



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt, Colleagues Launch Reset - Reopen Economic Rollout

ROBERT G. ORTT May 4, 2020

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Today, State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda) joined Republican colleagues, State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph A. Griffo, Sen. Rich Funke, Sen. Tom O'Mara, Sen. George M. Borrello, Sen. Pat Gallivan, Sen. Daphne Jordan, Sen. Pam Helming, and Sen. Fred Akshar to roll out an economic "Reset, Reopen" Plan for Upstate and Western New York to coincide with the virus's regression. The policy consists of four distinct elements:

- **Reopen** businesses in a safe and pragmatic fashion.

- **Reduce** government control over businesses.
- **Reform** government to help businesses and taxpayers.
- **Revitalize** our economy and local communities.

Ortt challenged policymakers to go beyond simply returning to work, even as he noted the importance of reopening certain segments of the economy.

**Sen. Rob Ortt** said, “The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed incalculable costs upon our country – the financial toll surpassed only by the human toll. As we put the pieces back together, it is incumbent upon elected officials to address the short-term and long-term challenges we face. In this great challenge, we have the unique opportunity to rethink, retool, and reboot our economy. While others talk about "un-pausing," I'm talking about resetting. We didn't pause the economy, we unplugged it. And just as we have assumed a war footing to combat the virus, we will need to assume the same stance in order to resuscitate and rebuild our economy.”

Over the last week, Gov. Cuomo has been receptive to reopening along regional lines, stepping away from the one-size-fits approach of earlier in the pandemic. The Governor heeded calls from Senate and Assembly legislators who have called for a regional approach to reopening with individual assessments of specific regions COVID-19 cases, and for businesses to reopen while accounting for the economic viability and potential risk of infection.

**State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph A. Griffo** said, “The vast toll of the coronavirus pandemic has led to untold pain, suffering and uncertainty for New York residents and businesses. As we begin the shift toward planning and implementing a safe economic reopening, we must do so by observing CDC guidance, eliminating the inconsistencies of the

state administration's executive orders and allowing for a safe but practical reopening plan for Upstate New York."

**Sen. Rich Funke** said, "New York State is not only New York City and it is time we stopped governing like it is. We should begin to reopen our economy regionally using the prudent, phased approach recommended by the Federal Government. Upstate infection rates are much lower and our economy is much more fragile as evidenced by yet another report out today that shows 53 counties – mostly upstate lost population in the last year. It's time we better balanced our focus on the disease with our focus on the economy. It's time to begin to reopen upstate."

**Sen. Tom O'Mara** said, "I have stressed throughout the ongoing COVID-19 response that we also need to be ready, once we weather this storm, to start an open and full discussion on the best ways to move forward for this entire state, upstate and downstate. It is going to require a restructuring of New York government, strengthening the state-local partnership, and getting back to work rebuilding New York with the right priorities, long-overdue commonsense reform, and fiscal responsibility. I look forward to continuing to join my Senate Republican colleagues throughout the weeks and months ahead to put forth for strategies that we believe are needed and to work to ensure that our upstate regions don't get left behind in the unprecedented recovery effort that we're facing."

**Sen. George M. Borrello** said, "COVID-19 has exacted a catastrophic toll on our state, in the innocent lives it's taken and the economic devastation it has wrought. New Yorkers have come together in an extraordinary way to combat the virus' spread and those efforts are working. Now we must engage the next challenge: reopening and rebuilding our economy, while maintaining critically important safety protocols in our communities and in every workplace. The scope of the problem in front of us requires rethinking and reforming our state's approach to business, which in the past has often been more harmful than helpful.

The Reset-Reopen plan recognizes that now it is urgent that we reverse that trend, so that our fragile economy and hurting businesses can rebound.”

**Sen. Pat Gallivan** said, “As we work to re-start our economy, we must do so while simultaneously following the guidelines of the CDC and other health care experts. Analyzing each region based on population density, infection rate and health care capacity will help to determine which business sectors can reopen and the appropriate level of public health screening and protective measures that should apply. We must also look for ways to not only re-open our economy, but to support businesses and communities recovering from the devastating impact of this pandemic.”

**Sen. Daphne Jordan** said, “Reopening New York’s economy in a smart, sensible, regional, and safe business-to-business approach should be ‘job one’ in terms of getting folks back to work and helping our struggling small businesses. I’m proud to have led the important effort to get residential and commercial construction moving again, and I continue calling for the state to recognize the many businesses that can and should reopen. In many cases, it may be far safer to shop in our local small businesses that have safety plans than the big box stores that have much more foot traffic. I agree with my good friend Senator Ortt that it’s not nearly enough to simply ‘un-pause’ businesses when our state is hemorrhaging jobs, Albany is awash in red ink, and over a million New Yorkers are out of work. We must jumpstart our economy by re-opening businesses safely, reducing government control over job creators, reforming government bureaucracy to help businesses and taxpayers, and revitalize our economy and communities. This is our mission and it's critical to resetting New York State and successfully turning the page on this economic crisis.”

**Sen. Pam Helming** said, “We need to get New York reopened in a smart and safe way. That starts with listening to small businesses and farmers. They need a seat at the table and a chance to make their voices heard. To kick start our economy we must make regulatory

reform a top priority and reduce the cost of doing business in our state. Cutting taxes and red tape will give small businesses the confidence they need to expand and create jobs right here in our community.”

**Sen. Fred Akshar** said, “The COVID 19 public health crisis has devastated local businesses and employees in communities across our state and nation. While we all work together now to stop the spread of this devastating virus and save lives, we must also take practical and thoughtful approach to healing the devastation wreaked on an economy that wasn't the healthiest to begin with. It's not enough to work toward getting things 'back to normal.' We must work toward safely rebuilding a better economic environment for our businesses and employees and a better collective future for families and communities across New York.”

The Senators called for New York State to align the businesses on Empire State Development’s essential list with that of the Federal government’s essential businesses list. By aligning, operations such as construction, sportsmen stores, manufacturing, and other low-risk occupations would be allowed to re-open. This will allow limited New York residents to safely return to work – helping workers, small businesses, and a state unemployment system stretched to its financial and functional limits. The CDC’s “Opening Up America Again” Plan offers strict guidance for governors and legislators across the U.S. to utilize for the re-opening of the economy in phases as public health milestones are met.

The Senators announced that they will follow up on the initial phase to lay out additional elements of his *Re-open and Reset Plan* pertaining to **reduce**, **reform**, and **revitalize** in the coming weeks.

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