NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

March 4, 2025

3:50 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR JAMAAL T. BAILEY, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Bishop Orlando Findlayter, of the New Hope Christian Fellowship in Brooklyn, New York, will deliver today's invocation.

Bishop?

BISHOP FINDLAYTER: Let us pray.

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, we have come to You today first to say thank You. Thank You for the many blessings You have bestowed upon us individually and corporately as a state.

Thank You for this body, the New York State Senate. God, as they deliberate and as they make decisions that affect the entire state and all of its residents, we pray now that You will guide them. We ask God for wisdom, insight, a heart of compassion and the ability to

work together.

Grant, O God, to this body a heart for the marginalized, the downtrodden and the forgotten. Let every decision be fueled by love. And then, Lord, honor their sacrifices. Honor their commitment. Bless them, bless their homes and bless their families.

We ask that You would bless the leadership of the Senate. Bless every Senator. Bless the staff, and bless the great State of New York.

We pray for peace in this state. We pray for a season of prosperity for all New Yorkers. We ask, O God, that You grant mercy towards us where we have fallen short.

We pray this in respect to every faith tradition, but in my tradition, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Monday, March 3, 2025, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Friday, February 28, 2025, was read and approved. On motion, the

Senate adjourned.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Without objection, the Journal stands approved as read.

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

I move to adopt the Resolution Calendar, with the exception of Resolution 439.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: All those in favor of adopting the Resolution Calendar, with the exception of Resolution 439, please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The

Resolution Calendar is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: There is a privileged resolution at the desk. Please take that up, read it in its entirety, and call on Leader Stewart-Cousins.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: There is a privileged resolution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 441, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, mourning the death of Dr. Hazel N. Dukes, distinguished citizen and devoted member of her community.

"WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavors served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and this great Empire State; and

"WHEREAS, The members of this Legislative Body are deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. Hazel Nell Dukes on March 1, 2025, at the age of 92, and wish to express their heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, colleagues, and the countless individuals whose

lives she touched; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes was a trailblazing civil rights leader, a tireless advocate for racial and social justice, and a champion for equality, dedicating her life to uplifting marginalized communities and fighting for the rights of all people; and

"WHEREAS, Born in Montgomery, Alabama, on March 17, 1932, to parents Alice and Edward Dukes, Hazel Dukes demonstrated an early passion for education and community service, attending Alabama State Teachers College before pursuing studies in business administration at Nassau Community College and later earning a bachelor's degree from Adelphi University in 1978; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes made history in 1966 as the first African-American to work at the Nassau County Attorney's Office, where she worked to promote equal access to justice and public resources; and

"WHEREAS, She was instrumental in the implementation of President Lyndon B. Johnson's 'Head Start' program, which provided crucial early childhood education to underserved

communities and helped countless children and families achieve better futures; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes held numerous leadership roles throughout her lifetime, including serving as the national president of the NAACP from 1989 to 1992, during which time she guided the organization through critical years of advocacy and reform, and later serving for more than four decades as president of the NAACP New York State Conference; and

"WHEREAS, She was a fearless advocate for voting rights, fair housing, economic opportunity, and education, and in 1972, she played a historic role by seconding the presidential nomination of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman to seek a major party's nomination for President of the United States; and

"WHEREAS, Her advocacy continued into the 21st century, influencing President Joe Biden's decision to select a Black woman as his running mate in 2020, and in 2023, she was awarded the NAACP's highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, presented by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in recognition of her

extraordinary contributions; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes also led efforts in public administration, serving as president of the New York City Off-Track Betting Corporation and later founding Hazel N. Dukes & Associates, a consulting firm specializing in public policy, health, and diversity; and

"WHEREAS, She remained a steadfast leader in the NAACP National Board of Directors and countless other civic organizations, ensuring that future generations continued the fight for justice and equality; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes' commitment to education was further exemplified by her service as a trustee of the State University of New York and Stillman College, where she worked to expand educational opportunities for underrepresented communities; and

"WHEREAS, She was a devoted member of the Assembly of Prayer Baptist Church, where she served as executive assistant to the pastor, was a member of the board of trustees, and taught adult Sunday school, demonstrating her deep faith and commitment to community service; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes received numerous accolades for her unwavering dedication, including the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the YWCA City of New York John La Farge Memorial Award for Interracial Justice, and the Guy R. Brewer Humanitarian Award, reflecting the profound impact of her work on both local and national levels; she was an active member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Northern Manhattan Alumnae Chapter and was selected to receive the sorority's Althea T.L. Simmons Social Action Award in August 2010; Dr. Dukes was incorporated in 2007 as a Pi Eta Kappa Fellow, and her biography has been selected for publication in many journals and directories, including Fisk University Library, Minority Women Contribution, American Biographical Institute Personalities of Northeast, Who's Who Among American Women and Who's Who Among Black Women; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes has shown outstanding commitment to education, leadership, and community service; she was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the City University of New York Law School at Queens College in 1990, an Honorary Doctor of Humane

Letters from Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, New York, in 2009, and a similar honor from Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harlem, New York, in 2012; Dr. Dukes has also held leadership roles, including serving as the former president of the Metro-Manhattan Links Chapter and being appointed the National Links NGO Representative in 2010; her contributions to higher education include serving as a trustee for both the State University of New York and Stillman College; additionally, she has been an advocate for social justice and public health through her involvement with the National Council of Negro Women, Inc., and the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.; and

"WHEREAS, In recognition of her lifelong commitment to civil rights, a street in Roslyn Heights, New York, where Dr. Hazel Dukes once resided, was named 'Dr. Hazel Dukes Way' in her honor, serving as a lasting tribute to her legacy; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes resided in Harlem, New York, where she continued her advocacy and community involvement until her passing; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Hazel Dukes' passing is an immense loss to the civil rights community and the nation as a whole, yet her legacy will live on in the policies she helped shape, the lives she uplifted, and the generations she inspired; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pauses in its deliberations to mourn the passing of Dr. Hazel Nell Dukes, to recognize and celebrate her lifelong dedication to civil rights and public service, and to express its deepest gratitude for her contributions to a more just and equitable society; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Dr. Hazel Nell Dukes, the NAACP National Office, and the NAACP New York State Conference as a token of appreciation for her extraordinary work and enduring impact."

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank you so much, Mr. President.

And I rise on behalf of this body to express our condolences to the family of

Dr. Dukes and the many people who were called her children, the many people who were influenced by her intellect, her wisdom, all of those who had a chance to meet her, to be in her presence, and certainly all of those who will never have an opportunity to stand and honor this icon. It is certainly an incredible loss to not only this state, but to the nation.

But as I listened to all that was said and all that filled her 92 years, we know it was a life well-lived, but also it is a life to be celebrated. There is no one who has ever seen or heard Dr. Dukes who was not influenced by her, who was not indelibly marked by her -- by what she said and what she taught, how she lived, and how she believed in justice for everyone and certainly put her body on the line, put all she had on the line to make sure that justice was achieved. And if she didn't achieve it, you knew that she would die trying.

