



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of October 30, 2023 -- 'Still no solutions on a worsening migrant crisis'

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 30, 2023

| ISSUE: **MIGRANT CRISIS**



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

Washington, Albany, and New York City Democrats keep trying to buy time on a clock that just keeps showing time running out.

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, **"Still no solutions on a worsening migrant crisis"**

From the Siena Research Institute's latest statewide poll of New Yorkers: "While other issues in Washington and abroad have largely driven the news cycle over the last few weeks, the influx of migrants to New York remains top of mind for voters, with 84% saying it's a serious -- 57% very serious -- problem for the state. *Seldom do we see an issue where at least 79% of Democrats, Republicans, independents, men, women, upstaters, downstaters, Blacks, whites, Latinos, Catholics, Jews, and Protestants all agree -- that the migrant influx is a serious problem* (emphasis mine)."

It's a startling number and a broad majority of poll respondents disapprove of the job being done (or more accurately, in my view, not being done) by President Biden and Governor Hochul to address (or more accurately, in my view, to not address) the migrant crisis.

It's a crisis on every level -- humanitarian, economic, public health and safety -- and yet the top Democrats in this nation and state remain deafeningly silent on real solutions.

Even as this state is clearly running out of resources and space to handle the steady flow of migrants into New York from the nation's southern border.

Even as concerns over public safety across New York continue to mount. Again, from the latest Siena poll: "In May, 93% of voters said crime in the state was a serious problem -- 59% very serious -- and 65% said crime in their community was a serious problem, 26% very serious. Today, a strong majority of voters say the problem of crime in the state has only gotten worse over the last year, and more than four in ten say crime in their community has gotten worse over the last year."

Even as state spending continues to skyrocket. Recent updates revealed, for example, that state Medicaid spending over the first half of the year was \$3 billion more than anticipated. One fiscal watchdog, the Albany-based Empire Center, called it another sign of a “brewing fiscal crisis” driven, in part, by immigration-related expenses and warnings that the Medicaid cost overruns “are likely to compound” future state budget gaps already projected to be at least \$30 billion over the next three years.

In New York City, for instance, it’s now up to \$400 per day, per person to house and care for incoming migrants which, by the way, shows no signs of abating. “It’s not just that the demand is increasing, but it’s increasing at an accelerating pace,” one top official said recently. New arrivals keep surging from 40 new migrant households a day earlier this year to, now, roughly 100 new households daily.

From what we’re being told -- and keep in mind that the transparency of all of this remains deeply troubling -- it’s fast approaching 150,000 migrants who have arrived in New York since the start of this border crisis and are now under the state’s care.

So far, the best Governor Hochul offers in response is a continually extended “state of emergency” on the migrant crisis and words that, for far too many New Yorkers, clearly ring hollow. Remember that the latest Siena poll shows nearly 85 percent of New Yorkers view the migrant crisis as serious and most believe that it’s not being addressed.

“This is the largest migration of humanity since post-World War II,” the governor remarked last week. “So I understand the frustration. But I think over time, we’ll start to see a shift in how people view us managing this, because we’re going to have solutions. We’re going to have opportunities for people to get good paying jobs here in the state of New York, which is what they came for.”

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