NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

May 8, 2006

3:17 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

LT. GOVERNOR MARY O. DONOHUE, President

STEVEN M. BOGGESS, Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

THE PRESIDENT: The Senate will please come to order.

I ask everyone present to please rise and repeat with me the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

THE PRESIDENT: With us is a colleague, friend and advisor who needs no introduction, Reverend Peter G. Young, from Blessed Sacrament Church in Bolton Landing, New York.

REVEREND YOUNG: As New Yorkers, in having honored the prayer and having honored, of course, our flag, we are proud that the first christening of the American flag, the Stars and Stripes, was flown in battle at the defense of Fort Stanwick in Rome, in Senator Meier's turf.

It's with great pride that we are able to serve as Senators in this patriotic tradition, as elected leaders to fill Your call, O God of leadership to all our people of New York State.

Amen.

THE PRESIDENT: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Sunday, May 7, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Saturday, May 6, was read and approved. On motion, Senate adjourned.

THE PRESIDENT: 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 Fuschillo.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Madam President.

On behalf of Senator Meier, on page number 58 I offer the following amendments to Calendar Number 849, Senate Print Number

2322A, and ask that said bill retain its place on Third Reading Calendar.

THE PRESIDENT: The amendments are received, and the bill will retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Madam President.

On behalf of Senator Little, on page number 33 I offer the following amendments to Calendar Number 412, Senate Print Number 3844, and ask that said bill retain its place on Third Reading Calendar.

THE PRESIDENT: Those amendments are also received, and the bill will retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Madam President, on behalf of Senator Meier, on page number 39 I offer the following amendments to Calendar Number 579, Senate Print Number 2316B, and ask that said bill retain its place on Third Reading Calendar.

THE PRESIDENT: The amendments are received, and the bill will retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Madam

President, on behalf of Senator Libous, on page number 54 I offer the following amendments to Calendar Number 812, Senate Print Number 6425, and ask that said bill retain its place on Third Reading Calendar.

THE PRESIDENT: The amendments are received. The bill will retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: Madam President, there's a Resolution 5006 at the desk, by Senator Breslin. Could we have it read in its entirety and move for its immediate adoption.

THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: By Senator Breslin, Legislative Resolution Number 5006, congratulating the University at Albany Men's Basketball Team and Coach Will Brown upon the occasion of capturing the 2006 America East Conference Championship.

"WHEREAS, It is with great pride that this Legislative Body commends those outstanding athletes of the State of New York

who bring honor and distinction to the game of college basketball, distinguishing themselves through notable achievement and thereby representing the State of New York with exceptional dignity and determination; and

"WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to congratulate the University at Albany Men's Basketball Team and Coach Will Brown upon the occasion of capturing the 2006 America East Conference Championship. The Great Danes defeated three-time defending champions, the University of Vermont Catamounts, on Saturday, March 11, 2006, in front of a jubilant crowd of 4,538 fans at the Recreation and Convocation Center, Albany, New York, in a game televised nationally on ESPN 2; and

"WHEREAS, The top-seeded Great Danes earned the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament and completed their turnaround from Division I patsy. Entering this year, UAlbany hadn't had a winning season since upgrading to Division I in 1999-2000 and bottomed out with a 5-23 record just two years ago; and

"WHEREAS, The Great Danes came out like a team determined to put that history behind them. Hundreds of UAlbany students rushed the court when the game was over, and UAlbany players cut down the net; and

"WHEREAS, Entering the NCAA Tournament on Friday, March 17, 2006, the Great Danes competed against the top-seeded University of Connecticut Huskies in the first round at the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

"WHEREAS, The athletic talent displayed by this team is due in great part to the efforts of Coach Will Brown and his dedicated assistants, skilled and inspirational tutors, respected for their ability to develop potential into excellence; and

"WHEREAS, The team's overall record of 21 wins and 11 losses is outstanding, and the team members were loyally and enthusiastically supported by family, friends and fans all across the great State of New York; and

"WHEREAS, The hallmarks of the

University at Albany's Men's Basketball Team, from the opening practice of the season to participation in the NCAA Tournament in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, were a brotherhood of athletic ability, of good sportsmanship, of honor and of scholarship, demonstrating that these team players are second to none; and

"WHEREAS, Athletically and academically, the team members have proven themselves to be an unbeatable combination of talents, reflecting favorably on their college; and

"WHEREAS, Coach Will Brown and his staff have done a superb job in guiding, molding and inspiring the team members toward their goals; and

"WHEREAS, Sports competition instills the values of teamwork, pride and accomplishment, and Coach Will Brown and the 12 outstanding athletes have clearly made a contribution to the spirit of excellence which is a tradition at the University at Albany; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to

congratulate the University at Albany Men's Basketball Team, its members -- David Bauman, Brian Connelly, Jimmie Covington, Jon Iati, Lucious Jordan, Jerrad Knotts, Levi Levine, Brian Lillis, Jason Siggers, Brent Wilson, Jamar Wilson and Kirsten Zoellner -- Trainers Rich Bennet and Brian DePasquale, Managers Michael Peck, Rob Longert, and Nick Mattera, Assistant Coaches Pat Filien, Chad O'Donnell, Eric Eaton and Jeremy Friel, and Coach Will Brown on their outstanding season and on winning the America East Conference Championship; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the members of the University at Albany Men's Basketball Team and to Coach Will Brown."

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Breslin.

SENATOR BRESLIN: Thank you, Madam President.

This is a wonderful day to stand and to applaud this basketball team, a team that didn't become a Division I team until 1999. And to have its first winning season

this year, at 21 and 11, and to be able to turn on the television and watch a national game, as Albany beat Vermont for the America East title -- and then that Friday night, that Friday night when all of us were watching, when Albany played Connecticut -- Connecticut, a team that we see every day, a team that was arguably the number-one team in the country then -- and to watch minute after minute go by as, shot for shot, these kids just stayed with them and stayed with them, stayed with the team, the Connecticut team that's made up predominantly of McDonald's All Americans.

But as I talked to these young men, they weren't at all fazed by the people they were playing against. They knew if they played their own game, they would be right there with them.

And speaking of that team, the team at Albany is more than just the players, it's made up of the coaches: Will, who you know, Will Brown -- if you'd stand up, Will -- Eric Eaton, Pat Filien, Chad O'Donnell, Jeremy Friel; the athletic administration, led by Athletic Director Lee McElroy, who's here, and

Brian DePasquale and Charlie Voelker, who many of us know; and the university administration, our fine president, Kermit Hall, who's there with Charlie Williams and Mark Schmidt.

