NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

March 22, 2016

3:28 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR THOMAS D. CROCI, Acting President

FRANCIS W. PATIENCE, Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Senate will come to order.

Color Guard, post colors.

(The Color Guard entered the chamber, advanced to the center of the room, and posted colors.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: If you will please join us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Ladies and gentlemen, would you please join me in a moment of silence for the victims of the terror attack in Brussels.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Thank you.

Color Guard, post.

(The Color Guard exited the chamber.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Today we are joined by Lieutenant Colonel Gary T.

Fischer, chaplain of the 10th Mountain Division, from Fort Drum, New York. He will give our invocation.

Colonel.

CHAPLAIN FISCHER: I invite you to pray with me.

Our precious heavenly Father, the tragedy in Brussels leaves us stunned. We ask that you would be with the people touched by that tragedy today, surround them with Your love and grace. And may we, as a nation, support and be there for them in their time of need.

We thank You for today, for the life that You have given to us, the richness of Your blessings, the freedoms we enjoy and the gracious, tender mercies.

In this grand chamber where the State Senate gathers, we pause to offer You gratitude for the gift of a great nation and the State of New York. Forgive us for our transgressions against You. Help those who have gathered here today to work together in the knowledge of Your truth.

I thank You for these leaders who are here by Your authority. Bless them and

their families. Give to them the wisdom, discernment, humility and guidance they will need in fulfilling the obligations and responsibilities entrusted to them. May they be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. May their weakness be the vessel of Your strength.

May the work that is accomplished promote your righteousness and peace throughout the great State of New York. So shall we make our nation great in goodness and good in its greatness.

Our solemn prayer is that You will guide us by your Word, that You will comfort us by Your presence, and that you will strengthen us by Your power.

In Your holy name, we pray. Amen.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The reading of the Journal.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: 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 DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: I move to adopt the Resolution Calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: All in favor of adopting the Resolution Calendar please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Resolution Calendar is adopted.

Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Mr. President, I move that the following bills be discharged from their respective committees and

be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause, all bills by Senator Funke: 3657, 3680, 3953, 4330, 4560, 4770, 5399.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: So ordered.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Also, Mr. President, I move that the following bill be discharged from its respective committee and be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause: Senate 5881, by Senator Murphy.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: So ordered.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Would you please now recognize Senator Gianaris.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Mr. President.

On behalf of Senator Montgomery, I move that the following bill be discharged from its respective committee and be recommitted with instructions to strike the enacting clause: Senate Bill 7045.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: So ordered.

Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Yes, could we now take up the previously adopted resolution that's Number 4370, by Senator Ritchie, read it in its entirety, and call on Senator Ritchie, please.

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

THE SECRETARY: Legislative Resolution Number 4370, by Senator Ritchie, memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 22, 2016, as 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day in the State of New York.

"WHEREAS, Fort Drum is located in Jefferson County, in Northern New York, and is the largest military installation in the Northeastern United States; and

"WHEREAS, Fort Drum is named for Lieutenant General Hugh Drum, a decorated national hero, former commander of First Army, and an early leader of the state's own volunteer militia, the New York Guard; and

"WHEREAS, For more than 30 years, Fort Drum has been home to the United States

Army's storied 10th Mountain Division; and

"WHEREAS, The 10th Mountain Division includes the Army's most deployed combat units, serving with honor, distinction and great sacrifice as a part of Operation Enduring Freedom and other actions central to our nation's response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; and

"WHEREAS, Elements of the 10th Mountain Division, based at Fort Drum in New York State, were first to be deployed in the aftermath of those attacks and, 13 years later, the last units to return from combat duty, so for the first time in more than a decade, nearly all of Fort Drum's soldiers and officers are back at home in New York State; and

"WHEREAS, 323 brave men and women who were members of the 10th Mountain Division and based at Fort Drum gave their lives in the cause of defeating global terrorism; and

"WHEREAS, The distinguished service of units posted to Fort Drum has been celebrated by presidents, members of Congress, and members of the international community; and

"WHEREAS, In addition to its vital

role in our nation's defense, Fort Drum is the largest single-site employer in the State of New York, and an economic engine for the state and region, with a direct impact of more than $1.2 billion in 2014, and more than $20 billion since the reactivation of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum; and

"WHEREAS, The 18,000 soldiers and officers of Fort Drum and their families are an integral part of the community, and are welcomed as neighbors, coworkers, classmates, friends and fellow New Yorkers; and

"WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to salute the soldiers and officers of the 10th Mountain Division, to honor their dedication to preserving our freedom and our nation, and to recognize their individual and collective contributions to our communities and to New York State; and

"WHEREAS, For the past five years, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day has served to educate members of this Legislative Body about the sacrifices made by the brave men and women of our armed forces, as well as the importance of the installation to our nation's

defense and New York's economy; and

"WHEREAS, Fort Drum has and will continue to play an important and essential role in ensuring our nation's military readiness to defend our state and nation against hostility and threats to our safety and national security; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 22, 2016, as 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day in the State of New York; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Brigadier General Paul Bontrager, Commanding General of Fort Drum."

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Yes, please recognize Senator Ritchie.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Ritchie.

SENATOR RITCHIE: Thank you, Mr. President.

And thank you, Colonel Fischer, for

your invocation, along with the members of the Color Guard for leading us in our Pledge of Allegiance today.

It is my honor to welcome to the Senate chamber the officers and soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division. And once again today, the tragic news from abroad reminds us how important our soldiers are to the security of our nation. This is the fifth Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Day in the State of New York.

Fort Drum Day grew out of the recognition that for many of my colleagues and for many New Yorkers, Fort Drum is just a little too far to travel and visit. So we bring a little bit of Fort Drum to Albany.

In the chamber today we are joined by a few of our 10th Mountain soldiers, including six New Yorkers. So as I call the New Yorkers, could you stand up, please?

First we have Captain John Goodwill, from Black River, which is my district. And I'll also share him with Senator Griffo, because apparently he's originally from Senator Griffo's district.

First Sergeant Donald Lindley, from

Albany.

Sergeant Jesse Deel, from Geneseo.

Private Matthew Fauci, from Millbrook.

Specialist Michael Gross, from Knox.

Specialist Robert Piwowar, from Elma.

And also I would like to note that Fort Drum's acting commander, General Bontrager, has a strong connection to New York. His wife, Kelly, is a native of Lackawanna.

These soldiers and officers are among 18,000 fighting men and women who call Fort Drum home -- but they are not all at home right now. As we stand here today, over 4,000 10th Mountain soldiers and officers, including Commanding General Jeffrey Bannister, are deployed in forward areas, from Afghanistan to Kuwait, Korea and more -- anywhere and everywhere freedom is threatened. I ask that you keep them in your prayers while they are away from family and country.

To the soldiers, I am proud to represent you and proud of your many accomplishments. I am also very aware of your

sacrifices. You don't have the easiest job in the world, but it may be the most important.

In closing, let me thank a few individuals who helped to make Fort Drum Day possible.

First, our leader, Senator Flanagan. I had the privilege of taking Senator Flanagan on a tour of Fort Drum last summer, and I think he agrees that it's a pretty impressive site, an important part of our state. Thank you, Leader, for your support of Fort Drum Day and the 10th Mountain Division.

