



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of April 17, 2023 -- 'New York government only knows how to spend'

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 17, 2023

| ISSUE: **STATE SPENDING; TAXING; LATE BUDGET**



Fast forward to today, with the adoption of a 2023-24 state budget going on three weeks late, and we all know where it's headed: Spending. Spending. Spending. And taxing, taxing, taxing. 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 government only knows how to spend"

Back in April 2021, when former Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature's Democrat-led supermajorities were putting the finishing touches on their new, massive \$212 billion state fiscal

plan, it was a state budget, we now know, that accelerated the irresponsible fiscal actions that have brought this state to the brink of disaster.

That budget raised state spending by a whopping \$18 billion while still finding a way, shamelessly, to raise taxes by more than \$4 billion! Most significantly, it continued to set the stage for what has been cemented as the defining action of this era in state government: out-of-control spending.

New York State's budget in 2018, the last year that Republicans held the majority in the state Senate, totaled \$170 billion. This year, while Governor Hochul proposed a \$227 billion spending plan, the Democrat majorities in the Legislature are looking to go well beyond that and are eyeing a final budget of at least \$236 billion -- a budget that, if enacted, would represent an increase in state spending of \$66 billion, or nearly 40%, over the last five years. It's overwhelming -- and it's outrageous.

Another way to look at this outrageous growth in spending is that the \$60 billion-plus increase alone is larger than the entire budgets of 35 states.

Two years ago, after that year's final budget was enacted, I said, "We had an opportunity and a responsibility to enact a fiscally responsible, short- and long-term strategy for the post-COVID rebuilding, restoring, and resetting of local communities, economies, environments, and governments for the long term. Equally important, we needed to recognize the fiscal challenges New York will face for the foreseeable future, steer clear of any massive new taxing and spending, and bolster the state's emergency reserve funds. That's not what this budget represents. It sets up an economic and fiscal disaster."

Fast forward to today, with the adoption of a 2023-24 state budget going on three weeks late, and we all know where it's headed: Spending. Spending. Spending. And taxing, taxing, taxing.

Albany Democrats are clearly on their way to enacting the largest-ever state budget, by a wide margin, and they already are on the lookout for their next tax hike opportunities, both short- and long-term. Proposals have been floated for income tax hikes, gas tax increases, cost shifts to local governments, and more.

New York is already recognized as one of America's highest taxed, least affordable, least business friendly, least free states. We are one of the most debt-ridden states. We lead the nation in population losses. We have been singled out as one of the most undesirable places for retirees. We're overregulated and impose one of the heaviest burdens of unfunded state mandates to boot. New York's business tax climate has long been noted by the Tax Foundation as one of the nation's worst.

Despite it all, Governor Hochul and the Legislature's Democrats are bound and determined to be the biggest spenders of all. In short, one-party, Democrat control of New York State government continues to threaten moving all of us in the wrong direction.

When they decide to get around to it, Governor Hochul and New York's out-of-control Democrat supermajorities will enact a new state budget that will spend the roof off the state Capitol. It will set up a future of higher taxes, more fees, and skyrocketing debt for every New York taxpayer.

It will continue to be an unending search for more tax dollars to afford an irrational spending spree. The ongoing implementation of regressive taxes will leave middle-income families and workers, motorists, truckers, farmers, small businesses, manufacturers and other industries, and seniors among the hardest hit.

In a state long known as one of the highest-taxed, highest-spending states in America, the continually evolving Albany Democrat vision for New York keeps running the risk of setting new standards of recklessness -- at great cost and devastating consequences for far too many New Yorkers and the local economies they depend on.

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