



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, Weik highlight Senate GOP priorities for American Rescue Plan funding: Opportunity to reject tax hikes, make critical investments

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 12, 2021

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Albany, N.Y., March 12—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, today highlighted several of the Senate Republican Conference's

key priorities for utilizing federal funding coming to New York through the newly enacted American Rescue Plan, which can be allocated in the final 2021-2022 state budget set to be adopted by April 1.

In a joint letter today to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins with his Senate colleague, Senator Alexis Weik of Long Island, Ranking Member of the Senate Budget and Finance Committee, O'Mara outlined a number of GOP priorities, including the rejection of new tax hikes, moving forward with a middle class tax cut that Governor Andrew Cuomo has proposed to delay, broadband expansion, local government assistance, key mental health initiatives, bolstering state reserve funds, and greater state investment in local infrastructure like roads and bridges, and water and sewer projects.

O'Mara said, "We have an opportunity and a responsibility to utilize this one-time federal stimulus aid under a fiscally responsible, short- and long-term strategy for the post-COVID rebuilding, restoring, and resetting of New York State's communities. Among other priorities, we should reject tax hikes, focus on badly needed tax relief, and make critical investments in local infrastructure that will strengthen local communities, economies, environments and governments. Equally important, we need to recognize the fiscal challenges New York will face for the foreseeable future, steer clear of any massive new taxing and spending, and bolster the state's emergency reserve funds."

Weik said, "While the State will continue to face a challenging fiscal future as we continue to navigate the pandemic, the significant infusion of over \$12 billion in federal stimulus funding has put us on a very positive path. Our Conference will continue to focus on jobs, the economy, and making New York affordable across the State. That begins with rejecting new taxes and reinstating our middle class tax cuts, driving money to education, investing in infrastructure, and advancing policies to support and grow small businesses. I am proud to join Senator O'Mara and the rest of the Senate Republican Conference in putting forward

this ambitious set of priorities.”

This week, Congress passed the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act, which was signed into law by President Joe Biden yesterday. It has been reported that New York State is expected to receive \$12.5 billion in direct aid, in addition to \$12 billion for K-12 and Higher Education.

In their March 12 letter to the Senate Majority Leader, O’Mara and Weik wrote, “By using this Federal funding wisely and in a fiscally responsible manner, we can overcome the major challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthen our economy, and protect New Yorkers from wasteful, unnecessary spending and additional tax burdens.”

[see attached copy of today's letter above]

In spite of the scandals engulfing Albany, O’Mara and Weik said they are committed to working to ensure New Yorkers are not shortchanged in the upcoming state budget. The financial assistance from Washington will help erase the state budget deficit, they said, which is good news for New Yorkers who can’t afford the increased taxes proposed by Cuomo and legislative Democrats in the Senate and Assembly.