



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara says Governor, Legislature take no action to fix rent relief crisis: Fail to put in place a plan for accelerated, immediate, direct aid to struggling tenants and property owners

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 1, 2021

| ISSUE: **HOUSING CRISIS**



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Albany, N.Y., September 1—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today rejected legislation agreed to by Governor Kathy Hochul and the Legislature’s Democrat majorities to extend New York’s eviction moratorium until January 15, 2022 because it fails to take any immediate, significant action to help tenants and landlords struggling to access vital relief through the state’s failing Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

Throughout the past year, O’Mara and his colleagues in the Senate Republican Conference have called on state leaders to put in place a plan to ensure the speedy delivery of billions of dollars in federal relief aid to tenants and landlords. To date, less than 10% of the nearly \$3 billion in federal assistance has been distributed through ERAP.

O’Mara said, “Today’s action is taking no action at all. The New York State Democrats are just kicking the can down the road. The answer and the solution to this housing crisis is not to keep extending an eviction moratorium and canceling rent. The focus and the priority must be on getting vital federal assistance out of the state’s hands and into the hands of those who desperately need it, which means struggling tenants and property owners throughout the Southern Tier, Finger Lakes, and statewide. The former administration’s management of this vital federal aid was abysmal and it’s unfortunate that the new Hochul administration, with the full and ongoing consent of the Legislature’s Democrat majorities, isn’t turning the page. They are taking no meaningful steps to fix it now. This so-called ‘extraordinary session’ of the Legislature was just more business-as-usual out of Albany, negotiated behind closed doors, out of the public’s view, and rushed through.”

Since at least May, Senate and Assembly Republican leaders have joined many local government leaders to call on the state to implement a quicker distribution of rent relief funds. In recent months, Senate Republicans have held virtual listening sessions with stakeholders from the housing community to prepare for the end of the eviction moratorium this month and put in place immediate, direct actions to alleviate financial pressure on tenants and property owners.

In early August, the U.S. Supreme Court partially blocked New York’s eviction moratorium. Last week, the court blocked the federal eviction moratorium.

O’Mara stressed that the extension of the eviction moratorium without meaningful, immediate steps to distribute the available federal relief aid will only exacerbate the crisis, especially for small, mom-and-pop property owners throughout New York who, while not receiving any rental income, must continue to pay taxes, insurance, mortgage, and myriad other maintenance costs on their properties