O'Mara, GOP colleagues move again to end Cuomo's emergency powers: Senate Republicans have acted 15 times to highlight failures of 'government by executive order' (WATCH HERE)

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| ISSUE: **COMBATING COVID-19 AND PROTECTING NEW YORKERS; PROTECTING NURSING HOME RESIDENTS**

The Senate Democrat supermajority still remains afraid to take any meaningful action to immediately, fully and effectively restore the Legislature's decision- making authority and responsibility.

Albany, N.Y., February 22—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today joined Senate and Assembly Republican colleagues at the Capitol to renew their call and advance

legislation to bring an end to Governor Andrew Cuomo's unlimited, unilateral COVID-19 emergency executive powers.

At a news conference this afternoon, Republican legislators called on the Democrat supermajorities in the Senate and Assembly to act as Senate Democrats prepared to approve legislation establishing a new 10-member Commission made up of eight Democrats and only two Republicans to oversee, not straight-out revoke, the governor's COVID-19 executive order powers.

O'Mara and his colleagues also renewed their calls for an independent investigation into the Cuomo administration's handling of the COVID-19 response in New York nursing homes and long-term care facilities where upwards of 15,000 New Yorkers have died.

O'Mara, who serves as the top Republican on the Senate Investigations Committee, said, "It's clear that Governor Cuomo has abused his emergency powers, thwarted legislative oversight, engaged in a cover-up and has extorted at least one member of the Legislature who has dared to speak out. But the Senate Democrat supermajority still remains afraid to take any meaningful action to immediately, fully and effectively restore the Legislature's decision- making authority and responsibility. Now they want to hide behind yet another Commission so they can go on avoiding responsibility and continue protecting the Cuomo administration."

[Watch Senator O'Mara's comments at today's news conference **HERE**.]

[Watch today's full news conference **HERE**.]

Since last May, the Senate Republican Conference has advanced a legislative amendment 15 times to implement a straight repeal of the Cuomo emergency powers -- including a dozen times this year alone.

Republican efforts have been rejected along party lines each time.

Since the onset of the pandemic ten months ago, when Cuomo was first granted the emergency authorization, the governor has issued dozens of Executive Orders that have allowed him to unilaterally change hundreds of state laws, as well as implement rules and regulations and make spending decisions, without legislative approval.

O'Mara said, "We will not stop in this effort to restore legislative checks and balances to New York State government. It's long past time to end state government by Cuomo executive order. Endless executive orders are a recipe for failure and are failing in fundamental ways. Governor Cuomo can no longer be allowed to just issue another directive or another unfunded state mandate out of Albany and callously disregard local input. We shouldn't allow it to keep going unchecked and risk our upstate regions, workers, businesses, taxpayers, and communities paying an enormous price today and well into the future. The Legislature's decision-making authority must be restored as a fundamentally strong, locally based voice in state government."

The governor's actions have now gone well beyond the necessary scope of the COVID-19 response, O'Mara said. Republican efforts would put New York's disaster emergency control policy in line with other states that limit an Executive's powers to 30 days and require legislative approval for extending them.