NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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3:55 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR DAVID J. VALESKY, Acting President

FRANCIS W. PATIENCE, Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: In the absence of clergy, may we bow our heads in a moment of silence.

(Whereupon, the assemblage respected a moment of silence.)

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Reading of the Journal.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Tuesday, January 21st, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Monday, January 20th, was read and approved. On motion, Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President, we have motions by Senator Gianaris.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Mr. President.

On behalf of Senator Parker, I move that the following bill be discharged from its respective committee and be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause: Senate Bill Number 3174.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: So ordered.

Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President, on behalf of myself, Senator LaValle, I move the following bill be discharged from its respective committee and be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause. That's Senate Bill

Number 2921A.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: So ordered.

SENATOR LaVALLE: On Senator Libous's behalf, Mr. President, I move that the following bill be discharged from its respective committee and be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause. That is Senate Bill Number 4806A.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: So ordered.

SENATOR LaVALLE: On Senator Maziarz's behalf, I move that the following bills be discharged from their respective committees and be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause. That is Senate Bill Numbers 1183A and 1345.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: So ordered.

Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President, I believe there is a privileged resolution by Senator Stewart-Cousins, that is Resolution 2887, that is at the desk. I ask that it be read in its entirety and ask for its immediate adoption.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Legislative Resolution Number 2887, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, memorializing the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s tremendous contributions to civil rights and American society, and the 29th Anniversary of the national holiday that honors his birth and achievements.

"WHEREAS, Today we celebrate the life and extraordinary achievements of one of our nation's most beloved and influential leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 29th Anniversary of the holiday that honors his birth and achievements; and

"WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on Tuesday, January 15, 1929, at his family home in Atlanta, Georgia, and was the first son and second child born to the Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., and Alberta Williams King; and

"WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr., began his education at the Yonge Street Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia, attended the Atlanta University Laboratory School and

Booker T. Washington High School, and was admitted to Morehouse College at the age of 15; and

"WHEREAS, At the age of 19, Martin Luther King, Jr., graduated from Morehouse College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology, and three years later, in 1951, was awarded a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, where he also studied at the University of Pennsylvania, and won several awards for most outstanding student, among which was the Crozer fellowship for graduate study at a university of his choice; and

"WHEREAS, In 1951, at the age of 22, Martin Luther King, Jr., began doctoral studies in systematic theology at Boston University, and also studied at Harvard University, and at the age of 26 was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Boston University in 1955; and

"WHEREAS, During his studies at Boston and Harvard Universities, Dr. King married the former Coretta Scott of Marion, Alabama, in 1953; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King entered the

Christian ministry and was ordained in February of 1948 at the age of 19 at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, and became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama, from September of 1954 to November of 1959, when he resigned to move home to Atlanta; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, the organization which was responsible for the successful Montgomery bus boycott, which began in 1955 and lasted 381 days; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King was incarcerated many times for his participation in civil rights activities, was a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which he led from 1957 to 1968, and was the leader of the 1963 March on Washington for Civil Rights, which is one of the largest peaceful demonstrations in American history and is a defining moment in this nation's civil rights movement; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King was honored countless times for his leadership of the United States civil rights movement, including his

selection by Time Magazine as Most Outstanding Personality of 1957 and Man of the Year of 1963, and his selection by Link Magazine of India, the home of Mahatma Gandhi, as one of the 16 world leaders who had contributed the most to the advancement of freedom during 1959; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King's receipt in 1964 of the Nobel Peace Prize, at the age of 35, made him the youngest recipient of that prestigious award, and one of only three black Americans who have received that award, along with Dr. Ralph Bunche and President Barack Obama, whose journey to become president owes no small debt to the journey Dr. King and the millions of Americans who walked hand in hand with him undertook to end segregation and remind Americans of the great moral underpinnings of our federal Constitution, which provides that we are all created equal, and of the incredible power of the American ideal that we all deserve to live in a free and just society; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King was murdered in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, by James Earl Ray, and was mourned by millions of Americans of all ages, races, creeds and colors

on the national day of mourning declared by President Lyndon Johnson; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King's birthday was made into a national holiday in 1986, was first celebrated in all 50 states in the year 2000, and is the only federal holiday to honor a private American citizen; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King stands in a long line of great American leaders and represents the historical culmination and living embodiment of a spirit of united purpose, rooted in black African culture and the American Dream; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King taught us that through nonviolence, courage displaces fear, love transforms hate, acceptance dissipates prejudice, and mutual regard cancels resentment; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. King manifestly contributed to the cause of America's freedom; his commitment to human dignity is visibly mirrored in the spiritual, economic and political dimensions of the civil rights movement; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,

