

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

2
3
4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

5
6
7
8
9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10 January 8, 2020

11 12:32 p.m.

12
13
14 REGULAR SESSION

15
16
17
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 recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

8 THE PRESIDENT: Rabbi Hersh
9 Horowitz, the executive director of the Community
10 Outreach Center of Monsey, will deliver today's
11 invocation.

12 RABBI HOROWITZ: I share with you
13 this daily prayer, uttered by Jews young and old
14 upon waking every morning, for surely today dawns
15 a new day in government.

16 (In Hebrew) I give thanks before
17 You, (in Hebrew) King living and eternal, (in
18 Hebrew) for You have returned within me my soul
19 with compassion, (in Hebrew) abundant is Your
20 faithfulness.

21 Our esteemed Majority Leader, Andrea
22 Stewart-Cousins, who took the time to visit us in
23 Monsey following the horrifying Chanukah attack.
24 She sat in a room filled with community leaders,
25 people who, like all of you sitting here today,

1 are charged with an awesome responsibility: the
2 well-being of those under your care. Each and
3 every person in that room, and in fact every
4 single parent in Monsey and beyond, is determined
5 to do everything within their power to keep our
6 precious children, our future, safe from harm and
7 sheltered from baseless hatred.

8 Our leader, Ms. Cousins, spoke about
9 unification against that hatred. She
10 emphatically stated her determination to help
11 effect change within these hallowed halls and
12 implored us to hold strong to our faith. Her
13 words and her call to action still resonate, and
14 so I pray that today dawns a new day.

15 As a Hasidic Jew, I stand before
16 each one of you as an emissary for Jews and
17 non-Jews alike, anyone who has felt or continues
18 to feel discriminated against. In this great
19 State of New York, where the Statue of Liberty
20 stands strong and true, welcoming the huddled
21 masses yearning to breathe free, our differences
22 and diversity should be cause for celebration,
23 not strife. Our humanity is our commonality,
24 along with our fervent shared wish for a changed
25 reality, one where we feel safe sending our

1 children to schools and our families to worship.

2 And so I pray for a new day.

3 I humbly ask the Almighty, our G-d,
4 that He bless each and every one of you with
5 strength, courage, tenacity and determination, to
6 follow through on your daily dictates with
7 integrity and faithfulness to us all -- your
8 constituents back home -- rallying and praying
9 for true change. May He guide you in the swift
10 enactment of policies, legislation and laws that
11 will effectively keep us safe, restore a true
12 sense of peace, keep hate away, and join all
13 New Yorkers in equality, respect and unity.

14 May today mark the start of not just
15 a new day, but a turning point, where all of you,
16 our elected officials, renew your determination
17 to use your power and persuasion to create
18 positive forward momentum. And with that, we can
19 all wake up every day filled with hope for the
20 future.

21 Amen.

22 (Response of "Amen.")

23 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rabbi.

24 I want to thank you for coming, as
25 well as the many guests we have from Monsey, from

1 Rockland and other areas who have joined us
2 today. The dignitaries and leaders who are here
3 today, I want to welcome you and let you know we
4 are honored by your presence in this chamber
5 today.

