

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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3
4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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8
9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10 February 9, 2016

11 11:14 a.m.

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13
14 REGULAR SESSION

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18 SENATOR THOMAS D. CROCI, Acting President

19 FRANCIS W. PATIENCE, Secretary

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

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

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

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

9 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: And to
10 give our opening prayer today, the Reverend
11 Peter G. Young, of the Mother Teresa Community
12 in Albany.

13 REVEREND YOUNG: Thank you,
14 Senator.

15 Let us pray.

16 When we meet in session, sometimes
17 we stop listening and use our communication
18 skills to advocate only for our own constituents
19 and their agenda.

20 God, You want us to communicate
21 with respect and care for each other and each
22 Senator here in this chamber, so that we might
23 show our New York State citizens and
24 constituents our example of togetherness and the
25 common good of New York State.

1 Help us to have open ears and all
2 the hospitality of minds as we listen, share,
3 and build community, instead of disunity, for
4 our citizens.

5 We ask You this in God's name.
6 Amen.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
8 reading of the Journal.

9 THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Monday,
10 February 8th, the Senate met pursuant to
11 adjournment. The Journal of Sunday,
12 February 7th, was read and approved. On motion,
13 Senate adjourned.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Without
15 objection, the Journal stands approved as read.

16 Presentation of petitions.

17 Messages from the Assembly.

18 Messages from the Governor.

19 Reports of standing committees.

20 Reports of select committees.

21 Communications and reports from
22 state officers.

23 Motions and resolutions.

24 Senator LaValle.

25 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,

1 can we adopt the Resolution Calendar, with the
2 exception of Resolutions 3732, 3781, and 3797.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: All in
4 favor of adopting the Resolution Calendar, with
5 the exception of Resolutions 3732, 3781, and
6 3797, signify by saying aye.

7 (Response of "Aye.")

8 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Opposed?

9 (No response.)

10 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
11 Resolution Calendar is adopted.

12 Senator LaValle.

13 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,
14 can we have the noncontroversial reading of the
15 calendar.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Very
17 well. The Secretary will read.

18 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
19 16, by Senator LaValle, Senate Print 6385A, an
20 act to amend the Real Property Tax Law.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the
22 last section.

23 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
24 act shall take effect on the same date and in
25 the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of

1 2015.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the
3 roll.

4 (The Secretary called the roll.)

5 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 44.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill
7 is passed.

8 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 21,
9 by Senator Murphy, Senate Print 6390A, an act to
10 amend the Social Services Law.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the
12 last section.

13 THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This
14 act shall take effect on the same date and in the
15 same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2015.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the
17 roll.

18 (The Secretary called the roll.)

19 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 44.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill
21 is passed.

22 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 64,
23 by Senator Croci, Senate Print 6365A, an act to
24 amend the Executive Law.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the

1 last section.

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

4 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the
5 roll.

6 (The Secretary called the roll.)

7 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 44.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill
9 is passed.

10 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
11 144, by Senator Ranzenhofer, Senate Print 3969,
12 an act to amend the Private Housing Finance Law.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the
14 last section.

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

17 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the
18 roll.

19 (The Secretary called the roll.)

20 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 44.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill
22 is passed.

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

25 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,

1 can we return to motions and resolutions.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Motions
3 and resolutions.

4 Senator LaValle.

5 SENATOR LaVALLE: Can we take up
6 Resolution 3797, by Senator Stewart-Cousins. Can
7 we read it in its entirety, and the Senator would
8 like to open this resolution for cosponsorship.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
10 Secretary will read.

11 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
12 Resolution Number 3797, by Senator
13 Stewart-Cousins, memorializing Governor Andrew M.
14 Cuomo to proclaim February 2016 as Black History
15 Month in the State of New York.