But now to the people who brought it all together. And you can rest assured I won't be like the Governor; I'm not going to challenge any of these young men one-on-one, even though I threatened to before. And if you'd stand: Lucious Jordan, who happens to be from Colonie Center and a member of Albany County, and hopefully a voter in this county -- that's called an aside -- Jamar Wilson, from the Bronx; Jon Iati, from York, Pennsylvania; Dave Bauman, from Pittsburgh; and, last but not least, Levi Levine, from New York City.

We applaud what's happened. You've set a new standard for basketball. We expect to have you back each and every year. I am terribly impressed by watching you all this year, you players, the way you handled yourselves -- we knew you could do it on the court, but off the court, your ability to articulate and to bring prestige to this

university.

We of course have another kind of informal member of your team right here on the floor, and that's Senator Hugh Farley, from Schenectady, a long-time professor at Albany State, who I know joins with me in this tribute.

Again, I commend you, I'm humbled to have you here, and I look forward to seeing many of your games next year.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

SENATOR BRESLIN: I'd like to note, just before Senator Farley speaks, that they have decided to retire my number here at Albany State.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR BRESLIN: Thank you very much, Senator Farley.

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Farley.

SENATOR FARLEY: Thank you, Madam President, Senator Breslin.

Let me just say that as a graduate of the State University of New York at Albany, and somebody that's taught there for

35 years -- and for many, many years I used to rehabilitate Coach Sauer's players in my classes and enjoyed all of those basketball players who have been academic outstanding students -- let me just say, Albany, it was incredible.

The whole nation was watching them and rooting for them as they -- as the bottom seed was really taking the University of Connecticut and almost beat them, to the last minute. We got the light out from underneath the bushel for Albany. This is a national school.

Will Brown, what you've done with that team in the very short time you've been Division I is absolutely incredible. We're very, very proud of you. There's a lot of better days coming. This is one of the most exciting things that has ever happened in this Capital District. And I salute you, not only as a fine academic institution but as a great team and a great bunch of youngsters. And, you know, we've got them coming back for next year.

We're very proud of you.

Congratulations.

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Stachowski.

SENATOR STACHOWSKI: Just briefly. I won't rehash everything they said about the great year you guys had and the wonderful job you did in the tournament.

I just wanted to point out to you, as somebody who has nothing to do with the University at Albany, and I don't live in Albany except when I work here, what I noticed that you did for the university is lobbyists, people that work here, members of the Legislature that went to Albany were now suddenly telling everybody: "You know, I went to Albany. I'm going to watch my team Friday."

Then when you guys played so well, the following Monday they were all, again, in our face, telling us what a great job you guys did and how proud they were to be from the University of Albany. And I think that that job you did for the university, the university couldn't afford to pay for.

So I just join everyone else in

congratulating you.

THE PRESIDENT: On the resolution, all in favor please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

THE PRESIDENT: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

THE PRESIDENT: The resolution is adopted.

Congratulations. Best wishes, as we're sure you will have similar success down the road.

(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: Madam President, there's a Resolution 4632 at the desk, by Senator Flanagan. Could we have the title read and move for its immediate adoption.

THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: By Senator Flanagan, Legislative Resolution 4632, commending Lieutenant Dennis Carman upon the occasion of his designation as Correction Officer of the Year by the New York State

Deputies Association.

THE PRESIDENT: On the resolution, all in favor please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

THE PRESIDENT: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

THE PRESIDENT: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: Madam President, there's a resolution at the desk, 5100, by Senator Little. Could we have the title read and move for its immediate adoption.

THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: By Senator Little, Legislative Resolution Number 5100, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Tupper Lake National Bank.

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Little.

SENATOR LITTLE: Thank you.

We always speak about small businesses and how they are the backbone of our community. The Tupper Lake National Bank

is a small business. It has been an ongoing banking business in Tupper Lake for 100 years. And it's with a great deal of pride that we celebrate that.

They now have branches in Saranac Lake, Lake Placid, and Plattsburgh. And they, like many of our other small businesses, have been able to grow in the New York State business climate.

So I congratulate them and all of their previous workers and current-day workers for the wonderful job that they do providing banking services to the people in my district.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: All in favor please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

THE PRESIDENT: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

THE PRESIDENT: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: Madam President, if we could go to the noncontroversial reading of the calendar.

THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 57, by Senator Wright, Senate Print 5532B, an act to amend the Family Court Act, in relation to making juvenile delinquents criminally responsible.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the first of November.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

SENATOR SKELOS: Lay it aside temporarily, please.

THE PRESIDENT: The roll call is withdrawn.

The bill is laid aside temporarily.

The Secretary will continue to read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 105, by Senator Skelos, Senate Print 494B, an act to amend the Education Law.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last

section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 5. This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 162, by Senator Skelos, Senate Print 4381A, an act to amend the Uniform Commercial Code, in relation to conversion.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 517, by Senator Larkin, Senate Print 6880A, an act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to authorizing.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 611, by Senator Maziarz --

SENATOR SKELOS: Lay it aside for the day, please.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is laid aside for the day.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 700, by Senator Farley, Senate Print 4677A, an act to amend the Banking Law, in relation to changing.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the 90th day.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 724, by Senator Fuschillo, Senate Print 6568, an act to authorize the East Farmingdale Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 725, by Senator Johnson, Senate Print 6851, an act to authorize.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 54. Nays, 1. Senator Bonacic recorded in the negative.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 725, those recorded in the negative: Senators Bonacic, Larkin and Rath. Ayes, 52. Nays, 3.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 778, by Senator Little, Senate Print 731A, an act to amend the Local Finance Law, in relation to advance refunding.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 783, by Senator Little, Senate Print 4916, an

act to amend the General Municipal Law, in relation to balancing.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the first of July.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 786, by Senator Winner, Senate Print 6316, an act to amend the General Municipal Law and others, in relation to requiring.

