



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara joins Senate GOP colleagues calling for independent investigation into COVID-19 crisis in nursing homes

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 6, 2020

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Elmira, N.Y., May 6—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today joined his Senate Republican colleagues to call for an independent investigation of New York's response to the tragedy continuing to unfold in state-regulated nursing homes impacted by COVID-19.

“Our efforts on the front lines of this nursing home crisis and tragic loss of lives in regional nursing homes, particularly at Hornell Gardens in Steuben County, helped recently lead to an important shift in state policy that now prevents nursing home employees who tested positive for COVID-19 from returning to work for two weeks. Working as a team with Hornell Mayor Buckley, County Manager Wheeler, the entire Steuben County Health Department, and all of the local officials and health care providers working around the clock on the COVID-19 response, I can attest to our collective frustration with the response of the Cuomo administration to taking control of our nursing home hot spots. We repeatedly called for aggressive and decisive actions by the state Health Department to test, isolate, and prevent spread. I believe an independent investigation into this particular aspect of New York’s COVID-19 response is warranted and necessary for the families who have lost loved ones, the caregivers putting themselves at risk, and to ensure better and safer policies moving forward.”

The Cuomo administration has come under criticism for nursing home deaths, which now total nearly 5,000 following recent state reporting. An investigation has been launched by the state’s Attorney General and the Department of Health (DOH), but O’Mara questioned the independence of that investigation since DOH is directly involved in creating the directives being questioned.

In addition to an independent investigation, Senate Republicans called for an immediate change in policy to create regionally based specialty long-term care facilities for COVID-19 positive nursing home residents.