

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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3
4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10 February 5, 2024

11 3:10 p.m.

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13
14 REGULAR SESSION

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18 SENATOR JEREMY A. COONEY, Acting President

19 ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
3 Senate will come to order.

4 I ask everyone to please rise and
5 recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

6 (Whereupon, the assemblage recited
7 the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.)

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: I'd like
9 to invite the Reverend Dr. Sabu Varghese, of the
10 India Christian Assembly in Levittown, New York,
11 to deliver today's invocation.

12 Pastor.

13 REVEREND DR. VARGHESE: Let us
14 pray.

15 Our Father who art in heaven,
16 hallowed be Thy name. Your kingdom come, Your
17 will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

18 As we gather here today, we ask that
19 You give our lawmakers here wisdom from above for
20 the doing of Your will, so that this state may
21 shine with justice, righteousness and peace.

22 As we read in Romans 13:1, everyone
23 must submit himself to the governing authorities,
24 for there is no authority except which God
25 has established. The authorities that exist have

1 been established by God.

2 We acknowledge that Your divine
3 authority reigns over our government and its
4 people. We pray that these servants of Yours
5 will be united in their decisions and always have
6 the good of the citizens at the forefront of
7 their minds. May Your people be blessed by their
8 service to them.

9 We thank You for lending Your ears
10 to our prayers, because we have asked these
11 things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and
12 Savior. Amen.

13 (Response of "Amen.")

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Reading
15 of the Journal.

16 THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Sunday,
17 February 4, 2024, the Senate met pursuant to
18 adjournment. The Journal of Saturday,
19 February 3, 2024, was read and approved. On
20 motion, the Senate adjourned.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Without
22 objection, the Journal stands approved as read.

23 Presentation of petitions.

24 Messages from the Assembly.

25 The Secretary will read.

1 THE SECRETARY: Senator O'Mara
2 moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules,
3 Assembly Bill Number 8567 and substitute it for
4 the identical Senate Bill 8081, Third Reading
5 Calendar 63.

6 Senator Rivera moves to discharge,
7 from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill
8 Number 8522 and substitute it for the identical
9 Senate Bill 8056, Third Reading Calendar 191.

10 Senator Cleare moves to discharge,
11 from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill
12 Number 8604 and substitute it for the identical
13 Senate Bill 8063, Third Reading Calendar 193.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: So
15 ordered.

16 Messages from the Governor.

17 Reports of standing committees.

18 Reports of select committees.

19 Communications and reports from
20 state officers.

21 Motions and resolutions.

22 Senator Gianaris.

23 SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon,
24 Mr. President.

25 Let's begin by taking up the reading

1 of the calendar.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
3 Secretary will read.

4 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 63,
5 Assembly Print Number 8567, by Assemblymember
6 Palmesano, an act to amend a chapter of the Laws
7 of 2023.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
9 last section.

10 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
11 act shall take effect immediately.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
13 roll.

14 (The Secretary called the roll.)

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
16 the results.

17 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 50.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
19 is passed.

20 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
21 191, Assembly Bill Number 8522, by
22 Assemblymember Paulin, an act to amend a chapter
23 of the Laws of 2023.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
25 last section.

1 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
2 act shall take effect immediately.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
4 roll.

5 (The Secretary called the roll.)

6 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
7 the results.

8 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 50.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
10 is passed.

11 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
12 193, Assembly Bill Number 8604, by
13 Assemblymember Clark, an act to amend the
14 Judiciary Law.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
16 last section.

17 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
18 act shall take effect immediately.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
20 roll.

21 (The Secretary called the roll.)

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
23 the results.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 50.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill

1 is passed.

2 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
3 194, Senate Print 8067, by Senator Skoufis, an
4 act to amend the Parks, Recreation and Historic
5 Preservation Law.

6 SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Lay it
8 aside.

9 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
10 197, Senate Print 8074, by Senator Krueger, an
11 act to amend the General Construction Law.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
13 last section.

14 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
15 act shall take effect on the same date and in the
16 same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
18 roll.

19 (The Secretary called the roll.)

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
21 the results.

22 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
23 Calendar Number 197, those Senators voting in the
24 negative are Senators Griffo, Helming, Lanza,
25 Mattera, Oberacker, Ortt, Stec, Tedisco and Weik.

