

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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3
4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10 January 14, 2014

11 11:11 a.m.

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13
14 REGULAR SESSION

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18 SENATOR DAVID J. VALESKY, Acting President

19 FRANCIS W. PATIENCE, Secretary

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

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

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

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

8 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Today we
9 are joined by Rabbi Israel Rubin, from the Chabad
10 of the Capital District in Albany, and he will
11 give us our invocation.

12 RABBI RUBIN: This Thursday the
13 Jewish calendar marks Tu B'Shevat, the New Year
14 for Trees and Fruit. It sounds ironic to
15 celebrate trees and fruit when it's dark and
16 dreary outside, but deep within the tree new life
17 stirs as energies flow toward the growth of
18 leaves, blossoms and fruit.

19 Throughout the seasons, a tree
20 stands as a beautiful poem. It buds in the
21 spring, offers leafy shade in the summer and
22 brilliant foliage in the fall. But even in the
23 dead of winter, especially in the dead of winter,
24 the tree skeleton of bare trunk, branches and
25 twigs may resemble our New York State roadmap.

1 Rising from the Big Apple on the
2 bottom of the map to this Capital Region, growing
3 north to touch the Canadian border, reaching out
4 westward the full length of our state, these
5 roads and thruways divide and branch off into our
6 cities and towns, arterials, parkways,
7 boulevards, city streets, alleys, even on to
8 personal driveways.

9 Almighty God, in Thou inspire the
10 honorable men and women of this Senate with good
11 vision and noble wisdom to remember that our
12 networks are all linked and connected, to think
13 forward to fruit even when all seems bare and
14 barren, to plan ahead for the future growth, and
15 to yearn for the spring for the benefit of all
16 people of this great state.

17 Amen.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
19 reading of the Journal.

20 The Secretary will read.

21 THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Monday,
22 January 13, the Senate met pursuant to
23 adjournment. The Journal of Sunday, January 12,
24 was read and approved. On motion, Senate
25 adjourned.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Without
2 objection, the Journal stands approved as read.

3 Presentation of petitions.

4 Messages from the Assembly.

5 Messages from the Governor.

6 Reports of standing committees.

7 Reports of select committees.

8 Communications and reports from
9 state officers.

10 Motions and resolutions.

11 Senator Carlucci.

12 SENATOR CARLUCCI: Mr. President, I
13 move the following bills be discharged from their
14 respective committees and be recommitted with
15 instructions to strike the enacting clause:
16 Senate Bill Numbers 2259, 2266, 2335, 2376, 3053,
17 3771A, 5703B, 5803.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: So
19 ordered.

20 Senator Libous.

21 SENATOR LIBOUS: Thank you,
22 Mr. President. I too have a motion.

23 On behalf of Senator Zeldin, I move
24 that the following bill be discharged from its
25 respective committee and be recommitted with

1 instructions to strike the enacting clause. That
2 would be Senate Print Number 6214, please.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: So
4 ordered.

5 Senator Libous.

6 SENATOR LIBOUS: Thank you,
7 Mr. President.

8 At this time I believe that there is
9 a resolution before the house -- oh, we have to
10 adopt the Resolution Calendar first,
11 Mr. President.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: All
13 those in favor of adopting the Resolution
14 Calendar -- I believe there are exceptions,
15 Senator Libous, to that?

16 SENATOR LIBOUS: There are
17 exceptions. Mr. President, for some reason my
18 glasses aren't working this morning.

19 (Laughter.)

20 SENATOR LIBOUS: And now that I've
21 got them in focus, with the exception of 2778, by
22 Senator Kennedy; 2686, by Senator Stavisky; 2886,
23 by Senator Perkins; and 2758, by Senator Parker.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: All
25 those in favor of adopting the Resolution

1 Calendar with the exceptions of Resolutions 2686,
2 2758, 2778 and 2886, signify by saying aye.

3 (Response of "Aye.")

4 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Opposed,
5 nay.

6 (No response.)

7 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
8 Resolution Calendar is adopted.

9 Senator Libous.

10 SENATOR LIBOUS: Thank you,
11 Mr. President.

12 And at this time I believe there's a
13 resolution by Senator Kennedy, Number 2778, at
14 the desk. Could we read the title only and then,
15 if you could call on Senator Kennedy, he wishes
16 to speak on his resolution.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
18 Secretary will read.

19 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
20 Resolution Number 2778, by Senator Kennedy,
21 honoring Barbara-Jo Hard upon the occasion of her
22 retirement after many years of distinguished
23 service as Cofounder and Executive Director of
24 Bornhava.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator

1 Kennedy on the resolution.

2 SENATOR KENNEDY: Thank you very
3 much, Mr. President.

4 I rise today to honor Barbara-Jo
5 Hard upon the occasion of her retirement from
6 Bornhava Early Childhood Center for Children with
7 Development Disabilities and Special Needs.