THE PRESIDENT: There is a local fiscal impact note at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 8. This act shall take effect on the first of January.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 800, by Senator Bonacic, Senate Print 997, an act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law and the Labor Law, in relation to fingerprinting.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the 90th day.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 54. Nays, 1. Senator A. Smith recorded in the negative.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 808, by Senator DeFrancisco, Senate Print 5054, an act to amend the Navigation Law, in relation to operation.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 809, by Senator Padavan, Senate Print 5360, an act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law, in relation to suspension.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 54. Nays, 1. Senator Montgomery recorded in the negative.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 811, by Senator Young, Senate Print 6238, an act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law, in relation to designating.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 821, by Senator LaValle, Senate Print 1412, an act to amend the Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law, in relation to purchase.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the 30th day.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

The Secretary will read Calendar Number 57.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 57, by Senator Wright, Senate Print 5532B, an act to amend the Family Court Act.

THE PRESIDENT: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the first of November.

THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Those recorded in the negative on Calendar Number 57 are Senators Dilan, Montgomery, Oppenheimer and A. Smith.

Ayes, 51. Nays, 4.

THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

Senator Skelos, that completes the reading of the noncontroversial calendar.

SENATOR SKELOS: Madam President, if you could just recognize Senator Flanagan.

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Flanagan.

SENATOR FLANAGAN: Thank you, Madam President.

Just a brief announcement. Many of my colleagues know tomorrow is the bowlathon for the Bone Marrow Foundation, which many people have participated in.

Today, the Bone Marrow Foundation is in the LOB, in Hearing Room C. They're allowing people to get tested up until 6 o'clock. A very simple test, just a little prick on the finger and it can help save somebody's life. So if you have the time, they're down there until 6 o'clock, Hearing Room C, the Bone Marrow Foundation.

Thank you.

SENATOR BRUNO: Madam President.

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Can we at this time return to motions and resolutions.

I believe I have a resolution at the desk. I would ask that it be read in its entirety and move for its immediate adoption.

THE PRESIDENT: Motions and resolutions.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: By Senator Bruno, Legislative Resolution Number 5115, commemorating May 8, 2006, as Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Day, in recognition of the sacrifices and contributions these outstanding individuals make to protect and to care for

the residents of the State of New York.

"WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay just tribute to those individuals who devote their purposeful life to serving others, expressing its highest regard and admiration for the great skill and courageous dedication exhibited by those individuals who take prompt and heroic action in an emergency situation, without due regard for their own safety and welfare; and

"WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is proud to commemorate Monday, May 8, 2006, as Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Day; and

"WHEREAS, The members of four vital organizations that play a significant role in caring for the residents of New York State include the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), the Chiefs Association, the Fire District Association, and the Volunteer Ambulance Association; and

"WHEREAS, It takes a special

dedication, a strong desire to help others, and a tireless sense of community to be a volunteer firefighter, to respond to the signal that a neighbor is in need, and to heroically perform, often above and beyond the call of duty, those responsibilities which define the task of fire protection; and

"WHEREAS, Emergency medical services providers have traditionally served as the safety net of America's healthcare system. The members of EMS teams are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

"WHEREAS, More than 75 percent of the emergency response in the great State of New York is volunteer. The selfless contribution that these men and women make to New York's quality of life cannot be replaced; and

"WHEREAS, It is important for all citizens of our state and nation to know and understand the problems, duties and responsibilities of their volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel, and that these brave volunteers recognize their duty to serve

the public by safeguarding both life and property; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate May 8, 2006, as Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Day, in recognition of the sacrifices and contributions these outstanding individuals make to protect and to care for the residents of the State of New York; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the members of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York, the Chiefs Association, the Fire District Association, and the Volunteer Ambulance Association."

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Madam President, we just heard a resolution that talks about firemen and emergency responders here in this state. They are -- many of them are here in the building. We had hoped they could get here before we finished session. They may or they may not.

But the resolution describes the contribution that they make to all of our

lives. And recognize that all of these people are volunteers. Three-quarters of them are volunteers, 24/7. I don't think there's a person here that hasn't had a personal experience with one of the firemen or an emergency responder who hasn't in some positive way affected our lives.

I in one situation had them arrive for part of my family at 2:00 in the morning, and something that was very, very traumatic -- 2:00 in the morning. Whether it was life-threatening, lifesaving, who knows. But they were there.

Fires, right next door to where I live, 20 below zero, and they were there. Son's house burned to the ground. Within minutes, they were there.

I was the first car on the scene at a car accident where the car was over on its side and the motor was still going -- it was over on its roof. And there was a couple in there, and the woman was pregnant, eight months pregnant. Within minutes -- and there were fluids all over. And the young fellow that was behind that wheel was upside down and

strapped in. And we that were there were doing what we could to create some relief. But it was apparent you couldn't open doors, you couldn't get into that car.

Those people arrived, and within minutes -- with fluids all over that could have been gasoline, that could have been explosive -- just responded and handled the situation.

And the good news in that case, the baby was actually born and survived, the mother survived, the young fellow survived. And he had a good -- chances were that he could have choked to death, because he was upside down and bleeding in his head and his mouth.

So those are personal experiences. You just don't forget them. And everyone here, I'm sure, could tell story after story about the heroism, the commitment, the will of these people to do things where they have no regard for their own safety, their own lives, but just respond to other people who need their help.

So I am honored and privileged that

we can pass a resolution recognizing the merits of what all of these people do in our lives. And while they may or may not be here, this resolution will stand and will be delivered to them as a testimony to the respect that we in this chamber have for their will, for their commitment, for their good work, for being so unselfish, 24/7, in responding to the need of people throughout the state.

And if you would join me, as we are being joined by the representatives of the firemen and the emergency responders here. Are there other speakers? There are. Then I'm going to ask the other speakers to say a few words, and then we'll go from there.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Balboni.

SENATOR BALBONI: Senator Bruno and Madam President, I wanted to rise because we all understand the importance of the firefighting community.

But I want to share an experience that I just had. And I'm sorry, but I am

unaware of how many members of the Senate are members of volunteer fire departments. But I am not, and so I had never really gotten a chance to observe what fire departments and firemen do.

And last fall, I went to the Fire School. And I went with the Mineola Fire Department, and they put me into a tower, a fire going on in a tower of six floors. You put the bunker gear on, turnout coats, the helmet, the Scott air pack, about 60, 65 pounds, and you climb up six flights of stairs.

And there were two staircases, one the attack staircase and one the pressurized staircase. And I went in with the captain to the pressurized staircase, and we got in the fire room before anybody else got there.

And what they'd done is they'd taken two pallets of wood, and they put one in both sides of the floor of the tower, and they put a thing of gasoline underneath it. And so that was all that was burning in this cement room.

