



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara, Senate Republicans call for end to mandates: Call on governor to immediately end mask mandate in schools

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 14, 2022

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The continuation of an unscientific mask mandate for school children continues to define New York as a state under the control of extreme executive order, without legislative checks and balances, and ignoring the dire need for local decision-making.

**Elmira, N.Y., February 14**— State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) is joining his colleagues in the Senate Republican conference today calling on New York Governor Kathy Hochul to immediately end the mask mandate in schools.

The Senate GOP announced they would force a vote on the New York Senate floor today to end the mandates. Their renewed call comes in the wake of the so-called vax or mask business mandate being lifted, but with the mask mandate in schools and childcare centers remaining in place indefinitely.

O'Mara said, "The continuation of an irrational and unscientific mask mandate for school children, without a definitive end in sight, continues to define New York as a state under the control of extreme executive order, without legislative checks and balances, and ignoring the dire need for local decision-making. New York State already ranks near the bottom in too many categories of affordability, freedoms, and quality of life. Governor Hochul is leading us toward the bottom again as neighboring states, and many places across the nation and around the world, are taking bold steps into a post-COVID return to common sense."

Senate GOP Leader Rob Ortz said, "School children and toddlers are suffering emotionally. Parents and families are at their wit's end. New Yorkers are just sick and tired of these one-size-fits-all Albany mandates. I vowed to my constituents that I would fight these unconstitutional mandates until every single one is lifted. I intend to keep that promise, and I am proud to stand alongside my fellow Republicans today to force our Democrat colleagues to explain where they stand. It's time to end the mandates now."

The Senate Republicans' proposed amendment will be brought forth on the floor of the Senate later this afternoon. The measure would force a vote on unmasking, dismantling the governor's overreaching mandates, and restoring checks and balances. They said today's vote is an opportunity to put legislators on the record on how they feel about masking kids while mask mandates almost everywhere else in New York and the nation are being lifted. Every member of the Senate Republican Conference has committed to voting yes on the much-needed measure.

Senate Republicans have been a steadfast voice calling for more checks and balances in state government, and putting an end to the Cuomo-Hochul era of governance by mandates. Last month, the conference called on Hochul to end her one-size-fits-all approach to mandates.

A key plan in the Senate Republican "Take Back New York" 2022 legislative agenda – which the Conference has been unveiling since January – is restoring accountability, including checks and balances, to state government.