8 Barbara-Jo Hard has long been a
9 leading advocate for children with special needs
10 in Western New York. Through her relentless
11 efforts, Bornhava has grown from a small
12 preschool to a significant agency serving
13 150 children and their families.

14 Bornhava opened its doors 31 years
15 ago in 1983. As Bornhava's executive director
16 and cofounder, Barbara-Jo has overseen the growth
17 of the organization and always worked hard with
18 extraordinary dedication to serving children and
19 their families. In 1992, Bornhava moved into its
20 current home location off Main Street in
21 Amherst.

22 As an occupational therapist, I was
23 able to work under Barbara-Jo Hard and learn from
24 her firsthand. Her dedication to the children of
25 Western New York is unmatched, and her retirement

1 leaves a void that we must all work to fill.

2 I've known Barbara-Jo Hard my entire
3 life, and she's had an enormous impact on me
4 personally as well, as she introduced me to my
5 wife, Katie, a physical therapist who was working
6 at Bornhava at the time I was. Katie and I were
7 married a few years after we met at Bornhava,
8 something Barbara-Jo takes credit for, gladly,
9 and we gladly give it to her.

10 In her own personal life, Barbara-Jo
11 has committed herself to her church, her
12 community, and her family. She has continually
13 grown her family by reaching out across the
14 entire world to adopt children, some with special
15 needs, others in dire circumstances where raising
16 them in the United States gave them the
17 opportunity to live their lives to the fullest.
18 This included adoptions of numerous children
19 refugees and orphans from Vietnam and Russia
20 during the height of the Cold War.

21 As American citizens, her children
22 have grown and prospered and given back
23 to the community just as their mother has.

24 Barbara-Jo Hard is one of Western
25 New York's true servant leaders. She's always

1 put the needs of others before her own and
2 has served our community's children with a unique
3 sense of loyalty, honor and distinction.

4 Throughout her tenure as Bornhava's
5 executive director, Barbara-Jo has strived to
6 provide an environment where children with
7 developmental disabilities and special needs can
8 prosper, grow and succeed.

9 For all of these reasons, it's my
10 high honor and privilege to pay tribute to a
11 woman I truly admire and respect -- a former
12 boss, a true mentor, and a dear friend, not only
13 to myself but to all Western New York children
14 and families.

15 Thank you, Mr. President.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
17 you, Senator Kennedy.

18 The question is on Resolution Number
19 2778. All in favor signify by saying aye.

20 (Response of "Aye.")

21 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Opposed,
22 nay.

23 (No response.)

24 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
25 resolution is adopted.

1 Senator Libous.

2 SENATOR LIBOUS: Yes,
3 Mr. President, I'd like to take up Resolution
4 2686, by Senator Stavisky, read the title only,
5 and then please call on Senator Stavisky.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
7 Secretary will read.

8 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
9 Resolution Number 2686, by Senator Stavisky,
10 honoring President James L. Muyskens upon the
11 occasion of his retirement as President of
12 Queens College.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator
14 Stavisky on the resolution.

15 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you,
16 Mr. President.

17 I too am proud to sponsor this
18 resolution, not only as the ranking member on the
19 Committee on Higher Education but also as the
20 State Senator who represents Queens College in
21 the New York State Senate.

22 President Muyskens is retiring after
23 11½ years as president of Queens College. In
24 fact, he's the ninth president of
25 Queens College.

1 And in the interests of full
2 disclosure, I went to graduate school at
3 Queens College; my son also was president of the
4 student government at Queens College. And this
5 is truly a remarkable, remarkable part of the
6 City University of New York.

7 President Muyskens has many, many
8 accomplishments. To me, most important, he
9 raised the undergraduate level at Queens College
10 by establishing a general education curriculum.
11 He increased the student body from 15,000 to
12 20,000 students and the full-time faculty by
13 300 faculty members. They opened a residential
14 hall for 500 students a number of years ago,
15 which attracts students from all over the world
16 to this institution.

17 There's been a lot of construction
18 at Queens College. Powdermaker Hall, which is
19 the classroom instruction building, and Remsen,
20 the chem lab facility, these have all been
21 rehabilitated under President Muyskens.

22 He has been able to bring the
23 college to the community. And most of my
24 colleagues certainly from Queens know that when
25 you have a swearing-in ceremony, you go to the

1 concert hall and hold the ceremonies at
2 Queens College. They are open to the community.

