NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

February 13, 2008

1:25 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR JOSEPH GRIFFO, Acting President

STEVEN M. BOGGESS, Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Today's invocation will be offered by Father Peter Young, of the Mother Theresa Community here in Albany.

Father?

FATHER YOUNG: Thank you, Senator. Let us pray.

As we approach Valentine's Day, we, O God, might expect flowers and candy, but instead we work and wake up to the snow and to the sleet and to the rain. We thank God, though, for Your blessings.

And we here in the legislative body, we know that, God, You have never failed to provide our New York State citizens with dedicated Senators. May God pour forth His blessings on our legislators and provide them

with the spirit and courage to accept the many demands of their elected office.

We ask You this forever. Amen.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Tuesday, February 12, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Monday, February 11, was read and approved. On motion, Senate adjourned.

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

SENATOR SKELOS: Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: There will be an immediate meeting of the Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee in the Majority Conference Room.

And the Senate will stand at ease.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: There will be an immediate meeting of the Racing and Wagering Committee of the Senate in the Majority Conference Room.

The Senate stands at ease.

(Whereupon, the Senate stood at ease at 1:28 p.m.)

(Whereupon, the Senate reconvened at 2:00 p.m.)

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The Senate will come to order.

SENATOR SKELOS: Mr. President, if we could continue with the regular order of business.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Skelos.

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Larkin, from the Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering, reports the following bill direct to third reading:

Senate Print 6950, by Senator Bruno, an act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: So

ordered. The bill is reported direct to third reading.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Fuschillo.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

On behalf of Senator Alesi, on page number 17 I offer the following amendments to Calendar Number 134, Senate Print Number 6634, and ask that said bill retain its place on Third Reading Calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The amendments are accepted, and the bill will retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: On behalf of Senator Farley, I move that the following bills be discharged from their respective committees and be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause: Senate Print Number 1845 and Senate Print Number 5251.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: So ordered.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Fuschillo.

Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: I believe there are substitutions at the desk. If we could make them at this time.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: On page 13, Senator Skelos moves to discharge, from the Committee on Health, Assembly Bill Number 9471 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill Number 6504, Third Reading Calendar 47.

On page 15, Senator Maltese moves to discharge, from the Committee on Civil Service and Pensions, Assembly Bill Number 9820 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill Number 6689A, Third Reading Calendar 73.

And on page 28, Senator Larkin moves to discharge, from the Committee on Higher Education, Assembly Bill Number 9401

and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill Number 6458, Third Reading Calendar 278.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The substitutions are so ordered, and the bills will retain their place on the Third Reading Calendar.

Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: Mr. President, if we could go to the noncontroversial reading of the calendar and, with the consent of the sponsors, lay aside Calendar Numbers 47, 133, 156, 243, 275, and 278.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Those bills are laid aside for the day.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 73, substituted earlier by Member of the Assembly Abbate, Assembly Print Number 9820, an act to amend the Retirement and Social Security Law.

SENATOR DUANE: Lay it aside, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The bill is laid aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number

344, by Senator Bruno, Senate Print 6950, an act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law and the Real Property Tax Law.

SENATOR DUANE: Lay it aside, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The bill is laid aside.

Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: Mr. President, if we can go to the controversial calendar.

And would you please call up Calendar Number 73, by Senator Maltese.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The Secretary will read Calendar Number 73 on the controversial calendar.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 73, by Member of the Assembly Abbate, Assembly Print Number 9820, an act to amend the Retirement and Social Security Law.

SENATOR DUANE: Explanation, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese, an explanation has been requested.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President,

this is an act to amend the Retirement and Social Security Law in relation to the establishment of retirement programs, to permit members of the New York City Teachers Retirement System and certain members of the Board of Education Retirement System who are subject to such law to retire prior to age 62 without a reduction in their retirement allowance based upon such earlier retirement, and to make conforming and technical amendments.

Basically this establishes a retirement program to permit members of the New York City Teachers Retirement System and certain members of the Board of Education Retirement System to retire prior to age 62 without a reduction to their retirement allowance based upon such earlier retirement.

This bill is at the request of the Mayor and the UFT. The City of New York, as part of their New York contract agreement with the UFT, provided for the parties to negotiate a cost-neutral 25/55 retirement for New York City teachers only. This proposal will affect only the New York City Teachers Retirement

System.

This is an agreement after discussions during the past year, and it consists of basically of two parts, one for existing employees and the other for new employees.

For the existing employees, existing employees would have a 180 day opt-in window to participate in the 25/55 retirement plan. These employees would not be mandated to pay for the additional contribution of 1.85 percent for their previous years of service, but they would have to pay the going forward for each year until they retire.

So in effect, if there is an employee who is 54 years of age and has 24 years of service, they would only have to pay the additional contribution for that next year, when they could in fact retire under this plan if they wanted to.

The new employees would be mandated into a 55/27 plan. These employees would be required to pay the additional contribution of 1.85 percent on top of their current contributions for the full time of service

until they retire. Upon the attainment of both 55 years of age and 27 years of service, these employees could retire if they wished to.

Fiscal note. For the fiscal years 2009 and later, for -- let's see. Generally increase beginning fiscal year -- the impact is -- the impact of this proposed legislation is dependent upon the actual numbers of members who elect to join the age 55 program. The actuary prefers to determine employer contributions based on those members who actually become participants as of June 30, 2008.