Dr. Dukes was somebody who I had the pleasure of meeting many, many years ago when I started in government around the desegregation issue in the City of Yonkers. We became closer as I came into the Senate and had an opportunity

to work with her and the NAACP in matters of civil rights and human rights and criminal justice reform and education and healthcare, because she cared about everything.

And there was nothing, no one who was either too great or too small to be in Dr. Dukes' sphere. She would mentor you, she would scold you, she would bring you up, she would put you down. And no matter how she did it, she did it in a way that you knew that she was talking to you out of love. That's not easy to do.

You never were ambiguous what she meant or what she was trying to convey. And she was also, again, unambiguous in her love -- not only for humanity, but for justice.

What an honor and a privilege to be able to stand here, and in the presence of the new state director of NAACP, L. Joy Williams; the executive director of the NAACP statewide, Christopher Alexander; and our Regent Hasoni Pratts, who we'll be voting on, will be returning.

But all of whom in this moment are representing the thousands of NAACP members

across our state and across our nation who are mourning and celebrating simultaneously the life and the legacy of Dr. Hazel Nell Dukes.

Her funeral will be next week. I cannot imagine how many people will be there because, as you've heard, she's been doing what she's been doing for the better part of those 90 years, having grown up in the segregated South and having been so instrumental in advising presidents, putting, you know, Head Start into our communities across the nation, being able to second the nomination of Shirley Chisholm in 1972. Somebody who was courageous enough to stand up and say, this Black woman is worth being President -- in 1972.

Someone who was able to advise President Biden, swear in the current Governor, get awarded by Hillary Rodham Clinton, and every single person in between who had an opportunity to say thank you to Hazel Dukes, took the opportunity to say thank you.

I am so grateful that she was able to get flowers and her accolades while she was alive. So much we wait until people are gone and then we start saying all these great things. But

Hazel, she wouldn't let you wait. And you shouldn't. And I think we need to learn that lesson as well.

We can be passionate and still be someone that when we transit, when we transition, the loss of that energy is so deep and so profound that we have no choice but to admire it and to follow it, and to understand it makes a difference when you actually have the courage of your conviction and are willing to put everything on the line in order to achieve it. Not just for you, but for all of humanity.

So I am so honored, again, to have known her, to have been mentored and befriended and just elevated by her. And I really want to thank Senator Cleare, because actually it's -- this is her constituent. But, you know, she allowed me to, you know, carry it because, again, the influence of Dr. Dukes is something that we all celebrate for years to come.

So thank you so much, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Madam Leader.

Senator Cleare on the resolution.

SENATOR CLEARE: Thank you,

Mr. President.

And thank you, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Like always, you just so eloquently said all the things.

But if I were to add anything, you know, I have the privilege of serving the 30th District, which includes the Village of Harlem. And that was the home to Hazel Dukes. She was bigger than Harlem. She's worldwide. But, you know, I always looked at her that she belonged to us. And I'm thankful that I was able to say that and I had the privilege of being able to speak with her, being able to glean from her, get a few talking tools from her, and just be able to look at the inspiration, be inspired by her.

You know, she was well known for standing up, not backing down. Staying the course. Being her true self. And I'd like to think that some of that fell on me and others. It's about being yourself, showing up, standing up for what you believe in. And that's what she did. She led with class, she led with distinction, she led with compassion, with grace, with strength, with fire. With fire.

And I think we can all take some of that from her as a tribute to her. She served on my community board -- got to shout out my Community Board 10. That was her family. She led, she taught, and she just kept giving till the end. She gave and gave and gave -- everything. She left it here.

So I'll say to everyone, including myself, there are no excuses. Hazel Dukes taught us, she showed us the way. Her greatest title she earned was Ma Dukes. And she was that to many of us in Harlem and beyond. May she rest in power and prestige.

Rest in peace, Hazel Dukes.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Cleare.

Senator Webb on the resolution.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise just to add my remarks. I too was influenced by Dr. Hazel "Ma" Dukes as a young person, being a member of my local NAACP. But also as I became an adult and helping to support the campus chapter back in my district, I

had the opportunity to work with Dr. Dukes.

And as has been already shared, once you met her, you were forever changed. Because she had this incredible ability to not only give you a lasting impression with her wit and most certainly her conviction, but she was someone that inspired you to do better. To stand up and be courageous and to fight for what is right. And that is not just simply civil rights, but what it means to be a member of our human family.

And her 92 years of sacrifice, legacy building, as everyone has shared, continues not only in our halls but in halls all across this country.

Last year when we established the SUNY Black Leadership Institute, we actually have a fellowship within that institute that's named after her. And so this was something that she has been a long champion of ensuring equitable representation across every institution in our state and in our nation.

And so it is that legacy that we will continue in her honor, but also that is what she would want us to do.

And not only as a mentor to me, but

also as a soror of mine through our sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, she is someone that also has contributed en masse to our organizations's legacy that goes beyond this country, but most certainly internationally.

And so I want to extend my condolences to her family, to all of us who had the honor and privilege of being able to call on her. We knew that when you made that call, it was time for action, because she was going to make sure that the work was done and that it was done well and that you were respected.

And as we are lifting up Women's History Month, most certainly she embodies all of those things that we lift up and celebrate during this time of year.

And so I want to thank our Senate Majority Leader for her leadership always, and for most certainly Senator Cleare for bringing forward this important resolution.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Senator Bailey on the resolution.

SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,

Madam President.

Madam Leader, thank you. And as always, eloquent. Senator Cleare, thank you for your words, and Senator Webb, and everybody, all of my colleagues who will after me say incredibly eloquent things about living history.

We've read history books, we learn about Black history. But when you've been able to be around and have actual, meaningful conversation with someone who is a part of history, it's important to treasure that. It's important to commemorate that in these floors and places where, quite frankly, Madam President, folks like us weren't allowed here quite some time ago. When she started her life, the way that this chamber looked was a lot different.

But because of actions for Dr. Dukes, because of what she did, and folks like her, we have the chance to sit at these seats, to sit at that table, that proverbial table that Shirley Chisholm spoke about. Because of her. Generations after us, even if it's not a textbook or if it's a tablet -- whatever it is, she's going to be in history books. We got a chance to get jewels from somebody who is going

to be in history books.

I think we should soak that in for a second. History wasn't always written for us. Quite frankly, quite the contrary. But in that next chapter, it's written because of people like Dr. Dukes.

Growing up, you know about the NAACP and what they've done for Black folks and what they did in our community. And my branch, the Williamsbridge branch, was up here today.

But to hear the name Hazel Dukes and then to get a chance to meet her was incredible. And then when you realize that Hazel Dukes knows your name, it sends chills down your spine. The first time that she's said to each of you by your name, I'm pretty sure I can challenge you to say that it made you feel incredibly special.

She would come to me and say, the Senator from the Boogie-Down. Because as you well know, Dr. Dukes was Dr. Dukes wherever she was going to be. If it was at the conference, if it was in the chamber, or if it was just on the street, she was consistent. In a day and age when we lack consistency in many ways, she was a steady and consistent figure throughout her life.