1 Ayes, 43. Nays, 9.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
3 is passed.

4 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
5 204, Senate Print 3385A, by Senator Brisport, an
6 act to establish a task force on educator
7 diversity in New York State.

8 SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Lay it
10 aside.

11 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
12 258, Senate Print 1032, by Senator Jackson, an
13 act to amend the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
15 last section.

16 THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This
17 act shall take effect immediately.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
19 roll.

20 (The Secretary called the roll.)

21 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
22 Jackson to explain his vote.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you.

24 My colleagues, I stand in front of
25 you today to advocate for this bill that enhances

1 the mission of the Amistad Commission. The bill
2 number is 1032. It was established by the
3 Legislature in 2005, the commission's role to be
4 pivotal in integrating the history of chattel
5 slavery into our state curriculum.

6 Despite its initial placement within
7 the State Department, a 2016 report recommended a
8 strategic shift, proposing its integration into
9 the State Education Department, a move aligning
10 more closely with its educational objectives.

11 Named after the historic 1839
12 Amistad uprising led by enslaved Africans on a
13 Spanish vessel, the commission embodies a story
14 of courage and justice. This uprising, which
15 remarkably led to their liberation by the U.S.
16 Supreme Court, stands as a symbol of resistance
17 and rights.

18 In times when influential figures
19 and groups attempt to underplay the significance
20 of Black history, the necessity to amplify this
21 fundamental aspect of our past becomes even more
22 pressing. It's a critical moment to reexamine
23 and bolster the commission's mandate.

24 My bill, S1032, advocates for a
25 logical and widely endorsed shift of the

1 Amistad Commission under the Department of
2 Education purview. And this move not only
3 enhances its effectiveness, but also aligns with
4 our commitment to educate the next generation
5 about the harrowing history and enduring impact
6 of slavery upon systemic racism.

7 So I call upon my colleagues to
8 support this pivotal legislation. Let us heed
9 the timeless warning: "Those who do not learn
10 history are doomed to repeat it." In unity,
11 let's collectively ensure our educational system
12 becomes a powerful tool for learning.

13 Thank you.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
15 Jackson to be recorded in the affirmative.

16 Announce the results.

17 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 56.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
19 is passed.

20 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
21 261, Senate Print 1192, by Senator Persaud, an
22 act to amend the Education Law.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
24 last section.

25 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This

1 act shall take effect immediately.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
3 roll.

4 (The Secretary called the roll.)

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
6 the results.

7 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
8 Calendar 261, voting in the negative are
9 Senators Helming, Lanza, Oberacker and Ortt.

10 Ayes, 52. Nays, 4.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
12 is passed.

13 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
14 264, Senate Print 1988, by Senator Jackson, an
15 act to amend the Education Law.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
17 last section.

18 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
19 act shall take effect immediately.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
21 roll.

22 (The Secretary called the roll.)

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
24 Jackson to explain his vote.

25 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you,

1 Mr. President.

2 My colleagues, I stand before you
3 today to advocate for Bill 1988, a measure I'm
4 proud to sponsor.

5 In the diverse landscape of
6 New York's public schools, New York faces a
7 teacher diversity problem. In public schools
8 across New York the number of minority students
9 significantly exceeds half the total student
10 population, especially in central urban
11 districts, where nine out of ten students are not
12 white.

13 Being a teacher from an
14 underrepresented racial or ethnic group can
15 isolate, making it challenging for performance
16 regarding the job effectively.

17 However, the percentage of educators
18 of color has remained stagnant, despite a growing
19 body of research demonstrating that a diverse
20 teacher workforce has a positive impact on the
21 entire student body.

22 This imbalance not only places an
23 undue burden on these educators, who become
24 inadvertent role models and mentors for students
25 of color, but also leads to a feeling of

1 alienation among their peers.

2 Bill 1988 is a step toward
3 rectifying this imbalance. Its aim is to provide
4 resources for mentorship and networking
5 opportunities for underrepresented teachers,
6 enabling them to share best practices and
7 experiences.