I also would like to thank the organizations who are here from the community in the gallery today. Fort Drum's success in large part is a result of a strong partnership between the post and communities across the North Country.

And lastly, once again I'd like to thank General Bontrager, your staff and the soldiers who are joining us here today. We are grateful for all you do, and we are with you and stand behind you a hundred percent.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator

DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Could you please recognize Senator Flanagan.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Majority Leader Flanagan.

SENATOR FLANAGAN: Thank you, Mr. President.

I'd love to add my voice to that of Senator Ritchie. And these are the kind of days -- well, first of all, welcome to our house. Welcome to the New York Senate and the New York State Capitol -- all of which, frankly, belongs to you. And we have to remind ourselves of that periodically.

And the reason I say welcome to our house is because I know when I was given the privilege to visit your home, we were treated with dignity, respect, courtesy, and it was fantastic. We talk about Fort Drum. This is the fifth Fort Drum Day. Our colleague, your ambassador, Senator Ritchie, is your biggest champion, your strongest advocate, your greatest cheerleader, and for many, many reasons. And she is so proud of the fact is that she is able to represent you.

So when you are here, whether you're in this house or the Assembly, we hope that you are given the respect that you certainly deserve.

And I want to thank you on behalf of the New York State Senate and just add, you know, in light of what transpired today, the frailty of human life should always be something that we contemplate. That's the unfortunate news. The beauty of life is that we have the opportunity to live in a democracy, work in the great State of New York, and know that you have our back, under any circumstance conceivable, improbable or even unimaginable.

So I think that we owe you an extraordinary debt of gratitude for the service, the service that you have render. And I would ask if all of you gentlemen, including Brigadier General Bontrager, if you would please rise so we can give you an appropriate round of applause. Thank you very much for your service.

(Extended standing ovation.)

SENATOR FLANAGAN: Let me add one last thing very quickly. Brigadier General, one of your predecessors used the phrase that I've now heard a couple more times, and I think it's

characteristic of all the people who we just applauded: "I fight where I'm told and I win where I fight."

Thank you very much for your service.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Sanders.

SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I too must commend Senator Ritchie for doing a great service to all of us. To General Bontrager, to the officers, NCOs and the enlisteds, I commend you for great service. To be the most deployed unit in the Army is an honor, but one that brings its own sadness. It means that we have left a lot of people -- well, we have left -- we have taken them back home, but their spirit stays where we fought. And therefore it just cautions all of us that we need to be very careful moving our children into harm's way.

However, the attack in Brussels alerts us that this is needed, that we are -- you are absolutely needed, that there are those who, left to their own devices, would bring all kinds

of Hades here. And there has to be a line that says no, it's not going to come in. And more often than not, it's been the 10th Mountain Division. So I commend you for that.

The general, of course, was kind enough to give the rest of the Senate an invitation. He said not only would we be willing to come and visit, but he would do a one-day training for the Senate, that we can actually get out there and do a little something that the Mountain Division does. I suspect that he'll have us rappel from a mountain or two, or maybe we'll be dropped out of a plane. But maybe perhaps it's a little easier since it's a one-day.

I must admit -- and I'm very grateful that you gave me the chance to use the .50-cal machine gun. It was -- it is an amazing tool, and I thank you for it.

Having said those things, Mr. President, I again want to thank the 50 -- the .50 cal, mmm -- the 10th Mountain for their service.

Thank you very much.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator

Gallivan.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to also thank Senator Ritchie for helping to make this day possible, but really to the general and everybody at Fort Drum for making all things possible for us, for representing our state well, for representing our country, for representing our communities and allowing all of us to enjoy the quality of life that we have.

In particular, this is my sixth year, and I know this is the fifth year you guys have been here, our representatives have been here. I've never before had the honor of somebody from my district being here. So I just want to single out again Sergeant Deel, and Specialist Piwowar from my hometown and my father's hometown, and thank you for your service in making our state proud, our community proud, our state and our country.

God bless you.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Amedore.

SENATOR AMEDORE: Mr. President, I

rise to also echo the comments of my colleagues thanking Fort Drum and the soldiers and the leadership, also Senator Patty Ritchie for bringing such fine individuals, brave soldiers, and the best Americans that we know of.

You know, it's always a great day in the Senate when we have the opportunity to recognize the brave men and women in the armed forces. And I'm particularly proud to welcome two individuals who I represent in the 46th Senate District. The first is First Sergeant Donald Lindley, from Guilderland, right here in Albany County. Also is Specialist Michael Gross, from the town of Knox, also from Albany County.

And it's no doubt that we all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all of the men and women who are in uniform. I want to thank you for keeping us safe, for keeping us free, and for taking on the challenge.

God bless you all no matter where your path may lead you. Keep Him first, our country second, and thank you so much for your honor and dignity. God bless you.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator

Little.

SENATOR LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I would just like to thank Senator Ritchie for having this day, as she has begun this when she arrived here in the Senate. And I also thank you for coming down. But also thank you for the wonderful display in The Well and the opportunity for the men and women who are here in the Capitol to see what Fort Drum and what this Army division is all about.

I'm very proud of having you here, proud of having you in our state. I can't sit down without saying I do say "Go Navy" every day, but -- my son is deployed and is currently serving in the Persian Gulf as the CAG on the Truman Carrier. But he, like you, is willing to put himself in harm's way and has dedicated many years and made many sacrifices in his life to protect our country and protect all of us.

So thank you for your dedication, for your willingness to serve, and for the sacrifices you and your families make while you're serving.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Ortt.

SENATOR ORTT: Thank you, Mr. President.

I too want to thank my colleague Senator Ritchie for all the part you play in this day and bringing these brave soldiers to our house here in our state's Capitol.

And to all of you, I spent many a field exercise and a training exercise and many a night at Fort Drum. With all due respect to my colleague Senator Ritchie, I hated almost every minute of it when I was there.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR ORTT: However, as a New York State legislator, I understand the importance that Fort Drum is economically, not only to Senator Ritchie's district, but our whole state, as well as the importance from a national security standpoint.

But at the end of the day, Fort Drum would be nothing without the soldiers of the 10th Mountain. New York State is privileged to have its own division, I believe the only state that has its own division wholly within the

state. And so that is something we should be proud of, that is something we should be talking about.

And obviously, on a day like today, we are reminded of the risks of a free society. But we're also reminded of the men and women who will defend that freedom.

So I want to thank you for your service to our country. I want to thank you for raising your hand. No one made you, you did it of your own volition. And I also would like to ask you to keep me updated. My colleague Senator Sanders suggested that some members here might be rappelling. I would ask for a report from you, if you could keep me updated on how many of my colleagues volunteer to rappel. I would like to know that, if I could. I would be interested in that information.

But again, I want to thank you for what you do. Godspeed, God bless you and your families, wherever it may lead you. Hooah.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Díaz.

SENATOR DÍAZ: Thank you, Mr. President.

I also rise to join my colleagues in congratulating Senator Ritchie for what she's doing.

It is important for you guys to know, for everyone, especially young people to know how important it is what Senator Ritchie is doing today.

In 1960, 56 years ago -- 56 years ago, many of you were not even born. But 56 years ago, I joined the Army in Puerto Rico. And there was the Vietnam conflict, and I joined, volunteered. I joined the Army to fight for my country, to give my services.

