

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10 January 9, 2019

11 1:10 p.m.

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14 REGULAR SESSION

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18 LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR KATHLEEN C. HOCHUL, President

19 ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

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

2 THE PRESIDENT: The Senate will  
3 come to order.

4 I ask everyone present to please  
5 rise and join me in reciting the Pledge of  
6 Allegiance.

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

9 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

10 Our invocation today will be given  
11 by the Reverend Erwin Trollinger, pastor of  
12 Calvary Baptist Church in White Plains,  
13 New York.

14 REVEREND TROLLINGER: May we bow  
15 our heads.

16 Gracious Father, we thank You for  
17 this time and this event that You have called us  
18 into. We've come to this moment in humble  
19 reverence. We acknowledge Your will, Your plan  
20 and Your potential that you have placed in every  
21 elected and appointed official in this place.

22 Today, Father, fifty years ago You  
23 orchestrated the swearing-in of the first  
24 African-American woman into the United States  
25 House of Representatives. And we are here now

1 in this chamber to witness your orchestration of  
2 the first African-American woman to become the  
3 Majority Leader of the New York State Senate.  
4 For this we say thank You, for allowing us to  
5 witness this moment, this time and this moment  
6 of history that You have shown up and shown out.

7 Bless now this woman, this mother,  
8 this Senator, and now this Majority Leader.  
9 Grant her the wisdom that she will ask You for,  
10 grant her the knowledge that she will seek You  
11 for, grant her the understanding that she will  
12 pray for.

13 I pray also, Father, for every  
14 elected official in this Senate, that You may  
15 guide them to help New York State to be a good  
16 place.

17 I also pray for our Governor and  
18 his cabinet.

19 And lastly, Father, I pray that You  
20 will allow our Majority Leader, our Governor,  
21 and our State Assembly that they will be that  
22 three-strand cord that cannot be easily broken.

23 I ask you, Father, to grant this  
24 prayer based upon the Africans that were  
25 captured, based upon the survivors of the

1 Middle Passage, based upon the humanity that was  
2 enslaved, based upon the sharecroppers, based  
3 upon the women's suffrage movement, based upon  
4 those who engage in civil rights, based upon the  
5 immigrants of all generations that are here with  
6 us now, based upon our senior citizens and our  
7 children.

8 Grant this prayer in the words that  
9 I have spoken with the motto of "Excelsior":  
10 Upward, reaching onward and higher goals.

11 In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

12 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you,  
13 Reverend.

14 The chair now hands down a message  
15 from the State Board of Elections, being the  
16 duly official certification of the members of  
17 the Senate, and directs the same be filed. So  
18 handed down and so ordered.

19 I'd also like to ask if there are  
20 any Senators present who have not taken their  
21 oaths of office, to please rise at this time.

22 (No response.)

23 THE PRESIDENT: Seeing none, the  
24 Secretary will call the roll to ascertain that a  
25 quorum exists.

1 THE SECRETARY: Senator Addabbo.  
2 SENATOR ADDABBO: Here.  
3 THE SECRETARY: Senator Akshar.  
4 SENATOR AKSHAR: Present.  
5 THE SECRETARY: Senator Amedore.  
6 SENATOR AMEDORE: Present.  
7 THE SECRETARY: Senator Antonacci.  
8 SENATOR ANTONACCI: Present.  
9 THE SECRETARY: Senator Bailey.  
10 SENATOR BAILEY: Present.  
11 THE SECRETARY: Senator Benjamin.  
12 SENATOR BENJAMIN: Present.  
13 THE SECRETARY: Senator Biaggi.  
14 SENATOR BIAGGI: Present.  
15 THE SECRETARY: Senator Boyle.  
16 SENATOR BOYLE: Here.  
17 THE SECRETARY: Senator Breslin.  
18 SENATOR BRESLIN: Present.  
19 THE SECRETARY: Senator Brooks.  
20 SENATOR BROOKS: Present.  
21 THE SECRETARY: Senator Carlucci.  
22 SENATOR CARLUCCI: Present.  
23 THE SECRETARY: Senator Comrie.  
24 SENATOR COMRIE: Present.  
25 THE SECRETARY: Senator Felder.

1                   SENATOR FELDER:     Here.  
2                   THE SECRETARY:     Senator Flanagan,  
3       excused.  
4                   Senator Funke.  
5                   SENATOR FUNKE:     Here.  
6                   THE SECRETARY:     Senator Gallivan.  
7                   SENATOR GALLIVAN:   Here.  
8                   THE SECRETARY:     Senator Gaughran.  
9                   SENATOR GAUGHRAN:   Present.  
10                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Gianaris.  
11                  SENATOR GIANARIS:   Here.  
12                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Griffo.  
13                  SENATOR GRIFFO:     Here.  
14                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Gounardes.  
15                  SENATOR GOUNARDES:   Present.  
16                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Harckham.  
17                  SENATOR HARCKHAM:   Here.  
18                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Helming.  
19                  SENATOR HELMING:    Here.  
20                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Hoylman.  
21                  SENATOR HOYLMAN:    Here.  
22                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Jackson.  
23                  SENATOR JACKSON:    Here.  
24                  THE SECRETARY:     Senator Jacobs,  
25       excused.

1 Senator Jordan.

2 SENATOR JORDAN: Present.

3 THE SECRETARY: Senator Kaminsky.

4 SENATOR KAMINSKY: Here.

5 THE SECRETARY: Senator Kaplan.

6 SENATOR KAPLAN: Here.

7 THE SECRETARY: Senator Kavanagh,

8 excused.

9 Senator Kennedy.

10 SENATOR KENNEDY: Here.

11 THE SECRETARY: Senator Krueger.

12 SENATOR KRUEGER: Here.

13 THE SECRETARY: Senator Lanza.

14 SENATOR LANZA: Here.

15 THE SECRETARY: Senator LaValle.

16 SENATOR LaVALLE: Here.

17 THE SECRETARY: Senator Little.

18 SENATOR LITTLE: Present.

19 THE SECRETARY: Senator Liu.

20 SENATOR LIU: Here.

21 THE SECRETARY: Senator Martinez.

22 SENATOR MARTINEZ: Here.

23 THE PRESIDENT: A quorum is

24 present.

25 In keeping with the tradition of

1 this chamber, it's my honor, as the President of  
2 the New York State Senate, to welcome you to this  
3 2019 session.

4 And I'd first of all like to  
5 acknowledge the presence of the distinguished  
6 guests we have here. We have our New York State  
7 Comptroller Tom DiNapoli in our midst.

8 Thank you for joining us,  
9 Comptroller.

10 (Applause.)

11 THE PRESIDENT: And on this very  
12 special occasion we have the senior women of the  
13 Cuomo administration, as well as the first-ever  
14 female Secretary to the Governor, Melissa DeRosa.

15 Thank you for joining us here today.

16 (Applause.)

17 THE PRESIDENT: Each January for  
18 the past number of years, I've stood from this  
19 unique perch and looked out and seen a chamber  
20 filled with individuals with a passion for public  
21 service. And I also pay tribute to those who sat  
22 in these seats in the past. And while they may  
23 no longer answer the roll call, they should be  
24 proud of the difference that they made for their  
25 constituents as they held the honorable title



1 "New York State Senator."

2 To those who are returning, I hope  
3 you never lose that sense of awe that every one  
4 of us felt upon entering these majestic chambers.

5 And so to our returning veteran  
6 Senators -- and indeed, it's amazing to see how  
7 people have risen in seniority -- welcome back.  
8 As I visit all 62 counties every year, it's  
9 incredible to witness the pride that each one of  
10 you have in the districts you're proud to  
11 represent, and the people you represent.

12 We gather here fully embracing the  
13 weighty responsibilities entrusted to us by the  
14 electorate. And whether you were drawn to public  
15 service because there was a wrong you wanted to  
16 right or an injustice you wanted to correct or a  
17 challenge that your community was facing or you  
18 simply had the desire to leave the world a better  
19 place, to all of you, on behalf of Governor Cuomo  
20 and myself, I say thank you for your service and  
21 look forward to serving with you in a  
22 collaborative fashion.

23 But to the new class of 17 Senators,  
24 I look out and I see something I've been waiting  
25 for far too long, and that's a lot of women. A

1 lot.

2 (Cheers; sustained applause.)

3 THE PRESIDENT: Twenty, in fact --  
4 up from 13 since we last gathered -- nearly one  
5 out of three.

6 And this body is also more  
7 ethnically, racially, religiously and culturally  
8 diverse than at any time in the 242-year history  
9 of the State of New York.

10 (Applause.)

11 THE PRESIDENT: And that in itself  
12 gives each of us such a tremendous sense of  
13 pride.

14 But I know each of us is fully aware  
15 that it's more important than just making  
16 history, it's that we make a difference. And  
17 that's why you travel here, leaving spouses and  
18 families, and moms and dads saying goodbye to  
19 children who aren't quite sure why mom and dad  
20 are missing some important milestone, and in some  
21 cases leaving newborns. I know there's a lot of  
22 newborn babies among us. Senator Benjamin,  
23 Senator Thomas, and the appropriately excused  
24 Senator Jacobs, who I think has a one-day-old  
25 baby.

1                   So you're missing family milestones,  
2     important parts of lives. So to your families,  
3     to all the families gathered here today, I thank  
4     you and recognize the sacrifice that you also  
5     make to allow your loved one to come here and to  
6     pose ideas and debate them and to pass  
7     legislation, legislation that shows the rest of  
8     the nation that indeed our great State of  
9     New York can lead in enhancing the lives of  
10    others and promoting progressive values.

11                  And while I know no one ran for  
12    office to break down barriers, on this day we  
13    welcome the very first Indian American, the first  
14    Iranian American, the first Taiwanese American  
15    and the first Muslim to these chambers. I think  
16    those breakthroughs deserve a round of applause  
17    as well.