16 "WHEREAS, Black History Month,
17 previously known as Negro History Week, was
18 founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, and was first
19 celebrated on February 1, 1926; since 1976, it
20 has become a nationally recognized month-long
21 celebration, held each year during the month of
22 February to acknowledge and pay tribute to
23 African-Americans neglected by both society and
24 the history books; and

25 "WHEREAS, The month of February

1 observes the rich and diverse heritage of our
2 great state and nation; and

3 "WHEREAS, Black History Month seeks
4 to emphasize Black history is American history;
5 and

6 "WHEREAS, Black History Month is a
7 time to reflect on the struggles and victories of
8 African-Americans throughout our country's
9 history and to recognize their numerous valuable
10 contributions to the protection of our democratic
11 society in war and in peace; and

12 "WHEREAS, Some African-American
13 pioneers whose many accomplishments, all which
14 took place during the month of February, went
15 unnoticed, as well as numerous symbolic events
16 in February that deserve to be memorialized
17 include: John Sweat Rock, a noted Boston lawyer
18 who became the first African-American admitted
19 to argue before the U.S. Supreme Court, on
20 February 1, 1865, and the first African-American
21 to be received on the floor of the U.S. House of
22 Representatives; Jonathan Jasper Wright, the
23 first African-American to hold a major judicial
24 position, who was elected to the South Carolina
25 Supreme Court on February 1, 1870; President

1 Abraham Lincoln submits the proposed
2 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution,
3 abolishing slavery, to the states for
4 ratification on February 1, 1865; civil rights
5 protester Jimmie Lee Jackson dies from wounds
6 inflicted during a protest on February 26, 1965,
7 leading to the historic Selma, Alabama, civil
8 rights demonstrations, including Bloody Sunday,
9 in which 600 demonstrators, including Martin
10 Luther King, Jr., were attacked by police;
11 Autherine J. Lucy became the first
12 African-American student to attend the University
13 of Alabama, on February 3, 1956; she was expelled
14 three days later 'for her own safety' in response
15 to threats from a mob; in 1992, Autherine Lucy
16 Foster graduated from the university with a
17 master's degree in education, the same day her
18 daughter, Grazia Foster, graduated with a
19 bachelor's degree in corporate finance; the
20 Negro Baseball League was founded on February 3,
21 1920; Jack Johnson, the first African-American
22 World Heavyweight Boxing Champion, won his first
23 title on February 3, 1903; and Reginald F.
24 Lewis, born on December 7, 1942, in Baltimore,
25 Maryland, received his law degree from Harvard

1 Law School in 1968, and was a partner in Murphy,
2 Thorpes & Lewis, the first black law firm on
3 Wall Street; in 1989, he became president and CEO
4 of TLC Beatrice International Food Company, the
5 largest black-owned business in the
6 United States; and

7 "WHEREAS, In recognition of the vast
8 contributions of African-Americans, a joyful
9 month-long celebration is held across New York
10 State and across the United States, with many
11 commemorative events to honor and display the
12 cultural heritage of African-Americans; and

13 "WHEREAS, This Legislative Body
14 commends the African-American community for
15 preserving, for future generations, its
16 centuries-old traditions that benefit us all and
17 add to the color and beauty of the tapestry which
18 is our American society; now, therefore, be it

19 "RESOLVED, That this Legislative
20 Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize
21 Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim February
22 2016 as Black History Month in the State of
23 New York; and be it further

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

1 to the Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the
2 State of New York, and to the events
3 commemorating Black History Month throughout
4 New York State."

5 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
6 LaValle.

7 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,
8 would you recognize Senator Stewart-Cousins.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
10 Stewart-Cousins.

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Yes,
12 thank you, Mr. President.

13 I rise, as I do every year, to
14 recognize Black History Month. And when I rise,
15 I talk about a lot of different things, certainly
16 many things that were in the resolution -- my
17 parents and their struggle for equality in our
18 great nation, heroes and heroines in our
19 communities who are often unsung.

20 And today, when I thought about my
21 Black History message, I thought about the
22 significance of this day in my life. February 9,
23 2005, I found out that I had lost my race for
24 Senate by 18 votes. It was the longest
25 unresolved race in New York State history. And

1 of course I'm here, so clearly the next time I
2 was successful.

3 I also thought about what happened
4 during my time as Senator when on November 4,
5 2008, what we thought could never happen -- at
6 least in the black community -- happened: We
7 elected President Barack Obama, the first
8 African-American president in our nation's
9 history.

10 And I realized at that point, and
11 now, this will be the last Black History Month
12 celebration that I will be speaking while there
13 is a black president.

14 So I guess the conversation for me
15 today is about voting. It's about voting rights,
16 it's about the franchise that is so important to
17 America and its sense of democracy. It's about
18 the history that goes back, obviously, before
19 President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in
20 1863, where the enslaved Africans were freed.

21 We realize that even that freedom,
22 in quotes, didn't bring the right to vote. That
23 happened later, with the 15th Amendment,
24 February 3, 1870, where African-American men were
25 allowed to vote. Of course we know the women

1 were allowed to vote in 1920.