And at that time we didn't have people like Senator Ritchie. At that time we have other kind of people. We had Jane Fonda, Hanoi Jane. We have those that treated us like criminals, those that called us murderers.

And when I went back to Puerto Rico in 1962, ladies and gentlemen -- that's why I'm so happy and I'm praising Senator Ritchie -- when I went back to Puerto Rico in 1962, they didn't receive me there. They didn't give me any credit. On the contrary, they were ashamed of me, because I was wearing the American Army

uniform. And all over the nation, people were criticizing and talking bad about the armed forces, and they didn't give us no credit.

But now, 56 years later, the environment has changed, and we have Senator Ritchie. And we have all of you. Nowadays, with dignity, with honor, with prestige, we praise our armed forces' members. We give them the credit. We recognize what they have done. We recognize that they are putting their life in danger, that they are sacrificing their life, their family, to protect our nation.

And we don't have no more Jane Fondas. We don't have no more Hanoi Janes. We have heroines like Senator Ritchie and all of you that come to open the door of this chamber to recognize what those gentlemen, the men of the armed forces of the United States, are doing.

Congratulations to all of you. You are heroes. You deserve it. You are giving your life, you put your time, you put your youth to protect this nation. And shame on those that treated us bad in those days. And praise those like Senator Ritchie.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Akshar.

SENATOR AKSHAR: Mr. President, thank you.

I rise as well to thank Senator Ritchie for this resolution and to thank the members of the 10th Mountain Division for being here with us today.

We have, on a regular basis, pretty spirited discussions in this house, and robust debates. And we do that because of the work that each of you do. You afford us an opportunity to do that. Each of you epitomizes honor, integrity, and service to others. A couple of weeks ago we talked about ensuring that we don't drape flags around issues. But today I think we can drape a flag around this issue and be proud of that.

So, General, I thank you for your leadership. I thank you for bringing an amazing group of soldiers with you today. I enjoyed my time I spent in The Well; thank you for allowing me to see all the equipment that you use. And thank you all for what you do, and God bless.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Seeing no others, Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Thank you, Mr. President.

You know, it's always a great fix for everybody in this chamber when we have representatives of the military here. Because all we see is things on a legislative calendar to try to fix a problem -- to fix a problem because somebody's not acting properly, or somebody isn't getting the support they should be getting, or something that isn't quite done right by individuals, to try to legislate changes.

And many times what we see is the hardships around this state. But when somebody and a group of people like you come here, that are solid, solid human citizens that are giving themselves up for others, we -- I, anyway, believe, and I think everyone in this chamber realizes the future of this country is secure as long as there are still people like you serving and people like you to serve as examples to everybody.

You know, we're proud of our first

responders. This group here, the 10th Mountain Division, is the first responder for the country just about for every trouble spot in the world. And they've been first responders and many times, many times first responders, not just going to a theater of war one time.

The courage is un -- I was in the Air Force for three and a half years during the Vietnam War. Thank God I never went into combat. I don't know what I would have done in combat. The concept is just so amazing to think you're there when people are shooting at you, trying to kill you.

But the courage you all have and the examples you give us, hopefully we can show back to you the fact that we stand on principle, we will make the hard decisions, and we will do the right thing for our country and for our state.

So thank you all for coming. Thank you, Senator Ritchie, for allowing us to have this great opportunity. And God bless all of you in all your future endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Hamilton.

SENATOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Chairman.

I just want to congratulate our men from the 10th Mountain Division for putting your lives on the line for our country. And I want to thank Senator Ritchie for this resolution.

Our country is going through difficult times right now. We're fighting all over the world. And I just -- my heart goes out to your family members who have let you go and fight for this country. We just had an attack yesterday morning, and so we're not even sure we're going to have military going overseas to fight.

But on another note, what I want to say is that -- and when you put your lives on the line and you fight for this country, when you come home, we should provide affordable housing for you. We should provide you with credits to go to college. We should make sure that we give you everything you need to be successful in this state.

But a lot of time men and women go into the military, they come back here -- in New York City many of our homeless are veterans

living on the street. And that's unacceptable.

As we stand here today and we give you the honor that's your due, when you do come home, we should honor you with affordable housing, we should honor you with subsidies to go to college for free.

So it's good that we stand here today and we honor you, but let's put action behind our words. Let's make sure no veteran should be homeless in New York State. Let's make sure no veteran who wants to go to school is denied it because he cannot pay for it.

So I just want to congratulate you for doing a job that others don't want to do, who like to walk behind you and wave the flag, but who will not put their lives on the line for this state or for this country.

And so we should give you everything that you need in order to be successful. At one point in time, the veterans had more rights as far as housing, as far as jobs, as far as getting preferential treatment, be it for the police department, be it for the fire department. You should be given credits -- if you put your life on the line and you go for a civil service exam,

you should be getting credits for your work in the armed forces.

So hopefully as we proceed in this chamber and we give you all the accolades for doing a great job, that we put into legislation and put money into supportive housing, into affordable housing for our veterans, and make sure that they get an education for free. For putting your lives on the line for this country.

God bless you all, and keep up the good work.

Thank you Mr. Chair.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: General Bontrager, the Senate chamber stands at your disposal, sir.

(Applause.)

GENERAL BONTRAGER: Thank you. Thank you very much. I speak on behalf of all the members of the division that are here, tremendously humbled by the reception that we have and the comments here just in the last few minutes. If you sense that it makes us a little bit uncomfortable, it is accurate. That's not why we're here. We don't serve because of that. We serve because we want to be ambassadors for

our nation and we want to do the hard work of our nation. So -- but it's not missed on us, and I do appreciate all the kind comments.

Good afternoon, and climb to glory. "Climb to glory," by the way, is our division motto. So if you do take us up on the offer to come and train with us, I'd be ready to climb. You might want to work some climbing into your physical training regimen; it might show up handy.

But moving on, Majority Leader John Flanagan, Conference Leader Jeff Klein, Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, thank you for allowing me this honor to be here today.

In particular, to Senator Ritchie and her staff, thank you once again for this invitation, for making this day possible, and for your continued support. It is an honor for our soldiers to travel here to their State Capitol to represent the Army that they serve so well. Today gives them a memory that they will not soon forget.

Again, I am humbled. What a privilege to address this distinguished body. I am here on the behalf of Major General Bannister,

the 35,000 soldiers, airmen, family members and civilians of the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum.

And for that matter, I'm here to represent the entire North Country. The North Country and Fort Drum are so closely intertwined that it is impossible to tell where one ends and where the other begins. We truly do live and serve as one.

The purpose of my brief message today is twofold. First, I would like to give you an update of your own 10th Mountain Division's current activities. And number two, I would like to express and communicate a sincere and heartfelt appreciation for the continued support of the New York State Senate, Assembly, and Governor for all that you do to show support for our mission and the entire Fort Drum and North Country community.

Point number one. I'm happy to report that all is well at Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division. We continue to be the unit of choice to solve our country's most pressing problems. We currently have more than 4,000 soldiers deployed all over the world -- to

include our commanding general, General Bannister -- and the division's headquarters. And while most of our soldiers are in the obvious hotspots of Iraq and Afghanistan, we also have soldiers in Korea, Kuwait, Qatar, Honduras, Haiti, Sinai, Italy, Kosovo, and four separate countries in Africa. It's amazing. Your very own 10th Mountain Division New York State citizens are truly globally engaged.