I'm grateful for the times that I had a chance to have a conversation with her. I'm grateful for the knowledge that she imparted upon me and the chances that we had to have a conversation. But I'm grateful that I got to, like by osmosis, almost, as it were, just to soak up some of what she was putting out there.

I can't imagine what it was like 92 years ago. I can't imagine what it was like to be a Black woman growing up then. But nevertheless, she persisted. She is someone that will ring bells throughout history. So as the bell tolls and continues to toll, let's always remember to say thank you, thank you to the generation.

And one more thing, Madam President. Our NAACP chapters, our leadership, thank you for the work that you do. But the membership, we've got to make sure we support them and continue the mission. That's what Dr. Dukes would have wanted us to do.

May she rest in peace, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Senator Sanders on the resolution.

SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you, Madam President.

To our Majority Leader, to Senator Cleare, thank you for bringing this before us.

A mighty tree has fallen. You can't get around that. The world has changed. A mighty tree has fallen.

Let me tell you a quick Hazel Dukes story, a recent one. Everyone knows that New York State has pioneered the art, the science, the wonder of trying to figure out reparations. But what you may not know is there came some snags in that. There were -- the big money said it would not happen, that it couldn't happen and it just -- it was dead in the water, dead man walking.

All right. They didn't understand the dynamics. And I picked up the phone to Hazel Dukes. Now, I cannot attest to what happened. I cannot tell you the magic that was done. I cannot tell you what this arm twister or this smile -- I don't know. But what I do know is a no turned into a yes.

Now, I'm not quite clear on how it happened, and I sure wish that I could have her in my life for a whole bunch of other things. But all I know is a no turned into a yes.

So we're seeing the passing of the greatest generation. Isn't this amazing? Folk who stood when the rest of us would have fallen. Women and men who labored from can't see in the morning to can't see at night, who stood up when everybody ran -- when it was sensible to run and it may have been insane to stand. A mighty generation. They don't make them that way anymore. Or do they?

So a mighty tree has fallen. Can't get around it. This is a tree that gave us shade, took us under her wing, comforted us. Fed us -- if you were hungry, you were fed. Gave us warmth. But I know one thing about life and nature. A mighty tree is necessary in nature, but it must fall because if the mighty tree does not fall, the younger trees cannot come forward.

The next generation has to come forward. The mighty trees have to yield so that the next branches of the trees come forward.

We are here saluting the next

branches of this tree. You come from a good stock. You got deep roots. These roots go back 400 years. They never ran. They never will. May you stand well-comforted by the incredible tradition that you come out of. A tradition that has brought us to here, where you have the first Black Majority Leader, a mighty tree.

Having said this, I say to you what I said to her. Whatever little bit I could do is done. I don't want anything except to aid in the process of growing this great tree. And that tree has to lead to one America. One America. Not 20, not 30, just one America with the same rights for everyone.

God bless you all. Thank you very much.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Jackson on the resolution.

SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you, Madam President and my colleagues.

And to the Majority Leader and Cordell Cleare, thank you for bringing forward the resolution. And I just want to thank Dr. Hazel Dukes for her advocacy on behalf of all

people, and especially the children.

When I was involved with the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, CFE versus the State of New York, she was there and she supported the process of litigating this particular case. It took many, many years. But the bottom line, like you know and like she knew, is that education is the key to uplift all people. It doesn't matter if you're Black or you're white or you're Hispanic or you're Asian, whether you're rich or you're poor. It's education.

And Dr. Dukes has always been there as someone. So I rise now in her passing, but to thank her for being who she was and standing up for what's right. And that's what this is about. And that's why I'm committed as a State Senator to continue to struggle to represent people and do the best that I can to make their lives better.

And with that, to the family and friends, peace and blessings to you. And rest in peace, my dear Mom, Hazel Dukes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Brisport on the resolution.

SENATOR BRISPORT: Thank you,

Mr. President.

I want to thank the leader for introducing this resolution, and also my colleague Senator Cleare.

I want to reiterate what Senator Jackson just said about Dr. Hazel Dukes' commitment to uplifting children and say one of my favorite memories of fighting alongside her was a couple of years ago when there were proposed changes to the charter school cap.

Because I remember Dr. Dukes hearing that there may be a massive expansion in charter schools in New York City, and she wasn't having that. So she showed up in Albany to rally with us. And standing alongside her, I could feel the immense legacy that she emanated. It really made me wish I could have been there in the '60s fighting alongside her.

But truly, when someone like Dr. Hazel Dukes devotes their entire life to uplifting children -- and so many other things, but uplifting children is one way to uplift all of society. And I've just got to say she has left incredibly large shoes that it will take all of us to fill.

So thank you again for introducing this resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Liu on the resolution.

SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Mr. President.

I will -- you know, I sit next to Senator Sanders. I listen to him all the time. It usually goes in one ear and out the other. But today I was moved. You know, Sanders, you actually said something good.

SENATOR SANDERS: Be the last -- be the last time.

SENATOR LIU: It was -- you know, he said that a mighty tree at some point has to fall so that the young trees can grow up and take over. And as much tribute has been paid to Ma Dukes, I want to say that we are in good hands with L. Joy Williams. I was there when Ma Dukes anointed her the leader of Brooklyn. And now she has -- she is that new young tree that is taking the place of Ma Dukes.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Krueger on the resolution.

SENATOR KRUEGER: So Hazel Dukes had an enormous impact on me in one day in my life. It was the late 1980s. Ted Kennedy -- one of the good Kennedys --

(Laughter.)

SENATOR KRUEGER: -- was coming to New York to do a -- to revisit -- sorry -- the tour of Robert, Sr., on hunger in America. And so they had planned a whole day of visits through the same areas of New York City that Robert Kennedy, Sr., had visited. And Ted Kennedy was carrying an antihunger bill in Congress at the time.

And I was invited to come be with Ted Kennedy and, it turns out, Hazel Dukes, traveling the day, talking about the continuing crisis of hunger growing out of inadequate funding of federal food programs, which was the area I was working in at the time. And I pretty much think I spent the whole day with my mouth open, just listening to Ted Kennedy and Hazel Dukes talk about the work that had been done and needed to be done.

So even though in theory I was there to explain technically what was going on, I was

mostly just sitting in this car with my mouth open the whole day. And I never forgot that day.

And I think it's just representative of a small piece of the impact that she had in her life, and the work, and the meaning it was for anyone who did have the opportunity to come in contact with her.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: To our guests, NAACP leadership for the future, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you all of the privileges and courtesies of this house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Extended standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The question is on the resolution. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Mr. President.

We have some additional resolutions to take up. We are going to simultaneously call an immediate meeting of the Rules Committee in Room 332, and then take up Resolution 439, by Leader Stewart-Cousins, read that in its entirety, and call on Senator Webb on that resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: There will be an immediate meeting of the Rules Committee in Room 332.

Please read the resolution prescribed by Senator Gianaris. The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 439, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2025 as Women's History Month in the State of New York, recognizing the invaluable contributions of women in all aspects of society.

