



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara charges legislative leaders fail again to limit Cuomo's executive powers: Says it's time to end 'government by executive order' and restore legislative checks and balances

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 21, 2020

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Albany, N.Y., July 21—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and his Senate Republican colleagues today proposed a legislative amendment to put an end to Governor Andrew Cuomo's current emergency powers to unilaterally enact state laws and regulations.

The amendment was unanimously rejected by the Senate Democratic leadership. A similar legislative amendment was also unanimously defeated when O'Mara and Senate Republicans proposed it when the Legislature met in late May.

Since early March, O'Mara said that Cuomo has issued 54 Executive Orders that have allowed the governor to unilaterally change nearly 300 laws.

O'Mara said, "The governor needed the ability to respond quickly to a rapidly changing crisis at the outset of the COVID-19 response, however four months later it's time to put an end to this government by executive order. The dangers and shortcomings of government by executive order have become clear. A legislative process without checks and balances goes too far and fails to be effective. Senate Republicans keep putting forth proposals to restore more balanced government, but the all-downstate, extreme-liberal Senate Majority is not serious about governing or checking the power of the governor. They are content letting Governor Cuomo do the dirty work."

The Senate GOP amendment would have immediately stopped the governor's unilateral emergency control. The proposal would have put New York's disaster emergency control policy in line with other states that limit an Executive's powers to 30 days and require the Legislature's approval for continuing the powers.

The amendment would have also mandated that the Governor to provide weekly reports to the Legislature during an emergency declaration to ensure accountability and transparency.