



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

SENATE DEMOCRATS REJECT MOTION TO ISSUE SUBPOENAS IN NURSING HOME SCANDAL: Investigations Chair James Skoufis Refuses to Consider Motion, Mutes Microphone of Ranking Republican Member Senator Tom O'Mara (UPDATED: WATCH HERE)

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 1, 2021

| ISSUE: [COMBATING COVID-19 AND PROTECTING NEW YORKERS; PROTECTING NURSING HOME RESIDENTS](#)



In the wake of the attorney general's report, the failure of the Investigations Committee to immediately issue subpoenas and demand testimony from Governor Cuomo and his administration once again completely abandons legislative responsibility.

[UPDATE: Watch Senator O'Mara's reaction to today's Senate Investigations Committee [HERE](#).]

Albany, N.Y., February 1--In an effort to compel an independent investigation into bombshell allegations unveiled by the Attorney General's nursing home report last week, Senator Tom O'Mara, ranking member of the Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations, today advanced a motion calling on the Committee to issue a subpoena to the New York State Department of Health for the nursing home data and related communications.

Instead of considering the motion before the committee, Chairman James Skoufis dismissed it on a questionable procedural argument, even going as far to mute Senator O'Mara's microphone during the meeting.

Senator O'Mara said, "It is time for the Senate Democrat Majority to stop stonewalling and protecting Governor Cuomo on the nursing homes crisis. In the wake of the attorney general's report, the failure of the Investigations Committee to immediately issue subpoenas and demand testimony from Governor Cuomo and his administration once again completely abandons legislative responsibility. It makes the Senate Democrats complicit in this tragedy. Every step of the way, the Senate Democrat Majority has been willing to give the Cuomo administration every opportunity to keep trying to cover its tracks and rewrite its false story on nursing homes."

Committee member Senator Anthony Palumbo, who seconded O'Mara's motion, added, "For months, my colleagues and I in the Senate Republican conference have been calling on the Senate's Investigations Committee to use its subpoena powers to get answers for New Yorkers who lost loved ones to COVID-19 in nursing homes and adult care facilities. Today, the Senate Majority once again refused to take action, blocking our motion in committee to

compel the use of subpoenas for an investigation. This partisan decision in the wake of the AG's report is a dereliction of duty on their part and a grave injustice for the families of the deceased. This is the sole committee equipped with the power to fully investigate state government, and their failure to act is shameful," said Senator Anthony Palumbo.

For months, Senate Republicans have been calling on Senator James Skoufis, Chair of the Committee on Investigations, and the Senate Majority to take action and issue subpoenas as the Executive Branch continued to stonewall and withhold critical data.

Senator O'Mara advanced the motion pursuant to Section 62-a of the Legislative Law, which states in part "the chairman, vice-chairman or a majority of a legislative committee may issue a subpoena requiring a person to attend before the committee and be examined in reference to any matter within the scope of the inquiry or investigation being conducted by the committee."

Despite the lack of action by the Majority, Senate Republicans will continue to call for a full, independent investigation into the Cuomo administration's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also, in session today, Senator O'Mara will once again advance an amendment to strip the Governor of his emergency powers and rightfully restore the Legislature as a co-equal branch of government. Senate Republicans have done so each day the Legislature is in session, but Senate Democrats continue to vote it down.

[View today's meeting of the Senate Investigations Committee [HERE](#).]