"WHEREAS, March is Women's History Month, and each year New York State officially sets aside time to recognize the unique contributions that women have made to New York

State and beyond; and

"WHEREAS, New York State has a distinguished history of monumental achievements in the area of women's rights; and has long been at the forefront of the women's rights movement, leading the nation in legislative and social advancements for gender equality; and

"WHEREAS, The social and political leadership of women has strengthened our democracy, from the abolitionists who fought for the freedom and racial equality of all Americans and the suffragists who fought for the 19th Amendment in 1920 to modern-day leaders shaping policy and governance at all levels; and

"WHEREAS, Throughout history, women have played an integral role in shaping politics, education, science, law, medicine, business, technology, literature, arts, and sports, breaking barriers and driving progress despite systemic obstacles; and

"WHEREAS, Recognizing Women's History Month provides an opportunity to highlight, honor, and celebrate the vital and extraordinary achievements of women past and present, ensuring that their stories are included

in our national and state narratives and serve as inspiration for future generations; and

"WHEREAS, Breaking barriers in education, Emma Willard opened the Troy Female Seminary in Troy, New York, in 1821, the first endowed institution for the education of women, expanding opportunities for women's academic advancement; and

"WHEREAS, In 1848 in New York, the first Women's Rights Convention was held at Seneca Falls to secure for all women a number of civil rights, including the right to vote, access to education, property ownership, and legal rights; and

"WHEREAS, Racial justice has been a crucial and ongoing fight within the women's rights movement, as women of color have historically faced both gender and racial discrimination; and Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist and civil rights advocate who challenged racial and gender inequality, spoke out for the abolition of slavery and suffrage for all women, famously delivering her 'Ain't I a Woman?' speech in 1851; and Harriet Tubman, a courageous abolitionist, led enslaved individuals

to freedom through the Underground Railroad during the 1850s and 1860s, ultimately settling in Auburn, New York, where she continued her humanitarian work; and

"WHEREAS, Pioneering advancements in education and medicine, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman in the United States to earn a medical degree, in 1849, from Geneva Medical College in New York, paving the way for women in medicine; and Dr. Mary E. Walker, the first female United States Army surgeon, in 1863, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1865, becoming the only woman in U.S. history to receive this distinction; and

"WHEREAS, Belva Lockwood became the first woman to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1880, advocating for women's rights in the legal profession; and

"WHEREAS, Ida B. Wells, a journalist, civil rights activist, and former resident of Brooklyn, fought for social, economic, and racial equality for African-Americans and all women while cofounding the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, highlighting the

intersection of civil rights and women's rights; and

"WHEREAS, Between 1911 and 1919, Madam C.J. Walker, an African-American entrepreneur and former resident of Harlem, became the first woman of any race to become a self-made millionaire due to the success of her hair-care products and the Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company; and furthermore, Madam C.J. Walker's mansion, Villa Lewaro, located in Irvington, New York, is listed on the National Register of Historic places and stands as a symbol of optimism, perseverance, and the resilience of the American entrepreneurial spirit; and

"WHEREAS, In 1917, New York guaranteed women the right to vote in all elections, and in the following year the first two women, Ida Sammis and Mary Lilly, were elected to the New York State Legislature and became the first women to then serve in 1919; and

"WHEREAS, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were two of many women leading the campaign for women's suffrage throughout the mid-to-late 19th century, advocating for the

right to vote, which culminated in the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920; and Maud Wood Park became the first national president of the League of Women Voters in 1920, helping to establish an organization that continues to empower voters and defend democracy; and

"WHEREAS, Margaret Sanger, a pioneer in birth control education and advocacy, opened the first birth control clinic in the United States in Brooklyn, in 1916, leading to the establishment of the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau in New York City in 1923; and

"WHEREAS, Eleanor Roosevelt, a humanitarian and diplomat, served as the United States Delegate to the United Nations from 1946 to 1952, and played a pivotal role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948; and

"WHEREAS, Rhoda Fox Graves, in 1934, became the first woman to be elected to the New York State Senate; she served from 1935 to 1948, sitting in the 158th, 159th, 160th, 161st, 162nd, 163rd, 164th, 165th, and 166th New York State Legislatures; and

"WHEREAS, In 1955, Bessie Buchanan

was the first African-American woman to serve in the New York State Legislature; and

"WHEREAS, Constance Baker Motley, a civil rights lawyer and the first Black woman elected to the New York State Senate in 1964, was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York in January 1966, by President Lyndon B. Johnson, and was confirmed by the United States Senate in August 1966, making her the first Black woman to serve as a federal judge in the United States; and

"WHEREAS, In 1967, Muriel Siebert became the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange, opening the door for women to gain positions of greater economic power; and

"WHEREAS, In 1968, New York State Assemblywoman Shirley Chisholm became the first Black woman elected to Congress, and in 1972 she ran for President of the United States, another first for Black women; and

"WHEREAS, In 1970, New York City was the site of the first Women's Strike for Equality, in which 50,000 people marched for equal rights; and

"WHEREAS, In 1978, Olga Mendez became the first Puerto Rican woman to serve in the New York State Legislature; in 1983, New York State women legislators established the Legislative Women's Caucus to improve the participation of women in all areas of government, support issues that benefit women, and provide a network of support for women in the State Legislature; and

"WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a Brooklyn native, was a trailblazing attorney and jurist who dedicated her career to advancing gender equality and civil rights and successfully argued landmark cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, challenging laws that discriminated on the basis of sex and laying the legal foundation for gender equity; in 1993, she made history as the second woman and the first Jewish woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court; and

"WHEREAS, In 1999, the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians was held to improve the status of women in history and in the historical professions; and

"WHEREAS, Hillary Rodham Clinton has been a trailblazer in American politics and

public service, and in 2000 she became the first woman elected as a U.S. Senator for New York State; and

"WHEREAS, In 2007, Ellen Young was the first Asian-American woman to serve in the New York State Legislature; and

"WHEREAS, In 2009, Sonia Sotomayor, a Bronx native, became the first Latina and the third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court; and

"WHEREAS, New Yorker Edith Windsor fought to expand marriage equality in the United States prior to the Marriage Equality Act of New York, which became law in 2011; and

"WHEREAS, In 2015, New Yorker Loretta Elizabeth Lynch was appointed as Attorney General of the United States, becoming the first African-American woman to serve in this esteemed position; and

"WHEREAS, Avril Haines of New York City became the first woman to serve as the Director of National Intelligence on January 21, 2021; furthermore, on January 26, 2021, Janet Yellen of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, became the first woman to serve as the U.S. Secretary of

Treasury; and

"WHEREAS, Brenda K. Sannes became the first woman to serve as Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York in 2022; Nusrat Choudhury became the first Muslim-American woman and the first Bangladeshi-American to serve as a U.S. District Judge in the Eastern District of New York in 2023; Meredith Vacca became the first Asian-American woman to serve as a Judge of the Western District of New York in 2024; and

"WHEREAS, The New York Liberty won their first WNBA Championship in 2024, marking a significant milestone in women's sports; and

"WHEREAS, Currently, 50 percent of statewide elected officials are women, a testament to the growing representation and leadership of women in New York State government; notably, each of these leaders made history as the first woman elected to their respective positions, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations of women in public service; and

"WHEREAS, 2025 marks the 105th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which

guaranteed women the right to vote in the United States; and

"WHEREAS, Today, 73 women serve in the New York State Legislature, 51 Assemblywomen and 22 Senators, holding leadership positions in both houses and bringing the diverse experiences of women into law and public policy; and

"WHEREAS, The extraordinary achievements of these trailblazing women -- spanning politics, law, medicine, business, civil rights, journalism, education, and activism -- have shaped the course of history and continue to inspire future generations; the collective achievements and efforts of these women have expanded rights, shattered barriers, and strengthened democracy, ensuring a more just and equitable society for all; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2025 as Women's History Month in the State of New York; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to

the Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, and the Legislative Women's Caucus of New York State."

