



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of November 4, 2024 -- 'Let your voice be heard on Election Day and beyond'

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ISSUE:

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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, **["Let your voice be heard on Election Day and beyond"](#)**

First and foremost, I will take this opportunity to urge everyone -- if you haven't already taken advantage of early voting -- to get out and cast your vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5th.

There is not a single more important or fundamental right and responsibility that we have as citizens of this nation.

Find your polling place here: <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>

Polls are open until 9:00 p.m.

To be reminded of the importance of voting, recall the words of so many former Presidents of the United States:

--"We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." -- Thomas Jefferson

--"Elections belong to the people. It's their decision." -- Abraham Lincoln

--"The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter." -- Dwight D. Eisenhower

--"The greatest threat to democracy is indifference. Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves, and the only way they could do this is by not voting." -- Franklin D. Roosevelt

--"We vote not because we're liberal or conservative, but because we're American citizens, and that is our responsibility." -- George W. Bush

It was Susan B. Anthony who said, "Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it."

President Ronald Reagan's former chief speechwriter and top aide Peggy Noonan has written, "Our political leaders will know our priorities only if we tell them, again and again, and if those priorities begin to show up in the polls."

Noonan's words speak to the practical bottom line of the importance of elections in a democracy: Once the votes have been counted and Election Day has passed, it becomes time to immediately get back to the hard work of governing, which is always about (or should be about, if a government is being responsive and effective) responding to the will of those who voted.

That will certainly be the case here in New York State government. In so many ways, the direction of this state is on the ballot on Tuesday.

In one of the latest statewide polls from the Siena Research Institute, more than half of New York voters believe that our state is headed in the wrong direction, and over 60% say the country is on the wrong track. Tellingly, 75% of those surveyed believe this is the most important election of their

lifetimes.

Consequently, when the dust has settled and it's time to get back to governing in New York State, voters are telling us that it's time to govern in a way that turns this state (and country) around and gets it heading in a new, better, safer, and stronger direction.

Toward that end and looking ahead to the start of a new session of the State Legislature in January just sixty days from now, it is worth restating many of the goals and priorities that will continue to drive my colleagues and I in the Senate Republican Conference. We believe we need a redirection of New York's priorities and resources to begin addressing unmet challenges and crises. We need to start charting a course for a more sensible and sustainable state government focused on priorities that include:

-- a better quality of life for all New Yorkers by restoring public safety and security as one of the state's highest responsibilities;

-- making New York more affordable by cutting one of the nation's highest tax and debt burdens;

-- putting a strict cap on state government spending that threatens to make the nation's highest population losses even worse;

-- rethinking a process underway to quickly implement energy mandates that ignore affordability, feasibility, and reliability;

-- transforming the state-local partnership by making good on a promise made over a decade ago to address the practice of unfunded state mandates;

-- finally, fully, and honestly reassessing New York's COVID response, including its failures and shortcomings, to be better prepared in the future;

-- continuing to protect and strengthen our Second Amendment and other Constitutional rights and freedoms; and

-- restoring local decision-making and addressing abuses of executive power at the state level.

Please vote on Tuesday. Let your voice be heard.

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