8 It directs NYSED, the New York State
9 Education Department, to organize annual
10 statewide and five regional conventions for
11 underrepresented teachers. By doing so, we are
12 allocating resources to enhance the support
13 network for these teachers, ultimately improving
14 the education provided to the diverse children of
15 New York State.

16 So let's pave the way for greater
17 diversity in New York State's educational system,
18 and I hope you will join me in voting aye on this
19 bill.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
21 Jackson to be recorded in the affirmative.

22 Senator May to explain her vote.

23 SENATOR MAY: Thank you,
24 Mr. President.

25 I'm very pleased to support this

1 package of bills that are promoting recruitment
2 and retention of underrepresented teachers.

3 I had the opportunity last year to
4 visit a school in my district that has about --
5 really, 99 percent of the students are Black or
6 brown. And I went from class to class, and the
7 teachers were working hard to engage the
8 students. And the students were mostly paying
9 attention.

10 But then we went into a classroom
11 that was taught by a young Black teacher who
12 literally had the kids in the palm of her hand.
13 They -- they were so excited and wanted to answer
14 every question. They were falling all over
15 themselves to answer her questions.

16 And it was mostly because she was a
17 very gifted teacher, but it was also clearly
18 because she looked like them, and they could
19 imagine being like her someday.

20 And it made me realize not just how
21 important it is for kids to have role models that
22 they can identify with in their classrooms, but
23 how lonely the job of that teacher must have
24 been.

25 And so this -- this effort to bring

1 teachers together all across the state so that
2 they can support each other and help each other,
3 recruit additional people who look like them --
4 this is a really important effort for the
5 teachers as well as for the students.

6 So I am proud to vote aye.

7 Thank you.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
9 May to be recorded in the affirmative.

10 Announce the results.

11 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
12 Calendar 264, voting in the negative:
13 Senator Lanza.

14 Ayes, 60. Nays, 1.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
16 is passed.

17 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
18 271, Senate Print 3408, by Senator Parker, an act
19 to amend the Education Law.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
21 last section.

22 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
23 act shall take effect immediately.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
25 roll.

1 (The Secretary called the roll.)

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
3 Parker to explain his vote.

4 SENATOR PARKER: Thank you,
5 Mr. President.

6 We know that education is not simply
7 a key to open up the door of opportunity, but is
8 a sledgehammer to knock that door of opportunity
9 down. So I'm happy to support this package and
10 want to thank the leadership for bringing this
11 package of bills that actually addresses the
12 issues around diversity and equity and inclusion,
13 and by retaining teachers that in fact fit the
14 model of not just looking like the people in the
15 classroom but also providing a cultural
16 competency that those students need in order for
17 them to best learn.

18 This bill coming to the floor is a
19 testament to the idea that the slow and the
20 steady win the race. I was a cosponsor of this
21 bill with now Congressman but at the time
22 Assemblyman Espaillat back in 2005, when I first
23 started in this body the Democratic Task Force on
24 New Americans. And the idea is to create a space
25 in which inclusion was a necessity.

1 When you look at some school
2 districts, especially in places like Queens, when
3 you have literally schools where like 50, 60,
4 70 languages -- more than that, okay, 90, 100
5 languages being spoken in school districts and in
6 individual schools, this bill is really necessary
7 because it provides the kind of economic
8 incentive and boost that teachers need in order
9 to make sure that bilingual teachers are
10 available in our schools.

11 We must continue to push to make
12 sure that we create every opportunity for our
13 young people to be educated, because they are the
14 future, and the better we educate them, the
15 better our society will be going forward.

16 I vote aye and encourage my
17 colleagues to vote aye as well.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
19 Parker to be recorded in the affirmative.

20 Announce the results.

21 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
22 Calendar Number 271, voting in the negative:
23 Senator Oberacker.

24 Ayes, 60. Nays, 1.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill

1 is passed.

2 Senator Gianaris, that completes the
3 reading of today's calendar.

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: In that case,
5 let's move to the reading of the controversial
6 calendar.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
8 Secretary will ring the bell.

9 The Secretary will read.

10 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
11 194, Senate Print 8067, by Senator Skoufis, an
12 act to amend the Parks, Recreation and Historic
13 Preservation Law.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
15 Lanza, why do you rise?