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Webb on the resolution.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Mr. President.

It is my honor to rise today on behalf of our esteemed Majority Leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, to speak on this very timely and very needed resolution memorializing Governor Hochul to proclaim March 2025 as Women's History Month in our great State of New York.

As it was read by our clerk, to recognize the countless contributions that women have made in our past, present and most certainly our future, and as we take up this resolution today, I want to lift up the words of a well-known abolitionist, feminist, and that is Sojourner Truth. She was someone who, like Dr. Hazel Dukes, who was unwavering in her commitment, courageous in a time where there was imminent danger. But she stood strong. And as she delivered her speech "Ain't I a Woman?" at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention more than

174 years ago, there's a particular piece in that speech I wanted to lift up that I think also helps to characterize why, when you add women, you change everything.

"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them."

(Laughter.)

SENATOR WEBB: The words of Sojourner Truth ring true today as we gather our collective strength to face new and continued challenges as a nation, most certainly as a state, and in our respective communities.

Mr. President, as we pause today to recognize Women's History Month and to lift up the long and distinguished history of the women of New York, as it has been mentioned, this year marks the 105th anniversary of the 19th Amendment which granted women the right to vote in the United States. And we know that women of color didn't see that right until many years later.

We know that it is important that we

lift up women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and we celebrate abolitionists Like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman -- all the women of color, past and present, who continue fighting to ensure justice and dignity for all women.

We celebrate trailblazers like Ida B. Wells, a journalist and civil rights activist who fought for social, economic and racial equality for African-Americans and all women, also while cofounding the NAACP in 1909.

We also want to thank women who continue to break and shatter not only glass ceilings, but especially for women of color, those ceilings are often made of bricks. And so we have trailblazers in our own state like New York State leader, former Assemblywoman and Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, who became the first Black woman elected to Congress and in 1972 became the first Black woman to run for president.

We also recognize the history of women in this chamber. Most certainly, Mr. President, I was proud to be elected to this body two years ago as part of the first-ever

all-women class of Senators ever in our state history.

And we have the opportunity and the privilege to serve under the leadership of yet another trailblazer, our own Majority Leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, who is the first Black woman to lead our respective legislative body.

And so while we continue to make important milestones and break records in our state, I want it to be clear: We have a long way to go. When you talk about issues as it relates to fairness in pay, when we talk about, through policy, the work we're trying to do to address the very real challenges with maternal mortality rates, when we talk about still having to ensure that we have bodily autonomy as women in this country, it is important that representation in every institution has gender parity.

And so as we commemorate Women's History Month and we lift up these challenges, it is important that we think about the next generation of women leaders, that we are creating a legacy that they can carry this torch of change, of human change. And that, as it says in

the saying that we all have heard, Strong women, right, may we know them, may we be them, and most certainly may we raise them.

Mr. President, I encourage my colleagues to vote aye. I will most certainly be doing that. And happy Women's History Month.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Webb.

Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick on the resolution.

SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to thank the Majority Leader for bringing this resolution to the floor to commemorate Women's History Month so that we can take a moment to recognize the multitude of women who have contributed to our great state, to our nation, and to the world at large.

For those of you who are fans of golf, the first professional female golfer, Helen Hicks, was born in my Senate district, the 9th Senate District, in Cedarhurst, and was one of the 13 founding members of the LPGA. Her playing career included two major championship titles,

and last year Helen was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame for her storied career and her efforts for women's golf.

I couldn't stand here today without the support of the great women in my life. And I always think of my grandmother, Sophie Canzoneri, who immigrated to this country from Italy. And I wear her American flag pin proudly, because she was so proud to be an American citizen.

I also have to thank my mom, because she encouraged me, along with my brothers, to do anything I wanted. As one of six, three girls, three boys, she raised us -- without Alice or any other help from anybody outside -- and I always admire my mom for that.

As the mother of three daughters, I'm proud of the numerous roles women have in our sports, our business, our academics, and here in this chamber.

But most importantly, we need to show them that we are examples to them of what they can do. And even more importantly, we have to show our sons that women can do anything. Because when they have the support of everyone around them, there is no limit to what they can

achieve.

So thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to speak on this.

I proudly vote aye. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick.

Senator Sanders on the resolution.

SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Today I rise as Sister Lois's son. My mother, Lois Sanders, was a proud Black woman who through her life tried to show and teach us that women were equal to us. They were not supposed to walk behind us, not supposed to do any of that stupid stuff, that they will walk equal with us. And you don't have to be a woman to support women.

I understand that women hold up half the sky. And I understand that if the sky hasn't fallen, it's because women have been holding up perhaps more than their share.

So I just could not let the day go by without saying that all of us should be supporting -- not just in words, but through legislation -- to say that we believe in the

equality of the human family, equality of women. And we can do it by voting on certain legislation. And I'll be nice for the moment.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Sanders.

The question is on the resolution. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Now let's move on to previously adopted Resolution 380, by Senator Hinchey, read that resolution's title and recognize Senator Hinchey.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 380, by Senator Hinchey, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 15-22, 2025, as National FFA Organization Week in the State of

New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Hinchey on the resolution.

SENATOR HINCHEY: Thank you, Mr. President.

New York FFA was first founded by a group of young farmers, predating the establishment of the National FFA in 1928. Their mission was to prepare future generations for the challenges of feeding a growing population.

Throughout its history, FFA has expanded into a program that helps students discover their talents, serve their communities, and gain leadership experience across a variety of pathways. These are our future teachers, chemists, environmental scientists, veterinarians, and overall our future leaders.

This year is an incredibly special one, as it is New York's FFA celebrating its 100-year anniversary.

New York FFA has seen significant growth in recent years. We actually had the Ag commissioner come to our committee meeting today, who shared with us that New York is the fastest-growing FFA state in the country. In

fact, in 2016 Commissioner Ball challenged FFA to increase its number of charters across the state by 100. And as of last year, FFA reached that goal with 103 new chapters, totaling over 200 chapters across our state. That's 100 new chapters in time for 100 years.

The FFA motto gives members 12 words to live by: Learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live, and living to serve. To me, that is a beautiful encapsulation of what we want to inspire and how we want to inspire all of our future leaders.

I'm incredibly proud that FFA is such a strong organization in New York, and I'm very proud to vote aye on this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Borrello on the resolution.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

I'd like to thank our sponsor, our chairwoman of the Ag Committee for bringing this forward.