Simply put, the 10th Mountain Division remains the division of choice to solve the nation's most difficult dilemmas. For the past three decades, whenever a crisis required sending combat power to a foreign land, America turned to Fort Drum.

This truism was again manifest only a short time ago when an austere area of Afghanistan needed a quick infusion of U.S. Army combat power, the Army looked across the entire force and chose the most ready battalion, our very own Second of the 87th Infantry.

So again, the Fort Drum community stepped forward, we scheduled last-second touch-up training, we made sure that families were prepared to again send their loved ones off

into the unknown. And last month, our Second of the 87th Infantry Catamount Battalion stepped forward in the breach, and today they are standing as a force against evil in the austere southern plains of Afghanistan.

What makes the 10th Mountain Division the clear choice time and again is very simple: We are ready. We maintain a constant state of readiness that in my opinion is only possible because of our resources and partnerships in the North Country. We are one of the newest, most sustainable state-of-the-art installations in our nation's army. We are the premier site for training in the Northeast. We have year-round opportunities such as cold weather training, enhanced live-fire training opportunities, and open air space. Our Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield has 7,900 nautical miles of specially designated air space that is unique outside of the southwestern United States.

Our extensive partnerships with many National Guard and Army Reserve units enable many others to partner with us to include training with us on Fort Drum, with the ultimate goal of affording the Army with total-force options

beyond what only the active Army can provide.

Our partnerships with our North Country communities are also unique. I have lived on many other bases across America and the world; I have never seen community involvement and partnership like we have here at Fort Drum. We heavily rely on off-post medical facilities to provide our soldiers and their family members with healthcare, and we totally rely on off-post communities to provide education for our children, with over 7,000 military-connected children attending 78 schools in 19 school districts.

Because of how our Fort Drum community relies on off-post communities, we are drawn together. And this synergy, brought about by our mutual reliance and dependence, creates a powerful connection that makes us all stronger.

To wrap this up, your 10th Mountain Division continues to do more than her share to solve the world's problems, but we can only sustain our state of perpetual readiness through the unique opportunities afforded at Fort Drum and through the strength and partnerships of the North Country.

Point number two, a sincere and heartfelt thanks. Since arriving on Fort Drum last fall, I've either met or spoken with many of our local elected officials, just like the incredible reception that we have received here today. And without fail, each of them has offered complete support for anything that we may need, from legislative assistance to the most basic outreach support.

And I know that words are not hollow promises. You all are completely committed to Fort Drum, and I can feel that. A few examples.

Over the last few years, the Army has committed to ensuring that our soldiers transitioning out of the Army are afforded the best opportunities to find employment. We call this our "Soldier for Life" Transition Assistance Program. And here in New York, representatives from the Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, and transition counselors have stepped forward to work with employees from the Department of Human Resources to provide assistance to soldiers, families, veterans and retirees.

This program is also in constant

contact with statewide employers, economic development agencies, trade schools and universities to promote opportunities for these soldiers and their family members transitioning from active-duty life to civilian life.

We in the Army have a disciplined, values-based workforce who on the foreign battlefields have earned their rightful place in our civilian workforce. We owe it to them to provide employment opportunities right here in New York. Let us continue to infuse our civilian workforce with these young, disciplined patriots.

Another example is our Solar-Ready Vets program. Last month, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul traveled to Fort Drum for our first graduating class. This national training program is led by the U.S. Department of Energy to prepare veterans for post-military careers in solar-related occupations.

The Fort Drum program, which was created through collaboration with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and SUNY Canton, is the first of its kind in the state, and transitioning soldiers who graduate are ready to enter the solar industry, one of the

fastest growing industries in the state. This initiative will continue to create good jobs, bring investment to our communities, and ultimately protect the environment.

This is just one of several examples of how the relationship between New York State and Fort Drum is so valuable.

Finally, all of you. You have all repeatedly demonstrated support for Fort Drum, passing legislation to fund several key projects, hundreds of millions of dollars over the years for infrastructure improvements, housing projects, and transportation initiatives, the latest of which is an offer of $25 million for Route 26 improvements and construction of an overpass that will connect our cantonment area with our airfield.

All of this resulted in growth for Fort Drum while stimulating the local economy and enriching the lives of many in the North Country.

And the investment that Fort Drum provides is equally impressive. In 2015 alone, our projects, soldiers and families injected more than $1.2 billion into the North Country economy. And since 1988, this one lone Army installation

has infused more than $22.2 billion into the local economy. It is clear to see that New York is good for Fort Drum, and Fort Drum is good for New York.

From the millions of dollars of infrastructure to the effort that goes into programs to assist soldiers transitioning out of the Army, New York's continued investment in Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division does not go unnoticed. It doesn't go unnoticed by us, it doesn't go unnoticed by the North Country, and it does not go unnoticed by the senior leaders of the United States Army.

Let me close with a few final thoughts. Precisely like each of you, we are soldiers and we are here to serve. Together with you, we join in lives of service. But our challenges are not completely similar because, in the end, you work for our citizens while we work for our elected officials. Our elected officials are they who decide what we will do, when and where, and for what purpose we will do it. We rely on our elected officials to understand what it means to use us, what it means to order us forward into harm's way into a foreign land, and

to understand all that goes with those orders.

And I only mention this to highlight the individuals that we rely on to accomplish these missions. You sometimes hear older generations disparage America's youth. And while every generation has its challenges, I am not the least bit concerned with our current generation of young Americans, because young Americans that I know, the young Americans that I work with, are no different from our soldiers from any other generation. They are simply magnificent.

And if you doubt me, I invite you to spend time with our soldiers. Ask them why they serve. Come see firsthand those among us who have stepped forward, raised their right hand, and uttered the oath "I do solemnly swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, so help me God."

These young Americans represent every state, every territory of the Union. But make no mistake, when we are assigned to Fort Drum, we are New Yorkers, and we proudly represent this state.

Once again, on behalf of Major

General Bannister and all the 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum and the North Country, we are truly grateful for your ongoing support and we look forward to sustaining a valuable and mutually beneficial relationship between Fort Drum and the North Country region. I do solemnly swear, so help me God.

Climb to glory!

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Yes, could we please take up the noncontroversial reading of the calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Very well.

And Senator Ritchie has opened the resolution for cosponsorship. If you do not wish to cosponsor, please notify the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 70, by Senator Serrano, Senate Print 956, an act to amend the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 71, by Senator Valesky, Senate Print 639, an act to amend the Social Services Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 184, by Senator Little, Senate Print 6650A, an act to authorize.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the

last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect July 20, 2016.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 191, by Senator Young, Senate Print 3060A, an act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 220, by Senator Avella, Senate Print 1148, an act to establish.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 221, by Senator LaValle, Senate Print 1442A, an act to amend the Education Law.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill will be laid aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 234, by Senator Klein, Senate Print 1940, an act to amend the General Municipal Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 22. This act shall take effect the first of January.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59. Nays, 1. Senator Sanders recorded in the negative.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 245, by Senator Griffo, Senate Print 3132, an act to amend the Public Authorities Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 250, by Senator Griffo, Senate Print 6024A, an act to amend the Public Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the 60th day.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Hoylman to explain his vote.

SENATOR HOYLMAN: Mr. President, to explain my vote.

