



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, Senate GOP make 21st attempt to end Cuomo's emergency powers: Senate and Assembly supermajorities preparing to extend 'government by Cuomo executive order' in vote on legislation tomorrow

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The Republican-sponsored amendment was defeated for the 21st time along a party-line vote in the Democrat-controlled Senate.

Albany, N.Y., March 4—With New York’s legislative majorities expected to approve legislation on Friday that will extend Governor Andrew Cuomo’s emergency executive powers indefinitely, State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and the Senate GOP moved for the 21st time today to advance a legislative amendment enacting an immediate, straight-out repeal of the governor’s unlimited, unilateral authority.

The Republican-sponsored amendment was defeated for the 21st time along a party-line vote in the Democrat-controlled Senate.

O’Mara said, “We will not stop in this effort to restore legislative checks and balances to New York State government. Endless executive orders have failed New Yorkers in egregious ways. Governor Cuomo can no longer be allowed to sit in Albany and issue directive after directive after directive without any regard for legislative checks and balances, or local input.”

Since the onset of the pandemic over a year 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.

Many of the governor's actions, O'Mara said, have now gone well beyond the necessary scope of the COVID-19 response.

O'Mara and his Senate Republican colleagues first introduced legislation in May 2020 that would have immediately ended the governor's powers. Their legislative amendments 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 legislative approval for extending them.

The Senate and Assembly Democrat supermajorities announced an agreement on legislation earlier this week, expected to be approved by the Legislature tomorrow, that they say will end Cuomo's unilateral authority. At a Capitol briefing yesterday, however, Cuomo indicated that his office was involved in negotiating the agreement with legislative Democrats. The governor said that the new legislation will in fact keep his emergency powers in effect until the time the federal government declares the end of the COVID-19-pandemic, well past their scheduled sunset date of April 30.

O'Mara and many of his GOP colleagues have blasted the pending legislation as dishonest.

O'Mara said, "Even under a dark cloud of mounting cover-ups, scandals and investigations covering the current Cuomo administration, this governor somehow still dictates to Albany's legislative Democrats. Over the past year that New Yorkers have lived under executive order, without legislative checks and balances, or any significant local decision making at all, the shortcomings and failures of Governor Cuomo abusing his emergency powers have caused tragic and unnecessary anger, frustration, pain and suffering for families, business owners, unemployed workers, overburdened taxpayers and overwhelmed local governments. The latest Albany Democrat scam being approved on Friday will keep it all in place until who knows when."