



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara releases results of online budget survey as Senate and Assembly prepare to release plans

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 13, 2011

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Elmira, N.Y., March 13—"That single answer alone delivers a loud-and-clear local message that the state bureaucracy should be streamlined and made more cost effective for taxpayers," State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-Big Flats) said today as he released the results of his online survey on Governor Andrew Cuomo's 2011-2012 proposed state budget showing 97% of the survey's respondents support proposals to consolidate, restructure and reduce the cost of the state bureaucracy.

[Read more in The Evening Tribune.](#)

In addition to a streamlined state government, 87% also support efforts by local governments to undertake similar cost-saving initiatives like consolidations and shared services.

[SEE BELOW FOR ATTACHED COPY OF FULL RESULTS]

The Senate and Assembly are set to unveil this week proposed changes to Cuomo's budget plan. Each house will act on its respective budget plan in the form of a "budget resolution," which will set the stage for a series of joint, public budget conference committee meetings starting next week and negotiations with the governor leading up to the beginning of the state's new fiscal year on April 1.

O'Mara noted that the state Senate convened a hearing in Albany early last week to receive specific public testimony on Cuomo's state agency consolidation proposals.

He launched his online survey, which has received nearly 300 responses, in mid-February as a way to encourage local input on the governor's budget proposal from across the 53rd District covering Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties, and a part of Tompkins County.

It's been helpful to gauge local reaction during one of New York's toughest-ever budget cycles, O'Mara said.

"This isn't a scientific survey by any means, but it does offer a meaningful and useful snapshot of what's on the minds of area residents paying attention to state government and willing to give some thought to the choices being debated in Albany," said O'Mara, noting that in addition to answering a series of 10 detailed questions, most respondents also took up his offer to share more extensive, detailed comments, which he's still reviewing. "I can't say

enough about the value of this local input as the Legislature begins working in earnest toward a final budget. It's timely, it's informative, and I truly appreciate the interest and participation."

Other survey highlights show that:

- > 60% of respondents believe that, overall, Cuomo's budget plan would put New York State on the right track;

- > 76% support actions to encourage private-sector economic growth and create private-sector jobs as one of the state's top 3 priorities;

- > 87% agree that any state-imposed property tax cap must be accompanied by actions to reduce the burden state mandates impose on local governments and school districts;

- > 86% believe that reforming the state's system of Medicaid should be one of New York's top 3 priorities this year;

- > respondents were split when it came to being "optimistic" (43%) or "pessimistic" (44%) about the future of the Southern Tier and Fingers Lakes regions; and

- > 65% support state spending cuts, even if the cuts result in significantly reduced state support for local schools and health care.

The survey will stay online and be available to area residents throughout the month of March: <http://www.nysenate.gov/webform/let-your-voice-be-heard-senator-omaras-budget-survey>.

"There's no quick-fix on most of these issues. We're going to have to confront these economic and fiscal challenges for the foreseeable future, so I continue to invite this local

input,” said O’Mara. “It’s important to have a full public airing of what we’re facing, and this is one way to encourage it.”

O’Mara said that he will conduct additional surveys like this one in the future on other important topics facing New York State government.