18                  (Enthusiastic applause.)

19                  THE PRESIDENT: And in a matter of  
20    minutes, listen closely: We're going to hear the  
21    shattering of this ceiling, the last great  
22    frontier, as we break down that ceiling and this  
23    body elects the most capable, the most  
24    battle-tested, and the most qualified person to  
25    be its leader. Who, by the way, happens to be a

1 woman and a woman of color. Senator Andrea  
2 Stewart-Cousins, we're here to honor you as well.

3 (Cheers; extended standing ovation.)

4 THE PRESIDENT: Leader Cousins, I  
5 know that you inspire me personally, and all the  
6 women in this room. But more than that, you've  
7 proven to every little girl in this state, brown,  
8 black or white, that there are no more barriers  
9 to hold them back because they can now look to  
10 our state leadership for inspiration, that the  
11 leader of the Senate is a woman, that two out of  
12 four of the statewide elected officials, the  
13 Attorney General and the Lieutenant Governor, are  
14 women.

15 (Applause.)

16 THE PRESIDENT: And down the hall,  
17 the majority leader of the New York State  
18 Assembly is a woman.

19 So a new day has dawned in our  
20 Capitol, and each and every one of you will  
21 remember that you were here when history was  
22 made.

23 And may we never forget why we  
24 gathered on this frigid January day in the  
25 Capitol of the greatest state in the nation, and

1 know that when we break on hopefully a warm,  
2 sunny day in June and we gavel out the  
3 242nd session, that the people of New York will  
4 know that each and every one of you honored your  
5 sacred oath of office that you took here today,  
6 serving the people of New York to the very best  
7 of your abilities.

8                   Congratulations.

9                   (Applause.)

10                  THE PRESIDENT: I'd also like to  
11 recognize and applaud the presence of our great  
12 Assembly Speaker. Carl Heastie is here as well.

13                  (Applause.)

14                  THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris,  
15 the floor is yours.

16                  SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon  
17 and thank you, Madam President.

18                  I believe there is a resolution at  
19 the desk, Resolution Number 1, and I ask that it  
20 be read and move for its immediate adoption.

21                  THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will  
22 read.

23                  THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution  
24 by Senator Gianaris, providing for the election  
25 of Andrea Stewart-Cousins as Temporary President

1 of the Senate for the years 2019-2020.

2 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris,  
3 you may speak on the resolution.

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Madam  
5 President.

6 And thank you to everyone who has  
7 chosen to be with us on this historic day, and  
8 congratulations to all my colleagues who are with  
9 us in the chamber again.

10 In almost two and a half centuries,  
11 the chambers housing New York's State Legislature  
12 have seen a lot. They have seen coups, they have  
13 seen ejected members, they have seen dueling  
14 sessions on this very floor. They have seen  
15 coleaders, they have seen coalition leaders.  
16 They have seen indicted leaders. Yet in  
17 241 years, the one thing neither house of our  
18 state government has ever seen is a female  
19 leader -- until today.

20 (Applause.)

21 SENATOR GIANARIS: Our historical  
22 embarrassment ends today with the election of  
23 Andrea Stewart-Cousins as our Majority Leader.  
24 And what a great leader she will be.

25 When we act properly, this body

1 should select as leader the Senator among us who  
2 represents the best of us, and Andrea  
3 Stewart-Cousins is that person. Not just because  
4 she possesses two X chromosomes, but because she  
5 is uniquely suited to lead at this moment in  
6 history, a moment when our nation is in crisis  
7 and the best hope for America is found in our  
8 state governments.

9           Andrea Stewart-Cousins understands  
10 what responsible leadership requires of us  
11 because her judgment and sober perspective are  
12 second to none. Indeed, I have never known  
13 anyone better at knowing when to temper emotions  
14 and when to fuel them, at knowing when to react  
15 angrily to injustice and when to forgive errors  
16 in judgment, at knowing when to put carrots on  
17 the plate and when to break out the stick.

18           Hers is a measured judgment born of  
19 a lifetime of experience destined for this day.  
20 Raised in New York City public housing, but also  
21 decades as a resident of one of our great  
22 suburbs. Someone who has felt discrimination up  
23 close and personal, and who authored  
24 Westchester's first human rights laws. Now  
25 representing a district that is simultaneously

1 home to the poorest and the wealthiest of our  
2 state and everything in between.

3           This experience provides her the  
4 knowledge of what all New Yorkers require: A  
5 government that is more responsive and  
6 accountable to the needs of its residents;  
7 increased access to healthcare; better education  
8 for our children; more affordability for our  
9 tenants and our homeowners alike; and, above all  
10 else, the integrity to restore the public's faith  
11 in our state government.

12           Years of public service clearly  
13 establish Andrea Stewart-Cousins' high ethical  
14 barometer and steady moral compass, traits that  
15 are more important today than they've ever been.  
16 I promise you this. Our selection of Andrea  
17 Stewart-Cousins as Majority Leader will be one  
18 that we can be proud of and will never regret.

19           My colleagues, after 241 long years,  
20 it is time to turn the page in this chamber and  
21 begin a new chapter. It is time for the  
22 proverbial "three men in the room" to say goodbye  
23 to everything they thought they knew about how  
24 government should be run.

25           (Laughter; applause.)



1                   SENATOR GIANARIS:    The winds of  
2   change are sweeping a fabulous scarf into your  
3   room, and things will never be the same.

4                   (Laughter.)

5                   SENATOR GIANARIS:    It is finally  
6   time for a woman's touch in the highest position  
7   in this body.  My colleagues, it is time for  
8   Andrea Stewart-Cousins to serve as  
9   Majority Leader.

10                  Thank you.

11                  (Cheers; applause.)

12                  THE PRESIDENT:    The question is on  
13   the resolution offered by Senator Gianaris.  All  
14   those in favor signify by saying aye.

15                  (Response of "Aye.")

16                  THE PRESIDENT:    Opposed?

17                  (Response of "Nay.")

18                  THE PRESIDENT:    The ayes have it.  
19   The resolution is adopted.

20                  (Cheers; sustained standing  
21   ovation.)

22                  THE PRESIDENT:    At this time  
23   Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins will come forward  
24   and be sworn in as Temporary President of the  
25   Senate by Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, and joined

1 by her family.

2 CHIEF JUDGE DiFIORE: Senator,  
3 please place your left hand on the Bible and  
4 raise your right hand and repeat after me: "I do  
5 solemnly swear" --

6 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: I do  
7 solemnly swear --

8 CHIEF JUDGE DiFIORE: -- "to  
9 support and uphold the Constitution of the  
10 United States" --

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- to  
12 support and uphold the Constitution of the  
13 United States --

14 CHIEF JUDGE DiFIORE: -- "to  
15 support and uphold the Constitution of the State  
16 of New York" --

17 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- to  
18 support and uphold the Constitution of the State  
19 of New York --

20 CHIEF JUDGE DiFIORE: -- "and to  
21 faithfully discharge my duties as  
22 Temporary President and Majority Leader of the  
23 New York State Senate" --

24 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- and to  
25 faithfully execute my duties as

1 Temporary President and Majority Leader of the  
2 New York State Senate --

3 CHIEF JUDGE DiFIORE: -- "to the  
4 best of my ability" --

5 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- to the  
6 best of my ability --

7 CHIEF JUDGE DiFIORE: -- "so help  
8 me God."

9 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- so  
10 help me God.

11 (Tumultuous cheering; extended  
12 standing ovation.)

13 THE PRESIDENT: Congratulations --  
14 and I've been waiting to say these words --  
15 Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.  
16 Congratulations.

17 (Cheers; applause.)

18 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris.

19 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,  
20 can you please recognize Leader Stewart-Cousins  
21 for opening session remarks.

22 THE PRESIDENT: Indeed, I'm happy  
23 to.

24 Majority Leader Andrea  
25 Stewart-Cousins, please come forward and deliver

1 your opening remarks.

2 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank  
3 you. Thank you.

4 (Applause; laughter.)

5 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS:

6 (Ascending to dais.) Thank you. Thank you,  
7 thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

8 Thank you. This is incredible.

9 And first and foremost, I want to  
10 thank God. Because frankly I consider myself  
11 being here amazing grace. Amazing grace.

12 (Applause.)

13 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And I am  
14 eternally humbled and grateful for the  
15 opportunity.

16 I want to thank the Lieutenant  
17 Governor, my friend Kathy Hochul. It has just  
18 been such a pleasure to work with you over the  
19 years, and I know we will continue to work to do  
20 great things for New York. Thank you.

21 I also, as I was thanking our  
22 Reverend Trollinger, thank you for that beautiful  
23 prayer. Reverend Trollinger is somebody who is a  
24 spiritual mentor for everyone in Westchester.  
25 Thank you so much for being here.

1 (Cheers, applause.)

2 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: I want to  
3 thank my deputy, Senator Gianaris, for your kind  
4 words and certainly for all the work you've done  
5 on behalf of our conference. Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And  
8 Senator Griffo, I know this year is going to be a  
9 good one for all of us, and I look forward to  
10 working with you to make sure that New Yorkers  
11 are served in the very best way. Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: I'm also,  
14 obviously, looking forward to a great partnership  
15 with the Governor, Governor Cuomo. We've had a  
16 wild ride --

17 (Laughter.)

18 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- but  
19 I'm sure we will work together on our shared  
20 agenda for New York.

21 (Applause.)

22 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And of  
23 course I know my comptroller friend -- we always,  
24 you know, point out our Comptroller because, as I  
25 say, he's the best comptroller in the whole

1 country. And he also signs the checks.

2 (Laughter.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: But Tom,  
4 thank you so much for all that you've done. And  
5 again, I'm looking forward to working closely  
6 with you.

