NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

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4:32 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: In the absence of clergy, let us bow our heads in a moment of silent reflection or prayer.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Monday, February 13, 2023, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Friday, February 10, 2023, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Breslin

moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 1285 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 1320, Third Reading Calendar 88.

Senator Skoufis moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 611 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 1328, Third Reading Calendar 96.

Senator Hoylman-Sigal moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 631 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 1335, Third Reading Calendar 103.

Senator Parker moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 978 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 2227, Third Reading Calendar 164.

Senator Mayer moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 969 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 2235, Third Reading Calendar 288.

Senator Krueger moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 622 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 2621, Third Reading Calendar 289.

Senator Rhoads moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 1007 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 2622, Third Reading Calendar 290.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Substitutions so ordered.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, I move to adopt the Resolution Calendar, with the exception of Resolutions 304, 434, and 443.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: All those in favor of adopting the Resolution Calendar, with the exception of Resolutions 304, 434, and 443, please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Opposed?

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Resolution Calendar is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, we're going to simultaneously have a Rules Committee meeting while the resolutions are being taken up.

So please call an immediate meeting of the Rules Committee in Room 332 and take up -- begin by taking up previously adopted Resolution 297, by Senator Sepúlveda, read its title only, and recognize Senator Sepúlveda.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: There will be an immediate meeting of the Rules Committee in Room 332.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution 297, by Senator Sepúlveda, commending Staff Sergeant Aquilino Gonell in recognition of his prompt and heroic actions in protecting the members of Congress and their staff while the United States Capitol was under attack on January 6, 2021.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Sepúlveda.

SENATOR SEPÚLVEDA: Thank you, Madam President, for allowing me to discuss this

resolution.

It's not every day that we bring a truly authentic American hero into this body, into this chamber. And today I present to you one that all of us should be proud of, because he sacrificed his life in the defense of democracy on January 6th.

It's my honor to stand before you today and recognize Staff Sergeant Aquilino Gonell. He is a proud American citizen, a proud New Yorker, and a proud Dominican American.

When he arrived in the United States, he made New York City his home, where he worked to achieve the American dream.

He received a college education and joined the military. Serving in the U.S. Army and the Army Reserve, he served at Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Despite the challenges he faced as an immigrant, Sergeant Gonell never wavered in his commitment to his country and fellow Americans. He joined the Capitol Police Department in Washington, D.C., where he once again put himself in harm's way to protect the Constitution of the United States.

On January 6th, during the attack on the U.S. Capitol, Sergeant Gonell demonstrated remarkable bravery and courage. Despite being subjected to chemical spray, suffering several injuries, being cut and bled, requiring several surgeries, he continued to serve for 15 consecutive days after the inauguration of President Biden.

I want to tell you that Sergeant Gonell has received -- and I believe is one of the few Americans to ever receive both the Presidential Citizens Medal and the Congressional Gold Medal.

As you know, the President's Medal is the second-highest honor you can bestow on a citizen. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor you can bestow by Congress on a citizen of this country.

Today it's a great honor to have Sergeant Gonell with us, along with members of his family, including his father and mother, Mr. José Gonell and Mrs. Sabina Gonell.

The New York State Senate is proud to honor Sergeant Gonell with this resolution, J247, how he proudly testified before Congress on

July 27, 2022, recounting the events of that day, ensuring that history accurately records the horrible events that occurred and the violence that he and many others were subjected to.

Sergeant Gonell will be writing a book called "The American Shield: The Immigrant Sergeant Who Defended Democracy."

As Sergeant Gonell continues to heal from physical and mental injuries sustained during the attack, the New York State Senate is honored to pay tribute to his actions. I'm also proud to announce that in early May of this year, Sergeant Gonell will receive a recognition and resolution from the Dominican Republic Senate in the hands of Senator Alexis Victoria Yeb and the Honorable President of the Senate, Eduardo Estrella. This recognition marks the first time that a person has received such a well-deserved honor from both the New York State Senate and the Senate of the Dominican Republic.

Let us all take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey of Staff Sergeant Gonell, a proud New Yorker and American citizen -- a proud American citizen, a proud Dominican American.

And I was touched when he gave me this shield. It's got a shield, and inside it says "First Responders Unit, United States Capitol Police."

And allow me to say a few words in Spanish. (In Spanish.)