2 Even that 15th Amendment, and the
3 later amendment that included women, didn't allow
4 for African-Americans, especially in the South,
5 to exercise their franchise. They were still
6 subject to Jim Crow Laws -- literacy tests, all
7 kinds of impossible tests that nobody else who
8 was a citizen of this great nation were subjected
9 to, thereby disallowing the American population,
10 the full American population who should have been
11 allowed to vote, to vote.

12 And it was the constant struggle and
13 the constant push for a full democracy that
14 allowed for finally -- and we've heard about
15 Bloody Sunday and we've talked about, obviously,
16 the influences of Rosa Parks and Dr. King. And
17 all of those sung and unsung heroes and heroines
18 made sure that by 1965 the Voting Rights Act was
19 passed that removed obstacles from
20 African-Americans exercising their right to vote.

21 So here we are today, on the eve of
22 a new election, with the reality that in many of
23 our communities, less than 40 percent of the
24 people actually vote -- many who have really
25 benefited from the sacrifices of people who came

1 before. Because people understood that if you
2 exercised your right to vote, you would have as
3 much say as every other person who was a citizen
4 of this country.

5 As we stand on this eve of a new
6 election, as we celebrate African-American
7 history, my message is the history of our rights
8 to vote, and the fruit that the exercise of those
9 rights have yielded, should not be taken for
10 granted. So much a part of our history is about
11 our democracy, so much of black history is about
12 pushing the ideals of that democracy so that they
13 become reality for everyone.

14 So as we celebrate black history,
15 let's celebrate our heroes, celebrate our
16 accomplishments, but don't forget that the basic
17 and fundamental right to vote is at the core of
18 it all.

19 Thank you.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
21 Comrie.

22 SENATOR COMRIE: Thank you,
23 Mr. President.

24 I rise today to second our Leader
25 Cousins' speech in noting Black History Month.

1 Black History Month in America means
2 a lot of things to a lot of people. It means a
3 time of reflection, it means a time of reviewing
4 history, renewing history, reminding people of
5 the sacrifices that people have made for progress
6 in this country, reminding people of the people
7 that had to fight to get the right to vote, to
8 get the right for respect, to get the right to
9 take buses, to get basic rights that any
10 American citizen should have and still have
11 today.

12 As our Leader Cousins has spoken on
13 the fact that it all boils down to the right to
14 vote. And in New York State, where we have one
15 of the lowest voter turnouts and participation,
16 it reminds me that we still need to go out and
17 reach out to all segments of our population so
18 that they can understand what the power of the
19 vote is and the need to vote.

20 And as I am reminded by Martin
21 Luther King, we are not makers of history, we are
22 made by history. We must make sure that we send
23 out that message to all that we know and be
24 living examples to make sure that people
25 understand that history is made in the present;

1 history is made by each one giving back; history
2 is made by being a living example and a walking
3 solution to people that have problems; history is
4 made by us as elected officials by reaching out
5 and touching people, by impacting people in a
6 positive way, by trying to make sure that the
7 Senate and all elected officials in New York
8 State do their utmost to try to make a positive
9 change in this state, by making sure that we
10 reach out to our young people that are
11 disconnected from history, that are disconnected
12 from reality so that we can show them that
13 there's a better way.

14 The object of history and
15 understanding our past is to try to ensure that
16 we have a better future, and not fall down the
17 same gateways and potholes that we fell into when
18 we were not united in purpose, when we did not
19 have a singular goal, when we could not find
20 opportunities to bring each other together.

21 What we've learned from history in
22 the Black History Movement was that in struggle
23 there was unity, in struggle there was an
24 opportunity to come to a consensus, in struggle
25 there was an opportunity to find a peace and find

1 an opportunity to make good. And I think that we
2 need to remember that as Black History Month and
3 try to emulate that.

4 In my district, I put together
5 opportunities this month for people of
6 intergenerational -- different generations to
7 come together and speak about their experiences,
8 both young and old, so that the young people
9 could teach the old and the old people can remind
10 the young of what they've been through.

11 I'm honored in my district to have
12 one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, who is over
13 93 years old and has a stronger grip than almost
14 anyone in this chamber and is still a very active
15 and agile person who was also, when he came out
16 of Tuskegee, became one of the first black car
17 dealers, car salesperson and then dealer in
18 Philadelphia, then came to New York.