3 But don't just take my word for it.
4 Washington Monthly ranked Queens College as
5 number two in the country in value. You get what
6 you pay for. In fact, you get more than what you
7 pay for. I like to call it a Tiffany education
8 at Target prices. And that's really what you're
9 getting.

10 Princeton Review, they evaluated 378
11 colleges and ranked Queens College, part of CUNY,
12 as second in race and class interactions. And
13 that's an interesting category, because
14 50 percent of the students at Queens College were
15 not born in the United States. They speak over
16 160 languages at Queens College. And to me, this
17 is meeting the needs of the current population.
18 The diversity, everybody knows how diverse
19 Queens County is.

20 President Muyskens has come full
21 circle. He spent 17 years at Hunter College,
22 from an assistant professor all the way to acting
23 provost. Then he went off to Kansas and to the
24 University of Georgia. And 11½ years ago he
25 returned to Queens College, which was then in a

1 state of flux. They were having some problems on
2 campus. We had a lack of leadership for a
3 while. And yet he restored stability to the
4 campus and to the students and to the faculty and
5 to the community.

6 So I congratulate President Muyskens
7 on his tenure at Queens College. He's going off
8 to become a professor of philosophy at the CUNY
9 Graduate Center in Manhattan. But I think the
10 fact that we stop today to honor President
11 Muyskens is significant. And I ask anybody who
12 would like to cosponsor the resolution to join
13 me.

14 Thank you.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
16 you, Senator Stavisky.

17 The question is on Resolution 2686.
18 All in favor signify by saying aye.

19 (Response of "Aye.")

20 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Opposed,
21 nay.

22 (No response.)

23 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
24 resolution is adopted.

25 Senator Stavisky.

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: Can we open the
2 resolution, Senator Libous?

3 SENATOR LIBOUS: Sure.

4 Mr. President, Senator Stavisky
5 would like to open the resolution. And as the
6 policy in the chamber goes, all members will go
7 on it. Unless for any reason you wish not to be
8 on it, please let the desk know.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
10 you, Senator Libous.

11 Senator Libous.

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

14 Mr. President, at this time Senator
15 Perkins has a resolution, 2886. He would like to
16 have it read in its entirety and if you could
17 call on Senator Perkins before its adoption.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
19 Secretary will read.

20 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
21 Resolution Number 2886, by Senator Perkins,
22 celebrating the life and accomplishments of
23 Nelson Mandela, civil rights leader and prominent
24 freedom fighter, and commemorating the
25 24th anniversary of his visit to New York City

1 and the speech he presented to the people of
2 Harlem.

3 "WHEREAS, It is the sense of this
4 Legislative Body, in keeping with its
5 time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay
6 tribute to those extraordinary individuals who
7 foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of
8 cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric
9 of the communities of New York State; Nelson
10 Mandela was one such individual; and

11 "WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern,
12 and in full accord with its long-standing
13 traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud
14 to celebrate the life and accomplishments of
15 Nelson Mandela, civil rights leader and prominent
16 freedom fighter, and to commemorate the
17 24th anniversary of his visit to New York City
18 and the speech he presented to the people of
19 Harlem; and

20 "WHEREAS, On June 22, 1990, Nelson
21 Mandela and his wife, Winnie, made a worldly
22 homecoming to New York City, as a crucial
23 component of the unstinting quest to end
24 apartheid; as part of his visit, Mr. Mandela was
25 greeted by over 150,000 people as his motorcade

1 moved from Queens through Brooklyn; he spoke to a
2 crowd of over 100,000 people in Harlem; he
3 addressed a crowd at the world-renowned
4 Riverside Church -- where he would later be
5 memorialized -- guided by former Manhattan
6 Borough President and then-Mayor of New York
7 City, David Dinkins; he addressed the
8 United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid,
9 was feted with a ticker-tape parade in Manhattan
10 down the Canyon of Heroes, culminating in a
11 speech to over 200,000 at New York City Hall, and
12 made remarks to a packed house at Yankee Stadium
13 to conclude this day of inspiration; and

14 "WHEREAS, On this day, Nelson
15 Mandela was welcomed with open arms by over
16 100,000 people in Harlem who identified in him,
17 as daughters and sons of Africa, a commonality of
18 struggle, singularity of hope and unity of cause
19 in fighting racism and oppression the world over;
20 and

21 "WHEREAS, In his speech to the
22 people of Harlem, which took place at the
23 intersection of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and
24 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevards in the middle
25 of African Square, Nelson Mandela highlighted the