6 The Secretary will call the roll to
7 ascertain a quorum.

8 THE SECRETARY: Senator Addabbo.

9 SENATOR ADDABBO: Here.

10 THE SECRETARY: Senator Akshar.

11 SENATOR AKSHAR: Present.

12 THE SECRETARY: Senator Amedore.

13 SENATOR AMEDORE: Here.

14 THE SECRETARY: Senator Bailey.

15 SENATOR BAILEY: Here.

16 THE SECRETARY: Senator Benjamin.

17 SENATOR BENJAMIN: Here.

18 THE SECRETARY: Senator Biaggi.

19 SENATOR BIAGGI: Here.

20 THE SECRETARY: Senator Borrello.

21 SENATOR BORRELLO: Here.

22 THE SECRETARY: Senator Boyle.

23 SENATOR BOYLE: Here.

24 THE SECRETARY: Senator Breslin.

25 SENATOR BRESLIN: Here.

1 THE SECRETARY: Senator Brooks.
2 SENATOR BROOKS: Here.
3 THE SECRETARY: Senator Carlucci.
4 SENATOR CARLUCCI: Present.
5 THE SECRETARY: Senator Comrie.
6 SENATOR COMRIE: Present.
7 THE SECRETARY: Senator Felder.
8 SENATOR FELDER: Here.
9 THE SECRETARY: Senator Flanagan.
10 SENATOR FLANAGAN: Here.
11 THE SECRETARY: Senator Funke.
12 SENATOR FUNKE: Here.
13 THE SECRETARY: Senator Gallivan.
14 SENATOR GALLIVAN: Here.
15 THE SECRETARY: Senator Gaughran.
16 SENATOR GAUGHRAN: Here.
17 THE SECRETARY: Senator Gianaris.
18 SENATOR GIANARIS: Here.
19 THE SECRETARY: Senator Gounardes.
20 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Present.
21 THE SECRETARY: Senator Griffo.
22 SENATOR GRIFFO: Here.
23 THE SECRETARY: Senator Harckham.
24 SENATOR HARCKHAM: Here.
25 THE SECRETARY: Senator Helming.

1 SENATOR HELMING: Here.
2 THE SECRETARY: Senator Hoylman.
3 SENATOR HOYLMAN: Here.
4 THE SECRETARY: Senator Jackson.
5 SENATOR JACKSON: Here.
6 THE SECRETARY: Senator Jacobs.
7 SENATOR JACOBS: Here.
8 THE SECRETARY: Senator Jordan.
9 SENATOR JORDAN: Here.
10 THE SECRETARY: Senator Kaminsky.
11 SENATOR KAMINSKY: Here.
12 THE SECRETARY: Senator Kaplan.
13 SENATOR KAPLAN: Here.
14 THE SECRETARY: Senator Kavanagh.
15 SENATOR KAVANAGH: Here.
16 THE SECRETARY: Senator Kennedy.
17 SENATOR KENNEDY: Here.
18 THE SECRETARY: Senator Krueger.
19 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes, here.
20 THE SECRETARY: Senator Lanza.
21 SENATOR LANZA: Here.
22 THE SECRETARY: Senator LaValle.
23 SENATOR LaVALLE: Here.
24 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris, a
25 quorum is present.

1 In keeping with the tradition of
2 this chamber, it is my honor as President of the
3 Senate to welcome you to the 2020 session.

4 While we celebrate coming
5 together -- reacquainting our friendships, making
6 new ones, looking forward to an impactful and
7 productive session -- it is also appropriate that
8 we briefly look back and pay tribute to one of
9 our own that we lost over the last year. And I
10 speak of my good friend Senator Bill Larkin.

11 Senator Larkin extended his hand in
12 friendship to me from my very first day when I
13 presided, and he welcomed me many times to his
14 district. And we went to his beloved Purple
15 Heart Hall of Fame. And so I just wanted to
16 offer a moment of silence in honor of Senator
17 Bill Larkin.

18 (Whereupon, the assemblage rose and
19 respected a moment of silence.)

20 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

21 I also want to take this opportunity
22 to welcome new Senator Borrello, who's from my
23 neck of the woods. I've spent many times down in
24 your beautiful district and look forward to
25 visiting again. And I encourage you, Senator, as

1 you entered this room for your very first time
2 known as a Senator, that you never forget the
3 awesomeness of gathering with such incredible
4 elected officials who journey from all across the
5 state to do the work of the people. So I welcome
6 you, Senator Borrello.

7 The turbulent times in which --
8 (Applause.)

9 THE PRESIDENT: The turbulent times
10 in which we live compel us to acknowledge
11 something that for a long time had simmered below
12 the surface but sadly has now reached a boiling
13 point. Since I gaveled in one year ago, hate
14 crimes in the State of New York have gone up
15 20 percent -- abhorrent acts of antisemitism,
16 racism, homophobia, transphobia. Hate has seeped
17 into the underbelly of New Yorkers, and it's
18 manifesting itself through bigotry, ignorance and
19 violence.

