



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of August 29, 2022 -- 'New York's spending spree already proving unsustainable'

THOMAS F. O'MARA August 29, 2022

| ISSUE: **STATE BUDGET**



This state was at a crossroads this year and we needed to enact an across-the-board agenda to permanently cut taxes, dramatically address affordability, and significantly rebuild stronger and safer communities.

Instead, we went in the completely opposite direction.

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, "New York's spending spree already proving unsustainable"

It didn't take long and it's not good news for future taxpayers.

In April, when Governor Kathy Hochul and the Democrat legislative majorities in the Senate and Assembly finished stocking up what would become New York's largest-ever state budget, many of us warned about its irrational spending.

Remember that the final 2022-2023 budget rang in at over \$220 billion, hiking New York government spending by at least \$8 billion over last year while simply ignoring the overriding need for mandate relief, regulatory reform, or permanent, broad-based tax relief.

In fact, the Democrats' latest spending plan, a one-party vision for spending billions of taxpayer dollars, set us on a course toward higher taxes.

Now, according to a report earlier this month from one of Albany's leading fiscal watchdogs, the Empire Center for Public Policy, the new state budget is already projecting multi-billion-dollar budget gaps in the coming years. The latest deficit projections were quietly put out by the governor's own Division of the Budget.

In other words, the massive new state spending authorized over the past two years, which has sent New York into the stratosphere of state budgets in America, is already proving unsustainable.

The Empire Center states, "Historically large budgetary surpluses inherited by Governor Hochul are now just a memory, with the state now facing projected budget gaps totaling \$13.7 billion over the next five years ... The new sea of red ink is due to an anticipated plunge in tax receipts resulting from the recent economic and financial market decline."

The center goes on to conclude, "Where the economy and financial markets go from here is unknown. But in retrospect, it seems clear at least that the Governor and the Legislature should have showed more fiscal restraint in April."

No kidding. Unfortunately, there's no such thing as fiscal restraint coming out of Albany at the moment.

Back in April, when this year's final budget was enacted, I said, "This Albany Democrat giveaway goes far beyond any reasonable sense of fairness, responsibility, or long-term sustainability for

hard-working, taxpaying citizens. It's the largest spending plan ever enacted but it fails to include the scope of tax, regulatory and mandate relief needed to truly begin turning this state around. It largely ignores the need to rebuild and revitalize the manufacturing sector. It's a one-party vision for spending billions of dollars that's teeing up a next generation of hard-hit taxpayers and unaffordable living in New York State. We are going to be footing the bill and carrying the burden for these all-Democrat budgets for years to come."

In the end, this year's budget can only be defined as a spending spree. Governor Hochul followed in the footsteps of former Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature's Democrat majorities who two years ago began setting New York government loose on an irresponsible, extremely liberal, far-left frenzy of spending that blew through a one-time federal windfall and clearly risks a future of higher state taxing and borrowing.

Cuomo blew through his self-imposed two-percent spending cap five-fold with a nearly 10% spending increase in a then-record \$212 billion state budget grasping for support from a Legislature out for his head. Hochul followed suit this year in a gross pandering for votes in her contentious primary election -- both blowing billions of your tax dollars in their own selfish pursuits and setting New York State up for significant future deficits.

It has spread around a lot of taxpayer dollars and made plenty of people happy in the short term. The bottom line, however, is that it will not change New York's reputation as one of America's highest-taxed, highest-spending, highest-regulated states.

Throughout this year's budget adoption cycle, the Senate Republican Conference highlighted key priorities through a comprehensive "Take Back NY" agenda. The GOP agenda has focused on lower taxes, less regulation, greater accountability, economic growth, job creation, and more common sense on state fiscal practices, including spending restraint.

New York remains one of the highest-taxed states in America. We are one of the most overregulated states in the nation. Our local governments and local property taxpayers continue to foot the bill for one of the country's heaviest burdens of unfunded state mandates.

It's no coincidence that New York led the nation last year in overall tax burden and population loss. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers are heading for the exits.

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