It is estimated that employer contributions to this would increase in the fiscal year 2009 by approximately $99.2 million, and by a comparable percentage of payroll thereafter.

The Assembly counterpart, by Assemblyman Abbate, has already passed the Assembly.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Maltese.

Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you, Mr. President. If the sponsor would yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MALTESE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you, Mr. President.

How broad is the range of dollars that could potentially be incurred by passage of this legislation? In other words, what is the lowest anticipated amount of money that it would cost as part of a fiscal note to what is the largest amount possible?

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese.

SENATOR MALTESE: Well, Mr. President, according to the fiscal impact statement, the actuaries are indicating to us that they want to base it, as of June 30, 2008, on how many members opt in.

They are indicating to us that it would increase in fiscal year 2009 by approximately $99.2 million and by a

comparable percentage of payroll thereafter.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

SENATOR MALTESE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese continues to yield, Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: How many teachers, potentially, would we be losing from the New York City public school system if all of those eligible opted to take this retirement?

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, I didn't hear the end of the question.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Could you repeat the question, Senator Duane?

SENATOR DUANE: How many teachers would the New York City public school system lose if every teacher that was eligible to take this retirement decided to retire in June?

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, through you, we don't expect that to have a negative impact on the New York City school system. Basically NYSUT, who requested the passage of the bill, has indicated to us that they do not feel that this would have a negative impact.

As far as the numbers, we could get the numbers of the present teachers at or around that age with that amount of service, we could get that to the good Senator subsequent to this session.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese, do you continue to yield?

SENATOR MALTESE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: What is the -- currently, if a teacher with 25 years or more of service retired without this legislation,

to what would they be entitled?

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, I think -- those figures I would have to obtain from NYSUT and get back to you.

But I'd like to just indicate from the statement of support by NYSUT: "For employees, the enactment of this legislation would enable current and future members in affected titles to retire without penalty at age 55 or older after a full 25-year or 27-year career in education, in exchange for an additional annual member contribution of 1.85 percent of payroll.

"Currently, members in Tiers 2, 3 and 4 experience up to a 27 percent reduction in their annual pension benefit for life if they retire prior to age 62 with less than 30 years of service."

The enactment of an earlier-retirement-age benefit has been much sought after by our educators and school-related professionals alike, because it enables them to retire earlier in order to

care for sick loved ones or to deal with other family or personal issues.

It is the position of both the Mayor of the City of New York, the Senate Majority, and NYSUT and the teachers union that this enables us to be competitive for teachers and not have our teachers from the city school system going to other jurisdictions to work and teach young people.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

SENATOR MALTESE: Yes, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Right now, if a teacher is in Tier 3 and they retire after 25 years, what is the package that they get?

And the second part of that is, why was the decision made by the sponsor not to include Tier 3 in this legislation?

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President,

through you, I don't have the exact figures on that. It's something we could obtain for the good Senator from UFT and NYSUT after this session.

We have been assured by all parties involved, and certainly in previous discussions with the Assembly, that this is something they need, this is something they want. And all those legislators interested in the education of our young people should be for this legislation.

SENATOR DUANE: Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese, will you continue to yield?

SENATOR MALTESE: Yes.

But prior to yielding, I'd like to remind the Senator and other Senators involved that this was a result of a contract previously negotiated and agreed to by all parties.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: So noted.

Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you,

Mr. President. The sponsor is continuing to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Yes.

SENATOR MALTESE: Yes.

SENATOR DUANE: Why was the decision made only to have this be for New York City teachers? Why not for teachers statewide?

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, the reason for that is that this was a negotiation, as I've indicated earlier, a negotiation agreed to. And they were the ones, the parties to the contractual agreement.

And, Mr. President, with your consent, I'd like to indicate, in view of many, many circumstances today, I'll be glad to entertain an additional question from the good Senator.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Okay.

Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you, Mr. President, but I actually didn't catch

what the Senator said at the end, after "entertain."

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, what I'm saying is that this contract has been around a while, it's been much negotiated, it's been much covered by the press. Both unions have indicated by leaflets and mailings to their members. The entire contract is available for perusal by the good Senator.

And in view of all that, I would indicate that I'll take one more question and that's all.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Do you have any further questions, Senator Duane?

SENATOR DUANE: Yes, Mr. President, I do.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, if the good Senator would indicate what he feels is his premier, paramount question, I'll be very happy to answer it.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Maltese.

Senator Duane?

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you, Mr. President.

On an issue so important fiscally for the City of New York and indeed for the State of New York, it would be extremely hard for me to prioritize my questions, because they're all very, very important.

And so I'm not going to be able -- I don't want my next question to be misinterpreted in any way as the premier question. But I will ask the next question on my list of questions.

What is the average salary of those teachers who are eligible or those who will be affected? And by that I mean, just to be as specific as I possibly can be, it's 1.85 percent of what amount?

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Could you repeat that question, Senator Duane?

SENATOR DUANE: Yes, Mr. President.

What is the average salary of the teachers who are affected by this legislation, those who could take this retirement? In other words, when the sponsor said that it was 1.85 percent of their salary, what is that -- what I'd really like is to know the average

salary and the median salary of those teachers who would be potentially taking this retirement plan.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, I'm not an actuary. One of the reasons that I became an attorney and a legislator is because I had a great deal of difficulty. Fortunately, my daughter is a CPA. If she was here today, she'd be able to answer that question.

