



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of June 5, 2023 -- 'Rescuing New York now more urgent than ever'

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 5, 2023

| ISSUE: **RESCUE NEW YORK**



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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 now more urgent than ever"

To kick off the 2023 legislative session -- one that we believed represented a pivotal session with New York at a crossroads in so many areas -- the Senate Republican Conference put forth a comprehensive set of goals to help rebuild and strengthen local and state economies, focus on the financial challenges facing many middle-class families and small business owners, and make public safety a top priority.

At that time back in early January, I said, "New Yorkers across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide, are worried about making ends meet. They see this state becoming less safe, less affordable, less free, less economically competitive, less responsible, and far less hopeful for the future. Albany Democrats acknowledge that New York State has an affordability crisis causing the exodus of our citizens to more affordable states, however the Democrats are intent on raising taxes to increase handouts to their base. They have no interest in reining in out-of-control spending, eliminating taxes, lowering costs, cutting burdensome regulations and mandates, or restoring public safety. We need to rescue New York by restoring the right priorities to turn things around, rebuild stronger and safer communities, and work toward a more responsible and sustainable future."

We called it "Rescue New York" and we began rolling it out at the very start of this session -- a session that New York's Democrat legislative leaders will bring to a close later this week -- with a focus on fiscal responsibility and affordability for all taxpayers, rebuilding and revitalizing New York's local economies, and addressing rising crime and public safety.

Albany Democrats have gone in a completely different direction. It continues to put this state's future on high alert. Their direction for New York is producing billions upon billions of dollars of short- and long-term spending commitments requiring billions upon billions of dollars in new taxes, fees, and borrowing for future generations of state and local taxpayers.

The overriding goals of our Rescue New York agenda would have:

--Offered a safer and better quality of life for all New Yorkers by repealing bail reform and supporting law enforcement and crime victims;

--Made New York more affordable for every resident by cutting the state's highest-in-the-nation tax burden and taking other actions to lower the cost of living in New York;

--Improved the state's business climate and expanded economic opportunity by cutting burdensome regulations;

--Moved more responsibly and sensibly toward a cleaner energy future without ignoring affordability, feasibility, and reliability like the strategy currently set in motion under Governor Hochul is doing; and

--Restored accountability and local decision making to state government in the aftermath of rampant abuses of executive power throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

But that's not where we have gone this session under continued one-party, all-Democrat rule. The size of the state budget continues to skyrocket. There was no turning back from this explosive tax-and-spend path this year. Far from it, in fact. The new state budget, as I have detailed in previous columns, took yet another huge leap in size and will burden state and local taxpayers for years to come.

The same goes for law and order. Albany Democrats are turning criminal justice on its head. Most reasonable New Yorkers recognize that rising crime and violence, and weakened public safety and security, are the direct 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 an overall careless approach to criminal justice.

In short, our calls to make New York more affordable, responsible, safer, and sustainable have, once again, gone unheard this session. Nevertheless, the fight goes on to rescue and restore a more reasonable approach to governing this state.

It's more urgent than ever.

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