



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of May 6, 2024 -- 'New Yorkers keep losing hope'

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 8, 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, **"New Yorkers keep losing hope"**

New Yorkers are losing hope and the signs of it are all around us. We lead the nation in population loss thanks in no small part to the fact that we continue to be one of the nation's highest taxed and most heavily regulated states -- in other words, one of America's most unaffordable places to live, work, and raise a family.

The latest statewide polling of registered voters from the Siena College Research Institute showed Governor Hochul having her lowest-ever favorability rating. The poll also found that more than 80% of New Yorkers believe the ongoing arrival of thousands upon thousands of illegal migrants is a serious problem -- and keep in mind that the poll was conducted before the Albany Democrats enacted their latest state budget and delivered another \$2.4 billion handout to provide programs and services for illegal migrants. Needless to say, a majority of poll respondents continue to dislike the job that Governor Hochul, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, and the Biden Administration are doing (or, more accurately, not doing) to address New York's border crisis.

The poll also revealed that most New Yorkers believe that crime across this state has gotten worse over the last year. Approximately 60% of voters remain concerned that they will be a victim of crime.

Yes, New Yorkers are losing hope. But what's being done to restore it?

To kick off the 2024 legislative session -- one that we believed represented a pivotal session with New York at a crossroads in so many areas -- the Senate Republican Conference put forth a comprehensive set of goals to help rebuild and strengthen local and state economies, focus on the affordability challenges facing so many middle-class families and small business owners, and make public safety a top priority.

At that time back in mid-January, I said, "We face an affordability crisis. We face a border crisis. Law and order are in free fall. The Albany Democrat direction for New York simply fails to produce any hope for a long-term, sustainable future for communities, families, workers, businesses, industries, and taxpayers. New York is a state in decline that continues to become less safe, less free, less affordable, less economically competitive, less responsible, and far less strong for the future. We are at a dangerous crossroads and we must enact an across-the-board agenda to cut taxes, address affordability, and rebuild stronger and safer communities."

We called it "A New Hope for the Empire State" and we began rolling it out at the very start of this session with a focus on fiscal responsibility and affordability for all taxpayers, rebuilding and

revitalizing New York's local economies, and addressing rising crime and public safety.

Albany Democrats have gone in a completely different direction. It continues to put this state's future on high alert. Their direction for New York is producing billions upon billions of dollars of short- and long-term spending commitments requiring billions upon billions of dollars in new taxes, fees, and borrowing for future generations of state and local taxpayers.

The overriding goals of our New Hope agenda would have:

--Offered a safer and better quality of life for all New Yorkers by repealing bail reform and supporting law enforcement and crime victims;

--Made New York more affordable for every resident by cutting the state's highest-in-the-nation tax burden and taking other actions to lower the cost of living in New York;

--Improved the state's business climate and expanded economic opportunity by cutting burdensome regulations;

--Moved more responsibly and sensibly toward a cleaner energy future without ignoring affordability, feasibility, and reliability like the strategy currently set in motion under Governor Hochul is doing; and

--Restored accountability and local decision making to state government in the aftermath of rampant abuses of executive power throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

But that's not where Democrats have gone so far this session and there's very few signs of it turning around any time soon. The size of the state budget continues to skyrocket. There is no turning back from this explosive tax-and-spend path this year. Far from it, in fact. The new state budget, as I have detailed in previous columns, took yet another huge leap in size and will burden state and local taxpayers for years to come.

The same goes for law and order. Albany Democrats are turning criminal justice on its head. Most reasonable New Yorkers recognize that rising crime and violence, and weakened public safety and security, are the direct result of the pro-criminal policies being enacted and pushed by this governor and a State Legislature under one-party control. They have emboldened the criminal element throughout this state through failed bail reform, lenient parole policies, an out-of-control Parole Board, cowing to the "defund the police" movement, and an overall careless approach to criminal

justice.

In short, our calls to make New York more affordable, responsible, safer, sustainable, *and hopeful*, have, once again, been going unheard. Nevertheless, the fight goes on to rebuild and reclaim hope for a more reasonable approach to governing this state.

It's more urgent than ever.

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