



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of May 26, 2025 -- 'For as long as we remember'

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ISSUE:

- [Memorial Day 2025](#)



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, ["For as long as we remember"](#)

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.

Several years ago, asked about the importance of Memorial Day, the director of both the Woodlawn and Bath National Cemeteries, Duane Mendenhall, shared this reflection: "Every single freedom and liberty we enjoy can be traced back to a battlefield ... How can words suffice to honor our fallen veterans? We honor them by remembering they loved America. Most of all they valued life by bravely readying themselves to die in service of this country."

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."

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."

And from President Donald Trump: "To every family member of the fallen, I want you know that the legacy of those you lost does not fade with time but grows only more powerful. Our fallen heroes have not only written our history, they've shaped our destiny."

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.

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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