



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of December 25, 2023 -- 'Renewing hope for a New Year'

THOMAS F. O'MARA December 28, 2023

| ISSUE: **2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**



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, **"Renewing hope for a New Year"**

Above all else this week, I hope this column finds you and your families, friends, and neighbors well and doing your best to have a memorable and meaningful holiday season.

Approaching the start of another new year in New York State government, we could focus on looking ahead to the debates that always await the governor and legislators in ordinary times -- traditionally difficult challenges on education, economic development, environmental protection, fiscal policies, infrastructure, public safety and security, and so many more.

But these remain far from ordinary times. Consequently, the beginning of 2024 will arrive during what continues to be an incredibly long and hard road back to community and economic renewal across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and throughout New York State.

As always, this hoped-for revitalization will continue to hinge on strong regional teamwork on the goals and priorities we share. The experience we have gained and the bonds we have cemented over these past several difficult, unexpected, unprecedented years will continue to serve us well in the year ahead. This teamwork will remain fundamental to our success and our ability to keep pushing forward.

And, once again, we simply need a state government that's focused on addressing the right priorities.

Throughout the past year, I have welcomed the opportunity to represent the newly redefined (as a result of redistricting in 2022) 58th Senate District. This redefined district has continued to include the core of the district I represented prior to redistricting -- Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Yates counties -- with the addition of Seneca and Tioga counties, and a part of Allegany County. It is one of New York's geographically largest legislative districts. The communities and citizens comprising the 58th District share common strengths and fundamental goals, and I have appreciated working with so many of you to be a strong voice in Albany -- and to keep fighting to secure our priorities for affordability, opportunity, and stronger and safer communities.

On the economic front of this ongoing battle to reclaim solid ground across our region and within individual communities, we will need the Hochul administration to better recognize that our regional revitalization can and must move forward with greater clarity, common

sense, and fairness. Many of us across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, as well as all over Upstate New York -- government officials, business owners, and workers and families alike -- continue to believe this revitalization can and should be accomplished more effectively and rapidly.

In 2024, we will need to redouble our emphasis on the need for fairness. I've had this discussion with many local leaders and citizens. We will continue pushing the administration to recognize specific regional concerns and suggestions -- and the need for sensible compromises and effective, safe resolutions. State government needs to get away from its one-size-fits-all mentality.

There is enormous work facing us to fix what's broken and keep providing fundamental assistance. On the legislative front, we must continue to hear the voices of small business, farming, tourism, manufacturing, and the other foundations of our local economies. Moving forward, these ongoing discussions, on a bipartisan basis, will become increasingly critical. As I have said repeatedly, one way we stay together is by staying informed.

Finally, as we move through these last few days of 2023, days which traditionally serve as centerpieces of reflection on the year past, we do well to recall our gratitude to everyone throughout the public and private sectors providing diligent outreach and service. Because of these incredible and inspiring efforts, local citizens and communities have been able to persevere, stay together, remain hopeful, move forward, and keep planning for better days.

Let's all keep doing our part. These will remain the rays of hope at the beginning of the coming New Year, the silver lining of strength that always has and always will keep seeing us through.

My very best wishes to you and your families, friends, and neighbors for a Merry Christmas, and a safe, healthy, and successful New Year.

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