1 common bond and mutual inspiration shared amongst
2 all those gathered, saying 'Whilst my comrades
3 and I were in prison, we followed closely your
4 own struggle against the injustices of racist
5 discrimination and economic inequality. We were
6 and are aware of the resistance of the people of
7 Harlem and continue to be inspired by your
8 indomitable fighting spirit. I am able to speak
9 to you because of the mass resistance of our
10 people and the unceasing solidarity of millions
11 throughout the world. It is you, the working
12 people of Harlem, that helped make it happen';
13 and

14 "WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela's
15 homecoming in Harlem occurred on the same day he
16 delivered his famous speech to the United Nations
17 Special Committee on Apartheid; as such, it was a
18 befitting and appropriate bookend that ended with
19 many of the same universal words of truth and
20 power, including 'The light at the end of the
21 tunnel is beckoning' . . . 'But we are not yet
22 there. Let us act in unity. Let us double and
23 redouble our efforts'; and

24 "WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela's presence
25 in Harlem was an event of unparalleled

1 inspiration to a local and global community that
2 saw in him everything about themselves and the
3 pillars of struggle and hope that unite us all;
4 the evening ended with a resounding and
5 redoubling chorus of the chant: 'And We Will Not
6 Give Up The Fight!'; now, therefore, be it

7 "RESOLVED, That this Legislative
8 Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the
9 life and accomplishments of Nelson Mandela,
10 civil rights leader and prominent freedom
11 fighter, and to commemorate the 24th anniversary
12 of his visit to New York City and the speech he
13 presented to the people of Harlem; and be it
14 further

15 "RESOLVED, That a copy of this
16 resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to
17 the family of Nelson Mandela."

18 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator
19 Perkins on the resolution.

20 SENATOR PERKINS: Thank you very
21 much.

22 The importance of honoring and
23 cherishing Nelson Mandela's New York State roots
24 is of paramount importance as we all seek to
25 carry forth a flame of incandescent inspiration

1 from the man's singular earthly glow.

2 When he visited our state in 1990,
3 it was merely weeks after he had served nearly
4 three decades in prison simply for standing up
5 for the hallmark causes of justice, equality and
6 shared humanity.

7 Twenty-four years ago, cracks were
8 appearing in the artifice of apartheid, but the
9 foundational cement was as hard as ever. The
10 prime factor that drove his visit was deepening
11 the tide that would forever rend it asunder.
12 That approach is best encapsulated in the
13 following quote: "We fought injustice wherever
14 we found it, no matter how large or how small,
15 and we fought injustice to preserve our own
16 humanity."

17 Guided by the city's first black
18 mayor, David Dinkins, Mr. Mandela reached
19 millions of New Yorkers on his inspirational
20 journey. When Nelson Mandela visited New York,
21 it was a homecoming of the highest order, one
22 that spoke to so many spiritually, emotionally,
23 socially and culturally. It is a moment that was
24 born in time and born of the time surrounding it
25 and a moment of perpetuity that is handed down to

1 each of us.

2 Nelson Mandela came to my
3 neighborhood, to the cultural, political and
4 geographic nexus of Harlem. He came to a
5 specific place, but his message was universal.
6 It was a message for each borough, for each
7 county, for each person, for each of us that are
8 part of the Empire State.

9 The pride that I felt when Nelson
10 Mandela visited New York is a pride that
11 resonated from 125th Street and traveled to all
12 corners of this state as he spoke to everyone who
13 has ever been a dreamer, an advocate, an
14 organizer, to everyone who has ever put their
15 principles first and to those who live every
16 moment of their life imbued with the naturally
17 incurable hope for a fairer and more equal
18 tomorrow. Thank you.

19 I'd like to open up the opportunity
20 for my colleagues to cosponsor as well.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
22 you, Senator Perkins.

23 Senator Montgomery on the
24 resolution.

25 SENATOR MONTGOMERY: Yes, thank

1 you, Mr. President.

2 I want to thank my colleague for
3 introducing this resolution, and I'm very happy
4 to join him in cosponsoring it.

5 And I'm remembering the day that
6 Mayor David Dinkins set aside for Nelson Mandela
7 Day in the City of New York. He was hosting a
8 very significant and important celebration.

9 And one of my colleagues who has
10 since retired from the Assembly but at that time
11 was chair of the Association of Black and
12 Puerto Rican and Latino Legislators,
13 Assemblymember Albert Vann, decided that it was
14 important for us who were stuck in Albany, so to
15 speak -- if you consider being stuck here when
16 something important is going on in your
17 district -- that he wanted to make sure that
18 those of us who were members of the caucus had an
19 opportunity to celebrate Nelson Mandela in
20 person.

