



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara denounces ongoing release of state inmates: Says continued pro-criminal mentality endangers public safety

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 17, 2021

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I've said it before and it's worth repeating that criminal justice in New York State is being pushed by a pro-criminal mentality that has gone too far and keeps going too far. It has made and it looks like it's going to keep making New York State less safe. If there are dangerous conditions inside a state prison, it's not solved by authorizing a jail break.

Elmira, N.Y., September 17—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R-C-I, Big Flats) is denouncing today’s move by Governor Kathy Hochul to begin releasing more and more inmates from state prisons under a new law she signed today known as the “Less Is More Act.”

O’Mara said that Hochul’s signing of the legislation (S1144/A5576), which O’Mara voted against and strongly opposed when it was first approved by the Senate in early June, continues a troubling overhaul of the state’s parole laws that started under former Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Democrat supermajorities in the state Senate and Assembly.

The “Less Is More Act” seeks to facilitate the release of inmates currently incarcerated for so-called “technical” parole violations. While the law won’t take effect until next March, Hochul said today that she plans to move forward on her own to begin releasing more inmates before then. She announced plans to release nearly 200 inmates from Rikers Island in New York City.

O’Mara, a member on the Senate Codes and Judiciary Committees, said, “It’s disappointing, to say the least, to see Governor Hochul fall in line with the continuation of what has been disastrous, dangerous, radical parole reform driven by pro-criminal, anti-police, so-called progressive Albany Democrats. I’ve said it before and it’s worth repeating that criminal justice in New York State is being pushed by a pro-criminal mentality that has gone too far and keeps going too far. It has made and it looks like it’s going to keep making New York State less safe. If there are dangerous conditions inside a state prison, it’s not solved by authorizing a jail break.”

O’Mara and other opponents continue to argue that actions like encouraging parole leniency combined with other moves to radically redefine criminal justice in New York -- including a 2020 law eliminating cash bail and pretrial detention, ongoing prison closures, and a growing “defund the police” movement within the Legislature’s far-left leaning Democrat majorities --

have helped drive a pro-criminal agenda that over the past few years has been a major contributor to making the state less safe, putting far too many law enforcement officers in harm's way, and emboldening society's criminal element.

Violent crimes in numerous cities across New York have jumped over the past few years. The homicide rate in the city of Syracuse, for example, increased by 55% between 2019 and 2020, while aggravated assaults were up 15%. According to reports, violent crime has surged in the city of Rochester. And in New York City, according to recent statistics from the NYPD, overall index crime rose by more than 30% since April 2020, including a nearly 20% jump in murders and a 35.6% increase in felony assaults.