19 I'm honored in my district that I
20 have many people that participated in the March
21 on Washington and participated in many of the
22 struggles in the early Black History Movement
23 that have tutored and mentored many young people
24 and have tried to tell their story.

25 I just want to hope that we can all

1 be storytellers by our example, not just during
2 Black History Month, but every day in our lives,
3 so that we can teach people to be better people
4 in our future so that our state and our country
5 can be a better place.

6 Thank you, Mr. President.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
8 Serrano.

9 SENATOR SERRANO: Thank you,
10 Mr. President.

11 And before I begin, I want to first
12 thank my leader and friend, Senator
13 Stewart-Cousins, for bringing forth this
14 resolution. She is the epitome of class and
15 grace, and it's such a pleasure to know her, and
16 in many ways exemplifies the importance of this
17 month and the issues of diversity. And the
18 opportunities that she presents to all of us, not
19 only in her district but throughout the state, I
20 think are immeasurable.

21 And this resolution is significant
22 on so many different levels. It gives us an
23 opportunity to take a moment to think about the
24 struggles that have been going on for civil
25 rights for so many years. And as a Puerto Rican

1 myself, thinking about how the struggle in the
2 African-American community is not dissimilar from
3 the struggles of any civil rights movement in any
4 community here in our great land.

5 So it has really fostered discussion
6 about the importance of equality for women, for
7 all people of color, for all who feel oppressed
8 or marginalized in a society which was built on
9 inclusiveness and should continue to be built on
10 that.

11 Anyone who believes somehow that
12 Black History Month is not necessary really
13 should think about how much more we still have to
14 do. You know, with all that we have with social
15 media now and with Twitter and other social media
16 platforms, we're able to see in real time that
17 there still continues to be really shameful
18 displays of bigotry on a community level.

19 And how do we combat that? We
20 combat that through education. We combat that
21 through understanding and really by showing that
22 this struggle that we all care so deeply about is
23 not specific to any one group, but is a struggle
24 that all of us should feel completely wedded to
25 because it is the American dream. And this

1 country was built upon stepping back and pushing
2 against oppression.

3 So I think it's important that we
4 continue to embrace that foundation of our
5 society, and this resolution and Black History
6 Month celebrations that we have all throughout
7 our nation are a testament to that need.

8 Thank you.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
10 Sanders.

11 SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you,
12 Mr. President.

13 To some, Black History Month may be
14 a deification of ancient glories, a time when we
15 get together and speak about victories of days
16 gone by. I would suggest that they misunderstand
17 what the month is about.

18 The month is actually a time where
19 we reflect on America, a time where we get a
20 chance to say -- to hold true that out of many,
21 we are one. A chance we have to look at how far
22 we have come.

23 Yes, there have been many steps and
24 stutters and pauses along the way, but the
25 American people have been able to move forward.

1 When we look at black history, when we look at
2 this month, it's not simply a month of black
3 people. Every part of the victories of the black
4 population here have been aided by good people of
5 every type -- of women, of whites, of Native
6 Americans, of Asians, of Latinos, of every
7 person, when we speak of this particular month.

8 Going further, my friends, I would
9 suggest to you that this is not a time where we
10 look to the past, but indeed a time that we look
11 to the future, that Black History Month is what's
12 happening now, how you live your life.

13 The children of Martin Luther King
14 and Malcolm X are best seen in the Black Lives
15 Matters movement, where people are saying that,
16 hey, the American Revolution is not finished. We
17 are not finished. This is a thing of beauty that
18 has to be forever replenished. I'm thinking of
19 some of the ancient patriots when I speak of
20 that.

21 So we are looking at things that,
22 every day, what you do is create this type of
23 history. That's why I'm glad that the people
24 from the YAI are here, where they are
25 participating -- that was a plug, my friends --

1 that they are participating in this type of
2 history where they're building things.

3 So I encourage all of us to renew
4 our faith in America at this time. We need to
5 renew it and make sure that the dreams so many
6 have died for, that we have a chance of making it
7 a reality. In this month and the next month and
8 the months to come, we need to say that all of
9 this is American history. We're reflecting on
10 the blacks, but at the same time you cannot have
11 American history without black history.

12 And with that being said, I shall
13 say no more.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
15 question is on the resolution. All in favor
16 signify by saying aye.