20 And the presence of the Rabbi here
21 today, and his guests, are a reminder that no
22 place is immune, whether it's a college campus,
23 city streets, suburban enclaves, public markets
24 or even the sanctity of one's home during a
25 holiday observance.

1 Our fellow citizens now live in fear
2 for their safety, in conflict with the promise
3 that was made by former Governor and President of
4 the United States Franklin Roosevelt, when at
5 another time in our history -- scary times -- he
6 gave what was known as the "Four Freedoms"
7 speech, declaring that there are four freedoms
8 that every human being is entitled to, and one of
9 them is freedom from fear.

10 So how do we live the words of FDR
11 and provide freedom from fear for our citizens?
12 First and foremost, it is our responsibility to
13 condemn it whenever and wherever we see it.
14 Because here in the State of New York, an attack
15 on one of us is an attack on all of us.

16 (Applause.)

17 THE PRESIDENT: Yet as frightening
18 as these times are, I believe that we will get
19 through them more unified than ever before. And
20 why do I say that? Because I witnessed firsthand
21 the specter of tens of thousands of New Yorkers
22 as they marched just days ago across the
23 Brooklyn Bridge, sending a loud message across
24 the world that we are united in purpose and that
25 we come together, when someone under siege needs

1 us, regardless of their background.

2 And second, what gives me optimism
3 about where this state is headed is a historic
4 diversity in this chamber. This sets the example
5 for the rest of the country and future
6 generations to truly see what democracy looks
7 like, from the diversity in this chamber. This
8 is New York.

9 (Applause.)

10 THE PRESIDENT: But beyond making
11 history, as we did just a year ago when I handed
12 the gavel to my good friend Majority Leader
13 Andrea Stewart-Cousins -- and what a great day
14 that was -- but more than just making history, we
15 must make a difference, because many New Yorkers
16 still struggle to make ends meet and they look to
17 us for hope.

18 (Applause.)

19 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The
20 business of the people await.

21 And one item of business that I will
22 close on that is deeply personal to me, as we get
23 in 2020 we stand at the century mark when women
24 were finally granted the right to vote. And that
25 is a movement that as you all know your New York

1 State history -- and if you don't know it, I'll
2 take you to Seneca Falls -- it began with brave,
3 audacious women who were New Yorkers. And so --

4 (Applause.)

5 THE PRESIDENT: So we honor those
6 women of New York. And I wear the color purple
7 in recognition of their trials and tribulations,
8 to never forget what they strived so hard to do.
9 And the rest of the nation followed their lead.

10 But I think we'd all agree that none
11 of those women of that time, those courageous
12 women who defied the tides of their time, none of
13 them would be satisfied with the progress we've
14 made thus far in our nation and in our state.
15 And neither am I. That's why it remains our
16 moral responsibility, our moral obligation to
17 fight for full equality, regardless of sex,
18 ethnicity, national origin, age, disability,
19 sexual orientation or gender identity.

20 We face challenging times ahead, and
21 we must not fall prey to the inflammatory
22 rhetoric that seeks to divide us. Having had the
23 extraordinary privilege of traveling this entire
24 state and seeing so many of you in your
25 fascinating districts -- downstate, upstate, from

1 Buffalo to Brooklyn -- I know we have more that
2 unites us than divides us, because I've seen it.

3 And that is why, if we remain true
4 to our shared values, steeled in our resolve in
5 rejecting hate and ensuring that every single
6 person has the opportunity to achieve their full
7 potential, then there is no stopping us, for we
8 are New York. And we'll once again show the
9 nation the way forward.

10 Thank you very much.

11 (Applause.)

12 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris.