I suggest that Senator Duane contact the UFT or the mayor. These figures were available to them. I believe they're covered in the contract when they figured out, when the actuaries figured out the percentages. And I suggest again, most respectfully, that the Senator read the contract.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Maltese.

Senator Duane. On the bill?

SENATOR DUANE: Mr. President, I'd like to try to ask the sponsor another

question.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, I will not yield to an additional question at this time.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Maltese.

Senator Duane, do you wish to speak on the bill?

SENATOR DUANE: Yes, Mr. President, I will speak on the bill.

Well, first, I just have to put out there how saddened I am that the sponsor of a piece of legislation that is so important and has such an enormous fiscal impact on the City of New York and on the State of New York, that the sponsor of that legislation is unfamiliar with the range of the fiscal impact that it could have.

And I think that we're facing a downturn in our state's economy, we don't really know what the next revision of the revenue will be in New York State. And the city hasn't by any means come close to completing their budget; they won't be doing it until June. We have no idea what the

fiscal downturn might be there.

And so for us to be doing this -- and, you know, of course I think that I and probably most, if not all, of the members of my conference are very favorably inclined toward this. But unlike others, we usually like to know what the fiscal impact is more precisely.

And it's nice that the sponsor has suggested I read the contract, but it sounds to me like perhaps we're both guilty of not having read the contract. But I do have to say it's his bill, not mine. So you would think he would have read the contract. And maybe instead of -- maybe he didn't admonish me, but making the suggestion that I read the contract, maybe he should have read the contract first.

So, you know, I'm willing to be corrected on that, but there probably won't be an opportunity since I'm not going to be asking any more questions. So there won't be any way to respond to that, which is always -- I hate to not have a chance to respond, as many of you know. Not that I always have to

have the last word, but I like to be able to respond. But I digress.

Now, unfortunately, there were a lot of allusions made to it was negotiated and they negotiated. And I would have liked to have had more precise language, because I think some of the time the negotiations around this piece of legislation were between the City of New York and the UFT. Although some of it may have been between NYSUT and the state. And some of it might have been between the UFT and the Majority, and some of it might have been with the UFT and the Assembly majority.

And I'm not going to ask any of my colleagues, but I'm sure the UFT also consulted with members of my conference. And I'm sure that NYSUT consulted with members of my conference on this as well. But since I have the floor, I'm not going to go there right now.

But you see where my confusion would have been with all of this discussion -- it was negotiated and they negotiated and we negotiated. And was it the chairs of the

Finance Committees? Were the rankers of the Finance Committees involved? Was the speaker of the City Council involved? Was the Finance chair of the City Council involved?

You can see where I would be puzzled by this. But I guess I'll have to go without answers. And frankly, I don't think the answers to those questions would be in the contract.

Anyway, now, I think that it is unfortunate, also, that we are not going to be able to get the answer on why it is that -- or a more precise answer on why this is just a retirement package or possibility, if you will, being offered to New York City teachers and not to teachers around the state.

I mean, it's possible that Nassau County teachers have the right to take advantage of this, but I don't know that to be a fact. And it would be sad if they couldn't. Suffolk County, also sad. Less time for people to enjoy those beautiful beaches in retirement. I don't know whether Syracuse teachers have less time to go skiing.

It's always a shame when people are

too old to go skiing because they're unable to retire, and the ski season is predominantly during the school year. And yet those teachers who choose to live in the Snow Belt, unable to use the best years of their lives skiing -- not that the years later on aren't great years, but usually your skiing capability diminished. I know, mine too. I have a new hip. I'm not even 55; my skiing capacity is vastly diminished.

But I would have liked to have known why it is that only New York City teachers -- and I represent New York City, so more power to them that they were able to negotiate this. But I am curious as to why they -- maybe they're going first. Maybe we're going to see how it works out with them and then we'll see how it is with other teachers. Right? Possibly; right?

Maybe Westchester would be next. Maybe the teachers in Westchester; right? I mean, you know, there -- will this increase property taxes in Westchester?

Buffalo, who wouldn't want to retire at 55 if you live in Buffalo? Right?

Who among us would not want to retire at 55 and enjoy activities in Buffalo? Gambling, football -- but not gambling on football.

I would have liked to have known, but I'm not going to know, I guess, as part of this debate. But I hope I'll find out afterwards.

I also am wondering who else is being entitled besides the New York City teachers to the 25/55 elements of this legislation.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you, Mr. President. So much to say about this bill. And even though my time is not fleeting, I have decided to let people have their own thoughts about this legislation.

And I'm sure that the sponsor and all of the other people involved will be more than happy to answer any questions on the side. And I'm sure that the contract could be made available to anyone that wants to read it by next time we're in session.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Duane.

Any other member wishing to be heard?

Debate is closed. Ring the bells, please.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maziarz, to explain his vote.

SENATOR MAZIARZ: Thank you, Mr. President, to explain my vote.

I was waiting here anticipating some of the representatives of the city of Buffalo to get up to take exception to Senator Duane's comments about the city of Buffalo. And since they didn't, I will.

Mr. President, as a proud resident of western New York -- not a resident of the city of Buffalo, not a representative of the city of Buffalo -- for the record, I take

exception to Senator Duane's comments about Buffalo.

Buffalo is a great place to live, work, raise a family. And it is the permanent home of the Buffalo Bills.

