



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara: Fiscal crisis, upstate economy top Legislature's 2018 agenda

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 4, 2018

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Albany, N.Y., January 4— “The decline of the upstate economy and so many upstate communities continues to demand top billing in 2018,” State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) said in response to Governor Andrew Cuomo’s **eighth State of the State message** to the Legislature yesterday.

O'Mara said that Cuomo was right to focus this year's address on the seriousness of New York's fiscal deficit. The governor pegged the deficit at \$4 billion.

O'Mara said one pledge Cuomo failed to make was an outright pledge not to raise taxes to deal with the current deficit. He said that while working with the governor and his legislative colleagues to close the deficit will top this year's legislative agenda, he also stressed the importance of keeping Albany's attention focused on the specific plight of upstate property taxpayers, upstate communities, and upstate employers.

"While there's no denying the state has a serious and difficult fiscal deficit, the governor made no mention of the unprecedented year the financial industry markets had on Wall Street and what revenues we should expect to see from that. The deficit will overshadow every decision we make this year and it will take political cooperation to right the ship," said O'Mara, a member of the Senate Finance Committee. "I would have liked to hear the governor say outright that tax increases are off the table. We cannot afford to try to tax our way out of the deficit. New York is already one of the highest-taxed states in America. High taxes remain a serious drag on our business climate and overall economy, particularly upstate. 'No new taxes' will be a priority for Senate Republicans. So will state spending control and comprehensive regulatory reform."

In addition to economic development, ongoing tax relief, and establishing a permanent cap on state spending, O'Mara said that he will also fight to roll back onerous state mandates, rules, and regulations in the new year.

One key indicator arrives later this month when the governor unveils his 2018-2019 state budget proposal. O'Mara said that numerous state governors prior to Cuomo, when faced with significant budget deficits, turned to significant cost shifts to local governments, and unprecedented increases in state taxes and fees, to balance the state's books.

“That was an era in the not-too-distant past in state government that was incredibly tough on local taxpayers, employers, workers, and families. We can’t afford anything resembling a repeat performance of those years as a way to deal with the current deficit,” O’Mara said.