



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of February 27, 2023 -- 'Rescuing New York must be the highest priority'

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 27, 2023

| ISSUE: **RESCUE NEW YORK 2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA; AFFORDABILITY; PUBLIC SAFETY; ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**



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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, "Rescuing New York must be the highest priority"

To kick off the 2023 session of the State Legislature -- one that we believe finds New York at unprecedented crossroads in so many critical areas -- the Senate Republican Conference put forth a comprehensive set of goals to help rebuild and strengthen local and state economies, focus on the affordability challenges facing everyday New Yorkers and their families, and make public safety a top priority.

We're calling it "Rescue New York" which, in our view, undeniably defines where we find ourselves at this moment in the state's history: a rescue and recovery mission for this state's future.

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A relentless pursuit of a far-left, extreme-liberal agenda remains, as it has been for the past three years, the first order of business in New York government over a long-term, sustainable future for middle-class communities, families, workers, businesses, industries, and taxpayers.

Among many others, the overriding goals of Rescue New York call for:

- **instilling a better quality of life for all New Yorkers by restoring public safety and security as one of the state's highest responsibilities;**
- **making New York more affordable by cutting the state's highest-in-the-nation tax burden and one of the country's heaviest burdens of debt;**
- **putting a stop to out-of-control government spending that has defined the current era of NY government and threatens to make the nation's highest population losses even worse;**

- rethinking a process underway to quickly implement radical energy mandates that ignore affordability, reliability, and feasibility;
- transforming the state-local partnership by making good on a promise made over a decade ago to address the outrageous practice of unfunded state mandates;
- refusing to take any actions that risk the future of New York's family farms, including lowering the farmworker overtime threshold from 60 to 40 hours;
- finally, fully, and honestly reassessing New York's COVID response, including its tragic failures and shortcomings, especially within the state's nursing homes;
- combating an exploding fentanyl crisis; and
- restoring accountability to state government in the aftermath of disgraced ex-Governor Andrew Cuomo's rampant abuses of executive power.

None of the above is where we are heading in the current legislative session under continued one-party, all-Democrat rule.

Last year's enacted state budget, for example, increased spending by nearly \$20 billion -- the annual state budget, for the first time in history, surpassed \$200 billion -- and raised taxes by more than \$4 billion. Governor Hochul has already proposed starting negotiations on a final 2023-2024 state budget that would be *\$7 billion higher* than the current budget -- and that's before the willingly reckless, big-spending Democrat leaders in the Senate and Assembly get their hands on it.

There simply has been no turning back from this explosive tax-and-spend path under Governor Hochul and the Democrat legislative leaders. Far from it, in fact.

Most reasonable New Yorkers also recognize that rising crime and violence, and weakened public safety and security, are the result of the pro-criminal policies being enacted and pushed by this governor and a State Legislature under one-party control. They have emboldened the criminal element throughout this state through failed bail reform, lenient parole policies, an out-of-control Parole Board, cowing to the "defund the police" movement, and a "no consequences" approach to criminal justice.

It has been alarming to district attorneys, law enforcement officers, and criminal justice experts. It shows no signs of letting up.

Our alarm calls have gone unheard. Nevertheless, the fight for restoring a more responsible and reasonable approach to governing goes on.

You can read more about “Rescue New York” [HERE](#).