13 SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's please
14 proceed to the regular order of business.

15 THE PRESIDENT: Presentation of
16 petitions.

17 Messages from the Assembly.

18 Messages from the Governor.

19 The Secretary will read.

20 THE SECRETARY: "Dear Majority
21 Leader Stewart-Cousins:

22 "I would appreciate the privilege of
23 the presence of all the Members of the New York
24 State Senate at the Empire State Plaza Convention
25 Center on January 8, 2020, at 1:30 p.m. to

1 deliver the 2020 State of the State and
2 Budget Address.

3 "Very truly yours, Andrew M. Cuomo."

4 THE PRESIDENT: To be filed in the
5 Journal.

6 Reports of standing committees.

7 Reports of select committees.

8 Communications and reports from
9 state officers.

10 Motions and resolutions.

11 Senator Gianaris.

12 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
13 before we proceed with motions and resolutions,
14 can you please recognize our guests from the
15 State Assembly.

16 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
17 read -- I'm sorry, recognize the Assembly members
18 that have arrived.

19 ASSEMBLYMEMBER WEINSTEIN: Thank
20 you. I'm here to report that the Assembly has
21 organized, we've convened our 2020 session, we're
22 ready to receive the remarks of the Governor, and
23 we look forward to another productive legislative
24 session this year.

25 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you,

1 Assemblymember Weinstein.

2 (Applause.)

3 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris.

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
5 there is a resolution at the desk. Please have
6 it read in its entirety, and I move for its
7 immediate adoption.

8 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
9 read.

10 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
11 2343, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, directing the
12 Temporary President to appoint a committee of two
13 to inform the Governor that the Senate is
14 organized and ready to proceed with business.

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

18 THE SECRETARY: I'm sorry.
19 "RESOLVED, Directing the Temporary President to
20 appoint a committee of two, comprised of Senator
21 Harckham and Senator Little, for the purpose of
22 informing the Governor that the Senate is
23 organized and ready to proceed with business."

24 THE PRESIDENT: Got ahead of
25 myself. My apologies.

1 The question is on the resolution.

2 All those in favor signify by saying aye.

3 (Response of "Aye.")

4 THE PRESIDENT: Opposed, nay.

5 (No response.)

6 THE PRESIDENT: The ayes have it.

7 The resolution is adopted.

8 Senators Harckham and Little are
9 appointed to inform the Governor that the Senate
10 is assembled and ready to proceed with business.

11 Senator Gianaris.

12 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
13 there's another resolution at the desk. Please
14 have that one read in its entirety and move for
15 its immediate adoption.

16 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
17 read.

18 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
19 2344, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, directing the
20 Temporary President to appoint a committee of two
21 to wait upon the Assembly and inform the body
22 that the Senate is assembled and ready to proceed
23 with business.

24 "RESOLVED, Directing the Temporary
25 President to appoint a committee of two,

1 comprised of Senator Kaplan and Senator Borrello,
2 for the purpose of waiting upon the Assembly and
3 informing that body that the Senate is assembled
4 and ready to proceed with business."

5 THE PRESIDENT: The question is on
6 the resolution. All those in favor signify by
7 saying aye.

8 (Response of "Aye.")

9 THE PRESIDENT: Opposed, nay.

10 (No response.)

11 THE PRESIDENT: The ayes have it.
12 The resolution is adopted.

13 Senators Kaplan and Borrello are
14 appointed to inform the Assembly that the Senate
15 is assembled and ready to proceed with business.

16 Senator Gianaris.

17 SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time,
18 Madam President, please recognize Senator
19 Flanagan for opening remarks.

20 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Flanagan.

21 SENATOR FLANAGAN: Thank you,
22 Madam President.

23 Madam President, it's nice to see
24 you. I tried to get up there to see you, but you
25 were mingling amongst the members. And Happy

1 New Year to you, and Happy New Year to all of my
2 colleagues.

3 So I want to start by commending the
4 rabbi for his thoughtful words and your prayer.
5 Anytime anyone -- a person of faith can stand
6 before us and bless us, we can always use that.
7 I'm very appreciative.

8 And I wrote down "strength, courage,
9 tenacity, and determination." You said a lot of
10 other things, but that's what I wrote down. And
11 God knows we're going to need plenty of it as we
12 move into this coming year. So it's wonderful to
13 see you here.