7 (Applause.)

8 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And of  
9 course my partner. (To Speaker Heastie.) I know  
10 you finished up your session so that you could be  
11 here.

12 SPEAKER HEASTIE: (Inaudible.)

13 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Well, I'm  
14 really, really so happy that, again, we will have  
15 the kind of partnership we have. I'm looking so  
16 forward to it. Thank you so much for your  
17 leadership.

18 (Applause.)

19 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: So I'm in  
20 awe. I stand here in awe of everything that has  
21 happened.

22 First of all, my conference:

23 39 members strong. Wow. Wow.

24 (Cheers; applause.)

25 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We have

1 15 new members. Wow.

2 (Cheers; applause.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We have  
4 14 women in our conference. Wow.

5 (Cheers; applause.)

6 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And in  
7 this chamber, 20 women. Wow.

8 (Cheers; applause.)

9 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: You know,  
10 when you think about it, not that long ago women  
11 weren't even allowed to walk on the floor of  
12 these chambers.

13 So just because this is a visual we  
14 have not seen, can all the women please stand?  
15 Please stand. Please stand.

16 (Cheers; applause.)

17 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: It's been  
18 amazing. Amazing.

19 So anyway, as I said, I have 15 new  
20 members. And because I get a chance to introduce  
21 all of my new members, I want you to just bear  
22 with me. Because these people are going to  
23 change New York, so you need to know who they  
24 are.

25 So let me start with Alessandra

1 Biaggi.

2 (Cheering; applause.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: She's  
4 already earned a reputation as a fierce advocate  
5 for women's rights, fighting against sexual  
6 harassment. I look forward to her serving as the  
7 Senate's Ethics Committee chair and working to  
8 clean up Albany and rebuild the voters' trust.

9 Next I want you to meet Jim  
10 Gaughran. Jim?

11 (Cheers; applause.)

12 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Jim has  
13 decades of experience in the public sector in  
14 public service and will be vital as the chair of  
15 the Committee on Local Government.

16 Next I want you to meet Andrew  
17 Gounardes.

18 (Applause.)

19 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Andrew's  
20 got a life, too, of public service, and his  
21 commitment to providing a stronger voice for the  
22 residents of Brooklyn is outstanding.

23 Thank you, Andrew.

24 (Applause.)

25 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And I



1 want to you to meet Pete Harckham.

2 (Applause.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Pete  
4 Harckham's experience in public office is going  
5 to be of great value, and we look forward to  
6 working with him, I especially as a fellow  
7 Westchester County representative.

8 So thank you, Pete.

9 (Applause.)

10 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: I'm  
11 honored to welcome the first -- and we talked  
12 about, the Lieutenant Governor talked about a lot  
13 of firsts, and we've got a lot of firsts. And so  
14 I'm welcoming the first Muslim State Senator,  
15 Robert Jackson.

16 (Applause.)

17 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Robert is  
18 a powerful advocate for education fairness.

19 And Robert, we're lucky to have you  
20 in the Senate.

21 Join me in welcoming Senator Anna  
22 Kaplan.

23 (Applause.)

24 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Another  
25 first: The first Iranian American elected to the

1 State Senate. Anna will continue her service to  
2 Nassau County families and will work tirelessly  
3 to help grow Long Island and the New York  
4 economy.

5 (Applause.)

6 THE PRESIDENT: Let us welcome --  
7 we're not done yet with our firsts. Let us  
8 welcome Senator John Liu, the first Chinese  
9 American.

10 (Applause.)

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: John Liu  
12 has a depth of knowledge and experience that will  
13 benefit all of his constituents and all  
14 New Yorkers.

15 Next, another first: Senator Monica  
16 Martinez.

17 (Applause.)

18 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: The first  
19 Salvadoran Senator. Dedicated her life to public  
20 service, education, and a wonderful addition to  
21 this body. And I know she'll fight hard for  
22 Long Island families.

23 Looking forward to working with  
24 Senator Rachel May. Rachel. Rachel is chairing  
25 the Committee on Aging, and she will work

1 diligently to serve our seniors and represent  
2 upstate families and communities.

3 Thank you, Rachel.

4 (Applause.)

5 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Pleased  
6 to introduce you to Jen Metzger. Jen Metzger  
7 from the Hudson Valley, she's chair of the Senate  
8 Agricultural Committee, and she'll help our  
9 farmers and agribusinesses grow and prosper while  
10 also protecting the environment and natural  
11 resources.

12 (Applause.)

13 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Another  
14 first, Zellnor Myrie.

15 (Applause.)

16 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: First  
17 Costa Rican Senator. He understands affordable  
18 housing, a crisis that's facing many New Yorkers.  
19 And as the Election Committee chair, he'll move  
20 our state forward to empower voters and cut red  
21 tape. Zellnor Myrie.

22 (Applause.)

23 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Next, I  
24 want you to meet Jessica Ramos.

25 (Applause.)

1                   SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS:    Jessica  
2   has strong roots in her community, and I know  
3   that her leadership, especially as Labor chair,  
4   will be crucial for our progress and success.  
5   Jessica Ramos.

6                   (Applause.)

7                   SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS:    I want  
8   you to meet Senator Julia Salazar.

9                   (Applause.)

10                  SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS:    Julia's  
11   activism in civil rights and immigration will be  
12   important as we address many crucial issues  
13   facing New Yorkers.  She'll be a fierce advocate  
14   for her district and for all of us.

15                  (Applause.)

16                  SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS:    Now, both  
17   Senator Ramos and Senator Salazar are firsts as  
18   well:  The first Colombian Senators in the  
19   State Senate.

20                  (Applause.)

21                  SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS:    Senator  
22   James Skoufis.

23                  (Laughter; applause.)

24                  SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS:    Senator  
25   Skoufis is willing and eager -- and really

1 willing and eager --

2 (Laughter.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- to  
4 stand up and fight powerful interests and corrupt  
5 politics in Albany. He's already proven to be a  
6 great representative in the Hudson Valley when he  
7 was in the Assembly, and we're looking forward to  
8 him delivering real results for his community.

9 Thank you, Senator Skoufis.

10 (Applause.)

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And last  
12 but not least, another history-maker, the first  
13 Indian American Senator, Senator Kevin Thomas.

14 (Applause.)

15 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Senator  
16 Thomas has made history joining his colleagues in  
17 a diverse Senate Democratic majority. His  
18 experience fighting for the less fortunate and  
19 ensuring fairness and opportunities will make him  
20 a truly exceptional Senator for Long Island and  
21 all of New York State.

22 (Applause.)

23 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: So there  
24 you have all the new members.

25 And, you know, we're all sort of

1     lavishing praise on all our new members, but I  
2     want to thank, obviously, the members who have  
3     been through a lot. And thank you all for being  
4     strong and steadfast and committed and for really  
5     being the critical glue that made this moment  
6     possible. Thank you all so very much. What an  
7     honor to serve as your leader.

8                     (Applause.)

9                     SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And I  
10    know that Senator Griffo will get a a chance to  
11    more appropriately introduce the new members, but  
12    I do want to welcome Daphne Jordan --

13                    (Applause.)

14                    SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- and --  
15    Daphne, stand up -- and Bob Antonacci. Hi, Bob.

16                    (Applause.)

17                    SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Welcome.

18                    Okay. So now I'll just talk a  
19    little bit about this day. And, you know, as I  
20    reflect on what this day means, I think of  
21    opportunities and barriers. I think of all the  
22    giants whose names we know -- Sojourner, Harriet,  
23    Susan, Eleanor, just to name a few, Shirley --  
24    and the sacrifices that they made to make this  
25    moment possible.

1                   And I also think about the giants in  
2 my life. You've heard, many of you before, about  
3 my parents, Beryl and Bob. My father was a World  
4 War II hero who served in a segregated army. He  
5 won medals for his country and for his valor and  
6 then came back home and was denied many things,  
7 even the GI bill, because of the color of his  
8 skin.

9                   I think of my mother, a woman who,  
10 because of her gender and her race, was not given  
11 a fair shot. She always wanted to be a lawyer,  
12 but that opportunity, for so many reasons, was  
13 denied her. She typed a hundred words a minute  
14 but was denied even an opportunity to work in a  
15 corporation or private business. So she entered  
16 the workforce through civil service and made her  
17 mark in New York City government.

18                  I think of my brother, Bobby, a  
19 Vietnam War veteran who's accomplished so many  
20 things in his life, always supporting, the  
21 bedrock of the family.

22                  I think of my late husband, Tom, and  
23 all of his sacrifices that he made so that I  
24 could pursue opportunities and dreams. I wish he  
25 were here with me today to see all that I've

1 accomplished.

2 But I have our children, Kevin and  
3 Steven and Candice, and their beautiful families,  
4 my grandchildren. And we all know that our  
5 families sacrifice so much for us to do this. So  
6 I thank you for having been patient and loving,  
7 and I am so very grateful that you are here with  
8 me in this special moment. And I love you, love  
9 you very much. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Since our  
12 nation's founding, those chosen by the people to  
13 lead our government have faced the choice of  
14 traveling down two paths, the path of putting up  
15 barriers or the path of creating opportunities.

16 We know all too well which path some  
17 of today's leaders have chosen. We need only to  
18 look at Washington, where the administration has  
19 embraced the path of putting up barriers to the  
20 extreme. It has literally shut down the federal  
21 government to build a wall.

22 But not all barriers are that  
23 obvious. Sometimes, even in seemingly  
24 progressive places like New York, barriers still  
25 exist. We are going to break down some more



1 barriers.

2 (Applause.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We are  
4 going to tell the rest of the country that  
5 New York is about opportunities. Not barriers,  
6 not walls, not division. Opportunity.