21 And so he made sure that there was a
22 bus made available for us. We all got on that
23 bus and were able to travel to the city for that
24 day. And I am eternally grateful to
25 Assemblymember Vann because that was my one

1 opportunity to have a very, very personal
2 experience with this great and wonderful
3 international leader.

4 And so there are many, many
5 different people who are part of the wonderful
6 experience and certainly the inspiration of
7 Nelson Mandela. But to have been there to
8 actually see him, shake his hand, say hello and
9 give him a hug and welcome him to his other home,
10 which we felt was New York City -- for him, I'm
11 grateful.

12 So thank you, Senator Perkins. This
13 is an opportunity for us to say how much we
14 appreciate this light unto our world that
15 Nelson Mandela represents. So thank you, and I'm
16 happy to cosponsor it.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
18 you, Senator Montgomery.

19 Senator Parker on the resolution.

20 SENATOR PARKER: Thank you,
21 Mr. President.

22 I rise to add my voice to those who
23 want to celebrate the life and the legacy of
24 Nelson Mandela, Madiba.

25 And I want to thank Senator Perkins

1 for bringing this resolution forth and in
2 commemorating this important day but, more
3 importantly, the life and the legacy of
4 Nelson Mandela.

5 I feel like in many ways I get to
6 stand before you in this position because of the
7 work of Nelson Mandela. He was far more than
8 just a freedom fighter in the country of
9 South Africa, but for many young people,
10 particularly in the mid-'80s when I was in
11 college, he was our King figure. He was fighting
12 apartheid, which many of us saw as the modern-day
13 Jim Crow at that time. We can say there's a more
14 modern-day Jim Crow still going on, but that's a
15 speech for another day.

16 But the work that Nelson Mandela did
17 and the strength and character that he brought,
18 having been imprisoned for 27 years and then, you
19 know, becoming president of his country -- and
20 doing all that with such grace. And having the
21 kind of vision and, you know, the kind of
22 intestinal fortitude that kept him for almost
23 30 years keeping up the struggle, even after he
24 was imprisoned and beaten and denied the
25 opportunity to see what his people had been going

1 through, was important.

2 At that time there were many of us
3 at college campuses, me at the time at the
4 Pennsylvania State University, you know,
5 protesting the investments of those universities
6 in South Africa. And we were very, very
7 successful in doing that. But it is really
8 Nelson Mandela's example that pushed us on to do
9 the right things not just for corporations and
10 large institutions here in America and for what
11 was happening for the people of South Africa who
12 were suffering, but also then to look at that and
13 connect that to our struggles here as people of
14 African descent in America and continue to fight
15 for ourselves.

16 And so today I rededicate myself to
17 justice here in the State of New York, in
18 Brooklyn, and in my district in the name of the
19 life and the legacy of Nelson Mandela.

20 Thank you.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
22 you, Senator Parker.

23 Senator Sanders on the resolution.

24 SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you, sir.

25 It is good that Senator Perkins has

1 brought this to us. It allows New York State to
2 go on record as saying that we too recognize that
3 we lived in a day of giants, a day when giants
4 walked the earth.

5 And I'm speaking of course of
6 Nelson Mandela, a person who, although his body
7 was imprisoned, his presence was felt in every
8 corner on this globe. The presence was felt by
9 everyone who appreciates and loves justice and
10 dignity for all human beings. Nelson Mandela
11 went beyond being just the South African leader,
12 he went beyond being all of these. He became the
13 leader of everyone who loves justice, everyone
14 who loves the idea of democracy.

15 He did more for the people of this
16 earth staying in a prison cell for 27 years --
17 although he was offered three times that if he
18 would just renounce his principles, he would be
19 allowed to walk free. He could have done this
20 many a time, and chose that the struggle that he
21 was fighting was more important than just his
22 individual freedom. He understood well that an
23 injustice anywhere is a threat to justice
24 everywhere.

25 So it is good that we in New York

1 State stop and think about it, to think that how
2 can we find ways of rooting out any type of
3 apartheid that we find ourselves in, how do we
4 find out ways of uniting with all different type
5 of people to ensure that the many of us who like
6 justice, who insist on freedom, can oppose the
7 few who want to take it away from folk.

8 So with that, I say that
9 Senator Parker is right, that we do need to
10 dedicate ourselves -- not in an abstract
11 situation, but in this Senate hall that we need
12 to look within ourselves and within these bills
13 that we are debating to see what can we do to
14 make sure that the beloved community becomes
15 closer and more a reality. And in that way we
16 honor Nelson Mandela by becoming or allowing the
17 Nelson Mandela in us all to come forward.

