

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10 March 29, 2023

11 3:37 p.m.

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14 REGULAR SESSION

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18 SENATOR JEREMY A. COONEY, Acting President

19 ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

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

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
3 Senate will 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 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: We invite
9 Pastor Heinrich Arnold, from the Bruderhof Church
10 in Rifton, New York, to join us today.

11 PASTOR ARNOLD: Good afternoon,
12 Senators and members of the public.

13 Let's call on the name of our God,
14 the Lord, the Higher Power, to help us, and pray.

15 Lord, we thank You today for this
16 opportunity to come together. We ask for Your
17 special blessing and strength to these wonderful
18 Senators gathered here, to the members of the
19 government, and to the members of the public.

20 We thank You, Lord for so many
21 people that are serving, giving their efforts to
22 others. And we ask for Your strength, for Your
23 grace, for Your help. You know, there are some
24 difficult things happening in the world today,
25 and we need -- we need Your help, Lord, to help

1 us lift our hearts away from division and
2 disunity towards a common good, towards love,
3 towards forgiveness, maybe today some extra help
4 to work towards passing a budget, so send us some
5 heavenly money, if You would.

6 And we thank You for the real
7 dedication and service of our veterans -- many
8 are here today -- and God bless them and keep
9 them and protect them, and we thank You for their
10 service.

11 And for our students, from the
12 Mount Academy, and the future, Lord, give them
13 special wisdom.

14 Also for members of the medical EMS
15 community, for their putting their lives on the
16 line every day.

17 So we thank You for all these
18 things. We ask for Your grace, for Your wisdom,
19 for Your strength. This we ask in Jesus' name,
20 amen.

21 (Response of "Amen.")

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
23 you, Pastor.

24 The reading of the Journal.

25 THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Tuesday,

1 March 28, 2023, the Senate met pursuant to
2 adjournment. The Journal of Monday, March 27,
3 2023, was read and approved. On motion, the
4 Senate adjourned.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Without
6 objection, the Journal stands approved as read.

7 Presentation of petitions.

8 Messages from the Assembly.

9 The Secretary will read.

10 THE SECRETARY: Senator Mayer moves
11 to discharge, from the Committee on Judiciary,
12 Assembly Bill Number 1771A and substitute it for
13 the identical Senate Bill 5025, Third Reading
14 Calendar 503.

15 Senator Myrie moves to discharge,
16 from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number
17 5057B and substitute it for the identical Senate
18 Bill 5818A, Third Reading Calendar 571.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: So
20 ordered.

21 Messages from the Governor.

22 Reports of standing committees.

23 Reports of select committees.

24 Communications and reports from
25 state officers.

1 Motions and resolutions.

2 Senator Gianaris.

3 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, I
4 wish to call up the following bills, which were
5 recalled from the Assembly and are now at the
6 desk: Senate Bills 612 and 2518.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
8 Secretary will read.

9 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 11,
10 Senate Print 612, by Senator Mayer, an act to
11 amend the Election Law.

12 Calendar Number 259, Senate Print
13 2518, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the
14 Labor Law.

15 SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to
16 reconsider the vote by which these bills were
17 passed.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
19 roll.

20 (The Secretary called the roll.)

21 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 55.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bills
23 are restored to their place on the Third Reading
24 Calendar.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: I offer the

1 following amendments.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
3 amendments are received, and the bills will
4 retain their place on the Third Reading Calendar.

5 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
6 let's move on now to previously adopted
7 Resolution 615, by Senator Bailey, read that
8 resolution's title, and recognize Senator Bailey.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
10 Secretary will read.

11 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
12 615, by Senator Bailey, memorializing
13 Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2023 as
14 Athletic Training Month in the State of New York.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
16 Bailey.

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

19 So this is happy Athletic Trainers
20 Month. And -- but I want us to center ourselves
21 on something that we all saw on January 2nd. We
22 were all watching -- most of us were watching
23 when a Buffalo Bill by the name of Damar Hamlin
24 was very seriously injured on the field.

25 Now, as a point of notice,

1 Damar Hamlin's birthday was last week. He would
2 not have made it to that birthday if not for
3 these two men here. He would not have made it to
4 this birthday.

