



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of February 6, 2023 -- 'New York will remain one of America's biggest spenders '

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 6, 2023

| ISSUE: **2023-24 STATE BUDGET**



It ignores the reality that New York State remains one of America's highest-taxed, least affordable, most debt-ridden, and overregulated states, which makes it no surprise that we're leading the nation in population and job losses.

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, "New York will remain one of America's biggest spenders"

“Billions” remains the defining word of the New York State budget, the nation’s second-largest spending plan, behind only California.

Keep in mind that Governor Kathy Hochul and the Legislature’s all-Democrat majorities rang up last year’s state budget to a record \$220 billion, an \$8 billion increase over the year before and the largest-ever New York State budget.

It’s about to go even higher. Governor Hochul’s proposed 2023-2024 budget, unveiled at the Capitol last week, starts at \$227 billion, already a \$7 billion increase -- and that’s before the Democrat leaders in the Senate and Assembly get their hands on it.

In short, as I have said many times over the past few years, New York under one-party, all-Democrat control has officially jumped into the stratosphere of borrow-tax-and-spend state budgets. That will forever be the hallmark of New York government under their watch. It’s a direction that has been jolting to state and local taxpayers -- many of whom have already fled New York. It shows no signs of turning around.

According to one fiscal watchdog, the Albany-based Empire Center of Public Policy, the governor’s proposed budget “would stay on the course she set last year -- raising spending to unsustainable levels, pointing towards deep holes for the future.” A new report from the state comptroller warns again about New York’s ever-burgeoning debt and irresponsible borrowing and calls for a Constitutional amendment to cap it and get it under control.

State budgets never go down once new programs and services, and long-term spending commitments, are put in place and keep expanding, and as new and even bigger programs and spending commitments keep getting added. That’s long been the case in New York State; however, the startling, out-of-control increases we are witnessing at the moment are unprecedented. The past two state budgets have increased by \$26 billion thanks, in large part, to a windfall of federal pandemic aid. Yet these federal dollars are not recurring. The federal windfall dries up and it falls to state and local taxpayers to foot the bill while facing an economic future that is, at best, uncertain.

Governor Hochul tries hard to continue working a narrative of fiscal responsibility throughout a fiscal strategy that, at its core, is about a spending spree. The fact is that Governor Hochul’s proposed budget remains a spend, spend, spend strategy shelling out billions of taxpayer dollars but

remaining a billion miles away from making New York State more affordable for taxpayers.

It ignores the reality that New York State remains one of America's highest-taxed, least affordable, most debt-ridden, and overregulated states, which makes it no surprise that we're leading the nation in population and job losses. The spending habits of this government under one-party, all-Democrat control can only make New York a more expensive place to live and do business. There's no serious attempt to address the need for lower taxes across the board, less regulation, debt reduction, mandate relief, or any of the other strangleholds on state and local taxpayers, small businesses and manufacturers, and continually hard-pressed upstate communities, economies, and workers.

Beginning this week, the Legislature's fiscal committees -- the Senate Finance Committee, and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee -- convene a monthlong series of public hearings to examine, in detail, Governor Hochul's proposed budget. The hearings are available on my website, www.omara.nysenate.gov, as well as on the Senate's website at www.nysenate.gov/events.

As the Ranking Republican member on the Senate Finance Committee, I welcome the opportunities these hearings provide for direct input and critique on a range of policy areas that will decide the short- and long-term future and strength of our local communities and economies. Senate Republicans will continue to be a voice for lower taxes, less regulation, greater accountability, economic growth, job creation, and more common sense on state fiscal practices.

In the meantime, many details on the governor's budget proposal are available on the state Division of the Budget (DOB) website, www.budget.ny.gov.

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