18 Thank you very much.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
20 you, Senator Sanders.

21 Senator Hassell-Thompson on the
22 resolution.

23 SENATOR HASSELL-THOMPSON: Thank
24 you, Mr. President.

25 I stood yesterday when the leaders

1 of our chambers presented a resolution on
2 Nelson Mandela, and I spoke yesterday. And I
3 guess people want to know why would I speak
4 again. I would never let an opportunity to talk
5 about Mandela pass and not add my voice. And
6 particularly to my colleague, to Bill Perkins.

7 You know, Bill has become in his own
8 way the conscience of many of us in these
9 chambers. And I think that his personal
10 knowledge of Nelson Mandela added a dimension
11 that somehow was missing yesterday.

12 And so that I appreciate you
13 bringing that personal dimension to us, Bill.
14 Because as all of us stand here, we believe, many
15 of us believe that we embrace justice for all.
16 But I know that we all need to work harder to
17 ensure that we do.

18 So each time we talk about
19 Nelson Mandela, it is a reaffirmation that there
20 is work to be done. But there is the possibility
21 in all of us to help to make it a reality.

22 So I thank you, Mr. President, for
23 the opportunity, and to you, Bill Perkins, for
24 bringing this resolution for us this morning.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank

1 you, Senator Hassell-Thompson.

2 The question is on Resolution 2886.

3 All in favor signify by saying aye.

4 (Response of "Aye.")

5 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Opposed,
6 nay.

7 (No response.)

8 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
9 resolution is adopted.

10 Senator Perkins has asked that the
11 resolution be open for cosponsorship, Senator
12 Libous.

13 SENATOR LIBOUS: Yes,
14 Mr. President. Again, as the policy goes, if
15 someone chooses not to be on the resolution,
16 please let the desk know.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Very
18 good.

19 Senator Libous.

20 SENATOR LIBOUS: Mr. President, at
21 this time Senator Parker has Resolution Number
22 2758. Could we please read it in its entirety
23 and call on Senator Parker.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
25 Secretary will read.

1 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
2 Resolution Number 2758, by Senator Parker,
3 mourning the death of Congressman Major Robert
4 Odell Owens, distinguished citizen and devoted
5 member of his community.

6 "WHEREAS, It is the custom of this
7 Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of
8 the State of New York whose lifework and civic
9 endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in
10 their communities and the great State of
11 New York; and

12 "WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow
13 and deep regret that this Legislative Body
14 records the passing of Congressman Major Robert
15 Odell Owens, noting the significance of his
16 purposeful life and accomplishments; and

17 "WHEREAS, Major Owens, who served in
18 the House of Representatives until 2007, died on
19 Monday, October 21, 2013; and

20 "WHEREAS, Major Owens was born in
21 Collierville, Tennessee, on June 28, 1936, to
22 Ezekiel and Edna Owens; in 1956, the year he
23 graduated from Morehouse, Mr. Owens married
24 Ms. Ethel Werfel and was later remarried to the
25 former Maria Cuprill; and

1 "WHEREAS, After earning a master's
2 degree in library science in 1957 from
3 Atlanta University (which later became Clark
4 Atlanta), Mr. Owens moved to New York City and
5 worked as a librarian in Brooklyn from 1958 until
6 the mid-1960s; as a librarian, he became a
7 fixture in the Brooklyn community working as a
8 crusader for working-class families, which led
9 him into fighting poverty as part of the
10 Mayor John V. Lindsay administration in the
11 1960s, and eventually into a position as a
12 New York State Senator; and

13 "WHEREAS, After serving Brooklyn as
14 a State Senator, Major Owens ran successfully for
15 the Congressional seat previously held by
16 Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, which he
17 continued to serve for 24 years; among his many
18 achievements include the passage of the Americans
19 with Disabilities Act and many years of increased
20 funding for the historically black colleges and
21 universities; and

22 "WHEREAS, After his retirement from
23 Congress, Major Owens returned to the world of
24 academia and taught at Medgar Evers College in
25 Central Brooklyn; in his death, Brooklyn has lost

1 a true hero who led by example and cared deeply
2 for the community he lived in for so many years;
3 and

4 "WHEREAS, Congressman Major Owens
5 distinguished himself in his profession and by
6 his sincere dedication and substantial
7 contribution to the welfare of his community; and

8 "WHEREAS, Mr. Owens is survived by
9 his wife, Maria, his children, Chris, Millard and
10 Geoffrey, his brothers, Ezekiel Jr., Mack and
11 Bobby, his sister, Edna, stepson, Carlos,
12 stepdaughter, Cecilia, four grandchildren and
13 four step-grandchildren; and

14 "WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic
15 spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion,
16 Congressman Major Owens leaves behind a legacy
17 which will long endure the passage of time and
18 will remain as a comforting memory to all he
19 served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

20 "RESOLVED, That this Legislative
21 Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the
22 death of Congressman Major Robert Odell Owens,
23 distinguished citizen and devoted member of his
24 community; and be it further

25 "RESOLVED, That a copy of this

1 resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to
2 the family of Congressman Major Robert Odell
3 Owens."