I want you all to join me today in recognizing and honoring this true great American hero who has served this country in many capacities. He deserves this honor and much more.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Sepúlveda.

Senator Jackson on the resolution.

SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you, Madam President.

So my colleagues, I rise in order to congratulate our Staff Sergeant Gonell and his family, which I had the opportunity before we began our proceedings to meet his mother, father, his sister, his brother, his niece, his uncle -- his whole family is behind him. And as Americans we should all be behind him, congratulating him for basically preserving the integrity of our

democracy in Washington, D.C.

And I -- if you know, I represent part of Manhattan. You've heard me say this before. But my district now goes from Upper Manhattan and into the Bronx, where a majority of the constituents that I represent are of Dominican heritage. And I'm so proud -- talking to his uncle, he says he's a driver of a cab and they talk about me all the time up in Northern Manhattan.

But I'm so proud to be here today in order to see this recognition to you on behalf of what you stand for, for our country. And so thank you for your service to make us all safe and sound in our Washington, D.C.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Jackson.

Senator Kennedy on the resolution.

SENATOR KENNEDY: Thank you, Madam President.

I rise today to recognize Staff Sergeant Aquilino Gonell for swiftly stepping up to protect others when our Capitol was under attack on January 6, 2021. Not only did

Staff Sergeant Gonell proudly serve our country during Operation Iraqi Freedom and in the Army Reserve, but as we've heard here today, he quite literally helped protect our democracy from crumbling as insurrectionists attempted to wage an ill-informed onslaught on our nation's Capitol. It was an attack on democracy.

And Staff Sergeant Gonell stepped up, and he met the challenge head on. As a member of the Capitol Police Department in Washington, D.C., Staff Sergeant Gonell found himself at the center of the violence on January 6th. Yet despite the dangers surrounding him, he stayed true to his mission: Safeguarding the U.S. Capitol and members of Congress inside.

He was soaked in chemical spray. He sustained multiple injuries. And yet he stayed the course, because he knew what he was defending was worth protecting. We owe Staff Sergeant Gonell an incredible debt of gratitude -- and those we lost that day, and those that stood with him to defend democracy on that fateful day that will live in our nation in infamy.

They are all heroes. As Staff Sergeant Gonell continues to heal, both

mentally and physically, from that day, we pray for his recovery, we stand with him, and we hope that he is strengthened by those that love and care for him.

I'm honored to stand with all of my colleagues here today as we honor this American hero on the Senate floor. And I thank Senator Sepúlveda for bringing this resolution forward.

Thank you so much for your service to this state, to this nation, and to the global community for standing up for democracy when others may have wavered. For standing up for what is right in the face of the challenge of thousands of people that wanted to do you and this nation harm. Thank you, Staff Sergeant.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Kennedy.

Senator Bailey on the resolution.

SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you, Madam President.

We often wax poetic about certain phrases. The word "hero" is one of those things that we kind of -- just kind of throw out there, right? We just -- "That's heroic" or "This is heroic," or "You're a hero, you're a true

patriot."

As I watched January 6th unfold from the safety and comfort of my own home, as I watched the worst attack on democracy and on the people of this great country happen from the safety of my own home, Staff Sergeant, you were in the midst of it. You didn't back down. You did not forget what you were sworn to do, which was protect the people -- not just around you, but the people of the entire United States of America.

We owe you more than a debt of gratitude. We owe you more than a resolution. We owe you more than the applause that we should give you after everyone is concluded speaking. We owe you a lifetime of respect. Because leadership and being a hero is easy to do it when it's somebody that you -- it's easy to do it when it's your neighbor or your cousin or somebody. But you were protecting people that you didn't know, had never seen, would never meet again, for the sake of our democracy. That is what a hero, that is what a leader is.

And it proves something: That just because you were not born on the soil of the

United States of America does not mean that you do not have the heart of this country in mind. You have come here from the Dominican Republic to seek a better life for yourself and your family, but in you seeking a better life, you have made our lives better. By your heroism, by your bravery, and quite frankly because of your selflessness. Those of us who are in positions not in law enforcement, we -- when danger comes, we go the other way. You charge toward it. And you charge towards it boldly.

I can't imagine what it is that you think about on a daily basis by virtue of that attack. I can't imagine how you process it on a daily basis. But you did it, and you do it. And you do it for people that you don't know.