Well, the heat in there is

something I have never witnessed, experienced before in my life. And I didn't have one inch, not one inch of skin exposed.

And the firefighter who was next to me, the fire chief, he's walking on hands and knees, it's completely black. I've got a huge flashlight on my arm; you cannot see anything but a dull glow. And so I get up, just because we've got to run down this hallway now, and as soon as I run up, the hair on the back of my neck singes through the coat.

And the captain grabs me and pulls me down and says, "Get down, you can't do that, you're going to burn." And to emphasize it, he stands up after the fire is over. He's got a flashlight on top of his helmet; the flashlight has melted.

This is the kind of heat and the confusion and the darkness and the claustrophobia and the fear and the adrenaline. And now you've got to go look for bodies and you've got to try to pull people out. It is an extraordinary experience.

I urge all of my colleagues, if you have a chance, go to your local fire

department and see when they're going to do this. I'm telling you, it is an amazing experience. And to think that in places where they have volunteer fire departments, they do this for free. Unbelievable that they would do this.

But that's the kind of protection that they provide, it's the kind of experience that they have. And every time they do that -- you know, we talk so much about the word "bravery." But when you think about doing that to save your neighbor, there is no better definition.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Seward, on the resolution.

SENATOR SEWARD: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise as the chair of our task force that we have on volunteer emergency services. And following up on what my colleague -- our leader, Senator Bruno, and Senator Balboni have said, I think it's very, very appropriate that we pause this day to honor the men and women who selflessly give of

themselves day in and day out, night in and night out, to protect property and people in the State of New York.

Our volunteer firefighters, ambulance workers, other emergency service personnel provide such an invaluable service to the residents of our state.

I know Senator Bruno outlined some personal experiences he's had in emergency situations he's observed, Senator Balboni talking about a personal visit to a firehouse. I think we collectively, as New Yorkers and as Americans, we all saw on September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center was under attack, that no question we witnessed that day the immense dedication, commitment and sacrifice that our first responders make every time the pager goes off or that whistle blows. They never know what they're getting into.

And we saw, of course, on September 11, 2001, such a catastrophic event, but yet our first responders were there and far too many of them lost their lives. But in so doing, that was, I think, one of the largest evacuation efforts in history. And

many more thousands of lives could have been lost that terrible day if it was not for the bravery of our first responders.

And if there's any good that has come out of that terrible day, I think it's been a renewed appreciation for the dedication, commitment and sometimes the real sacrifice of our first responders.

So we pause today to pay homage to the 110,000 paid and volunteer first responders, our firefighters in particular, throughout the state who are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you want to put it in dollars and cents, it's very tough to quantify. We estimate that volunteers save our state and local communities no less than $2.9 billion. That's just in salaries and benefits alone. That's a tremendous contribution to this state and local governments.

And I was so pleased in our budget that we passed this year we included an income tax credit for volunteers in that budget, $200. It's not a huge amount of money, but it is some recognition in a tangible way of the

outstanding service that we're recognizing here today.

And I think we as a Senate are going to continue to provide the necessary tools that will continue to assist our volunteers in carrying out their important work.

So I think it's very appropriate that we pause this day to honor these heroic men and women that do so much to protect people and protect property throughout the communities in New York State.

Congratulations, and thank you for all you do.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Thank you, Senator Seward.

Senator Rath.

SENATOR RATH: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to add my congratulations to the volunteer firefighters of New York State.

A little bit of sentimentality, if you would allow me. My late husband's grandfather and great-grandfather were both battalion chiefs in the city of Buffalo. My

father-in-law, who was at one time county executive, always had the coat, helmet and boots and gloves in the trunk, and the fire band was always on his radio. And he was at every fire of any consequence at all in Erie County for his many, many years of public service, even before he was county executive.

Senator Bruno spoke very, very eloquently of some circumstances in his district when the emergency responders turned out almost instantly for a very, very dramatic and serious automobile accident, and how quickly things were put to rights and the people were saved, and a pregnant woman managed to deliver a very healthy child as a result of quick action.

I had a circumstance in my district a few years ago. I represent Western New York, as I said, and the city of Batavia, town of Batavia had a very serious train derailment out in farmland. Companies from everywhere showed up and came and stayed. It was a magnificent display of what people can do when they were interoperable in responding to a disaster.

So thank you for what you do today. Thank you for what you've done in the past, what you will do in the future.

And I would just like to note that two nights ago, it was the 150th anniversary of a very proud fire company in my district, Hutchinson Hose. The history of Williamsville, New York, is the history of Hutchinson Hose Company. It was wonderful to hear what they have done over the past 150 years and what we hope and plan and I know they expect to do for the next 150.

Thank you all for your service to the State of New York and the people of the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Alesi.

SENATOR ALESI: Thank you, Mr. President.

Like many of us, I'm sure that we all are related to or know or have personally experienced what it's like to grow up in a volunteer firefighter family, and I'm no exception. I'm very fond of referring to myself as a firefighter brat.

And for those of our guests that are in the gallery, I had the pleasure of joining many of them last year at their annual convention, recognizing some of the heroes that they themselves recognized at that convention.

And growing up in a little village, I was five doors down from the local fire department, which also housed the ambulance corps and the police department. And in those days, they didn't have pagers or radios, they just had a very loud, ugly-sounding whistle. But it worked very well to get the local men in our village to race down the street from wherever they were, whatever they were doing. Whether they worked in the dairy or whether they worked in the bank or the laundry, wherever they worked, they dropped everything, with complete, 100 percent community support.

And I remember racing down the street many times with my dad, waiting for my uncle, who lived a few doors down from us, to catch up too, and watching those, at that time, heroes get on the trucks and drive to wherever the fire was. And I never realized

as a young kid what it was that they were providing in terms of a service to our community.

And we look back now, and of course we talk about how valuable that service is because it's so hard to find volunteers. It's very hard for people to leave their jobs. It's very hard for them to just pick up and run. It's very hard for them to take the time for the training that's involved, because so much more is involved. And yet they continue to do it.

And our communities really need to understand that if they weren't doing it, yes, it would be costly to us in terms of dollars, but it would be more costly to us in terms of property lost and, even more important, lives endangered.

I'm very proud to have been the original sponsor of the tuition bill for our volunteer firefighters, and to join my colleagues here in the Senate in providing a tax credit for them. It's just our way of saying that we do recognize how valuable your service is.