7 How are we going to tell them?  
8 We're going to tell them by making democracy  
9 work. We're going to implement early voting,  
10 combat voter suppression --

11 (Applause.)

12 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- make  
13 registering to vote easier, allow voting by mail.  
14 We're finally going to give New Yorkers an  
15 honest, functional, ethical government that they  
16 deserve.

17 We'll restore the public trust by  
18 closing the LLC loophole, reforming our campaign  
19 finance system, making sure state contracts are  
20 fully vetted, and shining a light on how  
21 government works.

22 We're going to continue to build our  
23 economy and create new jobs, we're going to stop  
24 the exodus from our state, and we're going to  
25 make sure all of New York -- upstate, downstate,

1 urban, suburban, rural -- grows economically.

2 (Applause.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: While our  
4 national government vindictively uses the tax  
5 laws to punish our state, we're going to lower  
6 our tax burden for middle-class New Yorkers and  
7 make the tax cap permanent.

8 (Applause.)

9 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We're  
10 going to reduce mandates on local governments.  
11 We're going to help our small businesses,  
12 including MWBEs, thrive. We're going to make  
13 sure that New York laws recognize that women's  
14 rights are human rights.

15 (Applause.)

16 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We will  
17 pass the Reproductive Health Act. We will pass  
18 the Reproductive Health Act --

19 (Cheers; applause.)

20 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- and  
21 comprehensive contraceptive care.

22 I stand here the first woman leader  
23 of a legislative house in state history. And if  
24 we do this right, I cannot and will not be the  
25 last. Cannot and will not. But let me make my

1 voice clear. We need to deal with the scourge of  
2 sexual harassment in the workplace.

3 (Applause.)

4 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We cannot  
5 let this moment and movement pass. We will hold  
6 hearings, and we will hold all accountable.

7 In this chamber, we will stand up  
8 for our LGBTQ community and pass real  
9 protections, including GENDA.

10 (Cheers; applause.)

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We will  
12 stand up for our immigrant brothers and sisters  
13 and make sure their rights are respected and  
14 protected. This is New York, after all.

15 (Applause.)

16 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We'll  
17 make sure our children and every New Yorker has  
18 access to quality affordable healthcare. We'll  
19 make sure all New York children have access to  
20 quality education that they deserve and that all  
21 our children have access to quality, affordable  
22 higher education.

23 (Applause.)

24 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We are  
25 going to pass the DREAM Act.

1 (Cheers; applause.)

2 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And we  
3 are going to name the bill for our former  
4 colleague José Peralta, who championed this bill.

5 (Standing ovation.)

6 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We're  
7 going to stand up for victims of child sexual  
8 abuse and finally pass the Child Victims Act.

9 (Applause.)

10 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We're  
11 going to protect tenants and ensure that we  
12 provide affordable housing throughout New York.

13 (Applause.)

14 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We're  
15 going to reform our criminal justice system.  
16 We're going to pass bail reforms, speedy trial,  
17 ensure our system treats everyone equally.

18 We're going to lead the way in  
19 keeping our families safe from guns and gun  
20 violence. We're going to keep guns out of the  
21 hands of dangerous individuals, fix our flawed  
22 background check process, pass safe storage  
23 legislation, and ban bump stocks.

24 (Applause.)

25 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: We will

1 have bold investments in our infrastructure,  
2 which has been neglected for far too long. That  
3 means restoring MTA to an international transit  
4 model, improving roads and bridges and tunnels  
5 across our state.

6 And again, we believe in science and  
7 understand the dangers of climate change. We're  
8 going to work together to protect our  
9 environment.

10 (Applause.)

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: I could  
12 probably stay up here for hours. Colleagues,  
13 this is just part of an ambitious agenda, and  
14 there's no -- and there's nothing to stop us and  
15 so much more we have to accomplish. But we've  
16 been sent here to be ambitious, to make New York  
17 a beacon of hope and progress for the rest of our  
18 country.

19 And as I said at the beginning, our  
20 leaders have always been at crossroads, and as  
21 Senators, as New Yorkers, as Americans we could  
22 choose the path of putting up barriers or we  
23 could choose the path of creating opportunity.  
24 By delivering this diverse, talented and historic  
25 group of Senators to Albany, the people of our

1 great state have made it crystal-clear which path  
2 they expect us to take.

3 So I address my colleagues on both  
4 sides of the aisle, from every corner of  
5 New York. I invite you and all of us to join to  
6 create opportunity for every New Yorker, to level  
7 the playing field for every child, and to make  
8 this state as great as the people who live in it.

9 Thank you so very much. Let's get  
10 to work.

11 (Extended standing ovation.)

12 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator  
13 Stewart-Cousins.

14 Senator Gianaris.

15 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you,  
16 Madam President.

17 Can you please recognize  
18 Senator Griffo for opening remarks.

19 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Griffo.

20 SENATOR GRIFFO: Thank you,  
21 Madam President.

22 And I want to welcome this great  
23 crowd in the chamber today who are here to  
24 witness this significant moment and to experience  
25 government firsthand.

1                   As you can hear, I am fighting a  
2 cold, as some of my colleagues also are probably  
3 experiencing. So I know there's a lot of warmth  
4 in the chamber. And I can assure you, though,  
5 even though my voice sounds a little different,  
6 Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins told me  
7 it's not the outset of puberty.

8                   (Laughter.)

9                   SENATOR GRIFFO: So this is a new  
10 year, and it is a new beginning and a new  
11 opportunity for a new session. We have all the  
12 bustle, the energy, the excitement that comes  
13 along with it.

14                  And I want to thank every member of  
15 this body for their commitment and their  
16 willingness to serve. I want to thank all of the  
17 families who are here today for being here to be  
18 a part of this and to experience this and to be  
19 here on such a special day to witness all of  
20 this. This is what you call live TV, see, it's  
21 just -- let me congratulate the leader.

22                  (Laughter; applause.)

23                  SENATOR GRIFFO: So again, I thank  
24 all the members who are here and, again, for  
25 their service to this great state.

1           I also want to welcome all of the  
2 new members. As Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins  
3 has indicated, they all worked hard. We  
4 appreciate their dedication and willingness to  
5 serve this great state.

6           I particularly want to recognize two  
7 of our newest members here. I will start with  
8 Senator Daphne Jordan, who came from the ranks of  
9 the staff, who understands what it means to work  
10 long days and extra days and with very little  
11 sleep. She has been an exceptional public  
12 servant, and I know she will do an extraordinary  
13 job representing the Capital District.

14           Welcome, Senator Jordan.

15           (Applause.)

16           SENATOR GRIFFO: From Central  
17 New York, a uniquely qualified and very well  
18 respected individual who comes with such  
19 credentials that we are proud to have him as part  
20 of our conference: Senator Bob Antonacci, former  
21 local government official, who enjoys an  
22 outstanding reputation in Central New York, and I  
23 know that will grow across the state.

24           So Bob, welcome to you and your  
25 family today.



1 (Applause.)

2 SENATOR GRIFFO: And while there  
3 have been changes, our mission as public servants  
4 remains the same, starting with and supporting  
5 policies that will help hardworking families,  
6 middle-class families to succeed and for  
7 businesses to prosper and grow.

8 And as you know, we have chosen  
9 Senator John Flanagan to be the leader of the  
10 Republican Conference. He has recently  
11 acknowledged seeking help to overcome a battle  
12 with alcoholism. We applaud his courage in  
13 facing down this difficult challenge, and we hope  
14 by going public in a most difficult manner that  
15 he will also inspire others to seek the help that  
16 they need.

17 We remain united and supportive and  
18 look forward to his speedy and healthy return.  
19 And I know that's shared by everyone here.

20 (Applause.)

21 SENATOR GRIFFO: We also join you  
22 in recognizing the historic nature of this day  
23 and this very moment. Today marks the election  
24 of the first woman, the first African-American  
25 woman to lead this chamber.

1                   And I have known Senator  
2     Stewart-Cousins for a while; we arrived at the  
3     same time. But after reading many of the  
4     articles over the last several weeks, I think  
5     it's a true chronicle of an extraordinary journey  
6     with many challenges -- characterized, though, by  
7     courage, by dignity, by class, hard work and  
8     perseverance. And that should be an inspiration  
9     to and motivation to many others.

10                  So today, Senator Stewart-Cousins,  
11     we salute you on this achievement and we look  
12     forward to working with you in the weeks and  
13     months ahead. Congratulations.

14                  (Applause.)

15                  SENATOR GRIFFO: There have been a  
16     myriad of conversations about what kind of agenda  
17     this Legislature and our Governor should support.  
18     We in the Senate Republican Conference will  
19     advance the most taxpayer-friendly agenda that  
20     this state has ever seen. We must give our  
21     families the ability to stay and raise their  
22     families here in New York rather than being  
23     forced to leave our great state in search of  
24     lower taxes and greater opportunities.

25                  More than a million people have left

1 our state since the last census. We don't need a  
2 committee to identify the reasons, and it's not  
3 the weather. It's high taxes. It's  
4 strangulating regulations. It's crippling energy  
5 costs. And it's the lack of good-paying jobs.

6 Let's find real solutions. Let's  
7 work together to reverse this decline. And you,  
8 me, and all of us collectively working together  
9 can make a difference. There's plenty of time to  
10 achieve all that we want to do and more, of all  
11 the subject matter and issues that we have  
12 discussed and have been presented. And while we  
13 recognize and realize that everything on the  
14 table is important to someone, let's start here  
15 and make economic revitalization of New York our  
16 top priority.

17 Whether it's education funding or  
18 money for infrastructure, our hope is that this  
19 Senate will continue to treat each region of this  
20 state equitably. We believe that the property  
21 tax should made permanent. Many of you have  
22 recently pledged to join us in that effort, and  
23 we welcome that.