16 SENATOR LANZA: Mr. President, I
17 believe there's an amendment at the desk. I
18 waive the reading of that amendment and ask that
19 you recognize Senator Helming.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
21 you, Senator Lanza.

22 Upon review of the amendment, in
23 accordance with Rule 6, Section 4B, I rule it
24 nongermane and out of order at this time.

25 SENATOR LANZA: Accordingly,

1 Mr. President, I appeal the ruling of the chair
2 and ask that Senator Helming be heard on the
3 appeal.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
5 appeal has been made and recognized, and
6 Senator Helming may be heard.

7 SENATOR HELMING: Thank you,
8 Mr. President.

9 Mr. President, the proposed
10 amendment is clearly germane as both the
11 amendment and the bill before this chamber
12 recognize the significant service and sacrifice
13 of our veterans and propose eliminating fees for
14 veterans.

15 The bill before the chamber would
16 allow veterans and Gold Star families to visit
17 public campsites, parks and other places of
18 recreation free of charge. This is a fantastic
19 proposal that I wholeheartedly support.

20 Veterans and their families make
21 tremendous sacrifices to serve our country, and
22 this bill is just the beginning of the steps this
23 body should take to acknowledge their sacrifice.

24 I'm proposing an amendment that
25 would further acknowledge our state's veterans

1 and provide another small benefit in return for
2 their great sacrifice. This amendment, based on
3 Senate Bill 3205, would eliminate sporting
4 license fees for honorably discharged veterans
5 with a 40 percent or greater service-connected
6 disability.

7 Hunting, fishing and trapping are a
8 way of life for many New Yorkers and offer
9 residents the opportunity to experience our
10 natural beauty and the abundance of our great
11 state. In addition, these outdoor activities
12 have been shown to improve mental health and to
13 help our veterans cope with posttraumatic stress
14 disorder.

15 A study by the United States
16 Department of Veterans Affairs found that roughly
17 7 percent of veterans will experience PTSD. Even
18 more staggering, 29 percent of the veterans of
19 the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will experience
20 PTSD in their lifetime. In many cases PTSD can
21 lead to a disability determination for veterans
22 returning to civilian life.

23 This is a reminder for this body we
24 should take every step possible to provide
25 outlets and opportunities for veterans suffering

1 from service-related disabilities, to improve
2 their mental health and take advantage of the
3 many recreational opportunities throughout our
4 state.

5 This is exactly what my proposed
6 amendment would accomplish by removing the
7 financial barrier that stands in the way for many
8 veterans hoping to pursue hunting, fishing or
9 trapping.

10 For these reasons, Mr. President, I
11 strongly urge you to reconsider your ruling.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
13 you, Senator Helming.

14 I want to remind the house that the
15 vote is on the procedures of the house and the
16 ruling of the chair.

17 Those in favor of overruling the
18 chair signify by saying aye.

19 (Response of "Aye.")

20 SENATOR LANZA: Show of hands.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: A show of
22 hands has been requested and so ordered.

23 Announce the results.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 20.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The

1 ruling of the chair stands, and the bill-in-chief
2 is before the house.

3 Read the last section.

4 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
5 act shall take effect on the same date and in the
6 same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
8 roll.

9 (The Secretary called the roll.)

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
11 the results.

12 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
14 is passed.

15 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
16 204, Senate Print 3385A, by Senator Brisport, an
17 act to establish a task force on educator
18 diversity in New York State.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
20 Lanza, why do you rise?

21 SENATOR LANZA: Mr. President, I
22 believe there's an amendment at the desk. I
23 waive the reading of that amendment and ask that
24 you recognize Senator Tedisco.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank

1 you, Senator Lanza.

2 Upon review of the amendment, in
3 accordance with Rule 6, Section 4B, I rule it
4 nongermane and out of order at this time.

5 SENATOR LANZA: Accordingly,
6 Mr. President, I appeal the ruling of the chair
7 and ask that Senator Tedisco be recognized to be
8 heard on the appeal.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
10 appeal has been made and recognized, and
11 Senator Tedisco may be heard.

12 SENATOR TEDISCO: Thank you,
13 Mr. President.

14 As I rise to appeal the ruling of
15 the chair, it's clear the proposed amendment is
16 germane to the bill at hand because the bill at
17 hand creates an educational task force, which the
18 amendment I have brought today also creates.