And we also recognize that when you're out there, your families and the places where you work are supporting your efforts, and we appreciate that support as well.

And we also know, and we're reminded every now and then, sadly so, that when you're out there doing this and asking absolutely nothing in return, that you're putting your lives on the line. And we are now and then reminded of that in the saddest of ways.

You are all heroes, every one of you. And when your day is a day when that whistle blows or the radio goes off or the pager sounds, you and your family are there for us. And we need to remember that for you on a daily basis, not just today.

Mr. President, I'm honored to be a child of a volunteer firefighter family, and I'm honored to be in the presence of these people today.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Krueger.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: Thank you.

So we have more in common than we

all thought. I am very honored to be the wife of an auxiliary firefighter of the FDNY. My husband has been a volunteer with the FDNY for 30 years. And Engine Company 44, just having had its 125th anniversary, is basically my family's second home.

And on September 11th, when I was trying to figure out where I would go, I knew where my husband would be. He would have gone to the firehouse and gone with his company down to Lower Manhattan, which is exactly where he was and what he did.

And he is a brat, I suppose, also; his father was the chief medical officer for the FDNY, and he is now an honorary chief. And he is a true believer in what the gentlemen and women standing behind me, who I can't see right now, are throughout the State of New York. They respond, they save lives. And as is often said by firefighters, when other people are running out of the buildings, they are running in.

And so I see that every day in my own community from the firefighters that I know, both professionals and auxiliaries and

volunteers in the Fire Department of New York City.

And I have to tell you that I'm not sure we could imagine a society where we didn't have people who had such a strong sense of community and interdependence and the recognition that the definition of our society and the greatness of our country is our willingness to risk for each other.

So congratulations, and thank you for the work you do.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Little.

SENATOR LITTLE: Thank you.

I too would like to add my congratulations and my thanks to our dedicated volunteers in our fire services and emergency services.

And we're joined today by one of our most dedicated volunteers from the Lake George area, Bob McKinney, former chief, certainly a person who has spent a great deal of his life advocating for volunteer firemen and emergency services.

In my area we have had several instances recently where volunteer firemen went above and beyond and did things other than the normal fighting the fire. When we had the Northway washed out and several roads washed out in a rainstorm, it was the volunteer firemen who redirected traffic and looked at the closed-off roads.

When the dam burst in Fort Ann, it was the volunteer firemen that went door to door telling people that the dam had burst and they needed to evacuate their homes.

We had a power outage recently this winter, with temperatures below zero. It was the volunteer firemen, over a three-day period, who went from home to home hooking up generators, firing up the furnaces to warm up those homes.

And then most recently -- I was with Bob the following day -- we had a big fire in Lake George where five businesses were burned down.

So these men and women truly go above and beyond the call of duty and serve our communities. And as chairman of the Local

Government Committee, I don't know what the many, many towns, villages and communities in New York State would do without your services. So thank you and your colleagues very, very much.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Winner.

SENATOR WINNER: Thank you, Mr. President.

I too would like to rise to honor the emergency first responders and the volunteer firefighters that are here today. It is really a tribute to the State of New York that we have such tremendous volunteer efforts.

You know, as a representative of the 53rd Senate District, which is a rural area, I certainly recognize the valuable contributions that you make. And also as Chairman of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, we're constantly reminded in that function of all of the tremendous contributions that volunteer firefighters and first responders and emergency medical technicians provide for the state.

Senator Seward indicated the financial impact, which is certainly only one aspect of it, but a very, very important aspect. But the overall responsibility that you have to protect these communities is absolutely very, very inspiring.

And certainly in many of these rural areas the whole community's social fabric is built around the operations of the volunteer fire operations. And certainly in rural areas such as I represent, nothing can be more important than making sure that those assets and resources are there.

You know, there was a troubling report that came out recently from the Association of Towns indicating that there is a tremendous decline in the ranks of volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical technicians. And certainly the reason for that is -- there are a number of reasons. But, you know, the amount of pressure and training requirements and overall time constraints is very, very difficult these days.

And I know that it's important for

us not only to maintain your ranks but to come up with ways and solutions that we can to increase them, because of the tremendous contribution that you make to the communities.

And while the effort that we undertook this year with regard to the $200 income tax credit was an important effort, there is more that needs to be done and more incentives that need to be offered, whether it be real property tax relief, whether it be access to public health insurance plans or other types of measures that will provide for incentives to improve your ranks.

Those are things I think that we need to look at in this Legislature, and I am the sponsor of one of those members. But, you know, we need to get together on a bipartisan basis to make sure that those efforts are a reality so that we can improve your ranks and improve the services that you'll be able to provide to our communities.

So I congratulate you on this resolution today, thank Senator Bruno for advancing it, and look forward to working with your organizations to try to improve your

ranks, improve the ability to provide for services and training to you to make you do your jobs -- help you do your jobs better, and, overall, thank you for everything that you do.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Thank you, Senator Winner.

Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I am so pleased to join Senator Bruno and my other colleagues to really say a thank you, thank you to the volunteer service, the EMS personnel for their special dedication and their strong desire to help save life and property at their own expense.

Volunteerism is just a wonderful thing in this country, and sometimes we don't appreciate it. Senator Seward talked about and I was going to mention the billions of dollars each year that are saved to the citizens of our state.

But what they do is so appreciated in their communities. And everyone is telling stories, and I would like to just remind

everyone of the Pine Barrens fires that not only called into play every volunteer department on Long Island, but many, many of the departments throughout the entire state and in other parts of the country came and assisted in a fire that lasted for days upon days. Not one life was lost, and it was just absolutely incredible the property and the houses that were saved. You could see the fire line coming right up to a condo development, and they were able to save an entire development.

The fire was so intense -- Senator Balboni talked about the intensity of a fire. For those who have been out to Eastern Long Island and the Sunrise Highway, or 27, to have a fire arc over four lanes of highway is just an incredible thing.

So just from my district, I say thank you and thank you for the service that you give. And I am so hopeful that we will be able to meet the demands through more young people joining the junior volunteer fire service and having generation upon generation.

So many members got up -- Senator

Rath talked about the Rath family having at least three generations of service. As I travel to the departments, I find so many members having father, son, grandson having participated in a department.

So we say, as a body, thank you very much.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Bonacic.

SENATOR BONACIC: Thank you.

I'm humbled by our heroes visiting us today. Every Senator could get up and tell of an experience in their district where our heroes showed courage in saving property and lives.