The FFA is truly about the future of agriculture here in New York State. It is our

young people getting involved in this organization that will ensure that agriculture remains strong here in New York State. And FFA is strong. As the chairwoman mentioned, it is growing here in New York State. Chapters are increasing.

And this is truly a statewide organization. In fact, the largest chapter of the Future Farmers of America is in Queens. So that's a proud statement here, that this is truly a statewide organization.

It is an organization that teaches leadership, strength, an organization that is truly making sure that we have a future here, that we can feed New Yorkers for the long term with food grown right here in New York State.

As we move ahead in this chamber, we should understand that we have a tremendous impact on agriculture here in New York State, and understand that the folks, the young people that make up our FFA chapters across the state are committing themselves to remaining here and being farmers and protecting the future of New York State's ability to feed itself. It's an important thing for them, and an important thing

for us to remember.

So we're here to celebrate FFA. Thank you all for that support. And God bless those who grow our food. No farms, no food.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Oberacker on the resolution.

SENATOR OBERACKER: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, on the eighth day God looked down on this planned paradise and he said, I need a caretaker. So God made a farmer.

God said, I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go down and stay past midnight at the meeting of the local school board. So God, Mr. President, gave me a son.

God said: I need somebody strong enough to clear the trees, heave bales, yet gentle enough to tame lambs, wean pigs, tend the pink-combed pullets, and who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadowlark. So God, Mr. President, gave me a son.

Mr. President, if we had somebody to plow deep, straight, not cut corners; somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed, rake and disk and plow and plant, and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard day's work with a five-mile drive to church -- somebody who would be willing to bale a family together with the soft, strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh and then sigh and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says he wants to spend his life doing what his dad does.

So, Mr. President, God gave me two grandsons. And if there were ever two truer Future Farmers of America, it's two grandsons.

So, Mr. President, I would like to thank our chair of Agriculture for bringing this resolution forward. And I proudly, as a farmer myself, vote aye.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution was adopted on February 25th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, the sponsors of the various resolutions we took up today would like to open them for

cosponsorship.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolutions are open for cosponsorship. Should you choose not to be a cosponsor, please notify the desk.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, there's a privileged resolution at the desk.

Please take that up, read its title, and recognize Senator Mayer on that resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 438, by Senator Mayer, Concurrent Resolution of the Senate and Assembly providing for the election of eight Regents of the University of the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Mayer on the privileged resolution.

SENATOR MAYER: Thank you, Mr. President.

And it's truly my honor to rise in support of this resolution as the sponsor, together with my colleague Senator Stavisky, chair of the Higher Education Committee here in

the Senate.

This is a resolution that we do here in the Senate as well as the Assembly does at the same time, providing for the election of eight Regents. And I do want to speak both about the process and the names of those we are electing.

In the first place, we continue to have a robust interview process where people who are interested in these positions came forward, were interviewed by a bipartisan group of members of the Senate and Assembly.

We spent a good deal of time asking tough questions and getting good answers. And we commend all those who came forward to volunteer for this incredibly important task of serving as a Regent of the University of the State of New York, not only with responsibility for the education of our younger children from kindergarten through 12th grade, but of many issues that involve the professions and higher ed.

And we're very, very fortunate to have a distinguished group that we elect here today. I want to go through who we are either reelecting or suggesting as new Regents.

For the Second Judicial District, which is Kings County in the City of New York, Hasoni Pratts, of the County of Kings, to be reelected Regent of the University of the State of New York for a term of five years.

Dr. Roger P. Catania, of the County of Essex, to be reelected Regent for a term of five years. And the County of Essex is in the Fourth Judicial District, which includes Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, Saratoga, Schenectady, St. Lawrence, Warren and Washington counties.

And in the Eighth Judicial District, which includes Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming County, we are appointing Keith B. Wiley, of the County of Erie, to be elected as Regent for the Eighth Judicial District.

And for the Ninth Judicial District, for the counties of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester, we are reelecting the current Regent, Dr. Frances G. Wills, to serve for a term of five years.

For the 10th Judicial District, in Nassau and Suffolk County, we are electing

Felicia Thomas-Williams of the County of Suffolk as the Regent for the 10th Judicial District.

We are reappointing Dr. Lester W. Young, Jr., the current chancellor, from the County of Queens, to be reelected as at-large Regent for a term of five years.

And Roger B. Tilles, currently a Regent, to be elected an at-large Regent for a term of one year.

All of these individuals give of their time, give of their energy, give of their experience to help work with us to craft constructive ways to deal with the challenges of education and the professions in New York State. We are fortunate to have them be willing to come forward.

We look forward to their hard work. We look forward to engaging with them when we agree and disagree. But as a state, we are incredibly fortunate to have these individuals be willing to achieve and take on these responsibilities and to serve on the Board of Regents.

So I encourage all my colleagues to vote aye on this resolution, and I'm very, very

honored to be the sponsor of this resolution.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Stavisky on the resolution.

SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President, and Senator Mayer.

It's interesting, when people hear the term Regents, they assume it's an exam. But it's not. It's much more than that. There are 17 people with the title Regent, and we are electing eight of them today.

But the Regents, interestingly, are -- they go back to our colonial period. And I love to cite one of the most famous Regents was Alexander Hamilton. He was I guess in the room where it all happened originally.

And the Regents are unique. They are the policymaking body, the educational policymaking body of the State of New York. And in most states the commissioner of education is either appointed by the governor, it's a gubernatorial agency, or in some states they're elected by the people in a general-election vote.

New York is unique because the Commissioner of Education is elected by the

Regents. And the Regents are elected, as you know, by the Legislature.

So I can congratulate the Regents who have come forth through the interview process. We are proud of the work that you do, and continue to make New York State a leader in the education process.

The chancellor is a constituent of mine, and I congratulate him. He has a long history of service, starting as a teacher, frankly, and then rising through the ranks to become a superintendent and I think a deputy commissioner in Albany and now, since 2008, a Regent.

But all of the Regents have excellent credentials, and we congratulate them. And I urge a positive vote today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Murray on the resolution.

SENATOR MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. President.

Again, I'm going to rise and -- when I was down the hall in the Assembly and I was the ranking minority member on the Education

Committee, I sat in on all of the interviews. And it is an interesting prospect. You meet some great people and get some great information. And you really dig deep into background and pick the good candidates.

Unfortunately, that process doesn't allow every one of us -- I mean, I guess it does, it's open, but with our busy schedules most don't get the opportunity to participate like that.

And so you don't really get to know the individual candidates like maybe you could or should. And in fact we'll be voting on candidates that directly affect my area today -- two, in fact. One is at-large, and the other one will be directly in our judicial area.

But once again, and I rise and say this multiple times in the process, there are eight individual people that we are voting on today. Unfortunately, we're voting with one vote. Does that mean we support every one of the eight? We don't know, if you haven't looked into their background. But we have one opportunity to vote up or down on eight individual candidates.

I think the process is not good. I think we should have the opportunity to vote up

and down on each individual candidate based on each individual candidate's merits, so we are assured that we are getting the best candidates to serve us in such an important position.