I'll be voting against this bill today. While it's important that we try to extend energy to underserved areas, we shouldn't be doing it on the back of consumers. We should be relying on the private sector, the unregulated private sector, to do what they're supposed to do.

And today, also, a report was issued by the Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics Journal, which shows that global warming is happening at an even greater rate than anybody would have imagined. The sea level was thought previously to rise in hundreds of years, but according to this new study by a group of 19 leading climate scientists, including James E. Hansen of the Columbia University Earth Institute, it's actually going to occur over the next 50 years.

This has the potential,

Mr. President, to create immense new powerful superstorms and of destroying, according to the report, virtually the entirety of the world's coastal cities. Forty-four percent of the world's population is at risk -- 123 million people in the U.S., 39 percent of the population of this country.

We shouldn't be facilitating the extension of fossil fuels. More importantly, we shouldn't have consumers pay for them. We should be researching ways to provide renewable energies to New Yorkers.

So I'll be voting no. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Hoylman to be recorded in the negative.

Announce the result.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 250, those recorded in the negative are Senators Dilan, Hoylman, Perkins and Sanders.

Ayes, 56. Nays, 4.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 257, by Senator Venditto, Senate Print 3840, an act to amend the General Business Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 258, by Senator Golden, Senate Print 4916A, an act to amend the General Business Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 307, by Senator LaValle, Senate Print 229, an act

to amend the Education Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59. Nays, 1. Senator Latimer recorded in the negative.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 334, by Senator Boyle, Senate Print 6740, an act to authorize.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59. Nays, 1. Senator Bonacic recorded in the negative.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill

is passed.

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

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: All right. Before I go on, I should have mentioned earlier that Senator Ritchie's resolution for Fort Drum should have been opened for cosponsorship. And can we do that now?

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Yes, Senator DeFrancisco, we made the chamber aware that anyone who does not wish to be a cosponsor should notify the desk.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: All right, can we now go back to motions and resolutions and take up previously adopted Resolution 3406, by Senator Griffo, read it -- (to Senator Griffo) title only? -- read it in its entirety and call on Senator Griffo.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Motions and resolutions.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Legislative Resolution Number 3406, by Senator Griffo, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the State University of New York at Potsdam, to be feted

with a year-long celebration.

"WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those institutions of true purpose and high achievement whose exemplary programs and accomplishments clearly demonstrate an enduring pursuit of excellence in higher education for the youth of this noble Empire State; and

"WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the State University of New York at Potsdam, to be celebrated with a myriad of events and festivities planned throughout the year; and

"WHEREAS, The State University of New York (SUNY) at Potsdam kicked off its bicentennial celebration during Welcome Weekend in the fall of 2015; the college's 200th birthday party will take place in March of 2016, highlighting the signing of the charter of St. Lawrence Academy in 1816; and

"WHEREAS, From its humble beginnings in a one-room schoolhouse, SUNY Potsdam has grown to become a leader in creativity, applied learning and educational excellence; and

"WHEREAS, More than 200 years ago,

settlers from the original colonies began to migrate to Northern New York; in need of new places to settle and farm, the New York Legislature posted lands which included Potsdam, for sale in 1786, two years before the colony became a state by ratifying the newly written United States Constitution; and

"WHEREAS, In 1806, the Town of Potsdam was officially incorporated; from that time on, the settlers and their families came, almost all from Vermont, pushing their way westward through the woods; and

"WHEREAS, The early settlers in Potsdam lived a difficult and uncertain life; however, the urge for progress prompted an early movement for education; in 1811, Benjamin Raymond paid for the construction of a small one-room building, which would serve as a church, schoolhouse and meetinghouse; and

"WHEREAS, On December 1, 1812, the residents of Potsdam sent a formal petition to the New York State Board of Regents to establish St. Lawrence Academy; unfortunately, the movement for incorporation coincided with the War of 1812; and

"WHEREAS, Despite the uncertain times, residents were determined to raise both funds and support for their academy; a subscription drive continued through the war, raising 'a liberal sum' by 1814, with 312 shares of $100 each invested in the enterprise; in addition, the town set aside 'literature lots,' which could be leased for a fee, with the proceeds intended for the benefit of the new college; and

"WHEREAS, On March 25, 1816, the charter founding St. Lawrence Academy was signed, and work could commence on the school; the trustees of the new institution had plenty of tasks ahead, first and foremost, hiring an instructor, as well as setting a curriculum, establishing tuition and finding room and board for students; and

"WHEREAS, Environmental hardships, brought on by a shorter than normal growing season, coupled with economic hardship coinciding with a nationwide recession, made for a meager first year for the new St. Lawrence Academy; with only one teacher, the school opened its doors to students for the first time on September 30,

1816; and

"WHEREAS, Even though the people of Potsdam were struggling, they realized the importance of education and who gave of their meager earnings to make the endeavor a success; appreciating the sacrifice of the residents, New York State gave special funds to support its teacher education program and to help construct a much-needed new building; and

"WHEREAS, As New York began to follow the Prussian-style model of Normal Schools, it was fitting that Potsdam, named after the capital of Prussia, rallied to win designation for one of these institutions; from there, the campus was absorbed into the State Teachers College System and finally into the newly created State University of New York system; and

"WHEREAS, As one of America's first 50 colleges, St. Lawrence Academy was at the vanguard of a new movement in education, as the curriculum shifted to meet the needs of new generations and a growing country; and

"WHEREAS, Through the years, SUNY Potsdam has always strived to be an innovator,

pioneering new curricula in teaching, music education, mathematics and computer science; the school has a proud history of educating New York's and the nation's future teachers and exceptional musicians; and

"WHEREAS, Today, SUNY Potsdam continues to thrive on its founding spirit of perseverance and community engagement which has persisted since its founding 200 years ago; under the visionary guidance of President Kristin Esterberg, Ph.D., SUNY Potsdam stands proud and prominent, always looking to the future and the needs of those it serves; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the State University of New York at Potsdam, noting the propriety of its goals, the constancy of its commitment, and the significance of its accomplishments in preparing the youth of today and leaders of tomorrow; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to President Kristin Esterberg, Ph.D., the State University of New York at Potsdam."

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Griffo.

SENATOR GRIFFO: Thank you, Mr. President.

I think it was important that that was read because this is a significant milestone in the college's history.

I also want to recognize, as I begin some brief remarks today, in attendance with us is the 16th president of the State University of New York at Potsdam, Dr. Kristin Esterberg.

Dr. Esterberg, if you'd please rise. Along with her are several students and members of the staff. If you will all rise, and maybe we can give them a round of applause.

(Applause.)

SENATOR GRIFFO: Thank you all for being here today.

I want to thank you again, too, Dr. Esterberg, for all of your leadership. During your beginning of your tenure at Potsdam State, you have many challenges, but you have an extraordinary talented staff. You are very energetic, and I know you possess the passion and the resources within you to have a great

presidency and to do some great things for this college. So we're proud of you and Potsdam State, and I thank you for being with us today.

This is an important part of the North Country. We heard today about Fort Drum, a very valuable military asset for our nation. Likewise, at the State University of New York at Potsdam, they play a significant role in the growth and the development throughout the North Country economically.

They are an outstanding college with an outstanding mission. They have done so many good things over time. One of the greatest things we recognize Potsdam for is the Crane School of Music, which was formed in 1886 by Julia Crane -- one of the first public institutions dedicated to the teaching of music in the State of New York. They have played a pivotal role in educating many well-known classical performers, some of which I would just mention.