24 Let's also continue our efforts in  
25 the fight against heroin, opiate addiction, gang

1 violence and Lyme disease. Senate Republicans  
2 have made great progress, with your help and  
3 work, on those issues, and we encourage the  
4 leadership and this chamber to continue to work  
5 together to address them and to make a  
6 difference.

7                   And finally, this Legislature should  
8 support commonsense reforms to restore  
9 accountability, to make government work better,  
10 to make government more efficient than ever  
11 before. More disclosure, more transparency, an  
12 open and honest budget process, which are  
13 critically important to each and every  
14 New Yorker, and it should be important to each  
15 and every one of us.

16                   We stand here before you today in  
17 this conference ready to work and ready to serve.  
18 Even though Senate Republicans may now make up a  
19 numerical minority, our voice has never been as  
20 important as it is today. We have much to offer.  
21 We have much to contribute on behalf of the  
22 millions of New Yorkers that we now serve.

23                   Senator Gianaris, I look forward to  
24 working with you. And I know that our  
25 Mediterranean ancestry will make that very

1     passionate --

2                     (Laughter.)

3                     SENATOR GRIFFO:    -- and we will  
4     differ on policy, on politics, on philosophy and  
5     procedurally.

6                     (Laughter.)

7                     SENATOR GRIFFO:    But we will listen  
8     to one another, and we will listen to what each  
9     side is saying.  And we should always respect one  
10    another, particularly in this great house.

11                    Let's end with a fitting quote from  
12    a Roosevelt.  No, not the former four-term  
13    Democratic president that Governor Cuomo likes to  
14    quote and cite.  No surprise, I'm going to quote  
15    the other one, President Teddy Roosevelt.

16                    President Roosevelt once said:  "Far  
17    and away the best prize that life has to offer is  
18    the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

19                    The people's work is important, and  
20    it is so worth doing.  And all of us have made  
21    that commitment here today.  So that is the  
22    opportunity that lies before us.  Let's seize it  
23    and make it ours on this very day and through  
24    this entire session.

25                    Thank you all.  God bless you.

1 (Standing ovation.)

2 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator  
3 Griffo.

4 Senator Gianaris.

5 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you,  
6 Madam President.

7 We have several procedural items to  
8 take up. First, there is a resolution at the  
9 desk calling for the election of the Secretary of  
10 the Senate. Will you call that up, please.

11 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will  
12 read.

13 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution  
14 by Senator Stewart-Cousins, that Alejandra  
15 Paulino of Albany, New York, be, and she hereby  
16 is, elected Secretary of the Senate for the years  
17 2019-2020.

18 THE PRESIDENT: The question is on  
19 the resolution. All those in favor signify by  
20 saying aye.

21 (Response of "Aye.")

22 THE PRESIDENT: Opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 THE PRESIDENT: The ayes have it.  
25 The resolution is adopted.

1 (Cheers; applause.)

2 THE PRESIDENT: Ms. Paulino, we ask  
3 that you come forward and receive your oath of  
4 office while Senator Stewart-Cousins performs the  
5 swearing-in.

6 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Raise  
7 your right hand.

8 "I," state your name --

9 MS. PAULINO: I, Alejandra  
10 Paulino --

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- "do  
12 solemnly swear" --

13 MS. PAULINO: -- do solemnly  
14 swear --

15 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- "to  
16 uphold the Constitution of the United States of  
17 America" --

18 MS. PAULINO: -- to uphold the  
19 Constitution of the United States of America --

20 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- "and  
21 the Constitution of the State of New York" --

22 MS. PAULINO: -- and the  
23 Constitution of the State of New York --

24 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- "and  
25 to faithfully execute my duties as Secretary of

1 the Senate" --

2 MS. PAULINO: -- and to faithfully  
3 execute my duties as Secretary of the Senate --

4 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- "to  
5 the best of my ability" --

6 MS. PAULINO: -- to the best of my  
7 ability --

8 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- "so  
9 help me God."

10 MS. PAULINO: -- so help me God.

11 (Cheers; standing ovation.)

12 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: I would  
13 like to recognize the members of the Assembly who  
14 are present. Do you have something to report?

15 ASSEMBLYMEMBER WEINSTEIN: I'm  
16 Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein, chair of Ways and  
17 Means, along with our ranker, Assemblyman Will  
18 Barclay, and we're here to report that the  
19 Assembly has convened, we have organized, we have  
20 elected our great speaker, Carl Heastie.

21 On this exciting, historic day, we  
22 are pleased to report we are ready to proceed  
23 with the people's business, and we look forward  
24 to a very exciting year with the New York State  
25 Senate.



1 Thank you.

2 (Applause.)

3 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you,  
4 Assemblymembers. It is so noted in the record.

5 Senator Gianaris.

6 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you,  
7 Madam President.

8 There is a resolution at the desk  
9 adopting the rules of the Senate. Can we please  
10 take that up.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The  
12 Secretary will read.

13 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution  
14 by Senator Stewart-Cousins, to adopt the Rules of  
15 the Senate for the years 2019-2020.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
17 Griffo, why do you rise?

18 SENATOR GRIFFO: Madam President, I  
19 would ask that you call upon Senator Young for a  
20 question on the rules resolution before us.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
22 Young.

23 SENATOR YOUNG: Thank you,  
24 Madam President.

25 First of all, I want to say to my

1 colleagues, welcome back. And to our new  
2 colleagues, welcome to the New York State Senate.  
3 It is by far one of the most historic bodies in  
4 the entire country, and I look forward to working  
5 with you.

6 We are currently operating under  
7 house rules. Until these new rules are passed,  
8 these are the rules of the house. And so as the  
9 newly appointed ranking member on the  
10 Ethics Committee, I would invite my new colleague  
11 Senator Biaggi to debate some of these new rules.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
13 Gianaris.

14 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,  
15 as all the Senators who have previously served  
16 here know, it is the prerogative of the majority  
17 to decide who will answer questions about the  
18 rules, and as the floor leader I will take that  
19 upon myself.

20 SENATOR YOUNG: Thank you,  
21 Senator Gianaris. I just thought it would be  
22 appropriate, because you may remember two years  
23 ago the then-chair of the Ethics Committee  
24 debated the rules, and you were debating the  
25 rules. But it was the chair of the majority

1 Ethics Committee.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
3 Young, I'd just ask that questions go through the  
4 chair.

5 SENATOR YOUNG: Okay. So thank  
6 you, Madam President.

7 When you look at these rules  
8 changes, there are several issues that have not  
9 changed. But there are two new rules changes  
10 that we are particularly concerned about on  
11 behalf of the people of New York. And we need to  
12 have checks and balances in government to prevent  
13 the tyranny of the majority. That's what happens  
14 in Congress, that's what happens in the Assembly.

15 So I have some questions about --  
16 number one, I'll start with Rule X. And part of  
17 that amends the staffing allocations. We as a  
18 body are responsible for making sure that we have  
19 robust debate on critical issues that are  
20 important to the people of this state. Your  
21 conference, the new majority, has put forward a  
22 very, very progressive agenda with many  
23 controversial issues that are included in that  
24 agenda.

25 We need to make sure that we are

1 doing the right thing to have the debate so that  
2 all of the issues can be aired, all of the  
3 members know exactly what they're voting on, and  
4 all of the voters and the citizens of this state  
5 know what their government is doing.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
7 Young, are you asking --

8 SENATOR YOUNG: So the first  
9 question is --

10 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: -- Senator  
11 Gianaris to yield to a question?

12 SENATOR YOUNG: The first question  
13 is --

14 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
15 Young, excuse me, are you asking --

16 SENATOR YOUNG: The first question  
17 is --

18 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
19 Young --

20 SENATOR YOUNG: -- the part about  
21 amending the staffing allocations.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Excuse  
23 me --

24 SENATOR GRIFFO: Madam President.  
25 Madam President.

1                   ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    Yes,  
2    Senator Griffo, why do you rise?

3                   SENATOR GRIFFO:    I think Senator  
4    Young had the floor.  She had been recognized,  
5    she had asked to ask a question.  Senator  
6    Gianaris decided to take the question as floor  
7    leader, which is within his purview and  
8    prerogative.  Senator Young is beginning to ask  
9    the question.  So he did agree to respond.  So I  
10   would ask that you allow Senator Young to ask the  
11   question, please.

12                  SENATOR YOUNG:    So the first  
13   question is --

14                  ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    Senator  
15   Young, just to clarify, you're asking Senator  
16   Gianaris to yield to a question.

17                  SENATOR YOUNG:    Right, because he  
18   said he was the one handling the debate.  
19   Correct, Madam President.

20                  So the first question, through you,  
21   Madam President, but to have Senator Gianaris  
22   respond, is that what you've done is actually, by  
23   the language in this resolution, reduce the  
24   potential for the number of staffing that the  
25   minority conference has.  And that, again, is

1 something that's undemocratic. Because we are  
2 just asking that you treat this conference the  
3 same way that we treated you when you were in the  
4 minority --

5 (Laughter.)

6 SENATOR YOUNG: -- as far as -- as  
7 far as the rules go.

8 SENATOR GRIFFO: Madam President,  
9 order in the house, please.

10 SENATOR YOUNG: So I want to know,  
11 Senator Gianaris, why --

12 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Order in  
13 the house.

14 SENATOR YOUNG: -- through you,  
15 Madam President, why that staffing allocation  
16 formula has been changed.

17 SENATOR GIANARIS: Are you done?

18 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
19 Gianaris.

20 SENATOR GIANARIS: Ready? Okay.

21 The language that -- to which the  
22 Senator is referring was only what practice the  
23 Republicans had used when they were in the  
24 majority, and it was clarified. I know this is  
25 the practice, because there came a time when we

1 were losing members in our conference and the  
2 leader was made to go to the majority leader and  
3 ask for additional funding. It was not given as  
4 a right under the rules.

