



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Statement from Senator Fred Akshar on Mayor Bill de Blasio's "SOTA" Program

FRED AKSHAR March 9, 2018

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"New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio likes to pride himself on his 'progressive' bonafides and how his agenda is raising the quality of life for low-income residents. While his agenda

makes for catchy slogans and makes him a media darling, the truth of Bill de Blasio's New York is far more shameful and appalling.

In Bill de Blasio's New York, indigent people are struggling with serious substance abuse and mental wellness issues. Many of these people are veterans, or women and children fleeing from domestic violence or inhospitable living conditions. Rather than use city resources to help these men, women and children, Bill de Blasio has let them fall through the cracks, content to let them live in costly, yet substandard and ramshackle 'cluster sites.'

There are now a record 60,000 people living in shelters, with a Manhattan Institute study showing adults are staying in shelters an average of 383 days each. That's a nearly three-month increase in days spent in a shelter since 2013, the year Bill de Blasio took office. And what's his plan to fix this? Rent some buses and get the problem out of sight and out of mind.

Whether he likes it or not, Mayor de Blasio has a moral obligation to the people of New York City. Rather than take real steps to address mental and physical wellness or engage in public-private partnerships to create better housing and opportunities for homeless and low-income residents, Bill de Blasio is putting homeless New Yorkers on buses, tossing them some rent money and sending them elsewhere. Instead of treating unwell and struggling veterans, women and children like human beings, he's herding them like cattle onto buses and shipping them to Broome County for someone else to take care of.

The people of the Southern Tier and Broome County support and take care their own, in good times and bad. We don't ship our struggling neighbors elsewhere for others to 'deal with' and call ourselves 'progressives.' Now, NYC Mayor de Blasio wants Broome County

residents to foot the bill for his negligence, malfeasance and failed policies that are unable to fulfill the most basic obligations for his residents. It's shameful that Bill de Blasio is willing to shirk his own responsibilities as Mayor, as the leader of one of the wealthiest and most successful cities in the world, and let others pay the cost of his failures.

Shame on Bill de Blasio for lacking the moral courage to actually help those who need it, and instead choosing to uproot people from the city they've called home. When the Mayor said New York was 'a tale of two cities,' I don't think even his staunchest ally thought this was the solution he had in mind.

Broome County officials argue that the de Blasio's administration is doing all of this illegally, and I'll be following their legal actions closely. But I'm also calling on Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to fully investigate the legality of this morally bankrupt practice.

My first responsibility as state senator is to protect the people I represent. I will not allow Bill de Blasio to shift his responsibilities onto the people of my district. I pledge to the people of Broome County and the Southern Tier that I will stand up for them and work protect their interests from the cowardice of Bill de Blasio and his administration."

You can read Sen. Akshar's letter to Attorney General Eric Schneiderman on the SOTA program [here](#).