whose untimely death robbed America of his leadership at too early a date, and whose deeds and words transformed America and live in our homes, schools and public institutions to this day, continuing to inspire the millions of Americans whose lives of purpose and achievement might not have been possible but for Dr. King's leadership and the examples set by the millions of Americans who joined him in one of the great moral crusades of the 20th century; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body calls upon its members and all New Yorkers to observe the day of Dr. King's birth as a day of service to our family, friends, neighbors and those less fortunate than ourselves, and to moral causes greater than ourselves, and to the great State of New York, in keeping with the ideals of the national Martin Luther King Day of Service, which was started by former Pennsylvania State Senator Harris Wofford and Congressman John Lewis from Atlanta, Georgia, who coauthored the King Holiday and Service Act, signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1994; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That copies of this

resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Dr. King and to the King Center in Atlanta."

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

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

And I guess after all of us have returned from this weekend where we were able to remember Dr. King, to celebrate how far America has come because of the work of Dr. King and countless others, it is really fitting that we begin our session with where he left off, because that's what we must do.

He was only 39 when he died. And most people, I think, because when you read the biography and you read so much about him, you sort of tend to think that this was someone who lived so long to do all these things -- he did this work in less than 13 years, from 1955 to when he was assassinated in 1968. The tremendous amount of progress that happened for African-Americans and others happened in this 13 years.

Mahatma Gandhi, his own Christian

faith obviously informed him on the ways of nonviolence. And while people, certainly people growing up as I did in New York, we had the debate, well, is it nonviolence, is it by any means necessary, the reality was that Dr. King in his relentless pursuit of justice and equality changed a nation and changed the world.

And when he was assassinated, he was talking about economics, he was talking about jobs, he was talking about education, he was talking about organized labor, he was talking about the extension of what the March on Washington was was really the March for Jobs and Freedom.

Dr. King would have been organizing today with fast-food workers. Dr. King would have been organizing people who are working hard and not able to sustain families, who aren't getting educational opportunities, who still haven't been able to walk through those doors of equality, who still long for justice.

So it is so great that we as a nation get to pause every beginning of the year to remember not only what has been achieved but what has yet to be achieved. And certainly

people in legislatures and chambers all over this nation just like us, every day we have an opportunity to advance that dream, advance that purpose, and even make our own mark in making sure that Dr. King's legacy is felt, lived and enjoyed by all.

So thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Stewart-Cousins.

Senator Larkin on the resolution.

SENATOR LARKIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

And I'd like to congratulate the Senator. It was an excellent presentation, and it encompassed years into minutes. Well done. Congratulations and thank you.

You know, I've stood up in this body for a number of years. I believe I'm probably the only person in this room that ever personally met Dr. King.

When I first heard about Dr. King, it was 1963. I was in Europe, it was August, the Washington March, when he said "I Had a Dream." I asked then and I ask today, what happened to the dream? We talk about it, but we're not doing

things that we should be doing.

In 1965 I had the privilege of representing the United States government going to Montgomery, Alabama, and to entice the governor to activate his troops in protection and safety of the march from Selma to Montgomery. And of course the Governor said go you know where. At 12 o'clock that night I went back and gave him an official order to activate his troops and to move troops from all over America to Selma and Montgomery and the route to.

When that march started that Sunday morning, everybody was hanging around Dr. King, wanting to get him. I wasn't inside; all I know is what was being reported to me. And one person that we never hear talked enough about was Dr. Ralph Abernathy. When I went to him and said, you know, I can't talk to your boss but I'm telling you, there's thousands of people out here, thousands of people on the road. There was 2500 people ready to march.

He went in and said: "Martin, it's time to move." And some of the other hangers-on were saying, We need pictures, we need this. And Dr. King looked at him -- because I could see, I

was at the door. He was listening to Dr. Ralph Abernathy, who in my opinion is one individual in civil rights who never got the recognition that he deserved.

But look at what Dr. King said. His goal was to let us think about individuals as they can be. Respect for one another. I said last year, in this chamber, "In a year, when we come back, I want to ask you what have you done to fulfill those visions."