14 And I'm going to add, which I have a
15 penchant for doing -- but I'll do it extremely
16 briefly -- we are all privileged to serve in this
17 body. We are all privileged to be elected
18 officials, we are all privileged to be public
19 servants. Having said that, every one of us
20 should be proud of what we do. Everyone should
21 be proud of being a New York State Senator
22 representing over 300,000 people. We will have
23 our differences, as you all know, but we have a
24 lot more in common than we do what divides us.

25 So it's very, very important for me

1 to say that time and time again. And hopefully
2 it's a reminder because when we do have a new
3 colleague join us -- now, I'm going to smile even
4 broader, because he happens to be a new colleague
5 in our conference. But I want to welcome Senator
6 Borrello, who left three days ago to come to
7 Albany because he lives so far in the western
8 part of the state.

9 (Laughter.)

10 SENATOR FLANAGAN: Look, he's got a
11 fabulous pedigree. He's a real born and bred
12 New Yorker, family business. It was wonderful to
13 see his family here today for swearing in,
14 because it's reminiscent for all of us of how
15 special a day this is.

16 His district is 4139 square miles,
17 4139 square miles. And on some days he can get
18 across his district faster than Diane Savino.

19 (Laughter.)

20 SENATOR FLANAGAN: So we all know
21 what that means, right? All politics is local.

22 So I stand before you today grateful
23 to be here. I'm serving now in my 34th
24 legislative session, along -- I'm a classmate,
25 although we started in different houses, of

1 Senator Seward.

2 And I think it's appropriate for me
3 to recognize in the Democratic Conference the
4 senior member of that conference, Senator
5 Velmanette Montgomery, and of course my good
6 friend and colleague Senator Ken LaValle. Their
7 longevity is something that should be emulated,
8 embraced, and congratulated for their yeomanlike
9 service for a very long period of time.

10 So as we come into this day in
11 particular, this is the -- in my opinion, this is
12 really the Governor's day. This is a day for the
13 Governor to present his message to the people of
14 the State of New York. And we play a critical
15 role in that for sure, certainly, one, by showing
16 up; two, by listening; and three, by responding.

17 And I hope and feel and pray that my
18 colleagues in the Republican Conference will be
19 thoughtful, be diplomatic, be assertive, be
20 aggressive when need be, and be responsive to the
21 proposals that are being put forth by the
22 Governor. A number of them have, so to speak,
23 leaped out, which happens with every Governor.
24 That's fine and that's okay. There are things
25 that get out there for the public's review.

1 There's a couple of things out there to salt the
2 media, so to speak, and to give them things to
3 write about in anticipation of what the Governor
4 may say.

5 And I am looking forward to what he
6 has to offer as a message, but I am apprehensive
7 because I've seen some of the things that have
8 come out.

9 I believe the focuses of our
10 conference this year will be, as it always is, on
11 our constituents, on the residents that we
12 represent, on the taxpayers and the hardworking
13 middle-class New Yorkers that many of us
14 represent. We will be one-dimensional, we will
15 be focused, we will be parochial. We will be
16 collegial, because we are all state
17 representatives, but our fundamental obligation
18 is to the districts that we represent.

19 My colleague Ken LaValle from the
20 Senate First District always says "First District
21 first." Loves all of you, but he loves his
22 constituents a lot more. And we're all selfish
23 that way, and that's okay, because that's part of
24 the process.

25 But we find ourselves at a time

1 where we have very, very challenging issues for
2 the people of the great State of New York. If
3 you're a taxpayer, it's tough. Whoo, it is
4 tough. If you're a business owner, it's even
5 tougher. If you're a business owner someplace
6 else and you're thinking about coming to
7 New York, it's even tougher. We have way too
8 many obstacles, way too many burdens, way too
9 much oversight and regulation that doesn't do
10 really anything to serve the people that we
11 represent, in our opinion.