Three weeks ago we had a 19-year-old woman firefighter save approximately 50 lives in Sullivan County, alerting people at the Villa Roma, which was a resort where many people were staying, to get them out. And I could talk of twenty more stories.

But what I want to use this opportunity for is to talk to my colleagues about the problems these heroes are facing --

recruitment, retention -- and what we can do to help them in this area and prepare the next generation.

We do things in turtle steps. We help with property tax exemption. We did a voluntary tax credit in a bipartisan way. And all these things are good. But these are a group of individuals that have to raise a family, have to hold a job, and maybe two spouses in the family are working. And when they come home, if the whistle goes off, they leave for their second job, where there is absolutely no financial compensation. These are acts of love, unconditional commitment and sacrifice to neighbors and strangers. And they ask nothing in return.

But some of the things we can do. We can boost the revolving loan fund, help them with zero percent financing when they have to buy fire trucks or build firehouses. We can help them with affordable health insurance, which they need desperately and which they've been working on for the past 12 months with the Governor's office, so there's adequate health insurance for their

families. These kinds of incentives will help bring younger people into the ranks of firematics.

So I thank our heroes, and I am sure that every Senator in these chambers identifies and appreciates everything that you do. You are simply the best. And we hope you keep on doing it for the rest of your lives, and the next generation.

Thank you very much.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Larkin.

SENATOR LARKIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

You know, to the men up in the balcony, Senator Bruno said it all, really. But you know, when you start to think about how much you educate us -- many of us here have already spoken, have said things about the firematics and what they do. But you know, the education you provide for us.

My first term in politics was as town supervisor. And the chief came to me and said, "Let me sit down and talk to you. Here are our problems. They're your problems,

Supervisor." And then he said, "How much have we advanced in coordinating our senior citizens?" We had a big senior citizen population.

And then we got together between the fire department, Office of the Aging, and the post office, and the fire department put a little red sticker in every mailbox of a senior. And they would have people volunteering in our town, seven fire units, to go around and watch the mail. If it seemed to be piling up, someone would make some arrangements with the chief of police so we could get in and make sure that somebody in there didn't die, was crippled and couldn't get out. We saved at least three or four lives in the two years that I was there.

But the thing that was important was this put an additional burden on the fire members. They didn't care, because, number one, they were taking care of their fellow citizens.

And, you know, sometimes we talk about how much it costs to run a department. You all know that you have multiple areas in

your districts. How much does it cost? We couldn't pay you. There is no way we could compensate you for what you do. A lot of people just say, Well, they do -- they put out fires.

They take care of people. They assist people. They work with the young people. They teach young people about the problems of starting a fire, how to be productive as young people, how to come in and be a joint venture, get our juniors, 15 years of age, into the corps.

And you're always doing something that promotes the public safety and health. How would you like to put around here a new insurance policy with no firemen? Everybody would be moving to the town that still had them.

You are a godsend. You're special. You're special because you made a commitment, and that commitment is to the public safety of the units that you have protecting the lives and property of people. You're the heroes of not just today, but of yesterday and tomorrow. And with your blessing and help, we'll be able

to recruit new people to carry on the dedication that you have shown for so many, many years.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Meier.

SENATOR MEIER: Thank you, Mr. President.

There's a book that many of us were required to read in high school and in college called "Democracy in America," written by a Frenchman named Alexis de Tocqueville in 1836. The most famous line in the book is "America is great because America is good."

And what did he mean by that? In 1836 we weren't a big industrial power, we weren't a big military power. What he was talking about, he observed that in America, unlike the old countries in Europe that he was used to, Americans didn't sit around waiting for a prince or a ruler to tell them to do things, that Americans volunteered to help each other out, to meet needs in their communities.

And today, in 2006, nobody

exemplifies that better than the men and women of the volunteer fire service. And I'm proud that in the gallery tonight are two leaders of the fire service in my community, two friends of mine, Dave Jacobowitz and Brian McQueen.

And just as a public official and as a resident of a community that's serviced by a volunteer fire department, you get an opportunity to observe what they do, not just the calls to the fire scenes or to the accident scenes.

In 1998, an enormous ice storm hit the northern part of my Senate district, and parts of my Senate district were deprived of electricity for several weeks. Think about that: several weeks at a time. The volunteer fire departments in those small North Country communities became the literal lifeblood of those communities. It became the command post, it became the place from which people were dispatched to help those who were elderly and sick and alone.

And I'm mindful of something else when you think about the character of these gentlemen and the kind of spirit that this

brotherhood engenders. On February 27th, in the town of New Hartford in my Senate district, a young police officer named Joseph Corr was shot and killed in the course of trying to apprehend a robber.

Now, you would think that a young man with a wife and a baby at home would think that he was doing enough for his community by going out every day in his professional life and putting his life on the line as a police officer. But that wasn't Joe Corr, and that wasn't so many other people like him. Joe Corr was also a volunteer firefighter. Can you imagine it? This young man felt that his service to his community required even more of it.

And this is the kind of character, this is the kind of dedication, this is the kind of integrity that you find in the men and women who join the volunteer fire service.

And, Senator Bonacic, I think you hit the nail on the head. This is an opportunity, this resolution today, not just to say thank you but to talk to you and to recommit ourselves to our responsibility to

you, to see to it that resources are dedicated that equip you, that train you, that provide you the tools to do better recruitment and retention. America is great because it's good, and you exemplify the best of the reason why we're good.

Congratulations, and God bless.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Morahan.

SENATOR MORAHAN: Thank you, Mr. President. I too rise in support of this resolution.

It is very difficult, having heard all of my colleagues speak to this resolution, to come up with something new or something different. Therefore, I will not try to do that.

I stand to honor our firefighters, our volunteers across this great state and to recognize, as Senator Meier says, they represent the good of this country. They represent, going back to the earliest times in our history, of people in the community fending for themselves, coming together as a community to look after and protect each of us

and each of their friends and neighbors.

Yes, we owe a host of things and benefits and incentives to these men and women on the front line of our defense right here at home, and there is just no way we could ever compensate them for what they do. And furthermore, they're not in it for compensation. They're not in it for benefits.

The meager things that we do for our volunteers in providing equipment, providing incentives is merely a very humble way of saying thank you, recognizing you not for what you do but for who you are, for you who will stand up and rise to the occasion, selflessly, to defend the property and protect the lives of your neighbors and friends.