19 This task force is centered on the
20 impact of pandemic learning loss on our children.
21 The pandemic forced children out of classroom and
22 onto iPads. It put extra burdens on teachers,
23 who had to come up with every avenue possible to
24 educate students, many of whom were not engaged
25 with their schooling as they would have been in a

1 classroom environment.

2 It increased pressure on parents,
3 forcing them to take on the role of substitute
4 teacher. It put masks on toddlers learning to
5 speak.

6 The setback this has created for
7 children of all ages is still unknown. We do
8 know that many children, especially children of
9 color, are behind the curve on the very basics of
10 education. Math and reading scores are down, and
11 we're losing a generation of talented students
12 and kids.

13 We must take the steps necessary to
14 identify how big the problem is and what we are,
15 as a state, going to do to help those kids back
16 on track. Instead of cutting money for schools,
17 as the Governor is proposing, we should put money
18 back into the budget and help these kids move
19 forward. This is a start with that, creating a
20 task force to help them help us move them
21 forward.

22 For these reasons, I strongly urge
23 you to reconsider your ruling.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
25 you, Senator.

1 I want to remind the house that the
2 vote is on the procedures of the house and the
3 ruling of the chair.

4 Those in favor of overruling the
5 chair, signify by saying aye.

6 (Response of "Aye.")

7 SENATOR LANZA: Show of hands.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: A show of
9 hands has been requested and so ordered.

10 Announce the results.

11 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 20.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
13 ruling of the chair stands, and the bill-in-chief
14 is before the house.

15 Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, why
16 do you rise?

17 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
18 Thank you, Mr. President. I was wondering if the
19 sponsor would yield for a few questions.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the
21 sponsor yield?

22 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
24 sponsor yields.

25 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

1 Thank you.

2 Through you, Mr. President, I'd like
3 to know if the term "educators" is defined in
4 this bill.

5 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,
6 Mr. President, "educators" is self-explanatory.

7 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
8 Through you, Mr. President, will the sponsor
9 continue to yield.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the
11 sponsor yield?

12 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
14 sponsor yields.

15 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
16 Will the task force be permitted -- and will it
17 be within the scope of the task force -- to look
18 at administrators in addition to educators?

19 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,
20 Mr. President, the task force is referred to as a
21 task force on educator diversity.

22 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
23 Through you, Mr. President, will the sponsor
24 continue to yield.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the

1 sponsor yield?

2 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
4 sponsor yields.

5 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
6 Thank you.

7 Will this bill be limited to
8 educators in grades K through 12, or will it also
9 apply to colleges and universities?

10 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,
11 Mr. President, this bill does not put
12 stipulations on the grade levels.

13 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
14 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the
16 sponsor yield?

17 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
19 sponsor yields.

20 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: In
21 light of what has gone on at CUNY with the senior
22 leadership, I'd like to know if the sponsor is
23 aware of the Jewish representation on the CUNY
24 senior leadership board.

25 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,

1 Mr. President, I don't have that in front of me.

2 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

3 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the
5 sponsor yield?

6 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
8 sponsor yields.

9 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: So
10 just last spring it was revealed that the two
11 Jewish remaining members on CUNY's board were
12 resigning or removed, leaving no Jewish members
13 on the 80-member leadership board.

14 And I'm wondering if this task force
15 could evaluate the representation of groups like
16 Jewish educators in the confines of their task
17 force.

18 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,
19 Mr. President, this task force examines a
20 comprehensive study on the presence of educator
21 diversity, state actions taken to promote
22 educator diversity, and how New York State can
23 encourage new initiatives to enhance or promote
24 educator diversity.

25 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

1 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the
3 sponsor yield?

4 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
6 sponsor yields.

7 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: So
8 is it the sponsor's position, then, that Jewish
9 educators are not considered in the concept of
10 diversity?

11 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,
12 Mr. President. No, I did not say that.

13 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
14 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the
16 sponsor yield?

17 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
19 sponsor yields.

20 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: Is
21 the task force permitted to look at the
22 representation of Jewish educators in the scope
23 of their task force?

24 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,
25 Mr. President, there is nothing that prevents the

1 task force from examining that in the bill.