Thank you, Mr. President.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maziarz, how do you vote?

SENATOR MAZIARZ: I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maziarz to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Duane, to explain his vote.

SENATOR DUANE: Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: May I remind you, under Rule 9, two minutes.

SENATOR DUANE: Yes, Mr. President, I am quite aware.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Duane.

SENATOR DUANE: I believe that my comments may have been misinterpreted about Buffalo, a city in which I've spent a great

deal of time and which I like very much. In which I've spent, as I say, a very large amount of time.

My hesitation should not have been misinterpreted as anything but that I had actually used up a couple of things I was going to say about Buffalo for other areas, and so I was just trying to quickly come up with unique things to say about the city of Buffalo.

So, you know, I'm sorry if my comments were misinterpreted. I would in no way and I would never, ever say anything but positive things about the city of Buffalo, a city in which I, as I say, have spent a great deal of time and which I have enjoyed spending time in and which I plan on going back and visiting many times in the future, and where, frankly, I've really not had any downtime because there was so much to do.

So I'm sorry if it came off that way. I didn't intend for it to come off that way. I am a big fan of the city of Buffalo.

Thank you, Mr. President, I vote yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Duane to be recorded in the affirmative.

SENATOR MAZIARZ: For the record, apology accepted.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Apology is accepted.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Those Senators absent pursuant to Rule 9, Senator O. Johnson.

Those Senators absent from voting, Senators Bonacic and Farley.

Ayes, 53. Nays, 0.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The bill is passed.

Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Thank you, Mr. President.

With the consent of the Minority, can we at this time return to the noncontroversial calendar and take up Bill Number 344.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: So ordered. On the noncontroversial calendar, the Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to

Calendar Number 344, Senator Bruno moves to discharge, from the Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering, Assembly Bill Number 9998 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill Number 6950, Third Reading Calendar 344.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Substitution so ordered.

Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Mr. President, is there a message of necessity and appropriation from the Governor?

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: There is a message of necessity and appropriation at the desk, Senator Bruno.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 344, substituted earlier by Member of the Assembly Pretlow, Assembly Print Number 9998, an act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law and the Real Property Tax Law.

SENATOR BRUNO: Move to accept the message from the Governor.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: All in favor of accepting the message of necessity

and appropriation from the Governor signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The message is accepted.

Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Can we call the roll on the bill that's before us on the floor.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The Secretary will read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 32. This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Diaz, to explain his vote.

SENATOR DIAZ: Thank you, Mr. President.

This is a bill that we are appropriating $105 million, plus another

appropriation of $250 million to an organization that this is the second time that this organization goes into bankruptcy.

When we don't have money for the City of New York, for the New York City Housing Authority to bail out the New York City Housing Authority, we don't have money to keep hospitals open, we are cutting services to senior citizens, we are cutting services to needy people -- and we are assigning $305 million plus $250 million that we did many years ago and they never paid.

This is something ridiculous. This is something that's -- as Curtis Sliwa said, "Disgracia." I mean, we need money in the City of New York for housing, we need money to keep the hospitals from closing. The Governor is saying that we have a $4 billion deficit. Cutting services to senior citizens, the City of New York Housing Authority -- I'm going to repeat myself again, the City Housing Authority of New York needs money.

We don't have money for the poor people for the city housing, but we have money to bail out a gambling organization that has

been bankrupt over and over and over. And we know, no means of paying back already $250 million. Together we are spending $605 million on this organization.

I think that this is a waste of money to an organization that has proven to be a neglectful organization, an organization that cannot run itself. This organization should be closed.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I'm voting no in the name of the needy people in my district.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Diaz, how do you vote?

SENATOR DIAZ: No. In the name of the needy people in my district.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Diaz is to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Mr. President, colleagues, to explain my vote.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Bruno, to explain his vote.

SENATOR BRUNO: There's a lot of confusion, apparently, in some people's minds

about what we're doing.

What we're doing is something that has been contemplated for years. We are trying to fix the model that runs racing in New York State. And we are trying to fix and increase the economic impact, the tourism, money for education, by fixing a model that we know doesn't work.

How do we know? Because, through many administrations, we are in bankruptcy with horse racing in New York State. We are in debt $364 million.

Now, there are, Senators, 40,000 people employed, many of them your constituents. So while we talk about a bailout, what we're really talking about is putting New York State in a position -- and I think we do a lot of that with this legislation -- so that we can be the premier racing state in the whole world. That's the objective. And this is a giant step in that direction.

Is this bill perfect? Does it do everything that should have been done presently? No, it does not.

We deferred the OTB discussion. We had problems with the OTBs, starting with New York City. We have to fix that. That's critically important.

We don't have VLTs at Belmont in this bill. We don't have them at Aqueduct. But this bill indicates that within 30 days, that will get resolved and we will make decisions going forward.

Now, why is that important? That drives tens of millions of dollars ultimately to education. That's really the objective. To horse racing, which is an economic impact -- just had one small community in Saratoga, it's about $220 million a year outside of the effect of the horses running. Aqueduct, Belmont.

The rest of what this bill does that you want to be aware of when you're voting up or down is it pretty well fixes the standardbred problems that we have around this state. Vernon Downs, closed. Tioga talking about closing. Yonkers talking about closing. There's thousands of people employed, and there's millions of dollars in cash flow that

no longer will take place.

This bill, Senators, fixes that for the standardbred tracks around this state. It fixes it.

