



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' ~ for the week of July 12, 2021 ~ 'Governing from one Cuomo emergency to the next'

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 12, 2021

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The most serious state of emergency in New York is Governor Cuomo's ongoing abuses of power for political and personal gain.

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, "**Governing from one Cuomo emergency to the next**"

Governor Andrew Cuomo declared another State of Emergency in New York State last week – just about 14 days after finally calling an end to the COVID-19 emergency declaration -- and immediately began issuing a new round of the “Cuomo executive orders” that have now become the way of governing in this state.

Not surprisingly the governor touted his new “Disaster Emergency on Gun Violence” with what’s become his go-to playbook while he eyes a fourth term in office and fights for political survival amidst numerous criminal and ethical investigations and scandals: first-in-the-nation rhetoric; establishing an expensive state bureaucracy; another task force; a new advisory council.

It represents the latest Cuomo grandstanding. But it goes far beyond grandstanding and power grabbing because it perpetuates what’s become a dangerous era in New York government since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

Governor Cuomo is making it clear where New York State is headed under his continued reign should he win a fourth consecutive term in office in November 2022 – from one emergency disaster declaration to the next so that he and he alone can continue to govern by issuing executive orders, controlling public policy, infringing on constitutional rights and individual liberties, dictating the allocation of taxpayer dollars, and running this entire state out of his office.

That is what we faced for the 15-plus months this governor ran the show under the COVID-19 emergency declaration. From March 2020, when Cuomo was first granted the emergency authorization, to June 23, 2021 when the COVID-19 emergency declaration was called off, the governor’s nearly 100 Executive Orders allowed him to unilaterally change hundreds of state laws, as well as implement rules and regulations and make spending decisions, without legislative approval.

We saw the failures of state government by Cuomo executive order throughout the COVID-19 crisis – a nursing home tragedy, shuttered small businesses, out-of-work citizens, and last but far from least, rising crime and violence.

Our local Upstate communities, economies, workers, and taxpayers will be paying the price for years to come. Too many will never recover.

Now this governor can't bear to think of governing in any other way. He can't live without the unilateral power so he immediately issues a new emergency and a new round of executive orders that allow him to, for starters, allocate nearly \$140 million where and how he, and he alone, sees fit – no legislative approval, no local decision-making required. He's creating a new State Office of Gun Violence Prevention and we know that new state bureaucracies always demand more and more resources. He's putting new mandates on police departments.

Believe me, it's just the beginning.

“Just like we did with COVID,” Governor Cuomo proclaimed last week, “New York is going to lead the nation once again with a comprehensive approach to combating and preventing gun violence, and our first step is acknowledging the problem with a first-in-the-nation emergency on gun violence.”

“Just like we did with COVID” conjures up plenty of nightmares. Just like we did with COVID in nursing homes? Just like we did with COVID devastating local economies and small businesses? Just like we did with COVID silencing local decision-making?

“Just like we did with COVID” failed this state in many, many ways. Let's not forget. We haven't yet tallied the true cost.

Now here we go again with more state government by Cuomo executive order?

The most serious state of emergency in New York is Governor Cuomo's ongoing abuses of power for political and personal gain.

It doesn't take another Cuomo state of emergency, another Cuomo executive order to recognize that rising crime and violence, and weakened public safety and security, is the result of the pro-criminal policies and philosophies being enacted and pushed by this governor and a State Legislature under one-party control.

Emergency executive action should not be based upon a self-created circumstance resulting from the three-year effort by this Governor and the Democrat-controlled legislative majorities to coddle criminals and reduce criminal sanctions.

Let's start there.

They have emboldened the criminal element throughout this state through failed bail reform, lenient parole policies, an out-of-control Parole Board, a growing 'defund the police' movement, and

an overall careless approach to criminal justice.

No state of emergency declaration changes that reality.

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