Volunteerism really is the backbone of this nation. It is what built this country. It is what made us strong, which made us the country we are. And our volunteer firefighters and EMTs and many of our other volunteer services, auxiliary police, exemplify just that, that these are people, notwithstanding of their own needs, who will respond in the middle of the night, in the

middle of the winter, anytime they're needed for their neighbors.

And we must recognize too the families that stand behind all of these wonderful volunteers, those who worry and fret while you're out answering the call, those hoping and praying that you come back safe and stay out of harm's way.

But you rush into fiery situations, you rush into areas of danger without worrying about your own lives, so to speak. But you have our heartfelt thanks and the thanks of all New Yorkers for what you do. And for all volunteer firemen and volunteers across this country, we say thank you today.

And we do have legislative programs here because many of our young volunteers can't afford to live in the suburban and rural counties where they're so needed, and it's that that worries us. What can we do? The high cost of living in suburbia drives our young people out. The next generation of firefighters must move on and leave us unprotected. I think we need to encourage volunteers, young people to come in, but we

have to allow them to live in the community. You can't respond to a fire if you live 50 miles away.

So those things that we try to do with tax credits that we've passed in some counties, and we have statewide legislation that will give property tax relief to help costs of housing and to build, as we try to do in Rockland and some parts of Orange County, affordable housing for young volunteers and their families so they can stay in the community.

We salute you. We honor you. And we thank you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Oppenheimer.

SENATOR OPPENHEIMER: Well, as the ex-mayor of a community that was a hundred percent volunteer firefighters, Mamaroneck -- actually, the only all-volunteer community underneath the Cross-Westchester Expressway. And so I can tell hundreds of stories, including when my own house was on fire and how wonderful the response was and the many

things that we did together.

Some exciting things, like a -- I forget the name of it. It's a camera, and you can go into a totally smoke-filled, blackened basement, and the camera will show you in white where the bodies are, where furniture -- where everything is. Because when they enter this kind of a setting, they can't see if it's dark and smoke-filled.

But with this particular -- they'll know the name of the camera; I can't think of it -- they're able to see and take out the bodies and very often be able to get them out before they get too much smoke in their lungs and expire.

And we did dive equipment together, because my village is on the water, Long Island Sound. There are just so many wonderful stories that I could tell, but the time is getting late.

I was just trying to focus in on what things we might do and what could be done at the local level that would be more beneficial in, you know, perhaps enticing volunteers to come in.

Now, in my community we have families that have been at this for three and four generations, so we're in pretty good shape in my community. But one thing that we did, and I was doing it already 30 years ago -- and this might be a possible small answer -- is if we had two people who were sort of equally qualified for Department of Public Works or for recreation or for one of our many positions in our government -- we were a village of 20,000 people -- if they had equal qualifications, we always would take the volunteer fireman, because he was right in town. He was able to work right where he would do his volunteer activities.

So, I mean, it's a small recommendation but something that perhaps could be considered by your communities. It certainly has been very beneficial for my community. And we have a very, very high insurance rating because of the quality of our department. And I have always been so thankful that they are there, because they saved my house and they saved my village a bunch of money. But, more important, they're

just really good people who are interested in their communities and in helping people.

And I could never thank you enough and still can't.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Stachowski.

SENATOR STACHOWSKI: Mr. President, I too rise to comment, briefly, because I think I might be last, if I'm not mistaken. Or maybe there's one or two more.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: A few more.

SENATOR STACHOWSKI: I just would like to also thank the volunteer firemen for all they do, and just give you a couple of examples of how they do a little bit extra when you ask them.

In my community we had a situation where nobody was patrolling some of the waterfront area in the Lake Erie shore, Hamburg area, way back in the '80s. And volunteer firemen came and asked for a boat, and so we got them a boat to do the patrolling. And it was run strictly by the volunteers.

Then we got to find out that there were a bunch of volunteer companies that were all doing similar things. And they all had different equipment, but they wanted to be helpful. So we started this thing called the Alert Team, which has been in existence since the middle '80s. It's an organization made up of not only volunteer firemen but also paid police, paid fire. It's one of the few organizations that combines all kinds of jurisdictions.

And it works wonderfully. It's obviously still successful, it's still in existence. And it all started with a sincere effort by volunteer firemen, as if they didn't have enough to do with just the fire and EMT situations and the other things that come across their everyday life as volunteer firemen.

Then we had a regulation put out by the federal government where everybody had to have some kind of hazardous material plan. And for all these little towns, it would have been prohibitively expensive to have their own hazmat team. So in my area we got together

with the volunteer firemen and we started what was then called, and still is, the South Towns Hazmat Team.

And now all these volunteer firemen that take all these courses regularly had various members that volunteered to join this hazmat team, and they all took all the hazardous materials courses that keep changing and evolving. And they continue to do that. And they've been called out on numerous occasions. And that thing's been in existence for twenty-some years also.

So those are just ways where it's interesting -- because everybody says, you know, volunteer firemen, they fight fires. But they do all kinds of things to help our communities. In these two efforts, they saved all the communities money, they obviously have saved lives, and it was regionalism before it was a popular phrase. And it was kind of interesting, because here the volunteer firemen were actually the resource used to save all these different levels of government money.

And so that I agree with my members

on the other side, colleagues, that said we should always be looking for ways we can help them make their job easier and make it easier for them to recruit members and keep members and continue to be in existence so that they can help our communities, not only in the ways we all think of them, but in other ways, like the two I just mentioned.

And for that, I'll always be thankful, and I thank them every day for all the good work they do in our various districts.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Young.

SENATOR YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to join my colleagues in raising my voice in congratulating and thanking, giving our deepest gratitude to the volunteers from across New York State.

And as I look up in the gallery, I see so many familiar faces. And I wish to personally thank each and every one of you for your advocacy, for your communication. I can't think of more effective representatives

who come to Albany and tell us what is needed.

I especially want to point out that a constituent from my area, Tom Mooney, is here from Allegany County -- there's Tom -- and also Pete Casey, who is known across Western New York -- there's Pete -- because you do such an excellent job.

I was at two fire dinners over this past weekend, Dunkirk and Fredonia. And it's amazing to me, when you talk to people from those fire districts, the service that they have given, because it's very common to talk with volunteers who have devoted 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, 50 years, and sometimes more than 60 years to being volunteers. It's really incredible when you think about it.

