



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' ~ for the week of December 27, 2021 ~ 'Approaching the New Year with a renewal of hope'

THOMAS F. O'MARA December 27, 2021

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We need to keep pushing forward. We need to get more and more sectors of local economies moving again. We need to keep getting more and more workers back on the job as soon as possible.

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, **"Approaching the New Year with a renewal of hope"**

First and foremost, I hope that this week's column will find all of you and your families, friends, and neighbors well and doing your best to have a memorable and meaningful holiday season.

Approaching the start of yet another New Year, we could focus on looking ahead to the debates that always await the governor and legislators in ordinary times -- traditionally difficult challenges on education, economic development, environmental protection, fiscal policies, infrastructure, public safety and security, and so many more.

But these have been far from ordinary times.

Consequently, the beginning of 2022 will arrive during what continues to be an incredibly long and hard road back to public health, and community and economic renewal.

Therefore, public health has been all along and remains the top priority because it is paramount to being able to fully address the economic and social crises that have inflicted enormous pain and upheaval over the past two years.

Make no mistake that reaching the point of potential renewal is the product of personal responsibility, and enormous perseverance and sacrifice on the part of so many. Every single citizen who has understood the public health guidelines, and honored them, has made the difference up to now.

This public health emergency has called for all hands on deck and we need to keep responding.

A true, long-awaited reopening will be the result of strong regional teamwork on public outreach and care. This teamwork will remain fundamental to our success throughout the months ahead. The experience gained and the bonds cemented since March 2020 will continue to serve us well in 2022.

We need to keep pushing forward. We need to get more and more sectors of local economies moving again. We need to keep getting more and more workers back on the job as soon as possible.

On the economic front of this battle to reclaim and regain solid ground in our lives and communities, we will need the Hochul administration to better recognize that our regional reopening can and must move forward with greater clarity, common sense, and fairness.

Many of us here across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions -- government officials, business owners, and workers alike -- believe this reopening process can be accomplished more effectively and rapidly without jeopardizing public health. Guidelines that may be absolutely necessary in downstate regions, for example, shouldn't be unreasonably applied upstate.

In 2022, we will need to redouble our emphasis on this need for fairness. I've had this discussion with many local leaders and citizens. We will continue pushing the administration to recognize specific regional concerns and suggestions -- and the need for sensible compromises and effective, safe resolutions.

There is enormous work facing us to fix what's broken and keep providing fundamental assistance. On the legislative front, we must continue to hear the voices of small business, farming, tourism, manufacturing, and other foundations of local economies. Moving forward in this COVID-19 response, these ongoing discussions, on a bipartisan basis, will become increasingly critical.

As I have said repeatedly, one way we stay together is by staying informed.

Finally, as we continue this week that has traditionally had as its centerpiece a reflection on the year past, we still focus on this: Thank You.

Thank you to all throughout the public and private sectors providing diligent public outreach. Because of these incredible and inspiring efforts, local communities have been able to persevere, stay together, remain hopeful, move forward, and keep planning for better days.

These will remain the rays of hope at the beginning of a New Year, the silver lining of strength that has and will keep seeing us through.

Let's all keep doing our part. Thank you, and may you and your families, friends, and neighbors stay well and stay safe.

Merry Christmas once again, and Happy New Year.