



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara and Palumbo again call for investigation into NY's COVID-19 nursing home deaths

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 11, 2021

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



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Albany, N.Y., May 11—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Ranking Member of the Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee, today called for the committee to subpoena members of the Cuomo administration, including top state health

officials, in order to obtain documents, emails, phone records, and all other information surrounding the state's handling of the COVID-19 crisis in New York's nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

O'Mara's motion was seconded on the committee by Senator Anthony Palumbo (R,C-New Suffolk).

The *New York Times* reported in late April that Governor Andrew Cuomo and top aides repeatedly obstructed the release of accurate information on the number of COVID-19 deaths of seniors in nursing homes. According to the *Times*, "Mr. Cuomo's most senior aides engaged in a sustained effort to prevent the state's own health officials, including the commissioner, Howard Zucker, from releasing the true death toll to the public or sharing it with lawmakers."

Senator O'Mara said, "It continues to remain clear to me and to my Republican colleagues in the Senate and Assembly that this Legislature has a responsibility to fully understand what has happened and why. It is time for the Senate Democrat Majority to stop protecting Governor Cuomo. The failure of the Senate Investigations Committee to issue subpoenas completely abandons legislative responsibility. It continues to make the Senate Democrats complicit in this tragedy."

Senator Palumbo said, "Once again, Senate Democrats have refused to issue subpoenas to current and former Department of Health staff regarding nursing home COVID deaths. Despite their tough on corruption rhetoric, Democrat members of the Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee continue to stonewall our efforts to obtain this important information, which is critical to our full understanding of what transpired at nursing homes throughout the pandemic. Moreover, this data will provide us with invaluable insight if and when the Senate presides over Governor Cuomo's impeachment

hearing. Their refusal to act in good faith in issuing subpoenas puts into question if their loyalties rest more with the governor than the people of New York State."

O'Mara has now called on and made four formal motions to the Chair of the Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee, Senator James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley), to allow the full committee to vote on moving forward with subpoenas, including subpoenas to Zucker and other former and current top Health Department officials.

All of O'Mara's motions have been rejected by the Democrat Majority.

Watch today's meeting of the Senate Investigations Committee here:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/calendar/meetings/investigations-and-government-operations/may-11-2021/investigations-and-government>