I can stand up and say for myself we're having an essay contest that's finished in a high school. And I'm giving them cash out of my pocket for the winners. I've seen three or four of them. I've seen one from a young girl that came from Nigeria. And she said: "I never thought that I could enjoy a country as I do in America. But the more I read about Dr. King, we haven't done enough to fulfill his dream and his hopes."

And his hopes weren't just for African-Americans. His hopes were for all of us, to stop putting the blinders on and do something that would make us want to cooperate and do something for our fellow citizens.

You know, that march on the 25th, when it terminated there were 25,000 people. There were the left, there were the right, there were the antagonists on the sides of the road using such language that I wouldn't repeat here. But it came through, and it was safe.

One of the big incidents I remember was meeting with a gentleman called Bull Connor. You won't know him, but you'd have to look him up. He's the idiot that took a 12-inch hose and knocked people off the bridge. Yes, a law enforcement officer I call an idiot.

My comments to him were very simple: "You come out on this bridge and I guarantee you you'll need a plastic surgeon to get you out of jail."

And I meant it. This was a momentum in life. Because a lot of people fail to realize this was a time in our life when the civil rights and the voting rights campaign was in high esteem in Washington, in '65. And some prominent southern Democrats, including former Vice President Gore's father, voted against it.

But I think the momentum that Dr. King put together that spring was a momentum

to say to everybody it is time to act. Just think of it, the young man -- very, very young -- what he did, what he meant.

And he was -- if you read in history, in April of '68 he was encouraged to go to Memphis, Tennessee, because of the sanitation strike. Dr. Abernathy, in his comments, said "I tried to tell Martin it was too violent, stay away. But he said 'I made my commitment and I'm going to fulfill it.'"

His wife even asked him not to go. But he said, "How can I ask them to do something that I'm not willing to do?" And it cost him his life.

Think about it. What have we done as individuals to say this is what I've done in my community, this is what I will do.

I have a big African-American community in Newburgh. I've never won that district in 36 years. But Dr. King made an emphasis of working together. We've taken an armory and built it, doing what he said we should do. We're taking these young people and teaching them how to get along with one another. We're teaching them how to improve their educational

opportunities. And we have kids now that three years ago were outside getting in trouble. Now they're studying, playing sports, learning how to act with one another.

You know, it's nice to come every year and make mention of somebody that's done something. I'd like to come back next year and be able to say, Look what we've done as a body. Look what we've done in our districts.

We have 63 districts. How many here have done anything in the last seven days with Martin Luther King as a vision? I don't know. I saw less events this year than I did last year.

But you cannot stand around and make statements that Dr. King was somebody I think was great, we did this, and then the next day you say, well, what's on the football game or the basketball game?

How many people paid attention? How many people went out Monday and went to events? How many made some difference in how their community is? Because you were committed to do something that a man put his life on.

He was locked up at a young age. He did things that some in the southern territories

of our country didn't like. Did they not like him because of the color of his skin or did they dislike him because he wanted to do something to change and give everybody an opportunity? Not just people that were called Caucasians, not people that were called African-Americans. And in the early days of Dr. King they weren't called African-Americans, they were called Negroes.

But he wanted to send a message. I don't think we got the message. I hear people say all these nice things, but where's the message? The messenger left us a message and I'm sorry to say I don't think we -- not just in this body, but we in this state have turned around and said "This is what we will do."

In our community, I think our community has gotten together. And we did have an event. But we did something for the young people. Which is one of the things that he said. Make them understand, bring them in so they'll know what was going on. That was his vision.

Mr. President, it's an honor to stand here and talk about someone who made a difference in a lot of our lives, whether we like

to believe it or not. But let's remember a year from today, with God's blessing -- Michael, God's blessing -- I will be here and I'm going to ask you the same question: What have you done in your district to further those visions that Dr. King said?

He had a dream that one day. That day hasn't come. And I don't think we've done enough to enhance his vision.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Larkin.

Senator Savino on the resolution.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you, Mr. President.

And thank you, Senator Stewart-Cousins, for bringing this resolution to commemorate the contributions and the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King.

This is the tenth time that I will stand on this floor to talk about this. It's amazing that I've been in the Senate 10 years now. It's one of my favorite resolutions because I get to hear from the other members what the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King meant to them.

I get to hear, always, Senator Larkin tell the story about how he met Martin Luther King and that he was the only one, and then I get to hear Senator Hassell-Thompson point out no, that she met him as well. So we are blessed that we have two people in this chamber that actually got to meet him.

