-in-the-nation tax burden and taking other actions to lower the cost of living in New York;

--Improved the state’s business climate and expanded economic opportunity by cutting burdensome regulations;

--Moved more responsibly and sensibly toward a cleaner energy future without ignoring affordability, feasibility, and reliability like the strategy currently set in motion under Governor Hochul is doing; and

--Restored accountability and local decision making to state government in the aftermath of rampant abuses of executive power throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

But that's not where we have gone this session under continued one-party, all-Democrat rule. The size of the state budget continues to skyrocket. There was no turning back from this explosive tax-and-spend path. Far from it, in fact. The new state budget, as I have detailed in previous columns, took yet another huge leap in size and will burden state and local taxpayers for years to come.

The same goes for law and order. Albany Democrats keep turning criminal justice on its head. Most reasonable New Yorkers recognize that rising crime and violence, and weakened public safety and security, are the direct result of the pro-criminal policies being enacted and pushed by this governor and a State Legislature under one-party control. They have emboldened the criminal element throughout this state through failed bail reform, lenient parole policies, an out-of-control Parole Board, cowing to the "defund the police" movement, and an overall careless approach to criminal justice.

In short, our calls to make New York more affordable, responsible, safer, and sustainable -- and more hopeful -- have, once again, gone unheard this session.

Instead, Albany Democrats continue to make New York State a tax-and-spend addict, a safe haven for lawbreakers, unaffordable for taxpayers, less attractive to job creators, and facing a dire economic future.

It's no way to run a responsible government. They are creating a state in decline.

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