So for that reason, I will be voting no.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The question is on the resolution.

The Secretary will call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to the resolution, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 41. Nays, 20.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, there is a report of the Rules Committee at the

desk.

Let's take that up, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Stewart-Cousins, from the Committee on Rules, reports the following bills:

Senate Print 172, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the Workers' Compensation Law;

Senate Print 372, by Senator Gianaris, an act to amend the Labor Law;

Senate Print 1235A, by Senator Comrie, an act to amend the New York State Medical Care Facilities Finance Agency Act;

Senate Print 1514, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend the Labor Law;

Senate Print 2236, by Senator Gounardes, an act to amend the Labor Law;

Senate Print 4515, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the Labor Law;

Senate Print 4587, by Senator Mayer, an act to amend the Education Law;

Senate Print 5442, by Senator Krueger, an act to amend the State Finance Law.

All bills reported direct to third reading.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: All those in favor of accepting the report of the Rules Committee please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The report of the Rules Committee is accepted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you for recognizing my motion to accept the report of the Rules Committee, Mr. President.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time let's take up the reading of the calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 203, Senate Print 363, by Senator Gianaris, an act to amend the General Business Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Lay it aside for the day.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill will be laid aside for the day.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 364, Senate Print 4188, by Senator Comrie, an act to amend the Penal Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 368, Senate Print 2497, by Senator Gounardes, an act to amend the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This

act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 368, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Lanza, Rhoads, Tedisco and Weik.

Ayes, 54. Nays, 7.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 370, Senate Print 4611, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 11. This act shall take effect on the 30th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ramos to explain her vote.

SENATOR RAMOS: Hey, thank you, Mr. President.

I today want to tell you about a worker who inspired this bill. Sandra Mejia worked for years disinfecting clothes at a laundry on the Upper West Side. Her employer paid 25 percent less than the minimum wage and never paid her the overtime she was owed.

During the pandemic, they made Mejia buy her own PPE without compensating her and required her to work in an unventilated basement. When another worker tried to ask why they weren't paid minimum wage, she was fired.

All in all, her employer stole a million dollars from its workers over the course of six years. Mejia is just one of countless workers whose experiences show how rampant and unchecked wage theft is in our economy.

Whether working in restaurants, nail salons, construction, home care or other industries, New York workers are robbed of, at minimum, $3 billion every year. Many of these workers are immigrants who are more vulnerable to

exploitation. I have a member on my team who focused exclusively on filing wage-theft claims for my neighbors in my district office.

Wage theft's ubiquity is the result of New York's weak labor enforcement and collection laws. Bosses know that even if workers do win in court, they can still get away without paying a single cent by using a variety of tactics to evade payments, ranging from shutting down their businesses, transferring their assets, declaring bankruptcy, or simply never showing up to court.

So the Wage Theft Attachment Act we're passing today steps up to face this problem, and that is why I proudly vote aye, so that workers can have a tool and they can finally get their money.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ramos to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 370, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo,

Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 39. Nays, 22.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 372, Senate Print 4999, by Senator Hoylman-Sigal, an act to amend the Estates, Powers and Trusts Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 372, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Martins, Rhoads and Weik.

Ayes, 58. Nays, 3.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 374, Senate Print 1678, by Senator C. Ryan, an act to authorize the Board of Trustees of the Village of East Syracuse to permit that the Office of Village Justice may be held by a nonresident.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 376, Senate Print 4483, by Senator Mayer, an act to amend the Village Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 407, Senate Print 2708, by Senator May, an act to amend the Public Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the 90th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator May to explain her vote.

SENATOR MAY: Thank you, Mr. President.

As we see a lot of economic development in this state, as we see transitions

of buildings and transportation to using more efficient electric energy, we are also seeing pressure on the electric grid to be able to transmit the amount of energy that we need.

And it turns out that the solutions are not all big, expensive new grid infrastructure, but there are actually solutions that come from just technical efficiencies in the grid system itself. You can move electrons faster if you are testing the temperature of different parts of the grid system. You can make a lot of really dramatic increases in efficiency on the grid with just very clever sensors and other technical interventions.

And so I'm excited that we in New York are passing this bill to help us take those kinds of measures that are smart, they are cost-effective, and they are truly efficient and can make our whole grid system more efficient.

So I'm grateful that this bill has come up for a vote, and I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator May to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to

Calendar 407, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Griffo, Lanza, Martins, Oberacker and Stec.

Ayes, 56. Nays, 5.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

There is a substitution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Gonzalez moves to discharge, from the Committee on Elections, Assembly Bill Number 5834 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 5101, Third Reading Calendar 412.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The substitution is so ordered.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 412, Assembly Bill 5834, by Assemblymember Walker, an act to amend the Election Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 412, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Griffo, Oberacker, O'Mara, Rhoads, Stec, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 52. Nays, 9.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up the supplemental calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 441, Senate Print 172, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the Workers' Compensation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the

roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Mayer to explain her vote.

SENATOR MAYER: Thank you, Mr. President.

And a special thank you to Senator Ramos for her leadership on this bill.

This bill is incredibly important because it provides urgently needed reforms to the TDI system in our state, but also it includes a provision that will provide families with paid leave following a stillbirth.

In New York 3,000 families experience a stillbirth every year, and unfortunately one in four families know the pain of child loss. And yet these parents are ineligible for New York's program.

Many years ago I spoke with brave mothers who came to share their stories of stillbirth and their disappointment with the lack of support from the state during the toughest moments of their lives. They felt ignored at every level in state policymaking, ignored by the lack of paid leave, ignored by the lack of

research into stillbirth, ignored by the stigma of talking about it and advocate for it at a policy level.

We have an obligation to do better for them. Any parent who has experienced the loss of a child understands there's an obligation to take these stories out of the shadows and into the halls of chambers like this, to make the policy changes that these parents deserve and to insist that there are more to be done.

I'm pleased to be voting yes on this bill. Again, thank you to Senator Ramos for her leadership. And thank you to the brave advocates, the women who have come forward to make sure this issue is addressed.

I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Mayer to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Borrello to explain his vote.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

We continue to burden our small businesses here in New York State with more and more costs. And TDI here is now going to go up a

whopping 600 percent over the course of four years.

For those of you that don't know, temporary disability is for an injury -- not an injury that you sustain at work, but rather a sickness that is not work-related. So this is an insurance policy, like any other insurance policy. We don't mandate that businesses pay for car insurance or anything else, but we're going to mandate this, and this increase.

Sixty percent of that premium is paid by the business, 40 percent by the employees. With this massive increase, many small business organizations and advocates like NFIB are certain this is going to increase those that are participating in the program, and in some cases in a questionable manner.

We continue to drive businesses out of New York State, employers. You know, the problem is that this is continuing to burden and put really a heavy, heavy pressure on the people that really employ the most people here in New York State, and that's New York's small businesses. A 600 percent increase in this cost is going to be yet another reason to drive a

business out of New York or out of business altogether. So I can't support this bill.