Obviously I never did get to meet him, but I feel the need every year to stand up and talk about the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's commitment not just to the civil rights movement but to the labor movement and to remind people where he was on that fateful day when he was assassinated in the city of Memphis. He was leading a strike of striking sanitation workers in the city of Memphis. And that is where he delivered his "I Have Been to the Mountaintop" speech; we all know that.

But Dr. King was as committed to organized labor as anybody else ever was in this country. And so every year I feel the need to remind people of that, number one, and to remind people of where we are in this country and what Dr. King would think about what is happening to organized labor and workers' rights right now.

And what he would think about what happened the other day on Monday, on the anniversary of his birthday, when every editorial board in the state and probably across the country decided that they would dedicate their editorial pages to the contributions of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, and rightfully so. But then the day after, every one of those editorial boards would go back to their regularly scheduled programming, lately, of bashing workers and workers' rights and the institutions that fight for workers rights.

What would he think about those same editorial boards who celebrated the collapse of Detroit and the City of Detroit and actually applauded the fact that workers were going to believe deprived of their rights that they had achieved either through collective bargaining or their pension rights that had been achieved through their constitution?

Those very same pundits, Billy, applauded that and then had the audacity to applaud the work of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. They should be ashamed of themselves. Those very same pundits and

economists who think that workers should take less applaud Dr. King and say nothing about what's happening in Bangladesh or in Vietnam or any of the other countries that manufacturers continue to go to to exploit workers and to drive down our economy.

So yes, Billy -- Senator Larkin -- we have a lot of work to do to live up to his commitment and to his dream. For workers, we are certainly not there, and in fact in many ways we have been turning the clock back. So next year I hope to be standing here right along with you and everyone else in this chamber, and maybe we'll have something positive to report about the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's dream and whether or not we've helped to achieve any part of it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Savino.

Senator Diaz on the resolution.

SENATOR DIAZ: Thank you, Mr. President.

Ladies and gentlemen, on February 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King delivered a sermon

in the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. And I want to read a paragraph out of that sermon. It says: "And so Jesus gave us a new norm of greatness. If you want to be important -- wonderful. If you want to be recognized -- wonderful. If you want to be great -- wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's a new definition of greatness.

"You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love, and you can be that servant."

That was what Martin Luther King said in 1968. And I'm going to add to that you don't even have to speak good English to be a good servant.

But so many years after this happened, just a few days ago, our beloved

Governor, Governor Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of the State of New York, stated to millions of people, especially me, that there is no place in New York for me.

I was 18 years old in Puerto Rico, and I proudly want to serve the American -- in the United States Army. And I joined the Army. And they send me in 1960 to Columbia, South Carolina, to Fort Jackson.

With me from Puerto Rico there was bunch of Puerto Ricans, white Puerto Ricans, just as white as Senator Gustavo Rivera. And they came with me from Puerto Rico to Columbia, South Carolina. There's a reason why I'm choosing -- there's a reason why I'm pointing to Gustavo Rivera. There's a reason why. I'm going to tell you in a minute.

I came with them, all white, I was the only black, went to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. They gave us the first pass. All dressed in the Army suit, proud of being an American fighting man, went to a bar in Columbia. The waiter came, served all of them, turned his back on me and told me -- and when I called the waiter, the waiter told me: "Whatever

you're looking for, we haven't got it."

Those white Puerto Ricans that went from Puerto Rico, from Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, with me to Columbia, they were supposed to leave that place with me. But no, they told me "You have to leave. You've got to go." And they stood there.

And Martin Luther King fought to take away all these things. But nothing has changed. Because even Gustavo Rivera now, he's the one that make fun of me and laugh at me because of my heavy accent. So nothing has changed. People make fun of you. For your color, for your accent, for your kinky hair, for whatever reason. People make fun of you.

Now, the Governor earlier said there is no place for you in the State of New York, for anyone that oppose gay marriage or for anyone that feels that life is sacred and the babies in the womb of the mother should not be killed.

So, ladies and gentlemen, yes, we are honoring Dr. Martin Luther King. But we say blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, too many blah, blah, blah. People doesn't even care of that.

Martin Luther King said you don't

have to know too much to be a servant. You don't have to speak good English, Gustavo, just learn how to serve. And just learn that words hurt and that we are all human. Just learn that lesson. Stop making fun, stop laughing at people. And stop discriminating people for whatever reason they are. This is a lesson that we supposed to have learned.