So the economic impact that we're making here is extremely positive. Creates transparency, accountability. It fixes the model that hasn't worked in this state for years and years and years. It's a very positive thing, and I am proud to vote yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Bruno to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Maltese, to explain his vote.

SENATOR MALTESE: Mr. President, I of course echo what the Majority Leader has just indicated.

On behalf of the communities in Queens County, on behalf of the people in New York City, especially the people in Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, I want to express my appreciation for the Majority Leader for staying in there and fighting for the continuation of Aqueduct.

I also wish to express appreciation

to my Assembly counterparts, especially Assemblywoman Audrey Pheffer, who has fought for the people in the surrounding communities through these years of negotiations, as did Assemblyman Seminerio and Assemblywoman Titus. We represent the community most immediately involved.

At the same time, the entire State of New York is involved here, because the education of our children is at stake and the extra funds that would go toward that education.

This bill is in many ways a landmark bill, because we have been able to negotiate a place for an advisory board that can protect the surrounding community. A community board, Community Board 10, will have input as far as the members of the advisory board. That's important.

Tip O'Neill said at one time "All politics is local," and this is especially local for us in the surrounding community. We are interested, we are concerned about the funds that will come to New York, that will come to our children for education.

We are also concerned that we have 192 acres, a garden spot that can be returned to the city and to the state, a garden spot that at one time saw handles of over $1 million in one day, that saw attendance records being set at over 70,000. We want to return that.

This is a step, this is a significant first step. And I vote aye, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Maltese to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Larkin, to explain his vote.

SENATOR LARKIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

You know, quite often around this house we get all wrapped up around the axle and there's no grease to move us. But I think if you start to realize two years ago when we started this, two years ago was captured on the October 2001 that said we would do tracks, we would do VLTs. The goal line was to create funding, to provide additional funding for schools, K through 12.

Everybody's not going to be happy with this bill. I've never seen one in 30 years that I would sign my life away for 100 percent. But the guidance that we were given from Senator Bruno and from the communities -- Senator Skelos and I had the hearing at Belmont, Senator Craig Johnson was there with us, when we went down with Senator Maltese and Aubry, with Aqueduct, and we heard their concerns. And what we have in this bill is 99 percent of what they wanted.

They wanted an advisory, they wanted a way to say something, they were worried about the property tax NYRA had been paying which was planning to be cut out. Labor wanted to know what's going to happen to them. And Senator Bruno said, "Listen, we're a community. We're New Yorkers. We're going to work for one another."

And, you know, you can all find fault with all of this. But take a step back and look at that mirror and see what we have accomplished. Some of the shortfalls, some of the money that we're going to put out, look and see how we're going to recover it. And

then we will be in a better position to raise additional money to put into that school.

So don't always look at the negative things. Start to look at some of the positives.

At some of the meetings that were held here this week, that staff, Finance staff, Senator Bruno's personal staff, they were here 17, 18 hours a day. It doesn't make them big heroes because they work in that vacuum of trying to create something so that we can vote on it.

Those of you who want to vote no on it, that's your business. But let me just tell you one thing. When you do it and you haven't looked at some of the issues upstate that we have, some of them that we have in the city -- our goal here was one thing, to create something that we could live with.

Can we improve on it? Yes. We've got to a budget to do, and we've a closing session to do. So instead of going out and bitching, moaning and complaining, come to one of us and say, These are my concerns.

And I have to say thank you to

Senator Sabini, because he was excellent in working with us on many of the issues that were essential to get this done.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Larkin will be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Skelos.

SENATOR SKELOS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I listened very closely to Senator Bruno and Senator Larkin. And quite frankly, I want to congratulate them on, you know, bringing so many things to fruition, saving upstate tracks and certainly continuing racing.

My concern is, and the reason why I'll be voting no, is because of the failures throughout the year of NYRA. And certainly I hope the changes that have been made will turn that around.

Since 1990, attendance at Belmont has dropped 60 percent, from 955,000 to 378,000. And betting has gone from $215 million to $93 million. And certainly that is a hit on monies that we could be using

for education.

My real disappointment in the process has been, quite frankly, the failure of leadership on behalf of Governor Spitzer, and the fact that Speaker Silver, day after day after day, has said no to putting VLTs at Belmont.

And as a compromise, when we came up with the concept of treating Belmont in the Elmont community -- because it's not just about Belmont, it's about the community -- as a host community where they could receive funding for economic development, they could receive funding for police protection because of the high crime rate that's caused by the track.

And the school district, where there are 77 different languages, 77 different languages spoke, they need the additional funding so that the young people can get the education that they deserve.

And I want to point out the great job that the Elmont school district is doing, despite the fact that it is a community in transition -- Caribbeans, African-Americans,

Hispanic, Asians, white. That high school has one of the highest scores in history by African-Americans in this country -- not just in this state but in this country. And that's an indication of how well the school district, despite the odds against them and the lack of funding, how they're educating kids.

Now, NYRA. They've fallen back on taxes by $21 million, deadbeats to Nassau County.

When the community, because of the state of disrepair, volunteered to paint the fences -- Home Depot was going to donate the paint -- NYRA said no. They wouldn't even let them do that. Wouldn't let them mow the lawn so the area is more presentable. Wouldn't let them put flowers in flower boxes so the area would be more presentable.

And only when it came to the point where they were concerned, where they were concerned about the franchise being extended, did they allow the community to do something positive.