I take my hat off to you, sir. You are a true American hero. Your story should be emblazoned on more than just the great legislative record of this chamber. There should be more people who see what you've done and realize that they can do what you do and what you've done. You're a true hero, sir.

I vote aye on the resolution, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Bailey.

Senator Martinez on the resolution.

SENATOR MARTINEZ: Good afternoon, Madam President. Thank you.

I rise today to thank Staff Sergeant Aquilino Gonell for his service to our nation and our state. Your selfless actions on January 6th of 2021 showed the love and dedication that you have for this nation during a time when so much hatred was displayed.

I am hopeful the injuries you sustained will heal. And I hope that our nation also heals. And again, I want to thank you for your service. {In Spanish: Thank you for being here with us today.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Martinez.

Senator Cleare on the resolution.

SENATOR CLEARE: I rise to thank you, Sergeant Gonell, for your actions on January 6th.

I too, like others, sat in my home and watched in utter disbelief at what was going on in our country. You protected our Capitol.

You protected our representatives. You protected your colleagues. You protected all of us. And more importantly, you protected the core of our country, which is our democracy. And we thank you for that.

I proudly represent a significant Dominican American population, maybe not quite as much as Senator Jackson. But even more, I represent a district of citizens who all owe you a debt of gratitude for your service, your bravery, for our state and our country. And we thank you.

I proudly vote aye on the resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Cleare.

Senator Comrie on the resolution.

SENATOR COMRIE: Thank you, Madam President.

Staff Sergeant Aquilino Gonell -- I'm sorry, I pronounced your name wrong: Gonell. I never thought I'd have the opportunity to personally thank someone that stood in the fray on January 6th. I never thought I'd have an opportunity to meet one of the officers that held

our country together in the face of hatred and extreme prejudice.

I never thought that we'd have that opportunity. I didn't get a chance to meet you, but I'm going to hug you later, because you stood in the path, you created and saved our democracy.

I don't know that many of us would stand in the face of hatred when hatred was so imposed upon you. I don't know that many of us would stand there and get sprayed and cussed and beaten when people were determined to do harm. I don't know if many of us would be able to fight off anger when it was so prevalent.

I want to thank you. You know, they said you're an American. We all are immigrants to this country, as I've said in this chamber before. Unless you're an American Indian, we're all immigrants to this country. But you understand the pride of this nation, what this country is all about, what democracy truly is, and what is holding the line against hate.

I want to thank you for your service. I want to thank you for joining the armed services. I want to thank you for your belief in this country. And I'm getting

emotional, so I'm going to sit down. I've never had a chance, I never thought I'd have this opportunity to meet someone from that day.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Comrie.

Senator Martins on the resolution.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Madam President.

I too rise to thank Senator Sepúlveda for bringing forth this resolution. I had the opportunity to meet with the staff sergeant and his family before session; we had a few moments before we were able to convene. And I just want to take the opportunity, sir, to congratulate you, to thank you for your service.

I want to thank your parents and the pride they have today in being here in the New York State Senate, watching as their son is honored for his bravery and his service to his country, his service to the community.

You know, we talk about things like bravery, heroes. We talk about things in this chamber all the time about supporting those who hold the line in law enforcement. And that's

what I see this resolution really being about. It's our recognizing how important it is -- and should be to every one of us, and every one of our constituents throughout New York State -- to stand with law enforcement. To stand with those who stand up against those who would do harm to others.

For you, sir, it was at the United States Capitol. For so many here in New York State, in our own communities, in our counties and our villages, in the city, throughout this great state, we have people who serve this state honorably each and every day. Heroes in our communities who stand up and enforce the laws that we in this chamber have had the privilege of passing over the years.

So Staff Sergeant, to you, to your family, thank you.

And to my dear friend Senator Sepúlveda, thank you so much for reminding us all that it is our responsibility, when we have the opportunity, to recognize heroism, to recognize courage, and to stand up for those who stand up for us and our families each and every day in protecting us in our communities.

Madam President, I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Martins.

Senator Ashby on the resolution.

SENATOR ASHBY: Thank you, Madam President.

Staff Sergeant Gonell, thank you for being the best of what the United States has to offer. Thank you for your family, for being here today and reminding us of what it is to be an American hero. Not only volunteering to serve at a time when many did not, when it was unpopular -- coming home and choosing to serve again. It's a remarkable decision. It's a remarkable life. And it's an example for all of us here to follow and carry on that tradition.