And now, public servants, we all public servants, how could a public servant tell -- the Governor, the leader of the state, tell residents of the State of New York that there is no part for them, there is no way, there is no room for them in the State of New York? Even an undocumented person is better than me now. Because they got people to protect them, they got people to look out for them. Now they're going to say, Get out of New York, we have no place for you guys.

But there are millions and millions, there are millions in New York State that believe like me -- Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Orthodox Jews that believe like me. And the Governor is telling them, equal that he is telling me, that there is no room for us in New York State.

And then we brag about honoring Martin Luther King? Bunch of hypocrisy. That's what we are doing. Oh, we got to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, and then you are making fun of people and you are discriminating people and you are not accepting people when we are supposed to serve everyone, when we supposed to be equal to everyone?

I don't believe in gay marriage, but I have gay in my staff. I don't believe in gay marriage, but I got friends, and I employ them, and I make room for them.

So the Governor should learn the lesson and many of us should learn that lesson that we are servants. We don't have to have a college degree. We don't have to have -- what is it Dr. Martin Luther King say? We don't have to know the theory of thermo, what, thermodynamics.

There's no room. I didn't even make the list -- Malcolm, we didn't even make the list of the best dressed in New York.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR DIAZ: There's no room. Anywhere you go is ostracism.

So, ladies and gentlemen, yes, I'm here today with my broken English, my kinky hair, because Martin Luther King fought and people like Dr. Martin Luther King want us, black and all kind of race, to join together and took us blacks from the back seat of the bus. Now Governor Cuomo wants to put me back in the seat.

Sometimes Gustavo Rivera kill me, kill me. Because he doesn't agree with my position, he just make fun of me. There's no reason for that, Gustavo. And to any one of you, there's no reason for that. Don't agree with me.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator Gianaris, why do you rise?

SENATOR GIANARIS: We certainly want to hear what everyone has to say, but I do want to remind everyone --

SENATOR DIAZ: I know you don't want to hear that -- I know you don't want to hear what --

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator Diaz, Senator Gianaris is speaking.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I would just remind our colleagues that we're not supposed to

refer to each other by name during the proceedings. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The point is well-taken.

SENATOR DIAZ: Yeah, see? This is the problem that we are all facing. It's good when it's good for you, but when it's time for me, it's no good for me. That's a problem that we are facing here. And that's why I do what I do.

And I am the only -- and by the way, with all due respect to you Independents, I'm the only independent here.

And by the way, you know, this is something that we have to be more reasonable. If I don't bring this to your attention, if I don't bring this on the floor, it will continue. People get hurt. So I got to bring it. I have to -- I have to express my feelings, because I'm a human being like any one of you. Even though I don't believe in gay marriage and I don't believe in abortion, I'm a human being too. And I'm a Senator like any one of you.

So respect, you want me to respect, Gianaris? You want me to respect others? Teach

your members to respect others. And then we all could agree and then we'll join together to celebrate Martin Luther King and to honor Dr. Martin Luther King.

But it doesn't work that way. It doesn't work that way. So that's what I'm saying, Mr. Chairman and all of you. I might be out of order -- it's not the first time that I've been called out of order. You remember when gay marriage came? They didn't even allow me to speak because I was . . . So it's not the first time that this body call me out of order.

But I will continue expressing my feelings. I will continue to fight for what I believe. I will continue doing like Jesse Jackson said: Keep your faith, baby. And I will fight and keep my faith no matter how many ostracism they do to me and no matter how many fun they make of me and no matter how many Governor Cuomo say that there's no room for me in the State of New York.

I'm proud to be a Christian. I'm proud to follow the Bible. I'm proud to be a minister. I'm proud to be a Puerto Rican and I'm proud to be a black Puerto Rican.

And by the way, before I finish, us black Puerto Ricans, we have no part, we have no -- sometimes we in the limbo. When blacks and Hispanics fight, there's no room for me. The Hispanics reject us because we're black and the blacks reject us because we're Hispanic. You got to be in that shoe, in those shoes, to know exactly what discrimination is all about.

Thank you, Mr. President. And I -- I am really sorry for -- if I have interrupted anything.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Senator Hassell-Thompson on the resolution.

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

I rise to thank Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins for bringing the resolution to the floor today as we honor Dr. King. Last week we stood here and honored Nelson Mandela. Two men who changed the face of the world, two men who did not let hate interfere with the message that they had to bring.

