



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' ~ for the week of November 1, 2021 ~ 'An unending search for new taxes to fuel an impractical agenda'

THOMAS F. O'MARA November 1, 2021

| ISSUE: **OPPOSE GAS TAX**



The ongoing implementation of these regressive taxes would leave lower- and middle-income families and workers, motorists, truckers, farmers, manufacturers and other industries, and seniors among the hardest hit.

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, **"An unending search for new taxes to fuel an impractical agenda"**

Back in April, when former Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature's Democrat-led supermajorities put the finishing touches on their new, massive \$212-billion state fiscal plan for 2021-22, I criticized the new state budget for being an overall irresponsible action.

There were absolutely pieces of the new budget that everyone could identify as important, even indispensable, to the future of New York State. As I said at the time, that better be the case in a fiscal plan that increases state spending by a whopping \$18 billion – largely by utilizing nearly every penny of the \$13 billion in one-time federal funding that New York received through the American Rescue Plan!

Nevertheless, despite this massive influx of federal dollars, they still found a way in the new state budget to raise taxes by, incredibly, more than \$4 billion. With their other hand they gave \$2 billion to illegal immigrants in New York State that were excluded from federal COVID stimulus and unemployment payments. Yes, they raised taxes to give handouts to illegal aliens.

I said at that time, “We had 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 local communities, economies, environments, and governments for the long term. Equally important, we needed 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. That’s not what this budget represents. It sets up an economic and fiscal disaster.”

Fast forward from April and with the ink on the new state budget barely dry, these same Albany Democrats were already eyeing their next tax hike opportunities, including a potential 55-cents-per-gallon gas tax to help generate revenue to implement an unsustainable, impractical climate change agenda.

That legislation (S4264/A6967), known as the “Climate and Community Investment Act,” remains in play. It calls for accelerated state-level actions to achieve broad and far-reaching climate change policies and, to help pay for it, it includes a new 55-cents-per-gallon gas tax as well as increased

taxes on heating oil, propane, and natural gas, which is estimated to increase home heating fuel costs by 26%.

New Yorkers already pay the ninth-highest gas tax in America at 46.19-cents-per-gallon, according to the Tax Foundation. If the proposed gas tax of 55 cents were added, New York would have the highest overall gas tax in America.

To add to the alarm, home heating costs, even without this additional action, are already projected to increase by upwards of 25% this winter.

New York's business tax climate has long been noted by the Tax Foundation as one of the nation's worst.

In short, one-party, Democrat control of New York State government continues to threaten moving all of us in the wrong direction.

Last week, the state Senate Republican Conference called for the immediate suspension of the state's gas tax and continued to voice our opposition to any move by the Legislature's Democrat supermajorities that could raise the gas tax by 55 cents or increase home heating costs by at least another 25%.

Our call comes as gas prices continue to climb sharply across the state. According to the AAA, New York's latest average gas price is \$3.46 per gallon, compared to an average of \$2.25 per gallon one year ago.

New York's out-of-control Democrat supermajorities enacted a state budget this year raising taxes by nearly five billion dollars and they show no hesitation to just keep on looking for more. It will be an unending search for more tax dollars to afford more spending and every taxpayer will pay the price at the pump, to heat homes, and in a lot of other places.

The ongoing implementation of these regressive taxes would leave lower- and middle-income families and workers, motorists, truckers, farmers, manufacturers and other industries, and seniors among the hardest hit.

In a state long known as one of the highest-taxed, highest-spending states in America, the continually evolving Albany Democrat vision for New York keeps running the risk of setting new standards of recklessness – and far too many New Yorkers will be left stranded.

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