



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara meets with members of the Southern Tier Library System on 'Library Advocacy Day' at the State Capitol

[Thomas F. O'Mara](#)

February 25, 2020

ISSUE:

- [public libraries](#)



We are fortunate throughout the Southern Tier to benefit from an outstanding network of public libraries providing access to books and so many other activities, learning materials, broadband access, and civic, cultural, educational, and economic opportunities.

Albany, N.Y., February 25—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) met with members of the [Southern Tier Library System](#) on “Library Advocacy Day” at the State Capitol on Tuesday, February 25.

“Our public libraries across the Southern Tier are vital community resources and it's important for the state to continue investing in their strength and vitality. Fighting for our libraries is an investment in education, economic growth, and civic quality for parents and families, seniors, and the community at large. Our libraries play a fundamental role in local workforce development, career training, and job placement. They are cherished public institutions and we are fortunate throughout the Southern Tier to benefit from an outstanding network of public libraries providing access to books and so many other activities, learning materials, broadband access, and civic, cultural, educational, and economic opportunities,” said O’Mara, who in [2016 received the “Outstanding Advocate for Libraries Award” from the New York Library Association \(NYLA\)](#).

O’Mara noted that public libraries across New York State serve over 19 million patrons annually.

Throughout his tenure in the Legislature, O'Mara has been a strong supporter of Southern Tier and Finger Lakes public libraries, recognizing their central importance to the civic, cultural, and educational fabric of area communities. He has fought for increased state support for the Library Construction Grant Program and other state funding.

In 2015, O'Mara and area Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) sponsored a new law (Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2015) that, for the first time, included "installation and infrastructure of broadband services" as a specific project category eligible to receive funding through the Library Construction Grant Program. Prior to the law's enactment, libraries were unable to access funding through the popular grant program specifically for broadband purposes including cable, wiring and modems, and network terminals and access points.