Senator Larkin, in 1959 -- oh, he's left the chamber. But in 1959 I had the opportunity of meeting Dr. King. When he came to

New York, he came to Grace Baptist Church. I was 17 years old. And listening to the power of his voice as well as his message gave me a lot to remember and certainly as guideposts for the way I try to live my life.

I want to share with you a couple of quotes that are indicative of who he was as a man. We all know about his "I Have a Dream" speech. But how many of you know that he said "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"? And "In the End, we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

He said: "I've decided to stick to love. Hate is too great burden to bear."

"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it's right."

"Let no man pull you so low as to hate him."

"Never, never be afraid to do what's right, especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake."

"Society's punishments are small

compared to the wounds that we inflict on our souls when we look the other way."

And finally, "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity."

That was Dr. Martin Luther King.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Hassell-Thompson.

Senator Montgomery on the resolution.

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

I also want to join my colleagues in thanking our leader for making sure that once again we have a resolution on the floor that honors Dr. Martin Luther King.

And I certainly associate myself with all of the comments that have been made. And I'd like to take the challenge that Senator Larkin has given us, and that is come back next year to recite something that we've actually done. So I appreciate that, and he's right.

I have had the opportunity to read one of the many books about or by Dr. King, and

one of them in particular is the autobiography that's done by Clayborne Carson in conjunction with Dr. King, where Dr. King has an opportunity or we have an opportunity to look to see what kinds of things were going through his mind when he started the movement.

And I was particularly struck by one scene that he portrays where they had been threatened -- this was in the middle of the Rosa Parks situation, and they had been told in no uncertain terms that if they did not stop what they were doing, that they would be killed. So this kind of intimidation was made very, very much a part of the communication between the people who did not approve of, did not want to see the movement go forward, to Dr. King and the people he was working with.

And I was so absolutely amazed by the fact that he was terrified, because it was the Ku Klux Klan and it was in the place in America where people could come with their guns and when they threatened you, it was a real threat. So -- and there was no police to protect Dr. King. And so they came to his home and they paraded, they cruised in their cars in front of

his house. And he stood in the door and waited and in a sense dared them to go ahead and kill me, because this fight for freedom will not end with you killing me.

And so I'm so struck by that because how terrifying it must have been to be confronted, to be faced with this kind of terror. These were terrorists in America who were bent on making sure that the rights of African-Americans, of black people in this country were never realized, that the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments were really never going to be realized in this United States of America.

So for me, that was the image of Dr. King above all the other things that happened to him, the fact that he would stand and face death because he had a vision, he knew where he was trying to go, he knew what the meaning of his existence at that moment meant. Not to himself, but to his people. And that is, to me, bravery beyond belief.

Yes, we call him the Prince of Peace and we call him the Drum Major for Justice. But most of all, he was the symbol of democracy and what it meant. And what was the end point to

him, according to him in his words, was "I want the right for my people to vote."

That's how we were able to elect an African-American president. It was because Martin Luther King led his people across what some people would say the Jordan. He led his people to the point where -- and he kept his eye on the prize, and the prize was the vote. And so I'm so thankful and grateful, because that's how I'm here and that's how we're all here.

And let me just say it makes me so sad and I feel such a sense of regret that some people in our country are trying to take away the vote that so many people, including Dr. King, who stood in the door in the face of death because he wanted his people to be able to vote -- and now there are people trying to take it away. So this is a very sad thing.

So I take the challenge of Senator Larkin. He's right. I hope we all come back next year and we have more than a speech to make about Dr. King, that we've all done something. In our various positions, in our party, the Republican Party members, the Democratic Party members, all of us. I hope we're going to begin

to raise our voices and say this is an abomination. If we believe in anything that Dr. King represented, it is the right to vote for everyone in this country.

So thank you, Madam Leader, and thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Montgomery.

Senator Sanders on the resolution.

SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Colonel Larkin gave a very worthy question that remains to be answered. And there is no one answer to it. Each of us will have to find our own answer to this question. I can only try to answer it by saying that on Monday past I stood with the airport workers who are being grossly underpaid and struggled with them to ensure that justice roll down like a mighty river in their lifetime.

Now, I come to this position in a strange way. I must confess I was not an early convert to the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Indeed, I've been a late convert. The idea that they espoused of turning the other cheek, of

strength, that was -- it was not my first nature. It's not exactly the way I would see things. My own nature, I must admit, it might be better that the other guy turn the other cheek for a while.

But I came to an understanding slowly. I understood that sometimes the greatest courage is that it takes more courage to sit down, sometimes, than it does to stand up. To sit down when your nature may say to help the other guy see his maker quicker, faster, better.