I thank Senator Bruno, because he has been there in terms of fighting to get

VLTs at Belmont. But I think we all know in this business that you need two to tango in Albany. And the Speaker has repeatedly said no -- not to Belmont, I'm talking about the people of Elmont -- and the Governor did not show the leadership and partner with Senator Bruno to bring VLTs.

Now, the Governor has made certain statements that it's in his budget. The Governor puts $250 million anticipated revenues from Belmont, but it is not linked to VLTs going to Belmont. So that's a sleight of hand where I believe the Governor is wrong.

Now, some people may say to me, you know, it's not a lot of your district. It's a good part of my district, people that live in that area. Some people will say to you, you know, Senator Skelos, politically -- probably I get probably 30 percent of the vote there. It's a Democrat community. And I'm sure that Governor Spitzer and some of the local Democrats that run there probably get 70, 80 percent of the vote.

But it's not about the vote. It's about doing the right thing for the great

people of Elmont. These are people, many people new immigrants, some of them participating in government for first time by being activated to do something positive for their community. Not looking for a handout, looking for a helping hand from the Governor and the Speaker. And that helping hand has been slapped down by them today.

So I thank you, Senator Bruno, for what you've tried to do. And I'm hopeful, through your good efforts, that when the budget is concluded that we will have VLTs, we will have host community money -- not for Belmont, but for the people of Elmont.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Skelos to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Craig Johnson.

SENATOR C. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. President.

To almost paraphrase from the famous movie Casablanca, I'm shocked, I'm shocked that Senator Skelos and I would agree on an issue.

I too do not support this agreement. Simply put, this deal is a raw

deal for the residents of Niagara County and in particular the residents of Elmont and Floral Park, which shares the Belmont track.

The fact is is that today we're bailing out a bankrupt entity, not once but twice. As you may recall, there was a previous bailout of NYRA. And we're bailing them out again today. I'll take the phrase it's almost like we're throwing good money after bad.

The fact is is that we're not just bailing out a bankrupt entity, we're bailing out an entity that has not been a very good neighbor to the residents of Elmont and to the residents of Floral Park.

And I agree that there is a need for VLTs at Belmont. I find it amazing that we sit here and we talk about and we hear how it's only been one partner, supposedly, that doesn't want VLTs. But everything I've heard from the Governor is he has been fighting for VLTs at Belmont.

And this is a Governor who has been reaching out and helping the residents of Elmont. Just two weeks, the Empire State

Development Corp. announced a $2.5 million grant for the restoration of the Argo Theater in Elmont. And I congratulate Senator Skelos; I know he had a lot to do with that -- you know, before my time -- and Assemblyman Alfano. And I congratulate you on that. It's a very important project.

But to sit here today and blame the Governor? Quite frankly, the Senate Majority was at that table for over a year. And that's something we've been fighting for and we've been asking for for over a year.

So before we blame and point fingers at one another, let's put the partisanship aside and let's talk about the needs of the Elmont and Floral Park community. Let's talk about the needs of the residents of Nassau County, a county that needs the money and the revenue from the VLTs, revenue that will go to Nassau County, hopefully go to the Village of Floral Park, go to the residents of Elmont through some sort of vehicle.

But let's talk about what's also lacking in this agreement, which is extremely troubling. And Senator Larkin brought it up

when he talked about the advisory boards. And it's amazing that the advisory boards can exist in Saratoga -- oh, and they can exist at Aqueduct -- but no one seems to want to put in an advisory board for Elmont or for Floral Park. There's no advisory board for Belmont Track.

The voices of Elmont and Floral Park deserve to be heard when it comes to Belmont.

I ask the Senators to drive down Route 24 -- I know Senator Skelos does it, I do it when we visit our districts. And we do share Elmont. And you can see the lack of economic development that goes on right by Belmont.

I listen to the voices, the same voices that came to that hearing at the Elmont Library, and they talked about wanting to have their voice heard. And it's remarkable that in the negotiations, no one seemed to want to put in an advisory board for Elmont, or Floral Park, for Belmont.

Why is that? Why are we silencing the voices of these residents? These

residents who work hard, who play by the rules, and who simply want to live a normal American dream -- and who have to shoulder the burden of Belmont Racetrack.

Do you know that there are chickens that run around the Belmont Racetrack, that run around the community of Elmont? For goodness' sakes. Why can't we have an advisory board?

Now, I will be fighting tooth and nail from this point on to make sure we get those VLTs, to make sure we get that host community money for Elmont and Floral Park, because there are two communities that share this. But we need to have an advisory board. We need to make sure that the voices of Elmont and Floral Park that for years have been ignored by NYRA -- years, decades -- are no longer.

But today this agreement, this bill that showed up at 7 o'clock this morning, 103 pages long, I cannot support. I cannot support because it's not in the best interests of the residents of Floral Park, of Elmont, for the residents of Nassau County, for the

residents of New York State.

I vote no, Mr. President. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Craig Johnson to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Sabini.

SENATOR SABINI: Thank you, Mr. President, to explain my vote.

On a complicated matter like this, there's never going to be, as Senator Larkin, Chairman Larkin said, a perfect solution. And there's lots that you can cite in this bill that aren't perfect.

I'm delighted that the Majority Leader mentioned OTB. We really do have to do something for New York City OTB. Our former mayor in New York City used to say it was the only bookmaker that couldn't make a profit.

