



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of December 23, 2024 -- 'Approaching a new year in NYS government'

THOMAS F. O'MARA December 23, 2024

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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, **"Approaching a new year in NYS government"**

I hope this week's column finds you and your families and friends, and communities and neighbors, doing 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, it's of course time to start looking ahead to the debates and decisions that always await the Governor and the Legislature -- and there are many difficult challenges and crises facing all of us on education, economic development, energy and environmental conservation, health care, fiscal policies, immigration, infrastructure, public safety and security, and so many others.

Here at home, the beginning of 2025 arrives during what continues to be a long road back to community and economic renewal across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions. As always, this hoped-for revitalization will continue to rely on strong regional teamwork in pursuit of the goals and priorities we share. The experience we have gained and the bonds we have cemented over the past several difficult, unexpected, and 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.

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

Throughout the past two years, I have enjoyed and welcomed the opportunity to represent the newly redefined (as a result of legislative redistricting in 2022) 58th Senate District encompassing all of Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, and Yates counties, and the eastern portion of Allegany County (the towns of Alfred, Almond, Amity, Andover, Birdsall, Burns, Grove, Independence, Scio, Ward, Wellsville, and Willing). It is one of New York's geographically largest legislative districts; however, as I've said many times before, 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 -- especially to keep fighting to secure our priorities for affordability, opportunity, and stronger and safer communities.

On the economic front of this ongoing effort to reclaim solid ground, we need the Hochul administration and government as a whole out of Albany 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, as well as all over Upstate New York -- government officials, business owners, families, taxpayers, and workers alike -- continue to believe this revitalization can and should be accomplished more effectively and rapidly.

In 2025, we will need to redouble our emphasis on the need for fairness and affordability. I've had this discussion with many local leaders and citizens. We will continue pushing the administration and legislative leaders (who undeniably approach governing New York from a decidedly downstate, New York City-based perspective) 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 also said repeatedly, one way we stay together is by staying informed.

Finally, as we move through these last few weeks of 2024, weeks which traditionally serve as centerpieces of reflection on the past year, we do well to recall our gratitude to everyone throughout the public and private sectors providing diligent outreach and services. Because of these incredible and inspiring efforts, local citizens and communities have been able to persevere, remain hopeful, move forward, and keep planning for a better future.

Let's all keep doing our part. These local commitments will remain the lifelines of hope at the beginning of the coming New Year, as well as the foundation of strength that always has and always will keep seeing us through.

My very best wishes to you and your families, friends, and neighbors throughout this holiday season, and a safe, healthy, and successful New Year.

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