17 (Response of "Aye.")

18 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Opposed,
19 nay.

20 (No response.)

21 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
22 resolution is adopted.

23 Senator LaValle.

24 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,
25 can we take up previously adopted Resolution

1 3280, by Senator Ritchie, and read the title
2 only. And Senator Ritchie would also like to
3 open the resolution for cosponsorship.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
5 resolution is open for cosponsorship. If you do
6 not wish to be cosponsor, please notify the desk.

7 The Secretary will read.

8 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
9 Resolution Number 3280, by Senator Ritchie,
10 memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to
11 proclaim February 20-27, 2016, as Future Farmers
12 of America Week in the State of New York.

13 SENATOR LaVALLE: Would you
14 recognize Senator Ritchie.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
16 Ritchie.

17 SENATOR RITCHIE: Thank you,
18 Mr. President.

19 Today on both sides of the gallery
20 we have FFA students from across New York State
21 from 40 different chapters, including four from
22 my district, which is Belleville-Henderson, South
23 Jefferson, Canton and Carthage.

24 We also have the officers for
25 New York State, and they are Sara Millspaugh,

1 state president, from Albion; Emma Wegner,
2 vice president, from Schoharie; Kaylah Gulley,
3 treasurer, Greenwich; Tricia Jordan, secretary,
4 Greenwich; Lindsey Palmer, state sentinel,
5 Hamilton; and Erin Langdale, state reporter,
6 Warwick.

7 And I have to say every year I look
8 forward to FFA Day, because I'm so impressed with
9 the students that come, not just because of their
10 agriculture experience and how much they know
11 about it, but because of their abilities and the
12 fact that these are our leaders of the future.

13 I know that when I visit with many
14 of them from across the state, one of the things
15 that amazes me most is that I think many of us
16 believed in the past that the FFA students came
17 from farming families. That's not true today.
18 The students that come are from many different
19 families who have not had agriculture in their
20 past and who are now interested in producing a
21 career in the field.

22 So it's really quite enlightening to
23 see how much their teachers have taught them and
24 how they've encouraged them to look at the
25 opportunities to be part of the industry going

1 forward.

2 So I want to welcome all of you to
3 the chamber today, and I want you to know that
4 we're all very proud of you. We look forward to
5 what you're going to do in the future. And thank
6 you for coming.

7 Thank you, Mr. President.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
9 Little.

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

12 I'd like to join my colleague
13 Senator Ritchie and thank her for this
14 resolution.

15 And I too would like to express my
16 thanks to the Future Farmers of America, FFA, for
17 being here today and for all that they do -- for
18 all that their leaders do, for all that the
19 students who adopt leadership positions and learn
20 so much by being part of this great organization.

21 I have students today from Argyle,
22 Greenwich, Hartford, Chateaugay, Salem,
23 Cambridge, and Schuylerville Central Schools.
24 And as Senator Ritchie mentioned, not all of them
25 are from farm families. But the phenomenon of

1 the last 15, 20 years, when people want to know
2 where their food is coming from, has certainly
3 involved more and more people getting involved in
4 farmers markets and marketing of local produce
5 and all. And these students have just joined
6 that effort and have learned so much.

7 The program has grown so that there
8 are schools asking for ag programs, even though
9 they don't have a large number of farms in their
10 area, and the new distance learning programs are
11 beginning to do that.

12 So thank you to all the students
13 that are here. Thank you for your teachers,
14 advisors, and those who have helped you get to
15 this position. And good luck in the future.
16 Happy to have you here today.

17 Thank you.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
19 Stavisky.

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

22 I guess you're wondering why a
23 legislator from an urban, diverse county such as
24 Queens County would get up, first to thank
25 Senator Ritchie for introducing this resolution,

1 but also to speak on it.

2 Believe it or not, I represent the
3 largest chapter of the Future Farmers of America
4 in the state, and perhaps the country. We have a
5 high school in my Senate district, John Bowne
6 High School, that has an agricultural program,
7 and it's just a marvelous program. I met earlier
8 with the students and the teacher from the
9 Vernon-Verona-Sherrill Future Farmers of America,
10 and they were just terrific. They are the best
11 lobbyists you could have.

12 But I didn't need convincing,
13 because I have been to John Bowne many times, and
14 I'm very proud of my constituents, of the young
15 people, the assistant principal at John Bowne,
16 Steve Perry, who is a graduate of John Bowne, a
17 graduate of Cornell, and came back to teach
18 agriculture.

