



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of September 23, 2024 -- 'Latest statewide poll: NY headed in the wrong direction'

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 23, 2024

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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, "**Latest statewide poll: NY headed in the wrong direction**"

The weeks and months ahead will bring us to a critical crossroads in the future of this state and nation.

For nearly two years, beginning after legislative redistricting in 2020, it has been my privilege to represent so many of the citizens and communities of the 58th Senate District, which now includes all of Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, and Yates counties, as well as a part of Allegany County (the towns of Alfred, Almond, Amity, Andover, Birdsall, Burns, Grove, Independence, Scio, Ward, Wellsville, and Willing).

It is one of New York State's geographically largest districts. Despite the many diverse miles that we cover, however, the communities of our 58th District continue to share so many common strengths and fundamental goals.

Most recently, following devastating flash flooding in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Debby in early August, I've joined my regional legislative colleagues at the state, local, and federal levels to continue working to ensure that residents across many area counties, especially in the hardest hit areas in Allegany and Steuben counties, get the help needed to recover and rebuild. It will be an ongoing effort.

Governor Kathy Hochul recently announced the availability of emergency repair grants of up to \$50,000 through a "Resilient and Ready Home Repair Program." The application process is currently underway, and the governor has set an application deadline of October 7th, with funds available on a first-come, first-served basis. Find out more here:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-applications-now-open-income-eligible-homeowners-apply-emergency>.

My legislative colleagues and I will continue to urge the governor to ensure that every impacted resident will be able to access needed assistance and that whatever funding is necessary will be available. State support must remain a priority. The same goes for the need to enhance and make permanent the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) permitting process for stream and streambank repair and maintenance. It has been a longstanding hindrance for our local highway and public works departments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and property owners who must have a permanent process that is more efficient, effective, and timely to undertake needed flood prevention actions in the future.

As I've noted numerous times, in numerous places, over the past several weeks, the outpouring of support locally and across the region to help the impacted communities, residents and families, and businesses get back on their feet has been remarkable. It has reaffirmed one thing we know about our region: In times of crisis, we always pull together!

I will take this opportunity to express once again our collective "Thank You" to everyone who has stepped up to help.

Approaching the start of the 2025 session of the State Legislature in January, I look forward to once again working with all of you to be a strong voice in Albany -- and to keep fighting to secure our priorities for stronger and safer communities.

As I have stated repeatedly, we need a redirection of New York's priorities and resources to begin truly addressing unmet challenges and crises. This is a critical time in New York State. It's a critical election season. We're at an important crossroads.

The latest statewide survey of New Yorkers from the Siena College Research Institute (SRI) drives this point home. The latest poll found Governor Hochul's favorability and job approval ratings at all-time lows.

Most tellingly, in my view, is the following excerpt from Siena's poll analysis:

"Just as New York voters have soured on Governor Hochul, so, too, they have soured on the direction of the state. Only 32% of voters think New York is on the right track, compared to a majority of 55% who say the state is headed in the wrong direction. Last month it was 39-51%, net movement of 11 points in the direction of the state being on the wrong track. This is the most pessimistic New Yorkers have been about the direction of the state in at least a decade. It was close to this level, 34-55%, in January of this year. New Yorkers also remain pessimistic about the direction of the country, 31-59%, little changed from 30-61% last month. By a 79-19% margin, up a little from 74-23% last month, voters say this is the most important election of their lifetimes, a view shared by 82% of Democrats, 77% of Republicans and 75% of independent voters."

That summary packs a wallop heading into the fall and, beyond that, heading into a new session of the State Legislature in January.

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It simply reaffirms what so many of have been saying for so long now: There is a fundamental need and urgency to chart a new course for a more sensible and sustainable State government for Upstate communities, families, workers, businesses, industries, and taxpayers.

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