2 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

3 Thank you.

4 On the bill.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
6 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick on the bill.

7 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: In
8 light of what's gone on since the attack on
9 October 7th -- and in recent months we've seen an
10 escalation in antisemitic activity, and we have
11 to address it at the basic level of our
12 educational system, because the students are
13 getting their cues and their guidance from
14 educators and administrators.

15 This task force is looking at
16 diversity representation. And I submit to this
17 body that we should be looking at the
18 representation of Jewish representatives in our
19 educational system in order to deal with the
20 antisemitic problem that we are faced with.

21 So this bill is certainly well on
22 the right path to addressing issues, but I think
23 it could be expanded so that we address the other
24 issues that we know that we're facing.

25 Thank you. I will be voting aye.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Are there
2 any other Senators wishing to be heard?

3 Seeing and hearing none, debate is
4 now closed.

5 The Secretary will ring the bell.

6 Read the last section.

7 THE SECRETARY: Section 4. This
8 act shall take effect immediately.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
10 roll.

11 (The Secretary called the roll.)

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
13 Mayer to explain her vote.

14 SENATOR MAYER: Thank you,
15 Mr. President. I appreciate the opportunity.

16 And thank you to Senator Brisport
17 and my colleagues for voting for this bill.

18 And I just feel it's necessary to
19 remind my colleagues -- and I appreciate the
20 conversation that you had -- that we're not in a
21 zero-sum issue here about diversity and equity.

22 I obviously share my colleague's
23 great concern about issues regarding Jewish
24 educators and Jewish students, particularly in
25 higher ed. And I'm sure I'll be working with our

1 chair of Higher Ed on these issues as they
2 continue to be real challenges throughout our
3 state and the nation.

4 But at the same time, that doesn't
5 mean that it isn't appropriate to have a task
6 force on educator diversity. As someone who's
7 traveled around our K through 12 schools
8 throughout the state, we know the importance, as
9 Senator Brisport mentioned, of having a diverse
10 educator pipeline. And in fact the teachers'
11 union has endorsed a pipeline as well, because
12 this is an effective way for us to reach a
13 growingly diverse body of students.

14 So it's not one versus the other.
15 Our job here is to advance equity, equality,
16 opportunity and education for all. And I'm
17 confident we can do that.

18 I'll be voting aye and encourage my
19 colleagues to do the same.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
21 Mayer to record her vote in the affirmative.

22 Senator Bailey to explain his vote.

23 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
24 Mr. President.

25 Again, thank you, Senator Brisport,

1 for this legislation. Senator
2 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick certainly illuminated some
3 important topics.

4 But if you can't see it, you can't
5 be it. I went to public schools my entire life,
6 and the first time I had a Black male teacher, I
7 was a junior in high school.

8 So if we're talking about diversity
9 and talking about people that live within certain
10 communities -- and again, it's important to make
11 sure that all communities can see individuals
12 that look like them and sound like them and where
13 they're from.

14 To do that, I just want to make sure
15 that we illuminate that fact and show that,
16 again, you know, a public school system in a
17 majority Black neighborhood where I went to
18 school, I did not have a Black male teacher until
19 I was a junior in high school.

20 So programs like this are critically
21 important to promote in STEM and try to trigger
22 diversity. And diversity is not monolithic by
23 any stretch of the imagination, but diversity is
24 critically important.

25 And for those reasons I'll be voting

1 aye, Mr. President. Thank you.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
3 Bailey to be recorded in the affirmative.

4 Announce the results.

5 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
6 Calendar 204, those Senators voting in the
7 negative are Senators Lanza, Oberacker, O'Mara
8 and Ortt.

9 Ayes, 57. Nays, 4.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
11 is passed.

12 Senator Gianaris, that completes the
13 reading of the controversial calendar.

14 SENATOR GIANARIS: Is there any
15 further business at the desk?

16 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: There is
17 no further business at the desk.

18 SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to
19 adjourn until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 6th, at
20 3:00 p.m.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: On
22 motion, the Senate stands adjourned until
23 Tuesday, February 6th, at 3:00 p.m.

24 (Whereupon, at 3:39 p.m., the Senate
25 adjourned.)