5 This rule, as written by the  
6 Republican majority -- and the language that we  
7 took out was unclear, but used in a very -- in a  
8 manner that was doing exactly what this new  
9 language is doing. It said "on a per-member  
10 basis." It was explained to us by the majority  
11 at the time that that meant, if the composition  
12 of the conferences change, then the allocations  
13 change.

14 So we have done nothing other than  
15 make it clear for all to see what's happening.

16 SENATOR YOUNG: Through you,  
17 Madam President --

18 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
19 Young.

20 SENATOR YOUNG: -- I'd like to  
21 respond to Senator Gianaris. Because in our  
22 rules we always had a 30 percent floor.

23 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,  
24 is Senator Young on the bill at this point?

25 SENATOR YOUNG: So -- no, but I

1 want to continue with the questioning.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
3 Young, are you asking -- asking a question of --

4 SENATOR YOUNG: Sure. Through you,  
5 Madam President, I want to continue with the  
6 questioning.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
8 Gianaris, do you continue to yield?

9 SENATOR GIANARIS: I do.

10 SENATOR YOUNG: The other rule is  
11 Rule VIII that we have significant issues with.  
12 And particularly it has to do with the committee  
13 structure, number one. Because again, the  
14 formula on the committees has been changed.

15 And I am asking this question of  
16 you, why was that changed, on behalf of the  
17 people of this state. Because as I said, we need  
18 to have robust debate, we need to have fairness  
19 in the system, the same way that the rules read  
20 when you were in the minority. So why was that  
21 changed?

22 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
23 Gianaris.

24 SENATOR GIANARIS: Yes, thank you,  
25 Madam President.



1                   The rule that the Senator is  
2                   referring to provides for the membership of  
3                   committees. The New York Senate, for as long as  
4                   I'm aware, but certainly for over a decade, had  
5                   the largest member-per-committee-assignment ratio  
6                   in the entire country of any legislative body.  
7                   And not by a little bit, by a lot.

8                   There was a report several years ago  
9                   that recommended that that number be reduced  
10                  because it will allow members to focus more  
11                  expertise on the committee assignments they have.  
12                  And by making the changes we're making, the  
13                  average per-member committee assignments now goes  
14                  from 7.1 per member to 5.78. We think that is  
15                  more in line with legislative bodies all around  
16                  the country. And in fact, even that number may  
17                  be -- will be on the high end. I'm not sure  
18                  we've made it under being the -- having the worst  
19                  ratio in that respect.

20                  But the idea is to allow members to  
21                  develop an expertise in subject areas that will  
22                  operate these committees more efficiently.

23                  SENATOR YOUNG: Through you,  
24                  Madam President.

25                  So, Senator Gianaris, on some of the

1 committees it's my understanding there would be  
2 just one member from the Republican conference.  
3 And you said that it's utilizing people's  
4 expertise. I would say that our members have a  
5 lot of expertise in all of these topic areas.

6               So why, again, would you treat us  
7 unfairly and take away the representation that we  
8 have and the responsibility that we have to the  
9 constituents in our district and to the state to  
10 have more robust representation, proper  
11 representation on these committees?

12               SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,  
13 allow me to correct my colleague. There are no  
14 committees on which the minority only has one  
15 appointee. The minimum is two.

16               The smallest committee memberships  
17 are seven members, and those committees break  
18 down five-to-two, majority to minority.

19               SENATOR YOUNG: Thank you,  
20 Madam President.

21               I would say, Senator Gianaris,  
22 you're taking away people's voices in the state,  
23 something that you said you would not do.

24               The other question I had has to do  
25 with the Ethics and Internal Governance

1 Committee. And I --

2 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Excuse me,  
3 Senator Young. Are you continuing to ask  
4 Senator Gianaris to yield?

5 SENATOR YOUNG: Yes, if he will  
6 yield.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
8 Gianaris, do you yield?

9 SENATOR GIANARIS: Yes.

10 SENATOR YOUNG: Senator Gianaris,  
11 first of all, I want to applaud the new  
12 chairwoman of the committee, because she is  
13 focused on ethics. And we all want ethics  
14 reform. And in fact, we have done many ethics  
15 reforms in this house over the past several  
16 years, and I can go through the list in my  
17 remarks later on.

18 But there is a change to make the  
19 Ethics and Internal Governance Committee -- to  
20 make it go from a select committee to a standing  
21 committee. And by doing that, you are actually  
22 changing the whole structure of the committee and  
23 you are actually taking the Internal Governance  
24 Committee from nine to seven members, out of  
25 balance, four Democrats, three Republicans.

1                   And again, we need checks and  
2 balances in government. This is a time when  
3 there's one-party rule in Albany. And it's  
4 critically important that we have the proper  
5 systems in place.

6                   So why when you two years ago -- and  
7 I can read you excerpts of your remarks two years  
8 ago. Why two years ago did you insist on having  
9 equal representation between Democrats and  
10 Republicans and now, now with the new rules that  
11 you're putting forward, you are changing that  
12 balance and putting it out of balance? And by  
13 putting it out of balance, if you're going to  
14 change up the committee so it's an investigatory  
15 committee, then that opens the door for  
16 weaponizing that committee.

17                  So I'd like to know why it's not  
18 balanced like the Assembly does, why it's not  
19 balanced like what the Congress does. Why is it  
20 out of balance, and why are you contradicting all  
21 of the points -- and I have the debate right  
22 here, extensive debate, all of your remarks. And  
23 why have you changed your mind, now that you're  
24 in the majority, and you've got unequal  
25 representation?

1                   SENATOR GIANARIS:    Thank you.

2                   Let me start off by saying my  
3   colleague is right about one thing.  We are  
4   completely changing the way the Ethics Committee  
5   works in this body, because it didn't work under  
6   the previous majority.  In fact, it was infamous  
7   for the fact that it hadn't met in the entire  
8   time the Republicans had the majority in their  
9   most recent tenure.  And when it did the one time  
10  last year, it did not go very well, because it  
11  didn't take up any actual business other than  
12  agreeing to produce a newsletter.

13                  So yes, we are intending to remake  
14  the Ethics Committee and make it function so that  
15  the people can be well-served by a committee that  
16  cares about ethics, unlike what the previous  
17  majority had done.

18                  It is going to perform two  
19  functions.  It is going to perform a legislative  
20  function, which means it will have bills referred  
21  to it, which never happened -- not once, not  
22  ever -- under Republican control.  And for that  
23  to happen, in order for it to function like every  
24  other committee, it needs to have an uneven  
25  number of members so we don't have gridlock.

1           In fact, the ratio of membership is  
2 to your benefit. You just pointed out that a  
3 seven-member committee in these rules has five  
4 majority members and two minority. We decided to  
5 try and be fair and make this one four-to-three,  
6 so there would be more of a say.

7           As it relates to investigatory work  
8 of this committee, it does require -- as was  
9 required in the previous rules -- that at least  
10 one member from each conference has to agree for  
11 the committee to take action. That is unchanged.

12           And let me just lay one thing out  
13 very clearly for everybody. This is a better  
14 deal than we were given. Okay? The previous  
15 Ethics Committee was not three-to-three-to-three,  
16 it was six coalition majority members to three  
17 minority members. You're getting four-to-three.  
18 You should be happy and thanking me.

19           (Laughter; applause from gallery.)

20           ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Order in  
21 the chamber.

22           SENATOR YOUNG: Through you,  
23 Madam President, just to remind Senator Gianaris  
24 of his previous words --

25           ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Excuse me,

1 Senator Young. Are you continuing to ask  
2 Senator Gianaris to yield?

3 SENATOR YOUNG: Yes. Because I  
4 want him to respond.

5 "The issue of ethics scrutiny in  
6 particular should be above politics and applied  
7 fairly and equally to all." Page 25, lines 1  
8 through 6.

9 "Senator Gianaris: Ethics  
10 committees have always, for the very reason of  
11 taking them out of politics, had an equal  
12 representation from the majority and the minority  
13 in both houses." Page 25, lines 15 through 19.

14 And then you said: "And again, when  
15 we're dealing with ethics, Madam President, it  
16 should be something that we can discuss in  
17 transcendancy from our political parties, but  
18 also in a way that builds consensus on very  
19 important issues."

20 You kept referencing the Assembly  
21 rules, where they have equal representation  
22 between Democrats and Republicans, in your  
23 remarks.

24 And so I -- I agree with you, we  
25 should do more on ethics. I think it's a good

1     idea. But why not have two committees? Why not  
2     have one focused on policy, as Senator Biaggi  
3     wants to do, and have the other committee focus  
4     on investigations and have equal representation  
5     between the two parties? Why can't we do that?  
6     That would make more sense, rather than opening  
7     the door to possible abuse of power.

8                 And I think, you know, to the new  
9     members and to the previous members, one of the  
10    greatest responsibilities -- it's profound --  
11    that we have is to not abuse the power that we  
12    have as representatives in government. And this  
13    opens the door, because this is different than  
14    how other ethics committees that investigate  
15    things operate.

16                And I agree with Senator Biaggi, I  
17    think we should do more on sexual harassment. I  
18    commend you for that. Because we led the way  
19    last year as the only house that passed a sexual  
20    harassment bill so that it wouldn't be done in  
21    the budget, so it wouldn't be done behind closed  
22    doors. We wanted to get it out in the open.

23                But -- so Senator Gianaris, why  
24    can't we do both? Why can't we have equality and  
25    fairness, as we gave you on the Ethics Committee,



1 and why can't we have another committee that is  
2 set up to investigate any kind of issue that may  
3 arise?

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: Since we're  
5 making reference to previous comments that were  
6 made on this floor, let me quote Senator Young  
7 only about 10 minutes ago, that you would hope  
8 that you would be treated the same way we were  
9 treated. And that's exactly what you're getting.  
10 You're actually getting better treatment.

