



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara strongly opposes legislation banning gun raffles, calls it 'state government at its intrusive and overreaching worst'

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 22, 2019

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Elmira, N.Y., February 21—Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today announced his strong opposition to legislation introduced in the New York State Legislature that would prohibit volunteer fire departments, police clubs, sportsmen's clubs, Elk, Moose and similar lodges, and other groups and organizations from holding gun raffles as fundraisers.

“These popular, successful, and safe fundraisers have long been held by fire departments, police clubs, and other groups across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and throughout New York State. They are used to help raise funds to purchase badly needed equipment for volunteer firefighters, assist vital community charities, and provide scholarships to outstanding area students, among many other admirable initiatives,” O’Mara said, noting that **a recent gun raffle sponsored by the Canisteo Police Club in Steuben County** drew hundreds of participants and raised funding to support several worthwhile community endeavors including programs to provide bike helmets for area children and to send local youth to conservation camps. This year, part of the proceeds from the raffle are also going to support the Nicholas F. Clark Scholarship Fund honoring slain New York State Trooper Nicholas F. Clark, a Canisteo native who was killed in the line of duty last July.

Following the Canisteo Gun Club’s event in early February, Canisteo Police Chief told *The Spectator* in Hornell, “With the tragic passing of Trooper Nicholas Clark, a lifelong friend of mine and the police club, we wanted to do something to benefit his scholarship fund.”

O’Mara, who said that he would continue urging his legislative colleagues to reject the measure, added, “These raffles are popular and safe. The legislation fails to note that raffle winners cannot claim any firearm as a prize without undergoing a background check. For New York State government, under the guise of gun control and safety, to prevent the Canisteo Gun Club and other clubs and organizations across this region from ever again holding a gun raffle to support these important community efforts would be big government at its intrusive and overreaching worst.”

The legislation (**A1413**) is sponsored by Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon, a Brooklyn Democrat, and is currently in the Assembly Racing and Wagering Committee. It has 29 Democratic co-sponsors. Similar legislation has not been introduced in the state Senate yet, O’Mara noted.