19 They have a farm, they have -- they
20 host the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill School District,
21 who has a very interesting maple syrup van, they
22 come, they exchange programs. And to me, this is
23 what education should be: Hands-on, and it's
24 something that brings us together as a state to
25 appreciate agriculture. You don't have to be

1 from a rural district.

2 So again, I thank you. And I
3 encourage all of people here from the Future
4 Farmers of America to continue, and let us all
5 work together in our common mission.

6 Thank you.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
8 Panepinto.

9 SENATOR PANEPINTO: Yes, I'd also
10 like to extend my congratulations and thanks to
11 the Future Farmers of America.

12 I didn't know about the group until
13 I got on Senator Ritchie's committee, and I'm the
14 ranker on Ag. And I've just been incredibly
15 impressed by the leadership of the young people
16 involved in FFA. And I got a chance to meet a
17 number of them at the hotel last night where I
18 stay at, they were having a dance downstairs.

19 And, you know, I think it builds
20 leaders across the board. And we have --
21 99 percent of the farms in New York State are
22 family farms, and we're giving these folks a
23 pathway to take over their family farms and
24 continue a \$6 billion industry in our state
25 through FFA.

1 So it's a tremendous organization,
2 we need to support it. And just to echo some of
3 the things Senator Stavisky had to say, they
4 brought around, you know, maple production
5 packets yesterday to my office. And I am a
6 tremendous supporter of Maple Weekend, which is
7 two weekends this year in New York State, the
8 weekend of March 16 and 17, and April 2 and 3,
9 and I'll be going to both weekends in my
10 district.

11 So thank you again, FFA.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
13 Akshar.

14 SENATOR AKSHAR: Thank you,
15 Mr. President.

16 I rise to thank my colleague Senator
17 Ritchie for this resolution.

18 And I had an opportunity,
19 Mr. President, to meet with about 25 students
20 this morning from FFA, and I found them to be
21 remarkably intelligent, inspirational, forward
22 thinking, and just a wonderful group.

23 So I want to thank my colleague
24 Senator Ritchie for this resolution, and I want
25 to welcome each of the students to the chamber.

1 It was a remarkable event this morning, and I
2 thank you for everything that you're doing.

3 I would encourage all of my
4 colleagues in this house moving forward to ensure
5 that we support Ag in the classroom and FFA-type
6 events.

7 Thank you.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Senate
9 would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the
10 students here with FFA.

11 Senator Comrie.

12 SENATOR COMRIE: I want to echo the
13 sentiments of my colleagues and thank Senator
14 Ritchie. I serve on the Agriculture Committee as
15 well.

16 I heard some very inspiring speeches
17 from the FFA students this morning. And I also
18 heard that we have a shortage of agricultural
19 teachers that are available and willing to teach
20 these students, to make sure that we continue
21 having an economy upstate, having young people
22 that are engaged and staying in New York State.

23 I was truly moved by what I heard,
24 and I want to compliment Senator Ritchie for
25 continuing to push the idea, to push to make sure

1 that the opportunities for young people upstate
2 to stay in farming are highlighted.

3 I want to thank her for doing
4 everything she can to make sure that all of us
5 are aware of those issues. And hopefully we can
6 help improve the ability of people that want to
7 be teachers, agricultural teachers, in this
8 budget, so that we can have more people that are
9 willing to stay in New York State and do work in
10 expressly farming.

11 Thank you, Senator Ritchie.

12 Thank you, Mr. President.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
14 LaValle.

15 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,
16 can we take up Resolution 3732, by Senator Funke.
17 Would you read the title only, and Senator Funke
18 would like to open the resolution for
19 cosponsorship. And then would you recognize
20 Senator Funke.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
22 Secretary will read.

23 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
24 Resolution Number 3732, by Senator Funke,
25 commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Wegmans

1 Food Markets, Inc.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
3 Funke.

4 SENATOR FUNKE: Thank you,
5 Mr. President.

6 When Leader Flanagan opened our
7 session a couple of weeks ago, he kind of went
8 through everybody's district and talked about
9 something unique in their districts. And when he
10 got to the 55th State Senate District, I was kind
11 of excited because he mentioned a jewel, not only
12 in our community but in all of New York State,
13 and that's Wegmans Food Markets.

