



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

'Do you support Governor Cuomo's plan to provide a college education to state prison inmates?' ~ Share your opinion through Senator O'Mara's new online poll

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 19, 2014

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**Elmira, N.Y., February 19**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) is giving local residents the chance to share their opinions on Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposal to have New York State provide free college courses to state prison inmates.

"Governor Cuomo's proposal to provide a state taxpayer-funded college education to prison inmates seems to be striking a raw nerve among many taxpayers around the region, and statewide," said O'Mara. "I'm glad to offer this opportunity for local residents to share their opinions on the governor's plan."

O'Mara has launched a new online poll on his Senate website that gives residents of his 58th Senate District the opportunity to answer the following question, "Do you support Governor Cuomo's plan for New York State to provide a college education to state prison inmates?"

To participate in the poll, [CLICK HERE](#).

Last weekend, [Cuomo unveiled a proposal](#) to provide college-level education at state correctional facilities in 10 regions at a cost of approximately \$5,000 per inmate annually. The state currently spends \$60,000 a year to house an inmate and approximately \$3.6 billion in total spending across the state's correctional system. There are an estimated 54,500 inmates currently confined in state prisons. In announcing his proposal, Cuomo highlighted studies showing "that by earning college degrees, inmates are far less likely to return to prison. New York's current recidivism rate is 40 percent."

Yesterday O'Mara joined area Assemblymen Chris Friend (R-Big Flats) and Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) to [reject the governor's plan](#) and took the opportunity to again urge the Cuomo administration to reverse its decision to close the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility in Schuyler County later this year.

In a joint statement, O'Mara, Friend and Palmesano said, "We already know that Monterey Shock works to dramatically reduce recidivism rates and incarceration times while, at the same time, cutting costs, saving taxpayer dollars and giving inmates something even more important than free college classes, and that's the desire, discipline and drive to turn their own lives around by furthering their education or acquiring a practical skill or trade that offers a livelihood and an independent, success-driven future."