That's not true; they make a profit. We just have had a legislative construct over 40 years in Albany that had a lot of hands in their pocket before their balance sheet was finished. They can't make a profit because we take the profit from them. They make money.

I'm delighted to see that there's going to be new appointments to the new, publicly scrutinized board of NYRA. They'll have to respond to the Comptroller. They'll have to have open meetings. Because, frankly, their leadership has been calcified.

I voted against the last bailout. I had a lengthy colloquy with the Majority Leader on the floor here about that. It shouldn't be lost on people that the Rosary Societies and the restaurants in Queens County -- Queens County, where Aqueduct and Belmont, some of Belmont is located, all of Aqueduct is located -- when they have a Day at the Races, where do they take their parishioners or their customers? They go to Monmouth, in New Jersey, an hour and a half away, rather than going to Belmont.

Why? Walk around Belmont, take a look. The picnic tables are broken. The grounds aren't kept. They don't want those people there. We don't market our tracks, NYRA doesn't market the tracks for businesses to have events like they do at the Meadowlands. It doesn't happen.

So by putting these new people on the board, through the Governor's efforts at expanding the board, I hope he taps into some really smart people who, unlike the prior leadership of NYRA up until now, are just not interested in having their little horses run around the track, but understand that they're stewards of an asset of the people of the State of New York, that we now can claim ownership to these tracks as well as a result of this agreement. Because it is an asset. We should be marketing them better.

And there are lots of people in the racing business now, thoroughbred and standardbred, that understand that. And we should be tapping into their knowledge.

People like Jeff Gural, who doesn't need to be in the racing business -- he's got a very successful business on his own -- but he happens to love it. And his tracks will flourish under this agreement.

People like Mike Dubb, who's a developer, who with his own money went into the backstretch at Belmont and created a childcare center for the children of the

backstretch workers who live under deplorable conditions that NYRA let happen. Deplorable. If we saw films of that in other countries, we'd be horrified by it, and it's right in our backyard.

So by putting new blood on the board and opening it up for public scrutiny, I believe we've done a good thing. We shouldn't be killing off racing. They had no right to say they were going to close today or tomorrow. They have labor agreements. They can't do that. There's a state oversight board; they can't do that. Shame on them for putting us on this brink.

And part of me said, you know what, let them try it and let them try and claim that they own the land and the plant and the equipment because they claim they paid the water bill for 50 years. We can litigate it. We have lawyers. They're in bankruptcy, they have other problems.

But we shouldn't play brinksmanship with what could a great asset to our state and an industry that employs lots of people throughout the state -- that actually is

almost the perfect industry for New York State because of its agricultural component, because of its urban component, because of its tourism component in Saratoga. It's a microcosm, really, of some of our economy in New York State because it has so many facets to it.

We can't let it close. And we shouldn't let it wither on the vine, and that's what's happened for the last 25 or 30 years.

So I hope that the people coming onto this board will bring new energy, new ideas. You know, a lot of us got to meet the folks from Capital Play in this process. They have some really brilliant ideas about marketing our racetracks. We should be using them, using their efforts to make the tracks a place people want to go to again, so that corporate events will be held there, Day at the Races will be held there. Places that -- it will be a place that people will feel welcome at.

So rather than close down an industry that I think is important to our state, rather than lose the jobs in Queens

County, I think we have to look at the totality of this.

I compliment the Governor and the Majority Leader and Chairman Larkin for their leadership on this.

I think there should have been more dialogue with all the stakeholders involved, including some people in the Legislature who have some knowledge of this. But by and large, I think this is a solution we can live with that has the scrutiny, that has, in every four years, a sort of break point that an oversight board can stop bad things from happening, that has the Comptroller involved in scrutinizing the finances of it, that will stop things like the stupid selling off of the paintings they tried to do a few years ago to keep the doors open.

I mean, what are we talking about? This is -- it was run very, very poorly. I admit that. And that's why I voted no on every bailout.

I don't think this is a bailout for NYRA, I think this is an attempt to make racing good again for everyone in New York

State. And you will not recognize NYRA the way it was if the Governor has his way and this bill comes to fruition. I believe we'll have better oversight, better management, and I hope better people involved.

I'll be voting aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Sabini to be recorded in the affirmative.

The chair would like to remind the members that we are on explanation of votes.

Senator Liz Krueger.

SENATOR DIAZ: You called me. You called me.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Indicated by Senator Diaz.

SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER: Thank you. To explain my vote.

I want to say publicly how much I appreciate Senator John Sabini's thoughtfulness about this issue and this bill and this industry. I constantly turn to him for information and advice about where I should go on voting on issues around racing and wagering, because I confess I don't understand them very well.

And to be honest, I'm not sure I want to learn all the ins and outs of gambling, because there so many issues in state government to focus on where we haven't been doing a good job.

And yet -- and I listened to him earlier today, and I listened to him make the arguments pro and con, and I just listened to him now, and there are some better pieces of this bill, there are some parts of hopefully the future of NYRA that I can be more comfortable with. But I end up finding myself voting no today anyway.

And I'm sorry, I do hold this chamber responsible and the Senate Republicans responsible. You've been telling us for years you knew the right answers for racing in the state, Senators, but you didn't, and we keep making mistakes. And we keep not having the right answers in racing and wagering.