11 SENATOR YOUNG: Senator Gianaris --

12 SENATOR GIANARIS: If it was fair  
13 for you, it's fair for us.

14 SENATOR YOUNG: Senator Gia -- no,  
15 through you, Madam President, I just want  
16 to say --

17 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Are you  
18 asking him to continue to yield, Senator Young?

19 SENATOR YOUNG: No, I think on the  
20 bill.

21 Senator Gianaris says that they're  
22 writing the rules the same way that they were  
23 written two years ago. That is not true. All  
24 you have to do is look at the rules and compare  
25 them. And we do have investigatory bodies -- the

1 Legislative Ethics Committee, JCOPE. They have  
2 flaws, I agree with that. And so establishing a  
3 new Ethics Committee that does investigations is  
4 something that makes sense for this house.

5 But we still need the governance  
6 too, and we need to have bills that actually deal  
7 with ethics. And we didn't have the two mixed up  
8 previously.

9 I just want to remind our members  
10 and educate the new members about some of the  
11 reforms we've made to ethics over the many years.  
12 Just last year we proposed and passed -- and we  
13 did this together -- we proposed and passed  
14 comprehensive reforms to combat corruption and  
15 ensure greater transparency and accountability in  
16 state economic development programs. We didn't  
17 accomplish that through this governance  
18 committee, through the Ethics Committee. We  
19 could accomplish that through the rest of the  
20 committee process.

21 In 2017 we approved a constitutional  
22 amendment to strip pensions from corrupt  
23 officials. We supported that. We got that done.  
24 We approved Senate rules limiting terms of  
25 committee chairs and legislative leaders. We did

1     that. We passed a law requiring comprehensive  
2     disclosure of outside income, financial  
3     investments, and law clients. These dramatically  
4     expanded financial disclosure filings that are  
5     now publicly available.

6                 I can go through the entire list; it  
7     would take too long. But we have accomplished  
8     ethics reform without mixing the purpose of the  
9     Ethics Committee.

10                And we need that check and balance.  
11     We need to make sure that power is not out of  
12     balance. That's something that, you know, I  
13     commend you, Senator Gianaris, you talked about  
14     integrity. I commend you, Senator  
15     Stewart-Cousins, Leader Stewart-Cousins, for what  
16     you said. You want to make democracy work. If  
17     we want to make democracy work, we have to have a  
18     fair and balanced system and not have a system  
19     that has the potential for abuse, for political  
20     attacks, and for corruption.

21                And there's a saying that goes:  
22     Remember, power corrupts; absolute power corrupts  
23     absolutely. And this is something that needs to  
24     be changed. I would ask my colleagues on the  
25     other side to reconsider this.

1           I would ask you to establish two  
2 committees, two committees, one to be focused on  
3 legislation that deals with ethics reform -- I  
4 wholeheartedly, we wholeheartedly embrace that  
5 concept -- and have another on governance. But  
6 do not mix the two, because it's a recipe, I  
7 believe, for violating the rights of the people  
8 of this state to have everyone's voices heard.

9           So thank you, Madam President.

10          ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    Senator  
11 Seward.

12          SENATOR SEWARD:    Yes,  
13 Madam President. Thank you. I would ask if  
14 Senator Gianaris would take another question.

15          ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    Senator  
16 Gianaris, do you yield?

17          SENATOR GIANARIS:    Madam President,  
18 I've been waiting eight years to yield to  
19 questions. This is great for me, so --

20          (Laughter.)

21          SENATOR GIANARIS:    -- absolutely.

22          ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    The  
23 Senator yields.

24          SENATOR SEWARD:    Yes. Through you,  
25 Madam President, I was listening very intently to

1 the discussion between Senator Young and  
2 Senator Gianaris, and I just rise to ask for some  
3 clarification in terms of Section 8, Rule IX,  
4 having to do with staffing allocations.

5 The language, as I read it, implies  
6 that the Minority allocation could in fact dip  
7 below 30 percent of the overall allocation. Is  
8 that the intent of the Majority in these new  
9 rules?

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: And if I could  
11 ask for a clarification. The suggestion is if  
12 the composition of the relative numbers of  
13 conference changes, is that what you're asking?

14 SENATOR SEWARD: Yes. What I'm  
15 asking is there's reference to that the central  
16 staff of the Minority shall not be less than  
17 30 percent. But there's also language about a  
18 shift in terms of the numbers, in terms of the  
19 membership of each conference.

20 And my question is, are you  
21 intending to allocate central staff monies based  
22 on the numbers, or is 30 percent the target  
23 number?

24 SENATOR GIANARIS: It is the  
25 intention of this language to continue the

1 practice that was in place under the previous  
2 majority.

3           It's my understanding that when the  
4 conference representation changed, there was a  
5 discussion between the leaders to maintain the  
6 allotments where they were, that it was not the  
7 position of the majority that by operation of  
8 rule that that percentage should continue. And  
9 therefore I think that would be something that we  
10 would intend to continue as past practice.

11           ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:   Senator  
12 Seward.

13           SENATOR SEWARD:   Madam President,  
14 just as a follow-up.

15           So just to be clear, are we at the  
16 30 percent number or not?

17           SENATOR GIANARIS:   Yes, you are.

18           SENATOR SEWARD:   And will we remain  
19 at the 30 percent number?

20           SENATOR GIANARIS:   (Reading.) The  
21 funding for the Minority conference shall not be  
22 less than 30 percent and shall increase or  
23 decrease to reflect any changes in the membership  
24 of either conference.

25           SENATOR SEWARD:   Madam President,

1 so we could dip below 30 percent?

2 SENATOR GIANARIS: I don't have an  
3 answer to that question.

4 SENATOR SEWARD: Okay. Well, on  
5 the bill, Madam President.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
7 Seward.

8 SENATOR SEWARD: I would just like  
9 to reiterate some of the points that have been  
10 raised by Senator Young.

11 In order to make democracy work, and  
12 which is certainly something on both sides of the  
13 aisle we can agree on, I think we need to have  
14 robust debate, free flow of information here on  
15 the floor. And that of course requires staffing,  
16 appropriate and proper staffing.

17 So we would very much say that we  
18 should be at the 30 percent as a minimum. That's  
19 our position. And I -- I'm not -- I don't feel  
20 we're getting a straight answer on that point,  
21 whether or not we're going to dip below  
22 30 percent. We believe that should be the floor.  
23 And that will base my vote on these rule changes  
24 unless I get a firm commitment on the 30 percent.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Seeing no

1 one else who wishes --

2 SENATOR TEDISCO: Madam President.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
4 Tedisco.

5 SENATOR TEDISCO: On the rules  
6 change.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator  
8 Tedisco, why do you rise?

9 SENATOR TEDISCO: On the rules  
10 change. I'd like to speak.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: You want  
12 to speak on the resolution?

13 SENATOR TEDISCO: Yes.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator,  
15 go ahead.

16 SENATOR TEDISCO: Thank you.

17 As most of you probably know here,  
18 it's not too difficult of a shift for me to go  
19 from the majority on the other side of the  
20 building to the minority, because I spent  
21 17 terms, 34 years, in the minority, part of that  
22 as minority leader in the New York State  
23 Assembly.

24 My district in the New York State  
25 Assembly was 15 minutes from one end of it to the



1 other end of it. Had some diversity in it. My  
2 new Senate district is 4,000 square miles. It's  
3 two and a half hours up to Old Forge, two and a  
4 half hours back down. It's diverse, it's rural,  
5 it's suburban, it has a variety of concerns. But  
6 collectively I think they come together in two  
7 areas that they continue to ask me to move  
8 forward and to discuss with you and my colleagues  
9 from both sides of the aisle, and it has been  
10 mentioned by our new Majority Leader.

11 They want common sense in  
12 government, and they want to deal with the ethics  
13 issue because they know we can't go forward if  
14 we're not doing what's right in terms of taking  
15 an oath of office and living up to it.

16 In terms of common sense, and in  
17 terms of doing what's right ethically, this  
18 misses the point. They're very concerned about  
19 the fact that the inauguration speech, and the  
20 things I've heard in the speeches here today, and  
21 what the majority has been talking about, if you  
22 listen very carefully about an upstate agenda,  
23 you'll hear some crickets chirping. Nothing  
24 about jobs, nothing about small business  
25 opportunities, nothing about bringing up

1 cellphone usage or broadband to an area in my  
2 district or upper levels of New York State.  
3 Amazon is great, \$3 billion to bring them in, but  
4 small businesses need broadband also. We don't  
5 have that in large parts of our district.

6               When I served in the New York State  
7 Assembly, if you want to talk about extremism --  
8 and this is I think the beginnings of the  
9 continuation, doubling down on the extremism I've  
10 seen over the last 10 years from your side of the  
11 aisle. Extremism is doing the opposite of what  
12 your colleagues are doing in the New York State  
13 Assembly. We said hello to Mr. Heastie today,  
14 you honored him, you saluted him. In the New  
15 York State Assembly, it's an equal number of both  
16 sides of the aisle on the Ethics Committee.

17              I can understand creating a  
18 committee to deal with legislation as it relates  
19 to ethics. I think that's a fine idea. But when  
20 you're talking about nonpartisanism and working  
21 together, the Senate's really going in a better  
22 direction for you than they have in the past.  
23 They have an equal number of Democrats and an  
24 equal number of Republicans in their  
25 Ethics Committee.

1 I suggest you follow their lead on  
2 that, because the public is looking for  
3 nonpartisanship. They don't want you to protect  
4 your members potentially if something goes wrong  
5 with an ethics issue. And I'm not saying you  
6 will do that, but sometimes it's the appearance  
7 that has the worst impact on what our  
8 constituents think of those out here.