However, the strength that this community came up with -- and a community of all Americans, mind you, came up with at this time was one that you couldn't deny, a strength that went past and said that I'm going to love you in spite of yourself. I'm going to do good to people who are doing bad to me.

After you go past what the rational mind may think is an insanity, you see something deeper, something American, something deeper, something human that transcends all of these boundaries and says that, you know what, we can get to a place, this beloved community that all of us say, but it's going to cost us. It's going

to cost us greatly.

And this is why I'm so grateful that all of those people went before me and stood and were able to do what I at that time was unable to do -- of course, being a younger man I wouldn't have had the exact challenge, but I would not have been able to do, and by doing so gave a whole new generation.

Now, Dr. King, I'm very happy that he was an African-American. But at the same time I have to understand that he transcended all of these boundaries, that Dr. King ultimately gave his life for America and Americans and then went further than that and his position was for the world.

So in that sense he transcended even the nation and became one of those figures that we can point to -- and the world has several -- that we can point to in saying that this was a figure that made us proud to breathe the same air that he did.

So I'm glad that this body is kind enough and bold enough to say that we need to do these things. And because we have generations coming up behind us that maybe, like me, that

don't understand the strength that sometimes you stand tallest when you're sitting in.

And saying those things, I encourage all of us to remember that we all have a little bit of Martin Luther King in us, because his blood has gone through the veins of the American people.

Thank you very much.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Sanders.

Senator Perkins on the resolution.

SENATOR PERKINS: Thank you very much.

I want to thank our leader, Senator Cousins, and everybody else who's here and had an opportunity to speak.

I was going to use my half an hour an hour ago, but so much of what I want to say has been said. And the only thing that's left is to really remember that the Prince of Peace who we all remember mostly, I guess, for his civil rights advocacy was actually assassinated for economic justice and in the process of organizing the remarkable Poor People's Campaign.

And maybe in that regard it gives us

some very concrete direction about what we can do here as legislators for poor people, for people that Dr. King actually sacrificed his life for.

So whether that's in terms of a job, whether that's in terms of other kinds of economic opportunities, or whether that's in terms of ending discrimination, remember, the Poor People's Campaign is what he was organizing before he was assassinated. And perhaps that's the message that we can use as we move forward in our deliberations and making laws and opportunities through this august body.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Perkins.

Senator Rivera on the resolution.

SENATOR RIVERA: Thank you, Mr. President.

As I sit here and hear what our colleagues, certainly Senator Stewart-Cousins, Senator Sanders, Senator Perkins and the rest of the folks here -- certainly Senator Larkin -- talk about Martin Luther King, and we think about all -- we think about his courage, we think about his wisdom. And I'm sitting here thinking what

is the one thing that I am inspired most by when I think about Martin Luther King.

So when I think about that, I realize that it is the fact that he believed in this country. The fact is that when our Founding Fathers -- and I'm reminded when I'm in my political science classes and I teach civics classes in my district and I talk about where our Constitution came from, of the fact that the Founding Fathers, who were all white land-owning males, wrote a document that spoke about people, spoke about citizens, did not speak about white land-owning males.

So when you look at the work of Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders, you look at the fact that they believed in the idea of this country. They believed that during our history we can actually evolve, we can actually include more people in the thing that is America. And certainly as we discuss every day on this floor, we are not a perfect country, not by any stretch of the imagination. We have much work to do to make sure that we make our system more equal, we provide access to people that don't have it now.

But when I look back at the work of Martin Luther King, what I'm reminded of is the fact that ultimately the country that we all live in, the country that we all belong to and the one that we swear to every time that we take our oath of office or when we look up at the flag, is the idea that our country can over time and over history become better, can include more people, can actually be a better place for everyone.

And over time, we have done that. And every day that we do the work here in the Senate -- and certainly when Senator Larkin comes here next year and asks the question, I hope that we can all say over the last year we have done something to live up to that dream, to make our country a little bit better, a little more accessible, a little fairer.

And that's what I think about when I think about Martin Luther King.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Rivera.

Senator Espaillat on the resolution.

SENATOR ESPAILLAT: Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to thank our leader, Senator Cousins, for forwarding this resolution.

It was perhaps Jim Crow laws and how they deeply affected the South and the rest of this country that propelled Reverend King and a host of other leaders -- because he was surrounded by many capable, many charismatic, daring leaders -- to confront the status quo as he led the civil rights movement.

