



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Senate Republicans raise concern with political and partisan messaging from OTDA commissioner

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Albany, NY- New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, and members of the Senate Republican Conference recently wrote a letter to the Commissioner of the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), urging her to immediately stop her overtly political and inappropriate statements regarding the federal changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

They suggested the agency step back from partisan messaging and instead investigate the \$40 million lost due to SNAP theft and fraud and work collaboratively with lawmakers from both sides of the aisle to deliver meaningful solutions that improve the lives of all New Yorkers.

“We understand Governor Hochul is gearing up for a tough re-election, but the use of state resources to amplify partisan messaging must cease immediately. Language such as describing the federal changes as ‘cruel’ or ‘unthinkable’ more closely resembles campaign rhetoric than the neutral, fact-based analysis expected from your department. These talking points are best left to the Democratic National Committee, not parroted by a state agency that performs vital public service,” **stated the letter.**

“I am concerned with the overtly partisan messaging used by the OTDA Commissioner in a recent letter to state legislators,” **said Sen. Griffo.** “OTDA should be focused on helping, supporting and serving all New Yorkers regardless of their political views. The agency, or any other in the state for that matter, should not be using state resources to engage in rhetoric or to push an agenda that is political in nature. Instead, it would be more beneficial for OTDA to work collaboratively with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to improve the lives of all New Yorkers and their families.”

“Partisan rhetoric has no place in government agencies,” **Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt.** “Instead of targeting Republican members of Congress, I suggest the Commissioner use her government resources as they are intended: to provide crucial services to New Yorkers. Agency heads should be stewards of tax dollars, not taxpayer funded attack dogs for a flailing administration. We are calling for an immediate stop to political messaging from the Commissioner and urge her to focus her efforts on recouping the \$40 million lost to fraud and theft in the SNAP program.”

“I would strongly suggest that you stop the partisan political attacks and instead, try working with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to find solutions that will benefit New Yorkers in need, regardless of their political persuasion,” **said Sen. Dean Murray, ranking member of the Senate Social Services Committee.** “For example, focusing on switching to chip technology on your EBT cards to prevent the skimming theft of SNAP benefits that have cost needy New Yorkers tens of millions of dollars a year. With a state budget of \$254-billion, there really is no excuse for not getting it done. How about putting more of your focus on delivering results for needy New Yorkers and less on delivering attack pieces for political bosses.”

“Rather than focusing your public commentary on Republican members of Congress, we urge you to direct your attention to the serious issue of SNAP fraud in New York

State. Between 2022 and 2024, SNAP theft in New York totaled over \$40 million. Though our state accounts for just seven percent of SNAP recipients nationwide, we are responsible for 18 percent of the fraud.[1] That discrepancy suggests urgent reforms are needed at the state level to protect taxpayers and preserve the program for honest recipients,” **continued the letter.**

A full copy of the letter is attached.