



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Statement from Senator George Borrello on the 2021 Legislative Session

[George M. Borrello](#)

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“The 2021 Legislative Session has ended, and along with it, the hope that the Democratic leadership in the Legislature would put the people of New York State over party by finally and completely ending the Governor’s emergency powers.

“No less than 47 times did Senate Republicans advance amendments to repeal his authority. Each and every time these attempts were rejected by Senate Democrats. They also sat on a resolution I advanced to end the State of Emergency, voting instead to continue abdicating their constitutional duty.

“The tragic result is that we leave Albany with the Governor’s grasp on unilateral power as strong as it was 15 months ago when the Legislature first granted him that authority at the start of the pandemic.

“While that power could more easily be justified in March 2020, it is impossible to defend in June 2021, with positivity rates at their lowest, nearly 70 percent of New Yorkers vaccinated and multiple scandals surrounding the very man who has been left in charge. The cloud of corruption over the Governor and the other party’s unwillingness to confront it by using their subpoena power and fully stripping him of his emergency authority, should concern everyone who believes in the importance of honest and accountable government.

“These issues and his compromised negotiating position had consequences. Our \$212 billion budget contained a crushing and ill-advised \$4.3 billion in new taxes,

despite the Governor's opposition. The final deal that was struck to legalize recreational marijuana was reached with, what the *New York Times* described as a "torrent of concessions" by the Governor. And despite hinting at the need for stronger crime measures in his State of the State address, such proposals never surfaced and, in fact, the recently passed 'Less is More' measure will only worsen our current crime problem by ending the practice of reincarcerating most parole violators.

"However, this session also had some victories that are encouraging and that confirm the impact of a vocal and sustained advocacy.

"After the devastation that our small businesses experienced during the pandemic and our state-imposed lockdown, those of us who fought throughout the crisis to exempt COVID-related layoffs from being used against small businesses in the calculation of unemployment insurance rates finally saw that issue addressed. Our calls for small business relief contributed to the inclusion of approximately \$1 billion in grants and tax credits in the state budget, which will aid the recovery.

"I was proud to help lead a bipartisan effort to codify the farm to food bank program Nourish NY, which provided relief to over 4,000 farmers and 1.3 million food insecure New Yorkers. We will continue to advocate to get this signed into law as soon as possible.

"This week saw key progress on one of my top priorities with the passage of legislation I cosponsor that will end the practice of utilities unfairly requiring broadband providers to fund pole replacements as a condition of gaining access to the poles to install internet service. With the typical pole costing between \$15,000 and \$20,000, this measure has the potential to save small and mid-size broadband providers tens of millions of dollars, making it more feasible for them to invest in costly rural broadband build-outs and ultimately connecting rural New Yorkers.

"There is so much more that needs to be done to accelerate New York's economic recovery, increase public safety and restore common sense to every area of public policy. Some of the Legislature's efforts this session will advance these goals, but many others will set them back. As we go forward, I will continue to be the strongest advocate that I can be for my district and constituents."

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