You know, it's easy to spend somebody else's money. The problem here in New York State is we're starting to run out of other people's money. We're seeing that in the declining revenue, in income tax and all other taxes -- sales tax, payroll taxes, you name it. We have to stop this, and this is just one more unnecessary burden on New York State businesses.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Borrello to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Ramos to explain her vote.

SENATOR RAMOS: You know, Mr. President, heaven forbid that a small business owner care about its workers. If there's anything we hear from small businesses right now it is that they're dealing with heavy turnover, and we need more incentives, not less, in order to help our small businesses be able to retain their workforce.

This is why the Small Business Majority came out in favor of temporary disability reform. It's because the increase is

coming from a lack of movement since 1989, when the insurance was set at $170 per week. In 2025, it's impossible for anybody to get by on $170 a week. I don't think that's even what we spend on lunch within a week, much less being able to keep up with the cost of living.

I mean, had you wanted the increase to be much more modest, perhaps when the other side of the aisle was in charge of this chamber they could have cared to make some improvement in order to help our workers. But that is unfortunately not true.

So now here we are, being able to bring stakeholders together and make this monumental change in order to help our workers. I mean, imagine trying to navigate a cancer diagnosis or ALS or experiencing a stillbirth or a mental health crisis while losing your wages and only taking $170 per month. What you're doing is driving workers further into poverty. And then you're going to need a whole other set of services in order to help that worker and that family get by. But that other side of the aisle won't vote for that, either. They just want workers to die, essentially.

(Reaction from members.)

SENATOR RAMOS: So in February of 2023, A Better Balance issued a report with recommendations for the modernization of New York's TDI program, many of which are covered in this bill. The report explains that the TDI system, as it currently stands, is deficient in its ability to support veterans and military families, women, New Yorkers with disabilities and Long COVID, and New Yorkers dealing with substance abuse issues.

It's inhumane. It's contrary to the interests of public health. It's in direct conflict with our efforts to fight poverty and help New Yorkers find stability in this turbulent world.

I want to thank all of the advocates, so many of them, from NYCLU to A Better Balance and many others, who shared their stories about their efforts to heal while facing extreme financial stress, who bravely told personal stories about the most vulnerable time in their lives and helped us advocate to bring this bill to the floor.

The work continues to patch the

holes in the safety net, and I proudly vote aye, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ramos to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Martins to explain his vote.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to support this bill, as I have in the past. But I rise also to point out what everyone in this chamber should realize, that this side of the aisle, the side of the aisle that I stand on and stand in, has not been in the majority in this chamber for now seven years.

As a matter of fact, Mr. President, that side of the aisle that the sponsor referenced has had a supermajority in this chamber for a number of those years, as well as having a supermajority in the chamber on the other side of this building and also having the benefit of having a Governor that is also of the same party.

So here we are, into the seventh year of a majority on that side of the aisle, on the sponsor's side of the aisle -- and again,

remember, Mr. President, I rise to support this bill. But I will not sit here and listen to people complain about what happened on this side of the aisle when after seven years and here we are, you still haven't gotten there.

So hopefully that side of the aisle, along with this side of the aisle, can get this through and we can actually do the right thing for working people and working families in New York State and stop pointing fingers.

Mr. President, I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Martins to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Gianaris to explain his vote.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me begin by thanking my colleague Senator Martins for pointing out how thoroughly defeated his side of the aisle has been over the last several years. There's a reason for that. Because the people of this state have chosen to reelect our majority by strong numbers.

And part of the reason for that is

it has taken us quite some time to unravel the tremendous damage that has been done to this state under the leadership of the other side of the aisle -- which, prior to the last seven years, had the majority for almost a century, for the most part. Including, I know, the landmark achievement that Senator Martins supported of Tier 6, which we have been trying to peel apart for the last several years. And we have already taken steps to do that.

So I don't need to be lectured by Senator Martins. I served in the minority here for longer than I've served in the majority, so I know what it was like when he and his colleagues were governing. And Lord knows I and the people of this state don't want to go back to that.

I want to thank Senator Ramos for this tremendous bill. I'm so happy to support it. And I'm glad that we have the overwhelming majority to pass it today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Gianaris to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to

Calendar 441, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Helming, Lanza, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Rolison, Stec, Walczyk and Weik.

Ayes, 50. Nays, 11.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 442, Senate Print 372, by Senator Gianaris, an act to amend the Labor Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 442, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Stec, Tedisco,

Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 41. Nays, 20.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

There is a substitution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Comrie moves to discharge, from the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, Assembly Bill Number 3224 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 1235A, Third Reading Calendar 443.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The substitution is so ordered.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 443, Assembly Bill 3224, by Assemblymember Braunstein, an act to amend the New York State Medical Care Facilities Finance Agency Act.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 444, Senate Print 1514, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend the Labor Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the 180th day after it shall have become a day.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 445, Senate Print 2236, by Senator Gounardes, an act to amend the Labor Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 446, Senate Print 4515, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the Labor Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ramos to explain her vote.

SENATOR RAMOS: Thank you,

Mr. President.

You know, Black History Month just ended, and now we are in Women's History Month, so it's only appropriate to celebrate a labor and civil rights leader who inspired this bill.

Dr. Martin Luther King had a neighbor whose name was Dorothy Lee Bolden. She was a domestic worker in Atlanta, Georgia, and had been a domestic worker since the age of 9 years old.

With the encouragement of her neighbor, Dr. King, Dorothy began to organize nannies, housekeepers, and elder-care providers to make demands of their employers. Domestic workers, like farmworkers, are some of the original excluded workers. The sectors are explicitly carved out of the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

This workforce, made up predominantly of Black and immigrant women, make the rest of our economy possible by providing the care work needed to allow the rest of us to go to work.

In 1968, Mrs. Bolden founded the National Domestic Workers Union of America, which

eventually represented more than 30,000 domestic workers in 10 cities and was the longest surviving union of domestic workers throughout the United States.

Organizing domestic workers is a unique challenge. Their employer's home is their workplace, where a union organizer cannot reach them and where they are isolated from the company of coworkers that they may organize with. Dorothy Bolden solved this problem using tactics she learned in the Civil Rights Movement. She used public transit.

The shared bus rides that domestic workers would take from their neighborhoods to their employers' neighborhoods became an organizing meeting. Like any good union organizer, Dorothy knew you have to meet people where they are, sometimes quite literally.

She would ride the bus for hours, sitting next to domestic workers, striking up conversations and registering them to vote. Public transit became her union hall.

In 2010, New York became the first state to win a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, and today this body is passing my bill to grant

domestic workers across the state the security of paid sick leave. And I thank my colleagues who are voting for this, because we are correcting a deep injustice, a historical injustice, and one of the last vestiges of Jim Crow in our state.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ramos to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 446, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 40. Nays, 21.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

There is a substitution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Krueger moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 5833 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 5442, Third Reading

Calendar 448.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The substitution is so ordered.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 448, Assembly Bill Number 5833, by Assemblymember Pretlow, an act to amend the State Finance Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: There is

no further business at the desk.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 5th, at 12:00 noon.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 5th, at 12:00 p.m.

And even though he's a Net and a Yankee fan, Happy Birthday, Dad.

(Laughter.)

(Whereupon, at 5:26 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)