



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara calls for Senate investigation into Hochul pay-to-play allegations

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 27, 2023

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Albany, N.Y., January 27--Senator Tom O'Mara today called on Senate Investigations Chair James Skoufis and the Senate Democrat Majority to [investigate reports](#) that Governor Kathy Hochul met directly with a large donor to her campaign, whose company was

awarded a \$637 million state contract for COVID-19 tests. The disturbing pay-to-play allegations, first revealed last year, [detail how](#) the Executive used a State of Emergency to advance a no-bid process favoring Charles Tebele and his family – prominent donors to the Governor’s campaign – and their company Digital Gadgets, which supplied Covid tests to New York at prices nearly double the amount other states paid.

“As legislators, we have a duty to protect taxpayer dollars and investigate any suspected misuse. While I understand the Senate Majority would prefer to [take the Governor at her word](#), New York taxpayers deserve transparency and accountability. With New York paying 45% more for these tests than other states paid, it is not acceptable to simply blame the timing of the purchase. I urge my colleagues across the aisle to do the right thing and help us restore public trust by immediately launching an investigation into this critical issue,” wrote Senator O’Mara.

For years, Senate Republicans made repeated calls on the Governor and Legislative Majorities to end the COVID-19 State of Emergency, which gave the Executive authority to skirt state procurement laws with no oversight. These calls for checks and balances have been met with consistent silence and inaction from the Senate Democrat Majority.

In addition, Senator O’Mara and Senate Republicans have repeatedly called on Senator Skoufis and the Senate Democrat Majority to conduct an investigation into disgraced ex-Governor Andrew Cuomo’s coverup of nursing home deaths in New York State. Though the current Governor last year commissioned an “outside review” into New York’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will ultimately be overseen by officials in her administration.

A copy of the letter is attached above.