

## STATEMENT FROM SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER ROB ORTT

“Participation and engagement in our nation’s democratic republic is essential to being American. When asked what form of government the Founding Fathers created in the U.S. Constitution, Benjamin Franklin said, ‘A Republic, if you can keep it.’ This was a call on all citizens to never forget that we all have a duty to uphold our institutions that protect the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

“Over the course of America’s history, countless lives have been sacrificed to ensure that we as Americans have the ability to freely and fairly elect those who we wish to represent us. In their honor, and all who have sacrificed to guard the great American Idea, it is incumbent on us to be civically engaged throughout our lives. All of you here today have displayed a desire and commitment to educating yourselves on what it truly means to participate in our democratic process. This brings me such joy, and you should all be commended.

“The future of our nation rests on your shoulders. What our democratic republic needs now more than ever is an informed, active, younger generation that will carry the torch and participate in our local, state, and federal political processes. And, it is vital that our older generations empower you to share your voice. As I have said and will continue to attest to, next to leading U.S. soldiers on the battlefield as we fought to bring democracy and freedom to the individuals of Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, serving the residents of my district and New York State has been the greatest honor of my life. Whether it’s running for public office, being active in your community, using your free speech, or voting, I hope you always find the joy of being a citizen in the greatest country the world has ever seen.

“I wish all of you the best this evening and I hope you remember the lessons you learn tonight for the rest of your lives. God bless you, and god bless the United States of America.”