Thank you. I proudly vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Gounardes on the resolution.

SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you, Madam President.

I think a lot of my colleagues have said what I think so many of us are thinking in thanking Staff Sergeant Gonell for his service and his selflessness.

But I want to call attention to, one, the important symbolism of your heroic deeds. Because on the day that you responded at the Capitol, that was the first and only time in our nation's history when a Confederate flag made it into our Capitol building. There was a Civil War 160-something years ago, and even then the enemies of this country, those who did not believe in the American way of life, could not succeed in bringing a Confederate flag that stood for everything we stand against, into that building. But it did on January 6th.

And the symbolism of you, with where you've come from and where you came and why you came here, to be part of the effort, to be part of the push, to be part of the fight to repel that flag out of that Capitol building, cannot be understated.

You who answered Lady Liberty's call to come to this country in search of the American life, the American way for you and your family and your loved ones, to have, dare I say, the honor to be the one to repel that flag out of that Capitol building and protect our democracy -- that symbolism is so rich. And it

is so important.

And while the courage which you demonstrated and which your fellow officers demonstrated in answer to that call is of course significant, the fact that it was you, and the fact that you were there, and where you came from, and the fact that the flag flew in that building, speaks volumes and is a testament to the character and service that we honor here today.

So I want to thank you. I join my colleagues in thanking you for your service and for what your story means to the rest of us and how it inspires the rest of us.

And I proudly vote aye. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Gounardes.

Staff Sergeant Gonell, thank you so much for all you have done. Thank you for what you have done. Thank you for joining us here today. It is our honor to honor you.

We welcome and your family to our chamber, and we hold you in the highest regard. Thank you very much from all of our hearts.

(Extended standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The resolution was previously adopted on January 31st.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Madam President.

Let me also add my thanks to Staff Sergeant Gonell and to Senator Sepúlveda for giving us the opportunity to acknowledge him today.

Next, we are moving on to Resolution 304, by Senator Kennedy. Here he comes. Please read the title of that resolution and recognize Senator Kennedy.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution 304, by Senator Kennedy, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 14, 2023, as Canada Day in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Kennedy on the resolution.

SENATOR KENNEDY: Thank you, Madam President.

I rise today to honor the

long-standing relationship between the United States and Canada and to welcome our guests who have joined us from the Canadian Consulate in New York.

I'd ask them to stand and be recognized. The acting consul general, Andre Frenette. The Province of Quebec's delegate general in New York, Martine Hebert. As well as the director of the Province of Alberta's office in Washington, D.C., Julia Barema.

I also want to recognize a former staff member of mine, former chief of staff as well as my former legislative director, Rachel Homewood, who is the senior diplomatic advisor to the Canadian Consulate.

New York's neighbor to the north shares so much with us -- history, culture, and the largest bilateral tourism industry in the entire United States. More than 5.5 million Canadians visit New York every single year -- and yet our relationship is so much bigger than the temporary visits.

Our proximity and partnership has led to more than 700 Canadian-owned companies putting down roots and creating more than 680,000

jobs throughout the state, demonstrating collaboration and a commitment to opportunity.

Canada also serves as New York's primary export market to the tune of $13.8 billion in annual exports. And that list is only expected to grow in the years to come.

In Western New York our ties to Canada are part of our daily culture. Our AAA baseball team, the Buffalo Bisons, is the proud affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays -- sorry to my Yankees and Mets fans. And when the border controls prevented the Blue Jays from playing at home, we in Buffalo adopted them, hosting two memorable summers of Major League Baseball in downtown Buffalo.

And on a night when the Buffalo Sabres are taking on the Leafs, the Canadians or the Senators at Key Bank Center, the seats are full of fans from both sides of the border. Healthy competition never hurt anyone.

As a matter of fact, we don't have to wait to play these Canadian counterparts; the Canadian fans flow over the border to support our Buffalo Sabres quite often. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, its magnitude felt enormous,

especially for border communities that have long seen the other side not just as neighbors, but family. Thankfully we stand here today on the other side of that pandemic heartbreak.

As both of our nations continue to rebuild, we recognize that we are so much more than our shared border. In the light and the dark, we are one together.

Today, the New York State Senate joins together to recognize our friends to the north, the existing partnership we share, and the bright future ahead.

Madam President, please extend all of the virtues of the house to our friends from Canada. Thank you so much for making the trip here once again. We appreciate all that you do and our great partnership between our nations, our State of New York, and Canada. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Kennedy.