14 With all due respect to my Central
15 and Western New York colleagues, Wegmans is
16 distinctly a Rochester claim to fame. When you
17 think of Rochester, you think of Wegmans. You
18 might also think of Kodak, Xerox and Bausch &
19 Lomb, but today we're talking about Wegmans.

20 Now, for those of you who don't have
21 a Wegmans in your area, let me start by saying
22 I'm sorry. You don't know what you're missing.
23 Also I understand that praising a grocery store
24 might seem a little over the top to some of you
25 here -- crazy, even -- but let me tell you a

1 couple of ways Wegmans is so important in our
2 community.

3 First, consider the fact that the
4 flagship Pittsford Wegmans, in the heart of my
5 district, isn't just a grocery store, it's a
6 tourist attraction. For those of us from
7 Rochester, it's not uncommon to bring our
8 out-of-town guests first to this beautiful,
9 state-of-the-art, 140,000-square-foot Pittsford
10 Wegmans, with its burger bar, coffer shop, sushi
11 buffet, giant bulk candy section, and on and on.
12 It is that good.

13 Now, we have a lot of great tourist
14 attractions in the Rochester area, including our
15 Strong National Museum of Play -- which happens
16 to have a mini-Wegmans inside.

17 Second, understand that Wegmans
18 doesn't just occupy space in our regional
19 economy, it drives it every single day. As our
20 region's third-largest employer, Wegmans employs
21 nearly 14,000 of our friends and neighbors. And
22 by all accounts, the company is a great place to
23 work, consistently ranked among the very best
24 places to work in America. In fact, it's
25 possible that the ones who love Wegmans more than

1 its employees are its customers, because they
2 have made it America's top company for consumer
3 satisfaction and brand loyalty.

4 But most of all, Wegmans says it
5 best when they say they are more than just a
6 chain of stores. They are giving back to our
7 neighbors and our neighborhoods each and every
8 day in my district. And they have done that for
9 generations, whether it's donations to the food
10 bank, whether it's providing jobs and
11 scholarships for young people who work there, the
12 Wegmans School of Nursing and Pharmacy at
13 St. John Fisher College, or Danny Wegman's
14 service as our cochair of our regional economic
15 development council.

16 The Wegman family name is synonymous
17 with community giving in our area. Bob handed
18 that down to Danny, who handed that down to his
19 daughters Colleen and Nicole.

20 So today as we celebrate 100 years
21 of Wegmans, I offer my most heartfelt thanks and
22 congratulations to everybody on the Wegmans team
23 for their incredible success and their service to
24 our community. Here's to a hundred more years of
25 Wegmans putting Rochester on the map and making

1 all of us very proud.

2 Thank you, Mr. President.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Seeing no
4 one else wishing to address the chamber, the
5 question is on the resolution. All in favor
6 signify by saying aye.

7 (Response of "Aye.")

8 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Opposed,
9 nay.

10 (No response.)

11 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
12 resolution is adopted.

13 Senator LaValle.

14 SENATOR LaVALLE: Can we recognize
15 Senator Comrie for a gallery introduction.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
17 Comrie.

18 SENATOR COMRIE: Thank you, Senator
19 LaValle. Thank you, Mr. President.

20 I just wanted to let the Senators
21 know that I have a group of students from my
22 district that are here from Pathways High School
23 in Saint Albans. They're here visiting, they're
24 up in the chamber today. They're a bunch of
25 young people that -- Pathways High School is a

1 college prep school, it's in my district, that
2 has an excellent program. They're young people
3 that are working hard to be the future leaders of
4 our community.

5 I just wanted to welcome them and
6 thank you for coming up and spending the day in
7 Albany. And I hope that you get to stop by every
8 office that you want to see. And I hope that
9 this will also encourage you to stay part of the
10 political process.

11 Thank you, Mr. President.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
13 LaValle.

14 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,
15 before we take up the last resolution, by
16 Senator Kennedy, I'd like to once again open up
17 for cosponsorship the resolutions by Senator
18 Ritchie and by Senator Funke.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
20 resolutions are opened for cosponsorship. If you
21 do not wish to be a cosponsor, please notify the
22 desk.

23 Senator LaValle.

24 SENATOR LaVALLE: Can we now take
25 up Resolution 3781, by Senator Kennedy, and read

1 the title only.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
3 Secretary will read.

4 THE SECRETARY: Legislative
5 Resolution Number 3781, by Senator Kennedy,
6 commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the
7 Buffalo Criterion.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator
9 Kennedy.