Renée Fleming, who's an operatic soprano with the New York City Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. And she's performed at the Super Bowl; I think it was Super Bowl 48;

Stephanie Blythe, a mezzo-soprano, another regular performer at the Met; and Lisa Vroman, a a well-known performer who is recognized for her performances in the Phantom of the Opera and has a number of other stage credits on Broadway.

There are many other alumni worthy of merit because the college has produced many outstanding scholars and athletes and talented musicians over the years.

In 2014, we had the honor of unveiling a 97,000-square-foot performing arts center. With the help of this body, we were able to find those resources to put in the capital, thanks to the leadership of our Higher Education chairman, Senator LaValle. Those type of enhancements that allow SUNY Potsdam to continue to grow and to continue its contributions to the world of entertainment and the arts.

Some of the notable alumni, other notable alumni that I want to recognize today: Eileen Whelley, who's the executive vice president of human resources NBC Universal. The former coach of the Providence Friars, Tim Welsh, who reached the NCAA Tournament several times under his direction, and now a college basketball

analyst for ESPN -- who, I may add, are in the other chamber as we speak as they debate a bill that we had here previously. Also, Stephan Savoia, a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer for the Associated Press. These are some of the great alumni.

Two others are in this chamber: Senator David Valesky, and Senator Patty Ritchie, both distinguished alumni of the university.

So today, it's an honor to have you here, Dr. Esterberg, along with the students and other staff at Potsdam, to be here so we can recognize this bicentennial, all the things that you have done over time to create an academic presence of excellence. You are well renowned, not only for what you do as a higher education institution, but what you mean to the people who attend the college, who work at the college, and to the North Country.

So I just commend you. Happy 200, by the way. Potsdam is the oldest unit of the 64 campuses, but you still look pretty good.

So God bless you, happy bicentennial looking forward, and thanks for being here today.

And, Mr. President, I ask that we

extend the courtesies of the house to the president and the students and faculty and staff that are here.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Senate welcomes you, and we extend our congratulations and all the courtesies of the house.

The Senator has asked that the resolution be opened up for cosponsorship. If anyone does not wish to be a cosponsor, please notify the desk.

Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Yes. Could you also take up previously adopted Resolution 3624, by Senator Espaillat, read it in its entirety, and call on Senator Espaillat.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Legislative Resolution Number 3624, by Senator Espaillat, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York, Inc., on March 22, 2016.

"WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay

tribute to those organizations which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

"WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York, Inc., to be celebrated on Tuesday, March 22, 2016; and

"WHEREAS, For over five decades, the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York has fostered a spirit of unity, sportsmanship, and cultural pride for Dominicans living in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan and beyond; and

"WHEREAS, With a long history of immigration to the United States dating back to the arrival of Juan Rodriguez in New Amsterdam in 1613, successive generations of Dominicans have come to America in search of prosperity and to begin new lives; and

"WHEREAS, However, after the fall of the regime of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina in

the 1960s, many Dominicans emigrated to the United States in order to escape the widespread political persecution and social instability happening at the time in the Dominican Republic; and

"WHEREAS, Forced away from their loved ones to settle in the New York City boroughs of the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan, many Dominicans faced the challenges of an unfamiliar language, cultural customs, food, and climate, as well as a longing for what they had left behind; and

"WHEREAS, As a large number of Dominican immigrants began to settle in Washington Heights, one group of friends and domino game lovers began to create an organization for maintaining their cultural roots which converged on weekends at different apartments; and

"WHEREAS, At a meeting in the summer of 1964, a firm decision was made to form a social club to play dominoes and other games, emulating models established at that time in the Dominican Republic; the first interim board consisted of President Guaroa Well,

Vice-President Eduardo Payero, Treasurer Ramon de La Hoz, Victor Gil, Luis Cepeda, Conrad Guzman, Rafael Diaz and Rafael Innocent; and

"WHEREAS, On March 23, 1966, this new institution was incorporated in the New York State Capital in Albany, New York, as the Dominican Sports Club; a permanent club location was selected at 2186 Amsterdam Avenue, and its members also established statutes and rules to govern the handling of its operation under its first president, Guaroa Bueno; and

"WHEREAS, As its membership continued to grow, the Dominican Sports Club began to encourage its members to assess and understand their homeland from a new social perspective; the organization also welcomed its first partners: Geraldo Espinal, Ramon Garcia, Mario Jose Nunez, Francisco Perez, Octavio Jimenez, Jose Rodriguez, Miguel Payano, Salvador Garcia, and Rafael Vargas; and

"WHEREAS, Over the years, the Dominican Sports Club, now the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York, Inc., has remained steadfast in its commitment to helping its countrymen express themselves and channel their

energies in a spirit of friendship and cultural pride, while also striving to make a difference in the Dominican immigrant community; and

"WHEREAS, Today, the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York, Inc., is not only respected for its achievements in traditional sports activities like dominoes, but is also known for fostering great athletes in such disciplines as softball, bowling, billiards, ping pong, and karate; and

"WHEREAS, The success of the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York, Inc., is in direct correlation to the efforts of its members and staff, whose involvement is and always has been characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of this institution and the community it serves; and

"WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when cultural organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York, Inc., noting the significance of its unremitting efforts, and wishing the organization continued success for many years to come; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center of New York, Inc."

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Espaillat.

SENATOR ESPAILLAT: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise -- unfortunately, we rose today heavy in heart with the events that occurred in Brussels. But, you know, we move forward, and we received men and women of the armed forces here, and of course another presentation made from an academic institution in New York State.

And it's telling that a nation is not just bounded by its boundaries, it's made up of people. And therefore we move forward as a

nation, and we recognize those that have done well for our state and our country. And so we recognized the armed forces, academia, and now I stand to recognize community.

And by that I mean the Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano, which celebrates tomorrow, on the 23rd, its 50th anniversary. That is a sports and cultural club that engages the community in sports activity from softball to bowling to karate. They also engage in dominoes and other games, and engage families in a day-to-day effort to ensure that they do the right thing.

And so they've been around for five decades, a half a century. And that is telling. And that contributes also in many ways to strengthening the state and the country, to strengthening communities across New York City and this great state.

And so they're here, I believe for the first time. It is a fitting day for them to be here, as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. And they have been right in the middle of the community. They have been community-based and provided day-to-day

activities for people that come from the Dominican Republic, from all walks of life, from the Caribbean they go to Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano, and they engage in positive activities. They strengthen our communities.

And they are here represented by the current president, Milagros Vasquez, a woman who's here with us today; also the secretary, Santiago Cruz, is here. And the governor of the club is Cristina Rodriguez. And also, welcoming the three ladies here, Sandra Espaillat -- yes, Espaillat -- who was the president, the first woman president, in 2006.

In addition to them, we have in the balcony a healthy delegation from the club, with several of the past presidents, including Juan Morales Santana, from 1993; you have also Salvador Espaillat, 2003; you have Daniel Martinez, from 2010; you have Jorge Reynoso from 2004, Pedro Nieves, 2007; Rafael Dris Pimentel, 2015; Silvestre Acevedo, 2014; and Carlos Leerdam, 2012.

These are the former presidents that are here for this very important institution, which today is 50 years old. And so we're happy

to have them here, Mr. President. We hope that you extend them the courtesies of this house.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Díaz.