To our guests -- Acting Consul General Frenette, Delegate General Martine Hebert, Rachel Homewood, Taylor Reak and Julia Barema -- thank you so much for joining us

today. We welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of the house. We look forward to recognizing you and continuing to have you join us.

Thank you.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Madam President.

Next, will you take up Resolution 434, by Senator Ashby, read that resolution's title, and recognize Senator Ashby, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Gianaris, the question is on the previous resolution. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Opposed?

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The resolution is adopted.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution 434, by Senator Ashby, memorializing Governor

Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 12, 2023, as Operation Homecoming Recognition Day in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Ashby on the resolution.

SENATOR ASHBY: Thank you, Madam President.

Operation Homecoming marks the return of 591 prisoners of war from North Vietnam following the Paris Peace Accords in 1973. It's 50 years as of February 12th.

All of them were brave. I want To tell you about 11 of them today. The Alcatraz Gang were the leaders of the POW resistance in Vietnam. They were steadfast and unrelenting, unwilling to share intelligence or be used as props and enemy propaganda. And they paid for it. They were held in solitary confinement for years at a time. At night, they were forced into tiny concrete rooms with bright lights, starved and sleep-deprived. Their legs were shackled. They were brutally beaten until they lost consciousness, and they endured unspeakable physical torture.

It's hard to understand, to really

understand that level of sacrifice, let alone fully appreciate it. But we have to try. It's our obligation. It's what we owe them.

I want to read to you their names: George Thomas Coker. Jeremiah Denton. Harry Jenkins. Sam Johnson. George McKnight. James Mulligan. Howard Rutledge. Robert Shumaker. James Stockdale. Nels Tanner. And from New York, Ronald Storz, who never made it home, dying in captivity.

For the survivors, their homecoming wasn't a fairy tale. They encountered a war-weary public who didn't understand that these men didn't choose war, war chose them. A public that failed to make a distinction between a president who saw a war as an intractable political problem and the young men who were sent to fight for their lives.

Today and every day, this year and every year, we have an opportunity to do better by the men and women who put their lives on the line for their very country. To show that "thank you for your service" isn't a platitude, but a mission statement.

Few soldiers will ever endure what

the Alcatraz Gang did, but every soldier endures enough. This year's budget must invest in life-saving peer-to-peer counseling programming. It must invest in veteran housing. And we have to provide more assistance to the compassionate servants who are on the front lines of mental health addiction services and PTSD treatment. And I look forward to working with every single person in this chamber to make that happen.

Thank you, and I proudly vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Ashby.

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Opposed?

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: And now, Madam President, Resolution 443, by Senator Weber. Read that resolution's title and recognize Senator Weber, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The

Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution 443, by Senator Weber, honoring heart transplant recipient Roxanne Watson for her ceaseless dedication as a champion and advocate for organ donation upon the milestone of personally adding over 13,000 names to the National Organ Donor Registry by herself.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Weber on the resolution.

SENATOR WEBER: Madam President, I rise today to recognize a remarkable individual who has made immeasurable impact on our community, Ms. Roxanne Watson.

Roxanne's story is one of determination, hope, and selflessness. She is a heart transplant recipient who spent over two long years on a transplant list before receiving a heart from her donor, Michael Bovill. This new lease on life not only transformed Roxanne's health but also sparked a passion within her to help others in need. And so she set out on a mission to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation, and to encourage others to sign up for the National Organ Donor Registry.

Today we recognize and celebrate Roxanne's monumental achievement of personally signing up 13,000 people to the National Organ Donor Registry. This is a testament to her tireless efforts and her unwavering commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.

Her story has inspired countless individuals, and her impact will be felt for generations to come. Through her advocacy, she has helped bring attention to the critical need for organ donors, especially in the minority populations who statistically need the most organs.

If you live in Rockland County, you will no doubt recognize her from the Donate Life registration table at the mall, sporting events, high schools, naturalization ceremonies, and pretty much anywhere else a large crowd gathers.

If you do not live in Rockland County, you may recognize her as a spokeswoman on national television advertising campaigns.

Roxanne's connection to her donor, Michael, clearly demonstrates the profound impact one person's generosity can have on so many lives around this country. The fact that Michael's

selfless act of donation saved not only Roxanne's life, but also the lives of four others, is truly remarkable.