So I heard the discussion today about all the things that couldn't be done or should have been done but aren't in this bill. And I say you've been the house leading the charge on racing and wagering. The Assembly

has been holding back in concern. Senator Sabini's issues haven't been addressed.

I think the Governor, as Senator Sabini just said, has some good ideas that got put into this bill. But when I sit here and ask myself the question -- we're encouraging more gambling, we're not clear, still, whether we'll actually make money for the educational system of the State of New York, we keep trying to do partial fixes that don't get us to the places other states are -- I'm not satisfied.

And I share the concerns of some of my other colleagues who spoke out before. We're in a budget year where we're told we have no money for housing, we have no money for healthcare, we're telling ou educational institutions either you can't have the money we hoped you could or you have to go into the gaming business also before you can get your money.

And I'm saying, why are we letting NYRA off the hook for the $250 million we lent them in the past because they never could figure it out?

And I share the concerns about the promise of all the money from VLTs when it's still not clear to me that we ever get the return that we say we're going to.

So I have mixed feelings about this bill and could have seen myself going either way. But I do have to say that a bill that shows up at 7:00 a.m. in the morning on the day you're asked to vote for it, a bill where the person whose expertise I respect, Senator Sabini's concerns were not factored in enough, the fact that we've known about this issue for years and that this is the best we could do -- I don't think it's good enough. And I'll vote no.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Liz Krueger to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Hannon.

SENATOR HANNON: Thank you, Mr. President.

I come looking at this bill as somewhat an outsider to the debate that's been going on. And so I look at it with the common sense of what's been happening in the

community. And I'll address that. But I also look at it as the common sense of what's been happening for racing in this state.

All of us, when we think about racing, if we don't follow it day to day, we think about the Kentucky Derby, part of the Triple Crown. What's the last part of the Triple Crown? The Belmont Stakes.

You would think, with all the criticism generated by the Governor, his Attorney General, all the criticism of NYRA by other people, that when we come to looking at racing, we'd be trying to take a vision, where are we going, what are we doing, how are we going to raise the whole level of what has been a gem of athletic events in the United States.

Senator Sabini touched upon it, the need for marketing, the need to make it a destination. It's not here. And while I appreciate, Senator Johnson, your comments in trying to defend the Governor, he's been silent. Not in his State of the State, not in the budget, not in any reports. You read the MOU that they put out, one line about Belmont.

No vision. No direction. No goals. And that's what I really object to.

This Belmont Track sits at the intersection of public transportation. The Long Island Railroad has a special station for it. It's at the center of highways. There's a special exit right off the Cross-Island Parkway. There's major parking.

And what's the hallmarks of Belmont recently? They rent the parking lot out to automobile dealers to park excess cars. It's there for all of us to see. It's a lack of vision. That's my major problem.

There's been hard slogging. Senator Bruno set up his vision. He's made proposals, he's said this is where we had to go. You're wrong, Senator Krueger, for trying to have it both ways. We have been in leadership. But if you don't get an Assembly and you don't get a Governor, then you can't get anyplace. So we've been there.

And we've also been there -- Senator Larkin and Senator Skelos and I had a hearing, Senator Craig Johnson was there. The community is outraged. Can you imagine? The

community wants to volunteer to paint the fence, and NYRA wouldn't let them.

When the franchise started to get into the question about renewal, they had a change of plans. But what did they do? Not very much. They just rented the parking lot out to more automobile car dealers.

This is only a way stop. We need to go much further. We need to do something with these gems of economic possibility that we have in NYRA, and we need to go further.

I'm voting no.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Hannon to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: There being no further speakers to explain their vote, I would like to just commend Senator Larkin, and Assemblyman Gary Pretlow in the other house, and Senator Sabini for the good work that was done here to get a new NYRA in place.

And that's what this is. A new NYRA, a giant step forward, as we have all, that are supporting this, discussed. And it is a giant step, not the final step. There's

lots more that can be done. But we're doing something that is very positive for the 19 million people, 40,000 employees, and for the educational system here in New York State.

So, Mr. President, can we call the vote.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The Secretary will announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Those recorded in the negative on Calendar Number 344 are Senators Adams, Diaz, Dilan, Duane, Fuschillo, Hannon, Hassell-Thompson, C. Johnson, L. Krueger, Marcellino, Padavan, Parker, Perkins, Sampson, Schneiderman, Serrano and Skelos.

Ayes, 39. Nays, 17.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The bill is passed.

Senator Bruno.

SENATOR BRUNO: Mr. President, I believe there's a resolution at the desk by Senators Leibell and Saland. I would ask that the title be read at this time and move for its immediate adoption.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: We'll

return to motions and resolutions.

The Secretary will read Resolution 4313.

THE SECRETARY: By Senator Leibell, Legislative Resolution Number 4313, paying tribute to Rear Admiral Robert A. Rosen upon the occasion of his retirement as Commanding Officer of the New York State Naval Militia.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: All in favor of the resolution signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The resolution is carried.

Senator Bruno.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: There is no further business, Senator Bruno, before the desk.

SENATOR BRUNO: There being no further business to come before the Senate at

this time, I would move that we stand adjourned until Monday, February 25th, at 3:00 p.m., intervening days to be legislative days.

Everyone be safe and be well.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Thank you, Senator Bruno.

On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Monday, February 25th, at 3:00 p.m., intervening days being legislative days.

(Whereupon, at 3:20 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)