SENATOR DÍAZ: Thank you, Mr. President.

Once again, ladies and gentlemen, once again, I go back to history. Today this great Dominican who sits to my right, this great Dominican, Senator Adriano Espaillat, is bringing today to this chamber members of the Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano because they are celebrating 50 years of life, half a century.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, the Dominican community is a very strong and faithful community. Not 50 years ago. Today the Dominican community has power, political power in the state, in the City of New York. Not 50 years ago. Today, the Dominican community counts, with Senators, Assemblymembers, City Councilmembers, judges, lawyers, all kinds of personalities in different stations in life -- but not 50 years ago. Today the Dominican community is looked up to for every candidate for elected official for

their support -- but not 50 years ago. Today, today, the Dominican community is part of any political issue of anything that is done in the City of New York -- but not 50 years ago.

Why am I saying not 50 years ago, Mr. President? Because 50 years ago they were not known. But there was groups, groups like the Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano, 50 years ago. When nobody was around. When Espaillat was not around, when Senator Díaz was not around. With no Senators, with no judges, with no Assemblymembers, with no City Councilmembers, the Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano was there, fighting, opening doors, taking all the heat. Opening doors so the Dominican community today could have such a strong position.

So therefore, therefore, Mr. President and ladies and gentlemen, we have to honor, we have to recognize groups like the Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano and the past presidents that have been fighting the good fight and that have been opening doors for the Dominican community.

Today we're here celebrating 50 years, 50 years. Adriano, I don't know, where

were you 50 years ago? But 50 years ago, the Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano was fighting the good fight.

And today (to guests) -- today, madam president, and to the governor and to the secretary and to all you past presidents, let me tell you two paragraphs from the International Dominican. It says like that: {in Spanish}.

To you, Dominican men and women that have been fighting the good fight, that have been opening doors for 50 years, God bless you all. Thank you for coming here today.

And thank you, Senator Espaillat, for bringing this magnificent group, the Club Deportivo Cultural Dominicano, to this chamber on its 50-year anniversary. God bless you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

(Applause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Senate welcomes you and congratulates you on your 50th anniversary, and extends to you all the courtesies and privileges of the house.

Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: I just had a question. How many years has it been?

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: I believe the Senator stated 50, Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Okay. Senator Espaillat has opened this for cosponsorship to the entire floor.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The resolution is open for cosponsorship. If you do not want to be a cosponsor, please notify the desk.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Now can we go back to take up the one bill on the controversial calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Secretary will ring the bell.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 221, by Senator LaValle, Senate Print 1442A, an act to amend the Education Law.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Explanation.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Krueger.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Explanation, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Yes, I'd be happy to.

Could you bring this over to Senator Krueger?

So as many of you know, there are several configurations of the formation of a school district. There's a less than eight teacher, called a common school district; there is union free; and a central high school district as well as a central district. We're talking here about a central high school district.

There are central high school districts in Nassau County. And during my tenure here, we created a central high school district in Suffolk County. So in other parts of the state, central high school districts -- not to be confused with centralized districts -- are formed.

This legislation -- and I gave to Senator Krueger a map of the south fork of my district, and we're talking basically about East Moriches and going forward. And we have many districts that are either common school districts or union free districts.

I've been a leader in the state in

reorganization and trying various ways of getting school districts to come together to join together in an efficient way. In Suffolk County, as I had indicated, we have the central high school district law -- and again, it's in Nassau County, I don't believe it exists anyplace else in the state -- and we specifically talk about the districts that potentially would like to come together in a central high school district. Those districts are either common school districts or union free.

So we list them here. Why do we do that? Because the Assembly, in discussions, wanted to know -- they thought there was some clandestine reason that we had indicated that the districts not be contiguous. But if you see the map, there are districts that would like to -- if you look at the legislation, they're not contiguous -- but would like to join together in an organizational structure called a central high school district.

And that's it. It's very straightforward. We believe that reorganization does two things -- in some cases, saves money, but we also know that it provides, it provides a

good education or a better education that those districts can offer rather than stay on their own. So that's it, Senator.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Krueger.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you. Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR LaVALLE: Of course.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The sponsor will yield.

SENATOR KRUEGER: So I want to thank the sponsor for the explanation and the map. I also actually got some maps printed out for me, because I knew we would be talking geography and I always need maps for that.

So I appreciate the explanation of Suffolk law and what is a central school district for high schools. What I don't understand is why do you need this bill to allow noncontiguous school districts to combine? Is there a problem with contiguous school districts combining?

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator

LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: They could do that already. Through you, Mr. President, they could do that already.

But right now as I'm working, my sleeves rolled up, with these districts, they're listed there because those are districts that would like to come into some potential configuration called a central high school district.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Will the sponsor continue to yield?

SENATOR LaVALLE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The sponsor will yield.

SENATOR KRUEGER: So this bill lists out quite a few school districts in your section of Suffolk County. Can all of them become one central school district under this bill if they want?

SENATOR LaVALLE: No. Senator -- Senator --

SENATOR KRUEGER: Yup.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Through the chair, Senators.

SENATOR LaVALLE: I keep repeating myself because there's a reason. We are not creating a centralized district --

SENATOR KRUEGER: Central high school.

SENATOR LaVALLE: -- we are creating or would like to create a central high school district.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Through you, Mr. President, the sponsor is correct. I misspoke.

Under this bill, can more than -- can all of the districts listed form one central high school?

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: So will the sponsor continue to yield for a question?

SENATOR LaVALLE: Under --

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator LaValle --

SENATOR LaVALLE: -- under my original bill --

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator

LaValle, will you continue to yield for a question?

SENATOR LaVALLE: I do. Through you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Thank you.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Senator, in my original bill the answer would have been broader than the districts listed here, but the Assembly wanted to line out the specific districts.

So these districts are itemized in the legislation but would not include districts on the North Shore, Shelter Island, Fishers Island, way up at the top of your map that is closest to Connecticut than it is to the parent town of Southold. So -- yeah, I mean -- I think the Assembly felt more comfortable knowing what the districts are.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor will continue to yield.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Will the sponsor yield for a question?

Yes, proceed.

SENATOR KRUEGER: So yes, I see on

the map and from the bills the list of the groups of the different school districts that might be interested in creating a central high school.

One question -- through you, Mr. President -- is, is the Senator talking with all the school districts listed in the bill about combining for one high school, or is it some subset? In which case, why aren't those districts itemized out within this?

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Through you.

We started in East Moriches, if you look at your map, and we went out to Montauk. One of the districts that we included here is Bridgehamton. Bridgehamton is probably the least likely -- if Bridgehamton came running forward and said, Senator LaValle, we want to be part of the newly formed central high school district, I would pass out with such surprise.

But we listed them because we wanted to show a pathway from East Moriches out to Montauk. So East Moriches is in the western part of the East End of my district. And Montauk, you can't go any further; you're in the Atlantic

Ocean going to England.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor will continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Will the Senator continue to yield?

SENATOR LaVALLE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Krueger.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

So I'm looking at the map and I'm listening to the sponsor describe the various school districts that might potentially go into some kind of deal to have a central high school with noncontiguous district lines skipping over certain towns but including others. But there's one school district on this chart that doesn't seem to be listed in the bill, the Eastport-South Manor School district.