By carrying a picture of Michael with her wherever she goes, Roxanne keeps his memory and his gift alive. And she continues to inspire others to follow in his footsteps. Her weekly radio show, "Michael's Gift," serves a platform for her to spread awareness and to share her story.

This bond is so powerful it's the subject of a book called "Michael's Legacy: Transcending Life and Death."

Roxanne's selflessness serves as a reminder of the power of one individual and the impact that one person can make on the world. She has shown us that even in the face of adversity, it is possible to persevere and to use our experiences to help others. Her efforts have brought hope to families waiting for life-saving transplants and have saved numerous lives.

It's truly fitting that we honor Roxanne on this special day, Valentine's Day. Women's Heart Day is acknowledged on February 3rd, February 14th is Donor Remembrance Day, and

February is American Heart Month. All of these days are important in their own right and deserving of our recognition. But Valentine's Day represents love and generosity, two qualities that Roxanne embodies.

On behalf of the New York State Senate and the people of New York, I have the tremendous honor to present Roxanne Watson with my first resolution. Roxanne is here with us today in the gallery. So it is my privilege to say directly to her: Thank you for your unwavering commitment and your dedication to save lives. You are a shining example of the power of determination, compassion, and the human spirit. You are a true hero and an inspiration to us all. Your legacy will continue to inspire others, and your remarkable contributions to this community will be felt for years to come.

You know, I always tell my kids that superheroes don't always wear capes. But Roxanne, you're our superhero among us.

Madam President, please recognize Roxanne Watson and extend her the privileges and courtesies of the house.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Weber.

To our guest, Roxanne Watson, with her wonderful picture there, thank you. We extend to you all the courtesies of this house. We welcome you. We so appreciate all your work.

Please stand and be recognized by the body.

(Standing ovation.)

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Opposed?

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, at the request of the various sponsors, the resolutions we took up today are open for cosponsorship.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The resolutions are open for cosponsorship. Should you choose not to be a cosponsor of the

resolutions, please notify the desk.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I believe there's a report of the Rules Committee at the desk. Can we take that up, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Stewart-Cousins, from the Committee on Rules, reports the following bills:

Senate Resolution 444, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, amending Section 1 of Rule VII of the Senate Rules;

Senate Print 3125, by Senator Hinchey, an act to amend the State Finance Law;

Senate Print 4134, by Senator Parker, an act to amend the Public Authorities Law;

Senate Print 4270, by Senator Parker, an act to amend the Agriculture and Markets Law.

All bills reported direct to third reading.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator

Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to accept the report of the Rules Committee.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: All those in favor of accepting the report of the Rules Committee, signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The report is accepted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: At this point let's return to motions and resolutions for a moment and take up Senate Resolution 444, and call on Senator Fernandez to be heard on that resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution 444, by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, amending Section 1 of Rule VII of the Senate Rules, in relation to the name of the Standing Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Fernandez on the resolution.

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madam President.

As the chair of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committee, I can say confidently that its members and our staff are committed to fighting the stigma attached to addiction through all policy and budgetary avenues available.

In the midst of the crisis, we can sometimes be so focused on taking action that we overlook the language and the power of our words when spoken into the world. Words matter deeply. And the more we learn, the more sophisticated our language becomes.

This has been the case in my journey becoming immersed in the recovery community. That is why, on behalf of the recovery movement, I am supporting this resolution by our fearless leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, to rename the Committee of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse to Alcoholism and Substance Use Disorders.

Why? The word "abuse" implies a conscious decision to engage in a negative behavior. But those with a substance use

disorder have a disease. The goal is to embrace treatment over a punitive approach to these individuals.

In fact, the DSM-5 no longer defines the condition as "substance abuse" or "substance dependence," but as substance use disorders.

"Abuse" is an ugly word. Child abuse. Domestic abuse. Sexual abuse. In each of these instances, there is a perpetrator harming a victim. If we are going to truly accept that addiction is a disease, we need to stop using language that stigmatizes their condition. This stigma is real, and research has shown that it discourages people from seeking treatment. So avoiding this language will actually save lives.

As recovery counselor Don Coyhis once said: "Words matter. If you want to care for something, you call it a flower. If you want to kill something, you call it a weed."

And in that spirit, I would like to show some love to those struggling with addiction this Valentine's Day by changing officially our committee name to Alcoholism and Substance Use Disorders.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Fernandez.