9 And God only knows we have to gain,  
10 and it was mentioned, their support out here. We  
11 have to show them we're going to do something  
12 about ethics. Maybe we have to do that database  
13 of deals, let the Comptroller start looking at  
14 different things, get an outside budget  
15 committee.

16 But in this case you're sending a  
17 very bad message. You're sending a message that  
18 potentially if ethics go wrong on your side of  
19 the aisle -- not with that committee to deal with  
20 legislation, with that committee to specifically  
21 deal with members from your side and our side and  
22 make recommendations -- it's far different from  
23 what the Assembly has done and is doing, and that  
24 is an equal number so we don't see a partisanship  
25 in those decisions.

1                   And I think you're going to find the  
2 public, when they come to realize and the media  
3 covers it and says, Well, the Assembly is  
4 allowing both sides to have the same numbers,  
5 make a discussion and make a nonpartisan decision  
6 when those members come before them, but the  
7 Senate has decided to change that, they want to  
8 eliminate that and maybe have control of ethics  
9 decisions -- it strikes of cronyism, and I don't  
10 think that's the direction you want to go. It's  
11 extreme, and it's doubling down on extremism from  
12 what I've seen in the past.

13                   Thank you, Madam President.

14                   ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:   Seeing no  
15 other Senator that wishes to be heard,  
16 Senator Gianaris to close.

17                   SENATOR GIANARIS:   Thank you,  
18 Madam President.

19                   I want to just clarify a couple of  
20 things. Because I have the good fortune of  
21 sitting next to the leader in this chamber, I can  
22 clarify further for Senator Seward his question.

23                   It is not expected that the  
24 allocation will ever dip below 30 percent. But  
25 as was past practice, that is not something that

1 is by operation of rule. That will be a  
2 discussion between the leaders if that ever comes  
3 to pass.

4 As for the Ethics Committee and the  
5 issues there, as hard as it is to believe, there  
6 was some defense of the ethics record in this  
7 body a few moments ago. And if the Minority  
8 wants to spend their time defending the record of  
9 the Senate on ethics over the last 10 years, they  
10 should have at it. I will be happy to give it as  
11 much time on the floor of the Senate as they  
12 would like to do that, because I think most  
13 objective observers realize that it was an  
14 embarrassment at the time.

15 Now let's talk about the composition  
16 of the committee. There's two ways to look at  
17 this. We had rules last year that the current  
18 minority wrote and approved. And so if you  
19 want -- and under no way of looking at those  
20 rules was there an equal number of both  
21 conferences. If you want to look at it coalition  
22 versus minority, it was six to three in favor of  
23 the coalition government. If you want to look at  
24 it Democrat versus Republican, it was six to  
25 three, Democrat versus Republican. If you want

1 to do that, I'll add two more members to the  
2 rules for the Democrats and then we'll mimic the  
3 rules exactly as you had them.

4 I don't think that's what you want.  
5 So we tried to be fairer and create a makeup that  
6 was four-to-three. The protection we got in the  
7 rules after negotiation was that any  
8 investigative action would require the assent of  
9 at least one committee member from each  
10 conference. That remains. So the committee  
11 cannot be weaponized unless one of your  
12 colleagues agrees to do it.

13 That's the same protection we had  
14 last year, and we had to fight to get that  
15 protection. This was in the rules as we drafted  
16 them.

17 So let's be clear. This  
18 Ethics Committee is going to do something never  
19 before done in this body. It's going to actually  
20 move legislation. It's going to consider  
21 legislation. It's going to take a hard look at  
22 what we need to do to improve the ethics of this  
23 body, which is something that I can tell you the  
24 people of this state have been asking for for a  
25 long, long time. And it is going to be empowered

1 to actually look at malfeasance. And it's going  
2 to do so in a bipartisan manner, because it does  
3 require a member from each conference to  
4 participate in that.

5 That is a better deal than we got by  
6 far, and no amount of misrepresenting the past is  
7 going to change that.

8 Thank you, Madam President.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The  
10 question is on the resolution. All those in  
11 favor signify by saying aye.

12 (Response of "Aye.")

13 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Opposed?

14 (Response of "Nay.")

15 SENATOR GRIFFO: Show of hands  
16 requested.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: All those  
18 in favor signify by raising your hands now.

19 (A show of hands in the chamber.)

20 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce  
21 the results.

22 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 39.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The  
24 resolution is adopted.

25 Senator Gianaris.

1                   SENATOR GIANARIS:    Madam President,  
2   there's a resolution at the desk pertaining to  
3   the appointment of the Sergeant-at-Arms.  Would  
4   you please call that up?

5                   ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    The  
6   Secretary will read.

7                   THE SECRETARY:    Senate Resolution  
8   by Senator Stewart-Cousins, that Benjamin M.  
9   Sturges III be, and he hereby is, elected  
10  Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate for the years  
11  2019-2020.

12                  ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    The  
13  question is on the resolution.  All those in  
14  favor signify by saying aye.

15                  (Response of "Aye.")

16                  ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    Opposed?

17                  (No response.)

18                  ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER:    The  
19  resolution is adopted.

20                  For the record, Benjamin Sturges III  
21  has been elected Sergeant-at-Arms for the years  
22  2019-2020.  It is my honor to present to you the  
23  Sergeant-at-Arms.

24                  (Standing ovation.)

25                  THE PRESIDENT:    Senator Gianaris.



1                   SENATOR GIANARIS:   Thank you,  
2   Madam President.   There is another resolution at  
3   the desk, to appoint Catherine Kirkland as the  
4   Senate Stenographer.   Could you please take that  
5   up.

6                   THE PRESIDENT:    The Secretary will  
7   read.

8                   THE SECRETARY:    Senate Resolution  
9   by Senator Stewart-Cousins, that Catherine  
10   Kirkland be, and she hereby is, elected the  
11   Official Stenographer of the Senate for the years  
12   2019-2020.

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

16                  (Response of "Aye.")

17                  THE PRESIDENT:    Those opposed?

18                  (No response.)

19                  THE PRESIDENT:    The resolution is  
20   adopted.

21                  For the record, Catherine Kirkland  
22   has been elected Official Stenographer of the  
23   Senate for the years 2019-2020.

24                  Congratulations.   It is my honor to  
25   present the Official Stenographer of the Senate.

1 (Standing ovation.)

2 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris.

3 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you,  
4 Madam President.

5 There's yet another resolution at  
6 the desk setting forth the hours of the Senate  
7 for 2019-2020. Can we please take that up.

8 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will  
9 read.

10 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution  
11 by Senator Stewart-Cousins, providing for the  
12 hours of meeting by the Senate for the years  
13 2019-2020.

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

17 (Response of "Aye.")

18 THE PRESIDENT: Opposed?

19 (No response.)

20 THE PRESIDENT: The resolution is  
21 adopted.

22 Senator Gianaris.

23 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,  
24 would you please take up the resolution  
25 appointing a committee of two to inform the

1 Governor.

2 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will  
3 read.

4 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution  
5 by Senator Stewart-Cousins, directing the  
6 Temporary President to appoint a committee of two  
7 to inform the Governor that the Senate is  
8 organized and ready to proceed with business.

9 THE PRESIDENT: The question is on  
10 the resolution. All those in favor signify by  
11 saying aye.

12 (Response of "Aye.")

13 THE PRESIDENT: Opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 THE PRESIDENT: The resolution is  
16 adopted.

17 Senators Martinez and Antonacci are  
18 hereby appointed to inform the Governor that the  
19 Senate is ready to proceed.

20 Senator Gianaris.

21 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you.

22 Madam President, there's a  
23 resolution concerning the committee of two to  
24 inform the Assembly. Can you please take that  
25 up.

1                   THE PRESIDENT:    The Secretary will  
2    read.

3                   THE SECRETARY:    Senate Resolution  
4    by Senator Stewart-Cousins, directing the  
5    Temporary President to appoint a committee of two  
6    to wait upon the Assembly and inform that body  
7    that the Senate is assembled and ready to proceed  
8    with business.

9                   THE PRESIDENT:    The question is on  
10   the resolution. All those in favor signify by  
11   saying aye.

12                   (Response of "Aye.")

13                   THE PRESIDENT:    Opposed?

14                   (No response.)

15                   THE PRESIDENT:    The resolution is  
16   adopted.

17                   Senators Skoufis and Jordan are  
18   hereby appointed to inform the Assembly that the  
19   Senate is ready to proceed.

20                   Senator Gianaris.

21                   SENATOR GIANARIS:   Madam President,  
22   at this time I believe there's a hand-up at the  
23   desk by Senator Stewart-Cousins naming Majority  
24   members to certain standing committees. I ask  
25   that it please be filed in the Journal.

1                   THE PRESIDENT:    The hand-up is  
2   received and shall be filed with the Journal.

3                   SENATOR GIANARIS:   In consultation  
4   with Senator Flanagan, Senator Stewart-Cousins  
5   also hands up the following Minority member  
6   committee assignments and asks that they also be  
7   filed in the Journal.

8                   THE PRESIDENT:    The hand-up is  
9   received and shall be filed in the Journal.

10                  SENATOR GIANARIS:   Madam President,  
11   is there any further business at the desk?

12                  THE PRESIDENT:    There is no further  
13   business at the desk.

14                  SENATOR GIANARIS:   There being no  
15   further business, I move we adjourn until Monday,  
16   January 14th, at 3:00 p.m., intervening days  
17   being legislative days.

18                  THE PRESIDENT:    On motion, the  
19   Senate will stand adjourned until Monday,  
20   January 14th, at 3:00 p.m., intervening days  
21   being legislative days.

22                         The Senate is adjourned.

23                         (Applause.)

24                         (Whereupon, the Senate adjourned at  
25   2:48 p.m.)