During that process he was also a great coalition builder. You know, he reached out to Cesar Chavez out on the West Coast who was organizing the grape pickers and told them that they were brothers in the struggle.

And so, you know, this is a very nice warm evening in Albany here in the chambers as we commemorate the legacy, the life, the work of Reverend King. But many, many of the initiatives that he stood for and the advancements that he advocated for die right here in this chamber.

You know, he called Chavez to give him support for his efforts to organize farmworkers. You know, I recently met with Dolores Juerta, who is a terrific woman who

organized with Chavez, and she was appalled that 50 years later the conditions that they resolved in California and the West Coast are present in New York State, the Empire State. That the constitution of our state still carves out a classification of worker.

There were two classifications -- and for the most part back then they were African-Americans -- domestic workers and farmworkers. Now, we took care, to some degree, of the domestic workers, but we continue on this floor to kill that legislation that embody what Martin Luther King felt about Jim Crow laws, that embody everything that he stood for.

In this same floor, when we take up bills like the minimum wage bill -- $7.25. It is a struggle, it is a heavy lift to get all of us here on this same floor to agree that a New Yorker should earn $7.25 an hour. Income inequality. Fast-food workers that sell a meal in McDonald's and, after they sell that meal, for the rest of the hour everything that McDonald's gets is profits.

And they keep them under certain wages so that us, government and the taxpayers,

we have to subsidize their healthcare, we have to subsidize their food stamps, we have to subsidize -- that's what he stood for. He wasn't standing up for rich people with mansions and Jaguars, he stood for the little guy. And so right on this floor we kill many of the initiatives that he stood for.

I think Martin Luther King would have met with the Dreamers, I think he would have knocked on those doors right there and then with the Dreamers, young people that just want access to go to college so they can pay their taxes and hopefully even buy a car and a house in one of our counties. And that's what he stood for.

And we continuously have this very I believe self-serving day here where we cleanse our souls, but on a daily basis when we take up our calendar we kill many of the legislations, the pieces of initiatives that he would have stood for.

So I agree with Senator Larkin. We should come back next year and celebrate Martin Luther King and say we passed a farmworkers bill. We should come back and say, You know what, the workers in the airports that some are

making $4.25 an hour, they deserve a better salary. Because at one point I remember it was a privilege to work in an airport. Those folks who worked in airports were privileged in our neighborhoods.

We should come back and say the Dreamers, yeah, they have the right to access higher education. Then maybe we will have a sincere session and not this soul-cleansing exercise of which we should all be very shameful of.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Thank you, Senator Espaillat.

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The resolution is adopted.

Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President, Senator Stewart-Cousins would like to open the

resolution up for cosponsorship.

Can we please place everyone on as a cosponsor. And if someone does not wish to be a cosponsor, they should notify the desk.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: All Senators will be listed as cosponsors. Anyone who wishes not to cosponsor the resolution should notify the desk.

Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President, may we have the noncontroversial reading of the calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 6, by Senator DeFrancisco, Senate Print 6127, an act to amend Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2006.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as Chapter 459 of the Laws of 2013.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 8, by Senator Klein, Senate Print 6236, an act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as Chapter 472 of the Laws of 2013.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 8, those recorded in the negative are Senators Diaz, Espaillat, Hannon, Hoylman, Krueger, LaValle, Montgomery, Parker, Perkins, Sanders, Serrano and Squadron.

Ayes, 47. Nays, 12.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 9, by Senator Maziarz, Senate Print 6244, an act to repeal subdivision 24 of Section 1005 of the Public Authorities Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58. Nays, 1. Senator Gipson recorded in the negative.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 11, by Senator Robach, Senate Print 6248, an act to amend Chapter 508 of the Laws of 2013.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 13, by Senator Boyle, Senate Print 6250, an act to amend the General Business Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as Chapter 381 of the Laws of 2013.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 14, by Senator Carlucci, Senate Print 6251, an act to amend the Mental Hygiene Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as Chapter 551 of the Laws of 2013.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 57. Nays, 2. Senators Montgomery and Perkins recorded in the negative.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: The bill is passed.

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

SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President, is there any other business at the desk?

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: There is no further business.

SENATOR LaVALLE: There being no further business, I move we adjourn until Thursday, January 23rd, at 11:00 a.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT VALESKY: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Thursday, January 23rd, at 11:00 a.m.

(Whereupon, at 5:00 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)