A lot of members have talked about the fact that they can come up with story after story in their districts about acts of valor, everyday valor that our volunteers give. And I can do that too. But I also can speak to the fact that my family was personally helped by volunteer firefighters.

A memory that's seared into my mind is the fact that when I was 14 years old,

arsonists burned down my family's livelihood, our barns. It was August, the barns were full of hay. The firefighters here know what that means. And the firefighters were there immediately, and every single company in the entire county responded.

My father lost his business that night, but the firefighters battled that blaze for three solid days. And we were afraid that our house would burn to the ground also; it was a 150-year-old structure. But because of the efforts of the firefighters, they saved our house and they also saved lives.

And that's really what it's all about. Because I know FASNY did a study a couple of years ago, they did estimate I think it was about $8.5 billion would be the cost if New York State provided all the volunteer services across the state. And that's true. And so you can quantify the services from that financial aspect.

But you cannot put a price tag on the value of what you mean to the communities. Because when you go out and you save a father of four who's had a heart attack by getting

him to the hospital in time, when you go out and rescue the van that actually hit a tree, and those family members, when you go out and save a business from burning to the ground or you go out and save people from a house fire, you cannot put a value on that.

And so what you do, the lives that you touch day in and day out throughout this state, grows exponentially. So I want to echo the viewpoints of my colleagues, just extend our deepest admiration and our gratitude to those you represent from New York State. We just thank you from the bottoms of our hearts.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Nozzolio.

SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you, Mr. President. On the resolution.

I rise to lend my name and voice in support of this resolution in a small way to honor the great sacrifices and contributions of our brave men and women who have answered the call time and time again, when that call arose, as members of volunteer fire departments across our state.

Each weekend I spend time with

volunteer firemen from various corners of my district. Last week I was in Red Creek, the week before in Romulus. Whether it's West Webster or Victor or Fairville, each and every one of the firefighters provide me a unique perspective.

And my own home is covered by volunteers and protected by volunteers for the Canoga Fire Department. Just down the road, the town of Fayette, the Fayette Fire Department, my father-in-law was chief there for over 35 years.

And it's that fabric of great volunteerism the spirit that makes America what it is today. And if any good could have been derived from the horrific occurrences that the great attack against us on September 11, 2001 -- if there was any good that could have come from that attack, I think it's a growing recognition that the true heroes in the United States of America today are not the actors and celebrities, are not the athletes, are not those who are held up by the media as media icons. It's those who lay their lives on the line.

And the true heroes of our state and nation are those who answer the call each and every day to do, on behalf of their neighbors who need support, when the brave consequences of their actions could result in injury or even worse. The firefighters are the true American heroes in our nation. If 9/11 brought us anything, it was that recognition.

So I rise and thank the Fire Association, thank my good friend who has been stalwart in helping educate the Legislature as long-time legislative director -- I know he was here earlier -- Bill Schlegel, from West Webster, but who acts on behalf of all the firemen across this state in educating the legislators about items that we should pursue in making this state a better place for the volunteer services.

Mr. President, I humbly support this resolution and humbly thank the true heroes of our state, our firefighters.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Thank you.

Senator Marchi.

SENATOR MARCHI: Mr. President, I -- as so many of you have participated before your membership here in the Senate of this state, circumstances which commended themselves to you in prior living. And many of us -- there are people here who have four years of World War II and numerous experiences since then.

And I meet so many people here with personal experience with witnessing and responding to what these noble people have made manifest to all of us. And here I am now, some 55 years later, here, coming back -- I don't think I'll be back many more after this year. But the spirit is well and alive. People do care.

And here are representatives of the people who discuss a number of issues on both sides, the many sides that beset our society. And they're getting up with great rectitude and admirable love of people. I think what we're all trying to say is that we do love our neighbor. We go back to the Old Testament, love of God and love of neighbor as ourselves.

And this is manifest in this body.

Which means that there's a note of nobility, of what I observed here after so many years, the outpouring of splendid statements that have gone down on the record. And they will endure, and people will respond again. It nourishes that spirit of love of neighbor and the love of God that we all experience.

So it is a very fitting circumstance to be here. And I want to confess my profound appreciation to all of you, men and women from all over the state, giving testimony, living testimony that we should keep the object of love. It's not enough to bring relief, it's not enough to do those things that are necessary, but it's the proof positive that it's generated by a personal feeling of love of our neighbor.

And when I complete my service this year, I doubt if I'll be back up here again. But it's good to know that it's a spirit that will endure. It's not going to be abandoned. And there are people on both sides of the aisle -- there isn't an individual here who would take exception to the manifestation of what we should go through, when the only

reason you get involved -- and you people really give testimony to that feeling, because you prompted yourself to take notice and to do something positive about it. And we, in noticing it, generate our own spirit.

And we need it. We need it. Because if we're not, we're just another class of animals. But we're not. We're created in a divine image. And as long as there are people willing to give testimony and risk their lives, as you folks have been doing, then there's indeed reason for all of us to exult over the liveliness.

You know, and I'm sure that if I had the ability to be here a hundred years from now, that spirit would endure if we're a society that deserves to live. Otherwise, what is it all worth?

So I feel very blessed by just sitting here and listening to all of you and the way you express yourselves. And you do it in such a wholesome way, in a God-given love of our fellow beings on this earth. And that means that there will be people in our society that will respond when the need is great.

So God bless this group. I feel -- I feel rejuvenated. And I'll be 85 shortly. And I really feel exhilarated over this example that I was pleased to be a part of.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Mr. President, I am very, very pleased that the Firemen's Association representatives here and their leadership could join us.

And I want to thank all of my colleagues for their comments and observations.

We have a resolution there that preceded the attendance of the members, who were in the other chamber. I would ask at this time that the title be read again while they're here.

And I would also offer to open the resolution to anyone that's in the chamber. Anyone that would rather not be on it, if you would approach the desk.

After reading the title, I would move for its immediate adoption.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: The

Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: By Senator Bruno, Legislative Resolution Number 5115, commemorating May 8, 2006, as Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Day, in recognition of the sacrifices and contributions these outstanding individuals make to protect and to care for the residents of the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: The resolution is adopted.

(Applause.)

SENATOR BRUNO: Mr. President, is there any further business at the desk?

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: There is none.

SENATOR BRUNO: There being no further business to come before the Senate, I would move that we stand adjourned until

tomorrow, Tuesday, May 9th, at 3:00 p.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT ROBACH: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 9th, at 3:00 p.m.

(Whereupon, at 4:50 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)