



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara named top Republican on Senate Investigations Committee

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 25, 2020

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Elmira, N.Y., July 25—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) has been appointed as the top Republican member on the Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations as the committee prepares to lead upcoming joint Senate-Assembly hearings on the COVID-19 nursing home crisis.

O'Mara's appointment as the ranking member on the Investigations Committee was made by new Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt.

O'Mara will also continue to serve as the top Republican member on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

He welcomed the new appointment to the Investigations Committee and said that he looks forward to the upcoming hearings on nursing homes, scheduled for early August, to try to lead efforts to examine the impact of the Cuomo administration's COVID-19 response. So far, Senate Democrat leaders have resisted calls by O'Mara and the Senate GOP to use the committee's subpoena powers to compel testimony from the governor and top administration officials.

Significant questions have been raised over the Cuomo administration's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York State's nursing homes, assisted living and long-term care facilities, where at least 10,000 residents have died over the past four months.

O'Mara has worked closely with local officials throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, particularly in Steuben County where nursing home "hot spots" in Hornell and elsewhere have been alarming.

"New York State is home to one of the worst tragedies we have seen as a result of this ongoing pandemic," said Ortt. "The thousands of families who lost loved ones in nursing homes and long-term care facilities across our state deserve the truth as to whether the Cuomo administration was negligent in its response to the pandemic. Senator O'Mara has been and will continue to be a vocal proponent for an independent and thorough investigation of the administration's actions, and he will not rest until the families of lost

loved ones are provided the answers they are owed.”

O’Mara said, “Simply settling for the findings of an in-house report on the COVID-19 nursing home crisis from Governor Cuomo’s own Department of Health is not good enough for those who have lost parents, grandparents and other loved ones. The Governor’s response to our calls for an independent investigation as ‘politically motivated’ is disingenuous and disrespectful to these grieving families. The seniors who have died and their families deserve to have an unbiased and independent inquiry into the actions of the Department of Health, and they should know if any mistakes were made. There is nothing political about uncovering the truth.”

O’Mara said that same standard will hold true across the many responsibilities facing the Investigations Committee.

“The need for unbiased investigations does not stop at our state’s nursing homes and long-term care facilities. We must have representatives on the Investigations Committee who will seek out the truth on state issues regardless of the specific topic at hand. I appreciate Leader Ortt’s confidence in my experience, commitment and ability to represent our conference on the Investigations Committee, and I want to reinforce my commitment to getting the answers that New Yorkers rightfully deserve,” O’Mara said.

Ortt stressed that O’Mara is well suited to represent the Senate GOP on the committee, pointing to his previous experience as the District Attorney in Chemung County, as a former Chemung County Attorney and as a former Assistant District Attorney in both Chemung County and Manhattan.

O’Mara is a graduate of the Syracuse University College of Law.