



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of June 19, 2023 -- 'Spend, spend, spend, and now we all pay'

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 20, 2023

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Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature.

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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, "Spend, spend, spend, and now we all pay"

When they finally decided to get around to enacting a new state budget in early May, Governor Hochul and New York's Democrat supermajorities went ahead and spent the roof off the state Capitol.

Their final, \$230 million, largest-ever spending plan is just the latest chapter in a devastating era in New York government. In fact, there's been no looking back under all-Democrat control. They have simply and carelessly thrown caution (right along with taxpayer dollars) to the wind. They added \$8 billion this year alone. Since 2018, they have increased state spending by nearly \$60 billion -- and so much of it in relentless pursuit of a misguided, questionable, unsustainable political agenda.

And it's all before having to address a burgeoning migrant crisis. Before figuring out how to pay for massive energy mandates. Before addressing a multi-billion-dollar Unemployment Insurance debt. Before so much else that's coming down the line.

I, and many others, have repeatedly warned, all along, that the Albany Democrat spending agenda sets up a future of higher taxes, more fees, and skyrocketing debt for every New York taxpayer.

So here we go. The ink is barely dry on the latest, massive Democrat budget and the governor's own Division of the Budget -- in a Financial Plan quietly released while the Legislature was pushing through its final days of the legislative session -- already estimates that state expenses will exceed revenues by more than \$36 billion over the next three years, \$9.1 billion next year, \$13.9 billion the following, and \$13.4 billion the year after that!

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One of New York's prominent fiscal watchdogs, the Albany-based Empire Center for Public Policy, notes, "New York state government isn't in immediate danger of running out of money thanks to moves by Governors Andrew Cuomo and Hochul to build up reserves, with about \$19 billion available. Tapping this nest egg outside a major emergency or economic downturn, however, would leave the state poorly positioned when such an event inevitably occurs -- and it wouldn't be enough to cover even two years of spending. The new gap calculation is the clearest evidence to date that Albany's three-year spending binge

... can't be sustained."

New York State's budget in 2018, the last year that Republicans held the majority in the state Senate, totaled \$170 billion. Following this year's \$230 billion budget, state spending has increased nearly \$60 billion, or approaching 40%, over the last five years. It's overwhelming -- and it's outrageous.

Governor Hochul and her Democrat allies have simply cemented what will always be the defining action of this era in state government: out-of-control spending.

A couple other ways to look at this outrageous growth in spending is that the \$60 billion-plus increase, over the past five years alone under one-party control, is larger than the entire budgets of 35 states. This year's total budget is larger than the combined budgets of Texas and Florida (each of which has more population than New York State) and it spends more than 1½ times per capita than California (which is twice the population of New York State).

Following the adoption of this latest budget, I said, "New York State taxpayers today and long into the future now face having to go on trying to afford, and trying to live and work under, one of the most bloated governmental budgets in the world. The bottom line on this budget is that it's not affordable. To afford it, Governor Hochul and the Democrat majorities in the Legislature will keep on squeezing every penny they possibly can from state and local taxpayers through higher taxes, passing the buck to localities, more borrowing, raiding reserve funds, increasing fees, and every other anti-taxpayer, anti-business, anti-economic opportunity, and anti-economic growth action that's contained in this new budget and will be the cornerstone of state budgets for a long time to come under one-party, all-Democrat control. New York State will remain the nation's leader in irresponsible, irrational, and unsustainable spending that will overburden and make this state even more unaffordable for taxpayers, families, workers, small businesses, manufacturers, farmers, and every segment of our local economies."

Albany Democrats seem determined to keep setting new standards of recklessness as the biggest spenders New York State has ever seen.