12 We will offer a bold agenda that is
13 taxpayer-based. We're going to talk about things
14 that have gone by the boards, like a property
15 rebate check that our constituents love and that
16 they deserve. We're going to talk about not
17 raising taxes, full well knowing that we have a
18 large deficit. And today is not the day to
19 really get into that.

20 But I want to focus on one thing in
21 particular. Our fundamental obligation includes
22 making sure that people feel safe, not only in
23 their homes and their surrounding environs but in
24 their communities. Madam President, you spoke to
25 this with passion. And that is one of our core

1 obligations. I don't believe that this body has
2 met that obligation. I don't believe the public
3 is as safe as they were a year ago. I don't
4 believe our law enforcement has been given the
5 tools that they need to protect our people in
6 their homes and their communities. I don't
7 believe our district attorneys have been given
8 the proper tools and authority and discretion,
9 along with our judges. And as a result, the
10 public is less safe.

11 And it's been borne out in less than
12 eight days on a daily basis. And the
13 Democrats -- the Senate Democrats, the Assembly
14 Democrats, and the Governor -- own that. And I'm
15 sure many of them will say that's fine. But the
16 people we represent -- Democrats, Republicans,
17 Independents, Conservatives -- I'm hearing more
18 about these issues than anything else and
19 everything else combined.

20 What should have happened was more
21 diligence. What should have happened was
22 listening to people who are in the trenches every
23 day protecting us. But it didn't happen. And
24 now a lot of people are walking back, including
25 the Governor and the Mayor of the City of

1 New York and a lot of other elected officials who
2 were in strong support of the changes.

3 They're not making the public safe.
4 That's going to be a critical issue. And when we
5 come into session tomorrow, that should be the
6 only thing that we're dealing with.

7 We have many other things that we'll
8 be dealing with, including the State Budget. I
9 want to work with my colleagues. I have great
10 respect for Senator Stewart-Cousins, Senator
11 Gianaris and all my Democratic colleagues. But
12 we're going to mix it up, you know we are. And I
13 want to do it in a way that makes the people that
14 we represent proud. And when I say I want to do
15 it that way, I believe I speak for my colleagues
16 in the Republican Conference, including our
17 newest member, Senator Borrello.

18 Madam President,
19 Senator Stewart-Cousins, Senator Gianaris, I am
20 grateful for the opportunity to be able to stand
21 here with you. And let's get about doing the
22 work of the people again of the great State of
23 New York.

24 Thank you.
25 (Applause.)

1 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator
2 Flanagan.

3 Senator Gianaris.

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time,
5 Madam President, please recognize the Majority
6 Leader of the State Senate, Andrea
7 Stewart-Cousins.

8 THE PRESIDENT: Majority Leader
9 Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

10 (Applause.)

11 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank
12 you. Thank you so much, Madam President. It is
13 always good when you join us and preside over
14 this auspicious body.

15 And thank you for the words that you
16 spoke and reminding us of who we are and how far
17 we've come and yet, of course, how much we must
18 do. And we will do it together. I really
19 appreciate your being here.

20 I also want to thank Governor Cuomo.
21 We have accomplished an awful lot together. And
22 obviously there are more victories on the horizon
23 that we look forward to enjoying together.

24 Also I want to thank my partner in
25 the other house, Speaker Carl Heastie, because we

1 know without the two houses getting together, a
2 lot of what we are celebrating as great
3 accomplishments could not have been achieved.

4 I always thank you, Senate Minority
5 Leader Senator Flanagan. We do get along,
6 despite all of the back and forth. I, again,
7 enjoy working with you and your conference and
8 look forward to having a productive session as
9 usual.

10 And I do want to welcome the new
11 Senator. We had a chance to speak a couple of
12 times on the phone. Welcome to our chamber. And
13 I'm sure you will enjoy every day (laughing).
14 Come on, right?

15 (Laughter.)