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Opposed?

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's take up the reading of the calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 88, Assembly Print Number 1285, by Assemblymember Fahy, an act to amend the General Business Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 88, voting in the negative: Senator Brisport.

Ayes, 60. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 96, Assembly Print 611, by Assemblymember Paulin, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 103, Assembly Print 631, by Assemblymember

Carroll, an act to amend the Real Property Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2022.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Rhoads to explain his vote.

SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you, Madam President.

I rise in support of the legislation. I have had a conversation with the sponsor. My district across the South Shore of Long Island, as well as the North Shore of Long Island, were impacted heavily by Superstorm Sandy 12 years ago. As a result -- or 11 years ago. As a result of Superstorm Sandy, many participated in the mandatory and optional elevation programs through the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery.

I have spoken with the sponsor to raise my concerns about the applicability of this

bill to their circumstance, and he has been generous enough to indicate that we'll work on something together to provide an exception for those families.

So thank you, Senator, for bringing this bill to the floor and for working together to address my concerns. I appreciate it, and I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Rhoads to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 103, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Felder, Lanza, Martins, Murray, O'Mara, Ortt, Tedisco, Walczyk and Weber.

Ayes, 49. Nays, 12.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 164, Assembly Print Number 978, by Assemblymember Paulin, an act to amend the Public Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This

act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2022.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 164, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 42. Nays, 19.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 224, Senate Print 2301, by Senator Mayer, an act to amend the Penal Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the

roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 224, voting in the negative: Senator Brisport.

Ayes, 60. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Excuse me. Also Senator Salazar.

Ayes, 59. Nays, 2.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 250, Senate Print 509, by Senator Thomas, an act to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the 120th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the

roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 250, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Felder, Gounardes, Lanza, Oberacker and O'Mara.

Ayes, 56. Nays, 5.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 257, Senate Print 1974, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the Workers' Compensation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the 30th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to

Calendar Number 257, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Lanza and Walczyk.

Ayes, 59. Nays, 2.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 275, Senate Print 1290, by Senator Hinchey, an act to amend the State Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 288, Assembly Print 969, by Assemblymember Burdick, an act to amend the Civil Rights Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2022.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 288, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Felder, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 40. Nays, 21.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 289, Assembly Print 622, by Assemblymember O'Donnell, an act to amend the State Finance Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 290, Assembly Print Number 1007, by Assemblymember McDonald, an act to amend a chapter of the Laws of 2022.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2022.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 290, voting in the negative: Senator O'Mara.

Ayes, 60. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 301 --

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, please recognize Senator Lanza.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Lanza.

SENATOR LANZA: Madam President, Senator Gianaris, can we pause to congratulate Senator Rhoads on the passage of his first bill.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 301, Senate Print 1176, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend Chapter 606 of the Laws of 2006.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Rhoads to explain his vote.

SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you. Thank you so much, Madam President.

I just want to rise and thank my colleague Senator Harckham for introducing this legislation.

I know that Senator Oberacker, who is attending a hearing today, has been a volunteer firefighter for I believe the last 36 years. I myself have been proud to serve as a volunteer firefighter for 30 years with my local Wantagh Volunteer Fire Department, having spent nine of those years as a line officer.

And from that vantage point -- and I know we've taken the time to recognize some heroes today -- from that vantage point I've had the opportunity to witness incredible acts of compassion, some incredible acts of heroism and courage, by members of the volunteer fire service all across this state, in virtually every one of our districts, with the exception of the City of New York.

In virtually every one of our districts we have volunteer firefighters who are

answering the call, leaving their homes, leaving their families, leaving their dinner tables to put themselves in harm's way, to try and protect the lives and property of people whom they've never met, seeking nothing in return other than the satisfaction of a job well done and the knowledge that they were there to help their neighbor in a time of need.

And so I wanted to thank Senator Harckham -- and I was proud to be a cosponsor on this bill -- thank him for recognizing that service, recognizing that sacrifice, and recognizing the dangers that volunteer firefighters face every single day because of their exposure to the unique dangers of their firefighting activities.

So I proudly support the bill and vote in the affirmative. So thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Senator Rhoads to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The bill is passed.

Senator Gianaris, that completes the reading of today's calendar.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: There is no further business at the desk.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 15th, at 11:00 a.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 15th, at 11:00 a.m.

(Whereupon, at 5:26 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)