SENATOR LaVALLE: There's a reason for that.

SENATOR KRUEGER: That was my question.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator -- Senator, through the chair, please.

Is the question finished, Senator Krueger?

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you, may I just finish.

So yes, so why would we not include a school district that is between East Moriches and Remsenburg-Speonk?

SENATOR LaVALLE: Okay.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: So I'm going to answer your question, through the chair, but then I would like you to answer me why are we going through this -- I mean, why don't you tell me what is your real question or problem with this bill?

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator, through the chair, please.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Because, Senator, I don't -- it's a very straightforward bill.

Now, I've indicated to you that I've been very -- I've put forth a lot of ideas to reorganize school districts, and I work with them on an annual basis. And I try every creative idea that you can come up with.

So a number of years ago, about 18 years ago, I had a notion that there were two districts -- there were actually four. There were four school district that should have come together. And what we did is for 18 torturous months, I worked with four school districts toward a reorganization plan. One of the districts was Eastport, one of the districts was South Manor, one of the districts was East Moriches, and one of the districts was Center Moriches. Eighteen months, once a week for 18 months.

And so what we did is we actually used the central high school district idea, and then we went from a central high school district to a central district. So the very district you just mentioned is a reorganized school district, having taken Eastport and South Manor.

The other two districts had presidents of their boards that were attorneys and, in the eleventh hour, after having spent 17 months at the negotiating table, said, Well, you know, I don't know if this is the best for our district, and they bailed out.

And I pleaded with them that they

were not negotiating a personal injury settlement and, number two, that their school taxes would spike. And that's exactly what happened. Both districts, Center Moriches and East Moriches, faced increases in their real property taxes. At one point or another after turning down joining Eastport and South Manor, their taxes spiked 30 percent or more in both districts.

So -- but if you can really get around and ask me a question here to get -- it's like you're look at some clandestine reason for this bill, and there is none. But I'm willing to answer whatever question.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: I would remind the members to please address all remarks through the chair.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Krueger.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you, Mr. President. Through you, I appreciate the sponsor's answers.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Will the Senator continue to yield for a question?

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator LaValle?

SENATOR LaVALLE: Of course I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Krueger.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

So my concern -- and I will phrase it as a question to the Senator -- is that allowing noncontiguous communities to work together to create central high schools and leaving out others within the geographic area puts us in a position of potentially allowing communities --

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Is there a question, Senator Krueger?

SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes, there is a question, thank you.

It puts us in a position in this bill of allowing communities that might have commonalities of higher-income, lower --

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator, are you asking if -- are you asking that of the Senator?

SENATOR KRUEGER: I am asking. I haven't finished the question. But he was asking

me why am I asking this.

So I am saying -- through you, Mr. President -- if we allow, as this bill would do, noncontiguous school districts to be allowed to combine into central high schools, the risk -- and this is the question for the sponsor -- the risk is we could actually lock out poorer children in sections within a specific geographic area so that they could not participate in a central high school. Which means we would say we want this town's high school students, we want this town's high school students, but we don't want the students in between in our high school. Because perhaps they are lower-income, perhaps they are of color, perhaps we don't think they're like our kids.

So my concern and my question to the Senator is, how would we prevent that kind of situation from happening if this became the law and individual school districts who were not contiguous could choose to package themselves as, one, locking out others who may end up being in much worse financial shape under these kinds of deals?

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator

LaValle.

SENATOR LaVALLE: Senator, I started off by saying that under the law as it had existed, only contiguous districts -- and the reason I gave you the map is so that you could see that there are districts that are not contiguous that would like to enter this situation.

So that's why we have this bill before us, because districts, because they were not contiguous, were excluded.

Now, I had indicated to you that the one district that would not -- they are happy to be their own entity -- is the School District of Bridgehamton.

Now, from -- and I'm guessing, I know you visited the East End of my district. And you get to see some of the larger homes in Bridgehamton, but there's a whole other side of Bridgehamton. And they love, they love having their own high school in Bridgehamton and wouldn't -- wouldn't reorganize with anyone.

So this is very straightforward. It will allow all of those districts along that fork, it will create one contiguous,

tied-together -- that if they want, if they want to reorganize in a central high school district, they will now have that ability.

It doesn't force them. It doesn't force anyone to do this. But it takes away the one piece that never allowed them, and that's the word -- removing the word "contiguous." So now they're all -- they need not be contiguous.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Through you, Mr. President, on the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Senator Krueger on the bill.

SENATOR KRUEGER: I don't actually think the Senator answered my last question, even though he urged me to ask it, which was should we be concerned that school districts could jump over other school districts to get to the ones they like and not have to work with the one right next door, which might be a population of children and their families who they don't wish to work with. I think that isn't really very good public policy.

I'm not going to disagree that he may know for a fact Bridgehamton doesn't want to share its schools with anyone. My understanding

is Southampton and Tuckahoe have attempted a merger unsuccessfully in some way, shape or form, and Tuckahoe apparently has a lower-income population.

There was another explanation for the Eastport-South Manor story, but that is a district that has a high fiscal stress category and a significant number of black and Latino children in the school district.

I don't know what the reasons would be that certain school districts would want to work together towards one high school and other districts might not want to, or why a school district would desperately want to work with another one and would be told no.

I don't actually think it's a good idea for the Legislature to independently create its own set of rules for noncontiguous districts. I actually think there are a lot of questions that need to be answered when school districts can't or won't work together for the betterment of students and cost-efficiencies.

And so I do think that it should be left up to the State Education Department to evaluate each request and to stop and say, you

know, this might work for this town, but it certainly isn't going to help the town next to it, it will actually make it much worse if it's skipping over and doing a joint venture with the other community two towns over or three towns over.

It also raises questions about transportation costs of how far are you going to move the kids. Those may be resolvable, but I think when you're looking at regional questions like this within the context of Suffolk County, your result shouldn't allow specific school districts out of the process where SED has to come and evaluate and discuss what's going on.

And while I accept that the Senator's argument is there's just this one town, Bridgehamton, right there in the middle of this district who doesn't want to work with anybody around them, I don't know that that's the only story when you have so many school districts on a list in a bill and you are saying "don't have to have contiguous central high schools."

And I worry that we might find the outcomes are not at all what you might think if we were to pass this bill. And so I am urging a

no vote. I am not saying I would not agree with any specific proposal that might be made. But we're not getting a specific proposal made, and we're not having a chance to hear SED's position on whether it would be good education policy or open up a new can of worms that we might not have the information to deal with here today.

So I'll be voting no. Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Seeing no one else wishing to speak, the debate is closed and the Secretary will ring the bell.

Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: While we're waiting for Senators to come here, there was some confusion on the Republican side whether there was conference after session. There is not. Conference will be tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: Announce the result.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 221, those recorded in the negative are Senators Dilan, Espaillat, Hamilton, Hassell-Thompson, Krueger, Montgomery, Parker, Perkins, Persaud and Rivera.

Ayes, 50. Nays, 10.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The bill is passed.

Senator DeFrancisco.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: Is there any further business at the desk?

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: No further business before the desk.

SENATOR DeFRANCISCO: In that case, I move to adjourn until Wednesday, March 23rd, at 11:00 a.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT CROCI: The Senate stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 23rd, at 11:00 a.m.

(Whereupon, the Senate adjourned at 5:17 p.m.)