16 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And then
17 of course I want to thank my wonderful
18 conference, the Senate Democrats. And actually
19 the Lieutenant Governor mentioned what I was
20 going to say because it's just so important.
21 This conference represents what is great about
22 New York. It represents in so many ways the
23 American dream. And it represents America's
24 values. Thank you so much for being courageous,
25 and as the Rabbi said, tenacious, hardworking and

1 honest about public service every day. Thank
2 you.

3 Right now, though, I do want to
4 focus on Rabbi Horowitz's words and take a
5 special moment to thank him and all of my friends
6 from Rockland. And let me just tell you who's
7 here, because they don't get to be here often and
8 I do want to acknowledge our good friend Paul
9 Adler, Rabbi Yehuda Oshry -- why don't you stand
10 when I say your name. Rabbi Yehuda Oshry, Shaar
11 Ephraim. We have Asher Grossman, the deputy
12 mayor of Spring Valley. Hersh Wagschal. We have
13 the supervisor of Ramapo, Michael Stecht, and his
14 chief of staff we've gotten to know, Mona Montal.
15 And the chief of police from Ramapo, Chief Brad
16 Weidel. Thank you so much for being here and for
17 taking time to start us off on just the right
18 tone.

19 Rabbi, when I came to Monsey at your
20 invitation -- I was there with my deputy, Senator
21 Gianaris, and of course Senator Carlucci, whose
22 district you reside in -- I told you then, and I
23 reiterate to you what I said that day: In the
24 face of ugly, hateful, horrific -- this tragedy,
25 the entire Senate stands with you, with your

1 community as you heal and as you pray. There is
2 no place for hate in this state. None.

3 (Applause.)

4 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And
5 that -- what I'd like to do is for all of us just
6 to stand and give Rabbi Horowitz and his
7 colleagues in Monsey --

8 (Standing ovation.)

9 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank you
10 so much again. Your words were encouraging to
11 all of us to stay focused. And we want just
12 wanted to make sure that when we say we stand, we
13 stand in every -- literally, figuratively. And
14 we wanted to send you love back from this chamber
15 to continue to be a beacon for what needs to
16 happen all the time -- not only in our great
17 state but in our nation.

18 And now, of course, to the business
19 at hand. So here we are, we're at the beginning
20 of another session. And like you, I think back
21 to last year when we made all this history and
22 when you handed me the gavel.

23 And as the Lieutenant Governor
24 pointed out this year, 2020, is the
25 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Look

1 how far we've come. Look how far we've come.

2 (Applause.)

3 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: I am so
4 happy and proud to say that women are not only
5 voting, we are leading, as we should, in every
6 segment of society, and we are going to continue
7 that strong leadership.

8 And getting back to last year also,
9 I think of the victories along the way. We did a
10 lot of hugging and cheering on this side. I
11 think back also to when we gaveled out in
12 mid-June after months and months of nonstop
13 action. We gaveled out ready to be refreshed and
14 renewed, but mostly to go back to our districts
15 and serve our constituents. That's what we did.

16 Last session, and we all know, was
17 busy, it was tiring, it was historic. And for
18 us, we did a record, a record number of hearings
19 on everything -- I think it was about 77 to
20 date -- and we passed a record number of laws.

21 So I just want to look back. As I
22 said, we can't rest on our laurels, but it's
23 important because we did a lot of good things.
24 So we'll look back a little bit at what happened
25 last year. We passed a permanent property tax

1 cap. We have the lowest middle-class tax rates
2 in a generation. We finally stood up for women's
3 choice. While the federal government looked to
4 take women's rights away, we in this chamber
5 stood up and said no. We held groundbreaking
6 hearings on sexual harassment, passed legislation
7 saying that this scourge had no place in
8 New York. We stood up for our immigrant brothers
9 and sisters during a very scary time, stood up
10 for the LGBT community saying we're with you. We
11 passed laws that recognized the real dangers of
12 climate change. We passed the Child Victims Act
13 and delivered justice to so many abuse victims.
14 We passed groundbreaking affordable housing and
15 rent control laws. We passed commonsense gun
16 laws. And we're working towards reforming our
17 justice system and improving the voting process.

