



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' ~ for the week of August 2, 2021 ~ 'Not so fast on the end of the nursing homes tragedy'

THOMAS F. O'MARA August 2, 2021

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New Yorkers have already been shocked by the facts that have been exposed over the past year on the Cuomo administration's mishandling, dishonesty, misinformation, lying, whitewashing, and abuses of power.

Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature, as well as on legislative actions, local initiatives, state programs and

policies, and more. Stop back every Monday for Senator O'Mara's latest column...

This week, "Not so fast on the end of the nursing homes tragedy"

During a rare question-and-answer session with reporters at an event at Yankee Stadium last week to announce a new vaccination program, Governor Cuomo continued to defend his administration's actions on the spread of COVID-19 in New York's nursing homes, where the pandemic has already taken the lives of nearly 16,000 seniors.

Some viewed the governor's latest eye-popping comments as a victory lap – that the governor was pounding his chest and declaring himself absolved of any and all wrongdoing.

Not so fast.

In particular, the governor seemed to point to a recent decision by the federal Department of Justice (DOJ) to not undertake one specific investigation into the nursing homes crisis in New York and several other states as somehow proof that inquiries and investigations over the past year were all simply an “outrageous allegation,” “politically motivated,” “political hyperbole,” and “toxic politics” that “violated the basic concept of justice in this nation.”

Cuomo also let loose with this doozy, “I am telling you as I sit here – I have told you the facts on COVID from day one. Whether they were easy, whether they were hard, I told you the truth.”

As they say, sometimes you just can't make it up.

We also can't just sit back and watch and listen to this governor try to keep selling his own version of history by fabricating his own facts, like he did with his now infamous book on New York's “leadership” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the governor's suggestion that the recent DOJ decision somehow exonerates him on the nursing homes tragedy, that's simply not true. The DOJ has refused to investigate possible violations of what's known as the “Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act” – a narrow scope of inquiry that would have only covered approximately 30 government-run nursing homes out of New York's more than 600 facilities statewide.

Let's not forget that the governor and his inner circle remain under criminal investigation by the FBI and the United States Attorney's Office in Brooklyn for an apparent cover-up of the COVID-19 death toll in nursing homes and its link to the governor's \$5.1-million book deal, a book in which he

sought to portray New York's handling of the crisis in a more favorable light than what we now know the reality to be.

In other words, the 11th hour decision by the DOJ was limited in scope and did nothing to dissolve the clear and convincing evidence, in my opinion and in the view of many others, that the Cuomo administration engaged in an illegal cover-up of COVID-19 deaths in New York State's nursing homes. Many of us will continue to fight for justice on this front. There are other, ongoing investigations at the state and federal levels that should and I believe will fully examine and expose this cover-up by Governor Cuomo and his inner circle, as well as other misconduct.

Last week, Governor Cuomo said that when all is said and done on all of the ongoing investigations, that New Yorkers will be "shocked" by the facts that will come out.

New Yorkers have already been shocked by the facts that have been exposed over the past year on the Cuomo administration's mishandling, dishonesty, misinformation, lying, whitewashing, and abuses of power.

No amount of desperate doublespeak by this governor or his top aides can ever do anything to change those facts now.

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