4 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator
5 Parker on the resolution.

6 SENATOR PARKER: Thank you,
7 Mr. President. On the resolution.

8 I want to thank you for an
9 opportunity to celebrate the work and all of the
10 efforts of my Congressman, Major Owens. Growing
11 up, Major Owens was my Congressman. He was the
12 person, you know, who spoke at my graduations and
13 somebody who I knew to be fighting for me. He
14 was a person that my family went to when we were
15 having difficulties of any kind, and someone who
16 we felt was always on call.

17 How appropriate is it that today,
18 being the week of the birth of the Reverend
19 Martin Luther King, that we have the opportunity
20 here in the State Senate to honor Major Owens,
21 Dr. King, and Nelson Mandela. And it is no small
22 stretch to put Major Owens in that category.
23 This is somebody who in his own right was the
24 conscience of the Congress in the time that he
25 served there.

1 He was a tireless fighter on behalf
2 of education, coming from -- you know, we see
3 oftentimes a librarian as just a keeper of
4 books. But he was more than that, he was a
5 keeper of knowledge. He was somebody who always
6 cared about our young people. And in fact he's
7 most famous in the district for his Martin Luther
8 King, Jr., Commission that gave out scholarships
9 to young people, that provided educational
10 opportunities for young people, that provided
11 upliftment in the community and brought economic
12 development and access to opportunity.

13 Major Owens was somebody also in the
14 context of political empowerment who was always
15 on the vanguard. He was somebody who encouraged
16 young people like myself to be involved in
17 politics, who oftentimes fought for candidates
18 that nobody else wanted to fight for. He was
19 oftentimes on the side of the underdog.

20 In fact, representing the
21 21st Senatorial District in Brooklyn that is a
22 primarily Caribbean community in the part in
23 which I live, I remember my first political
24 campaign working for Una Clarke, Una S.T. Clarke.
25 And Una was running as an insurgent candidate at

1 the time. And the county was against her, and
2 the only major elected official in that area, who
3 lived in that area who was supporting Una Clarke
4 was Major Owens.

5 Unfortunately, in 1991 he suffered a
6 heart attack and had a triple or quadruple
7 bypass. It was like, you know, a really, really
8 serious heart operation. He was in the hospital
9 for about a week. And I remember this because I
10 went and got him myself, he went directly from
11 the hospital when they released him to do a train
12 stop for Una Clarke.

13 That's the kind of dedication that
14 this man had, that his health wasn't even as
15 important as was the fight for justice and the
16 fight for inclusion, as we saw that the election
17 of Una Clarke as the first Caribbean immigrant
18 ever elected to the City Council was for the
19 political incorporation of Caribbean people in
20 Brooklyn and in New York.

21 And how fitting is it now that that
22 Caribbean immigrant's daughter is now succeeding
23 Major Owens in the U.S. Congress, my new
24 Congresswoman, Yvette D. Clarke.

25 And so we're here to celebrate not

1 just the work and the life of Major Owens, but
2 his after, the things that he has left behind:
3 The sense of justice, the institutions, the sense
4 of political empowerment that Brooklyn has
5 because Major Owens was there. We are better as
6 a people, as Brooklynites, and as New Yorkers
7 because Major Owens served.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
9 you, Senator Parker.

10 Senator Smith on the resolution.

11 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you very
12 much, Mr. President.

13 And let me thank my colleague
14 Senator Parker for bringing this resolution to
15 the floor today.

16 As so many of my colleagues spoke so
17 eloquently about Nelson Mandela yesterday and
18 today, Major Owens so too deserves those same
19 type of accolades. Many may not realize that
20 Major Owens has had an impact on many of the
21 elected officials in particular of color that sit
22 in this chamber and the Assembly chamber.

23 As we have, so many of us on this
24 side of the aisle have joined the fight to
25 provide pre-K for our young people today,

1 Major Owens took up that fight for community
2 action programs back in the '60s and the '70s. I
3 myself had the ability to go to Washington, and
4 it was Major Owens who decided to take up that
5 fight when so many of our community action
6 programs were being threatened.

7 To some of my colleagues community
8 action programs may not mean a lot, but in the
9 neighborhoods of Southeast Queens and in Bed-Stuy
10 and Harlem, community action programs are the
11 difference between being caught up and being sent
12 to jail or in some negative activity, or being
13 able to sit in this chamber and advocate for
14 opportunities for young people to come forward
15 this day.

