



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara welcomes decision by ethics panel to require Cuomo to pay back book deal: Continues to call for full investigation of pandemic response

THOMAS F. O'MARA December 14, 2021

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**Elmira, N.Y., December 14**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), ranking member on the Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee, welcomed today's

decision by the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) calling on ex-Governor Andrew Cuomo to pay back the \$5.1-million pandemic book deal he received last year.

Today's decision found that Cuomo violated the specific conditions that JCOPE said he could not violate in the writing of the book, including that state property, resources or personnel could not be used to produce or market the book published last October, "American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic." The book has come under fire for falsely touting the Cuomo administration's handling of the pandemic and remains under investigation by state Attorney General Letitia James and federal investigators for the use of state resources in its writing and intentionally underreporting nursing home COVID deaths to make it a better story.

O'Mara has been a leading critic of Cuomo's handling of the COVID-19 crisis in nursing homes and has long expressed outrage at Cuomo's earnings from a book written while the state was in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis. Reports have revealed that the governor and his inner circle withheld information and accurate data on the number of COVID-19 deaths in state nursing homes in order to, in part, portray the administration's response efforts in a more favorable light in his book.

In a statement, O'Mara said, "Today's decision by JCOPE calling on Andrew Cuomo to pay back the profits from his corrupt book deal marks one more long-overdue step towards accountability. I doubt he'll immediately do the right thing and comply with this decision because ignoring or denying corruption seems to run deep in his DNA. To be clear, our disgraced ex-governor should never have been allowed to pocket millions upon millions of dollars by enriching himself off of what we now know was a tragic pandemic response.

"In New York State, on top of the COVID-19 crisis, we had a Cuomo crisis of arrogance and self promotion nearly every step of the way. The lasting lessons of this chapter of the

Cuomo administration will not be about leadership, they will be about abuse of power. It is outrageous and unconscionable that Cuomo would be paid and accept millions of dollars for a book that willingly created and pushed, for his own personal benefit, a false narrative about his handling of the COVID-19 crisis in nursing homes and other areas. It was a false account built on cover-ups, deceptions, stonewalling, and possible criminal conduct.

“The fact that Andrew Cuomo made himself a multi-millionaire peddling outright lies, false bravado, and dishonest government is a disgrace and continues to demand a full investigation.

"New Yorkers deserve accountability and the families who lost their loved ones in nursing homes deserve justice.”

O'Mara was a strong and frequent Cuomo critic throughout the year preceding the former governor's resignation in August. He has repeatedly called for the Senate Investigations Committee, and others, to fully investigate the governor and members of his inner circle concerning the handling of the COVID-19 crisis in New York's nursing homes and long-term care facilities.