18 These are big, historic changes.
19 They're changes that have created a more
20 affordable New York for working families, a
21 fairer, safer and more just New York for so many
22 of our neighbors who were denied basic rights and
23 equal treatment under the law for years.

24 And while many of us celebrated
25 these accomplishments, we know that change can

1 still be scary. Change can cause discomfort. It
2 can lead people down a path where fearmongering,
3 sowing division, spinning false narratives seem
4 attractive. We have to reject this path.

5 Because when given the choice, we must always
6 create opportunities for progress rather than
7 build barriers to prevent it.

8 We can do so much more to create
9 more opportunities for New Yorkers whose pathways
10 to a better future are blocked by the same old
11 barriers we've been dealing with for
12 generations -- barriers to being able to stay in
13 your home, barriers to getting a quality
14 education, barriers to accessing decent childcare
15 or treatment for addiction. These are barriers
16 that shouldn't exist in New York in 2020.

17 So today, with this new session, we
18 renew our commitment to creating opportunities,
19 to leveling the playing field for children living
20 in poverty in rural villages and inner cities;
21 for homeowners and tenants struggling to make
22 ends meet, pay their property taxes or make rent,
23 from downstate to upstate; for long-time
24 New Yorkers and new arrivals excited to
25 experience the promise of a great new state

1 firsthand.

2 This next session we have to
3 continue to be bold. We have to continue to
4 embrace change. It's not going to be easy.
5 We're facing a larger-than-expected deficit, and
6 we have working and middle-class residents of our
7 state who can't shoulder any more of the tax
8 burden than they already do.

9 But even with these challenges, we
10 must rise to the occasion and meet the needs of
11 our state. We're going to look for ways to fund
12 our education system in a fair manner, make sure
13 all of our students get the proper resources.
14 We're going to find ways to make college more
15 affordable so children can stay in the community
16 and thrive. We're going to make childcare more
17 affordable so parents can continue to work and
18 provide for their families.

19 We're going to continue to grow our
20 economy in all parts of the state, make sure we
21 create more jobs. We're going to ensure that our
22 small businesses thrive. We're going to help to
23 bridge the technology gap and even try, finally,
24 to bring broadband to rural areas. We're going
25 to continue to reform our voting system. We're

1 going to stand up for our brothers and sisters in
2 labor. We're going to continue to look to stop
3 the horrors of gun violence. We're going to look
4 to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and
5 transportation systems. We're going to continue
6 to take on the opioid crisis that is facing our
7 state and our country. We're going to continue
8 to recognize the dangers of climate change, pass
9 real reforms to clean up our environment.

10 And as we've begun, and finally,
11 we're going to continue to stand up to hate.
12 We're going to say that there's no place for that
13 in our state. And I believe that because we
14 understand the gravity of the work and the fact
15 that we have so much work to do, we're going to
16 do it together the way New Yorkers do.

17 Let's get to work. Happy New Year.
18 (Extended standing ovation.)

19 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Majority
20 Leader, for your heartfelt remarks.

21 Senator Gianaris.

22 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
23 at this time we have two handups to the desk on
24 behalf of the Majority Leader. There's a handup
25 related to Majority Conference membership change

1 that I ask be filed in the Journal. And I also,
2 in consultation with Minority Leader Flanagan on
3 behalf of Leader Stewart-Cousins, offer a handup
4 related to a change in Minority Conference
5 membership and ask that that also be filed in the
6 Journal.

7 THE PRESIDENT: The handups are
8 received and will be filed in the Journal.

9 Senator Gianaris.

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: Is there any
11 further business at the desk?

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

14 SENATOR GIANARIS: I will remind my
15 colleagues that we are supposed to be receiving
16 the Governor's address at 1:30, so please proceed
17 promptly to the hall for the speech.

18 And with that, I move to adjourn
19 until tomorrow, Thursday, January 9th, at
20 11:00 a.m.

21 THE PRESIDENT: On motion, the
22 Senate stands adjourned until Thursday,
23 January 9th, at 11:00 a.m.

24 (Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the Senate
25 adjourned.)