16 Senator Parker laid out all the
17 facts that need to be presented on behalf of
18 Congressman Major Owens. I stand today not only
19 to support the resolution but to make sure that
20 my colleagues take the time, when you have an
21 opportunity to Google Senator or Congressman
22 Major Owens, do so. Read the rich history that
23 he has contributed to, and I guarantee you you
24 will find some nexus between his life and yours
25 that would allow you at some point in time to not

1 only pray for his family but also to thank God
2 for the presence and the impact that he had on
3 our state and our city.

4 Thank you very much, Mr. President.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
6 you, Senator Smith.

7 The question is on Resolution 2758.
8 But before that, Senator Montgomery would like to
9 speak on the resolution.

10 SENATOR MONTGOMERY: Yes, thank
11 you, Mr. President.

12 I rise to also thank my colleague
13 Senator Parker for introducing this resolution.

14 But I just want to correct the
15 record for this moment. Congressman Major Owens
16 was my congressman.

17 (Laughter.)

18 SENATOR MONTGOMERY: And long, long
19 before I came to Albany as an elected official,
20 as an advocate in the community working on behalf
21 of children and families in Brooklyn and across
22 the state, it was Senator Major Owens that was
23 our go-to legislator in the State Legislature.

24 And he was not only the person who
25 supported us and sponsored legislation on our

1 behalf, but he also taught us how to be effective
2 leaders as it relates to working and advocating
3 for our communities.

4 And let me just say that Major Owens
5 was a Morehouse man. And so every time the
6 Morehouse choir came to Brooklyn, wherever they
7 were, if Major Owens was in the audience he would
8 dutifully get up and go and join the choir. So I
9 was very, very touched by that because not many
10 people feel that strongly about their alma mater.

11 But as the parent of a Morehouse
12 young person, one of the things that the
13 president of the college said to my son's class
14 as he was entering Morehouse was that "We did not
15 bring you to Morehouse to be an intellectual
16 elite. We are here to teach you and to prepare
17 you to be leaders of your people."

18 And I was extremely, extremely
19 touched by that because as I look at Major Owens,
20 I can see what Morehouse means to the young
21 people in this nation, especially young men of
22 color. He exhibited that. He was in every
23 single way the person that I believe the
24 president of Morehouse was talking about. He was
25 truly a Morehouse man.

1 And I appreciate that because of so
2 much that he meant not only to me personally, but
3 to the people that I worked with. Those of us
4 who have been part of a struggle, we did not
5 always know how to access power. He was there
6 for us to help us understand and open the doors.
7 So I thank him, I praise him, and I also praise
8 Morehouse.

9 Thank you.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
11 you, Senator Montgomery.

12 Senator Perkins on the resolution.

13 SENATOR PERKINS: Thank you very
14 much.

15 I want to be brief because I just
16 wanted to, for the record, let it be clear that
17 Major Owens was the congressman from Brooklyn.
18 He spent a lot of time with us in Harlem.

19 (Laughter.)

20 SENATOR PERKINS: And it was good
21 time, because when we were struggling around
22 hospital closings and anti-poverty programs
23 closing, he was always available. And he was a
24 role model for some of us who were looking
25 forward to getting involved in community

1 activism.

2 And so I just wanted to let it be
3 known that we appreciate him as if he was one of
4 our congressmen as well.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank
6 you, Senator Perkins.

7 The question now is on Resolution
8 Number 2758. All in favor signify by saying aye.

9 (Response of "Aye.")

10 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Opposed,
11 nay.

12 (No response.)

13 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The
14 resolution is adopted.

15 Senator Libous.

16 SENATOR LIBOUS: Thank you,
17 Mr. President.

18 I believe that Senator Perkins would
19 like to open this resolution up? Senator
20 Parker. The other Senator Perkins, yes. Senator
21 Parker would like to open this resolution up.

22 And as the policy goes, if you
23 choose not to go on the resolution, please let
24 the desk know.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The

1 resolution is open for cosponsorship.

2 Senator Libous.

3 SENATOR LIBOUS: Mr. President, is
4 there any further business at the desk at this
5 time?

6 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: There is
7 no further business.

8 SENATOR LIBOUS: There being no
9 further business, I move that the Senate adjourn
10 to January 22nd at 3:00 p.m., intervening days
11 being legislative days.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: On
13 motion, the Senate stands adjourned until
14 Wednesday, January 22nd, at 3:00 p.m.,
15 intervening days being legislative days.

16 (Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the
17 Senate adjourned.)

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