



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## **O'Mara, Senate continue to push legislation to end unfunded state mandates**

[Thomas F. O'Mara](#)

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**Albany, N.Y., March 21**—The New York State Senate has approved legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to end the practice of unfunded state mandates on local governments and school districts.

Specifically the legislation ([S.1347/A.5059](#)) would ban the imposition of any future state mandates that increase costs on local governments and school districts without providing state funding to localities to pay for delivering the required programs and services.

“The state enacted the local property tax cap with a promise to localities and school districts to roll back the heavy burden of unfunded state mandates. We still have a lot of work to do to lift that existing burden on local governments and local property taxpayers,” said O'Mara. “But we should also immediately put an end to any future unfunded state mandates. This legislation proposes a commonsense step that says the state will no longer pass the buck to counties, cities, town, villages or school districts. If the state mandates a program or a service that increases costs, the state should pay for it.”

O'Mara said the legislation serves to highlight the ongoing need for New York to provide mandate relief to local governments and school districts in the face of the two-percent property tax cap the state enacted in 2011.

It would also mark, if enacted, the beginning of a true transformation of the state-local partnership, he said. The state has taken some important mandate relief actions over the past several years, O'Mara said, including long-term pension reform and the takeover of the growth in local Medicaid costs.

But it hasn't been enough, according to O'Mara.

"Some meaningful steps have been taken to rein in the cost of Medicaid, for example," said O'Mara. "But we can't keep turning our backs on the fact that more needs to be done. Mandate relief has to remain a state priority. Localities and school districts facing tough fiscal challenges still have their hands tied by too many unfunded state mandates."

The legislation remains in the Assembly Local Governments Committee. It must be approved by the Assembly and signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo before becoming law.