



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of March 20, 2023 -- 'Spending sprees driving NYS on a road to nowhere'

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 20, 2023

| ISSUE: **STATE GOVERNMENT SPENDING; TAXPAYERS**



The direction that Governor Hochul and Albany Democrats lay out for New York's future spells even harder times ahead for taxpayers, small businesses and manufacturers, and already hard-pressed upstate communities, economies, and workers.

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, "Spending spree driving NYS on a road to nowhere"

In late January, when Governor Hochul unveiled her proposed 2023-2024 Executive Budget, the bottom line came in more than \$5 billion higher than the current budget. I warned then to “Watch Out,” because that bottom line was before the all-Democrat leaders in the Senate and Assembly had their hands on it -- and that this year’s final budget was likely to go even higher.

That’s exactly where we’re headed. Last week, the Democrat majorities in the Senate and Assembly approved their respective “one-house” budget resolutions in advance of final budget negotiations with the governor. These one-house budgets traditionally stake out legislative priorities entering negotiations on a final budget scheduled to be in place by April 1.

The Senate and Assembly Democrats would add \$9 billion in new state spending on top of the governor's \$5.5 billion proposed increase -- for a whopping increase of \$14.5B! In my view as the Ranking Member on the Senate Finance Committee, that spending is unsustainable, unwarranted, and will continue to drive more New Yorkers out of the state. If enacted, it would constitute a 39% increase in state spending since the Democrats in Albany took control of both houses of the Legislature five years ago.

It's out of control.

The Albany Democrats’ priorities include such massive programs as \$1 billion to New York City for the city’s migrant crisis and expanding Medicaid to illegal immigrants at an estimated \$1.7 billion. There’s no pullback of the No Bail fail. Indeed, they enhance their criminal-coddling ways by including so-called “Clean Slate” policy to permanently expand sealing criminal records, including for many felons.

The Senate Democrat budget (which the Assembly Democrat budget mirrors) calls for a \$236 billion final budget with double-digit increases in state spending. It charts a course for New York that could leave a future generation of state and local taxpayers footing the bill for a questionable, unaffordable, and unreasonable agenda of overspending. To pay for this massive spending increase, they want a combination of tax and fee increases, raiding state “rainy day” and other reserve and settlement funds, and pulling back on efforts to pay down state debt, which is already one of the nation’s highest.

Our Senate Republican conference was concerned about Governor Hochul’s out-of-control state spending plan when she proposed it in January. We warned that the Legislature’s Democrat majorities would be looking to go even higher. Here they go. Their proposed spending spree is irrational. It’s unreasonable. It doesn’t respond to the issues of affordability for everyday New York families, taxpayers, and workers.

Let me stress that the direction being pursued by Albany Democrats sets the stage for a final state budget this year that would significantly increase short- and long-term state government spending (in a state that already spends more than every other state in America, except California).

The direction that Governor Hochul and Albany Democrats lay out for New York's future spells even harder times ahead for taxpayers, small businesses and manufacturers, and already hard-pressed upstate communities, economies, and workers. It's mind-boggling how the governor and top legislative Democrats focus on explosive state government spending at a time when the priority should be a long-term, steady, sustainable future for upstate, middle-class communities, families, workers, and taxpayers.

Meanwhile, Senate Republicans will continue to be a voice for affordability, lower taxes, less regulation, economic growth, job creation, and more common sense on state fiscal practices.

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