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

12 Today I rise to honor a
13 well-respected and venerable institution in my
14 district, the Criterion newspaper, on the
15 occasion of their 90th anniversary. It's fitting
16 that this resolution is being considered today in
17 February, as we celebrate Black History Month,
18 because the Criterion is the oldest continuously
19 published African-American newspaper in Western
20 New York.

21 The paper was founded in 1925 by
22 Frank E. and Carmelita Merriweather, with the
23 goal of providing a voice to the Western New York
24 African-American community. This voice was badly
25 needed, as most other newspapers published very

1 few -- if any -- stories relevant to the
2 African-American community. But the Criterion
3 was different. The paper sought to inform the
4 black community on issues of health, education,
5 employment, housing, religion and civil rights,
6 at a time when this information was not commonly
7 reported on.

8 Finding difficulty in securing
9 printing assistance, the Criterion was the first
10 central-city publisher in Western New York to own
11 a complete newspaper plant, with Linotypes,
12 printing presses, photoengraving equipment, and
13 news cameras.

14 Frank and Carmelita weren't deterred
15 by a challenge. They found a way to bring the
16 voice of the community to life. The Criterion
17 encouraged participation in the political
18 process, regardless of party affiliation, and by
19 urging readers to run for committee. Their
20 belief was that society and the community was
21 bettered through participation.

22 Early on, the Criterion went through
23 great expense to start picturizing minority
24 activities in Buffalo and Western New York, at a
25 time when few other papers sought to do so.

1 These pictures remain a valuable record in the
2 history of Western New York, the City of Buffalo,
3 the state, and the nation.

4 In 1959, Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.,
5 succeeded his father as publisher, continuing the
6 goals of the paper up until his death in 1995.
7 Leadership of the Criterion is continued today by
8 Frank Merriweather, Jr.'s wife, Evelyn, and it
9 remains a family affair. Frank and Evelyn's
10 daughters, Frances and Patty, serve as editor and
11 associate editor, and Frank E. Merriweather III
12 is photojournalist and public affairs director,
13 not to mention friend of everyone in the
14 community.

15 And, Mr. President, Buffalo has
16 shown an appreciation to the Merriweathers for
17 their contributions through the Criterion. A
18 branch of the Buffalo & Erie County Public
19 Library has been renamed for Frank E.
20 Merriweather, Jr. And a portion of William
21 Street in the heart of the City of Buffalo has
22 been renamed Frank E. Merriweather, Sr.
23 Boulevard.

24 Appreciating everything that the
25 family and the Criterion have done and

1 contributed to our community, we bring this
2 resolution forward here today celebrating the
3 90th anniversary -- soon to be the 91st
4 anniversary next month -- of the Criterion. And
5 I ask that this body recognize the immense
6 contribution to the Buffalo community, to
7 New York State, and to the historic record that
8 the Criterion and the Merriweather family has
9 played. Here's to another 90 years.

10 Mr. President, I vote aye, and I
11 would ask that this resolution be opened up for
12 cosponsorship. Thank you.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
14 question is on the resolution. All in favor
15 signify by saying aye.

16 (Response of "Aye.")

17 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Opposed,
18 nay.

19 (No response.)

20 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
21 resolution is adopted.

22 Senator LaValle.

23 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,
24 would you open the resolution for cosponsorship
25 by Senator Kennedy.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The
2 resolution will be open for cosponsorship. If
3 you do not wish to be a cosponsor, please notify
4 the desk.

5 Senator LaValle.

6 SENATOR LaVALLE: Can we go back to
7 motions and resolutions.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Motions
9 and resolutions.

10 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President, on
11 Senator Griffo's behalf, on page number 9 I offer
12 the following amendments to Calendar Number 6,
13 Senate Print Number 2722C, and ask that said bill
14 retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: So
16 ordered.

17 SENATOR LaVALLE: Is there any
18 further business at the desk?

19 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: There is
20 no further business before the desk.

21 SENATOR LaVALLE: Mr. President,
22 then I move that we adjourn until Wednesday,
23 February 24th, at 3:00 p.m., intervening days
24 being legislative days.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: On motion,

1 the Senate stands adjourned until Wednesday,
2 February 24th, at 3:00 p.m., intervening days
3 being legislative days.

4 (Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the
5 Senate adjourned.)

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