



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of May 27, 2024 -- 'For As Long As We Remember'

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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, ["For As Long As We Remember"](#)

Throughout generations of Americans on Memorial Day, many words have been shared to honor the memory -- and the service and sacrifice -- of our fallen heroes.

From President Ronald Reagan: "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same."

From President John F. Kennedy: "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter the words, but to live by them."

From President Franklin D. Roosevelt: "In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved."

And from President Abraham Lincoln, at Gettysburg: "We here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

From Arlington in our nation's capital to Woodlawn, Bath, and Romulus here at home -- and at thousands of other veterans' cemeteries and monuments across this land -- Americans will gather once again to observe Memorial Day.

The nation's long-standing Memorial Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery is highlighted by a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, on which the following words are inscribed: "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."

Therein lies the essence of Memorial Day: To pause in our daily lives and remember the American soldiers who now rest "in honored glory" in devotion and service to all Americans -- to our families, our friends and neighbors, our communities, our state, and our nation.

In that spirit, we continue to raise the American Flag. Here at home, we proudly recognize New York State as the "Birthplace of Memorial Day," in Waterloo, Seneca County, which our nation has observed since the time of the Civil War, as well as stand proud at the newly designated New York State Veterans Cemetery (formerly known as the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery) in nearby Romulus.

We turn enduring thoughts and prayers to our soldiers, the heroes, who gave their lives, including the young soldiers who have recently been lost.

We honor wounded warriors, and we support the men and women serving in harm's way at this very moment -- shining examples of bravery, eternal honor and respect, and courage and conviction.

We salute all New York State veterans and the millions more strengthening communities across our nation.

Because of our veterans, we can look into the eyes of the young people in our lives this Memorial Day, the faces of the future, and have faith that they, too, will be instilled with the spirit to keep America strong, to keep believing that the American way is a good, decent, worthwhile way.

In the end, perhaps this is the great justice for all of the missions flown, the foxholes dug, the hills taken, and the battles fought on land and sea.

America's Armed Forces have made and will continue to make the ultimate sacrifice to keep America free, so that she can lead the way to a freer world.

The sacrifices of our military will keep alive America's promise, so that people throughout the world will look to her for inspiration.

Our servicemen and servicewomen will keep America strong, so that other nations will draw courage from her strength.

For as long as we remember and keep them alive in our hearts, we will stand as we do -- free in a land of opportunity and promise.

The spirit of this salute will endure and persevere.

God Bless America and God Bless our troops.

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