



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of April 29, 2024 -- 'Welcome to New York under one-party control'

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 29, 2024

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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, **"Welcome to New York under one-party control"**

Here's the final word from the Empire Center, a prominent state fiscal watchdog, on New York's record-setting, \$237 billion spending plan recently enacted by Governor Kathy Hochul and the Legislature's all-Democrat supermajorities: "New York is spending more than ever and it's more reliant on volatile Wall Street revenue than ever. Total spending will have grown 33 percent in just four years. This is not sustainable."

Go ahead and comb through all the myriad details of all the programs and services covered by this budget and of course you'll find things to like and support. There better be something for everyone to like in the aftermath of a \$237 billion spending spree.

Nevertheless, that doesn't mean, by any stretch, that this all-Democrat approach to governing -- especially to taxing and spending -- is smart or wise or in touch in any way whatsoever with common sense. Because it's not. And even more troubling is that there remains a significant bloc of Senate and Assembly Democrats who hate this budget because they don't believe it spends nearly enough. That's a warning for the future.

Here's another warning for the future from another prominent state fiscal watchdog, the Citizens Budget Commission: "This budget leaves the State with a massive, future structural budget deficit, likely exceeding \$16 billion. Instead of using strong receipt growth to shore up New York's fiscal foundation, the budget adds unaffordable spending that increases future gaps -- taking the State further in the wrong direction."

Keep in mind that this new fiscal plan increases spending by \$8 billion over last year. Nearly one-third of this increase, \$2.4 billion, goes directly to support programs and services and other handouts for an illegal immigrant population showing no signs of abating. In fact, it only continues to grow and constitutes nothing short of a border crisis for New York State taxpayers.

New York continues on its way to soon becoming the first state in America to ban natural gas stoves, furnaces, and other appliances (and the purchase of gas-powered vehicles). We are moving forward on a timeline for full electrification and other energy mandates that are not feasible, reliable, or affordable.

New York continues to impose a higher and higher state minimum wage despite dire warnings from farmers, small business owners, manufacturers, and many others that this move will lead to ongoing job losses, stagnant local economies, and diminished economic opportunity and growth across this state.

New York continues to fail taking meaningful action -- despite all the bravado we keep hearing from Albany Democrats to the contrary -- to make New Yorkers safer in their homes and communities.

The bottom line? New York State taxpayers today and long into the future must face trying to live and work under the most bloated and wasteful government budget in the nation. New York already ranks first among all states in population loss. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers have already waved the white flag and said, "We can't take it anymore." This budget makes it worse.

New York's big spenders have set up a steady string of unaffordable spending plans. As noted above, this year's budget increases spending and handouts by at least eight billion dollars while failing to address any meaningful tax relief, mandate relief, debt relief, or fundamental priorities in education, health care, local roads and bridges, and so many other areas. In fact, it ignores the economic and fiscal warnings on the horizon and keeps on increasing government spending like there's no tomorrow.

To afford it, Governor Hochul and the Legislature's Democrat supermajorities will go on squeezing every penny they possibly can from state and local taxpayers through higher taxes, more borrowing, raiding reserve funds, increasing fees, and taking every other anti-taxpayer action contained in this new budget, and that will be the cornerstone of every future state budget for as long as New York remains under one-party, all-Democrat control.

Welcome to New York under one-party control.

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