5 So we were in a state of shock and
6 confusion. And as true heroes do, they perform
7 best when the cameras were off. For those of us
8 who were watching that game, they cut away.
9 Because we didn't get a chance to see the
10 customary thumbs-up when the player is carted off
11 the field.

12 This was life or death. And Denny
13 and Nate literally and figuratively brought life
14 back to Damar Hamlin.

15 We do a lot of things in this
16 chamber, and we've spoken about heroes and there
17 are a lot of heroes who have served. And we will
18 certainly recognize you at some point today. But
19 heroes are thrown out sometimes in ways that they
20 don't deserve it. A man would not have made it
21 to his birthday if not for Denny and Nate.

22 And I want you to realize something,
23 that those of you who follow football, if you
24 watched the MVP voting this year, there were lots
25 of votes for MVPs I'm not going to mention,

1 depending on what your football alliance or what
2 your team may be.

3 But for the first time a nonplayer,
4 someone who doesn't play football, was given an
5 MVP vote. That was Denny Kellington. He
6 received an MVP vote. Because the reality is --
7 and if you hear Denny or Nate or any of the other
8 athletic trainers who I'm going to mention as
9 well who have come here to our Capitol, during
10 our press conference this morning, they never
11 said "I." They spoke about the team concept,
12 what it is to be a team player, and the "we" as
13 opposed to the "me."

14 Sports is the world's greatest
15 social currency. You might not agree on policy,
16 you might not agree on much else -- but if you
17 can agree on a team, you have a foundation to
18 build on. Just ask those of who us play
19 bipartisan basketball on Tuesday nights.

20 (Laughter.)

21 SENATOR BAILEY: Not good
22 bipartisan basketball, but it's bipartisan
23 basketball nonetheless, Mr. President.

24 But it's really important to
25 recognize athletic trainers and what they do. It

1 is far more than just giving someone an ice pack
2 and telling them to go about their merry way or
3 giving someone a couple of Advils and call their
4 primary doctor in the morning. This is a life's
5 work of dedication that Denny and Nate have
6 dedicated their lives to.

7 And again, I keep coming back to the
8 point that they saved a man's life. It was like
9 back in the day when TV went off -- you all
10 remember that, when TV went off? That's what it
11 was like on that telecast. Because we didn't
12 know what the outcome would be. Dare I say these
13 gentlemen changed the outcome of life based upon
14 what they've done.

15 But it's important to recognize that
16 we have other heroes and -- most importantly, I
17 want to underline it -- sheroes here in the
18 audience too, Mr. President. Athletic trainers
19 are critical at every level, not just the highest
20 levels -- at the Tuesday-night levels of
21 basketball and beyond. We have Aimee Brunelle.
22 We have Caite Bucco. We have Lisa Geiger,
23 Jessica Lappe, Rachel Leahy, Megan O'Grodnik,
24 Kurt Pfaffenbach, Kent Scriber, and Bridget Ward.
25 Heroes and sheroes in their own right.

1 We want to talk about sheroes, we
2 think about the -- when we brought Title 9, how
3 to make sure that we involve more women in
4 sports. And if you heard about the way that
5 these incredible women were speaking about the
6 saves that they had. They've saved lives also,
7 Mr. President. And when you think about, again,
8 athletic trainers, we should just make sure that
9 we give them the proper deference and respect.

10 I just want to underline a finer
11 point about some of the things that have been
12 happening. So they've employed their skills
13 ranging from cardiac, heat stroke, brain
14 injuries, and severe lacerations, amongst a
15 number of other injuries.

16 So I think not just as a sports fan,
17 but as a fan of life in general, we owe a debt of
18 gratitude to Denny, Nate, and every athletic
19 trainer from elementary school on up. I thank
20 you for your service. We appreciate what you do.
21 Tim Kennedy might say something along the lines
22 of "Go, Bills" later, or Sean Ryan might say
23 that. As a Giants fan, I am contractually
24 obligated not to say that.

25 (Laughter.)

1 SENATOR BAILEY: But I will say we
2 were all Bills fans on January 2nd.

3 Thank you, Mr. President.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
5 Ryan on the resolution.

6 SENATOR RYAN: Thank you.

7 And let me start by thanking
8 Senator Bailey for, you know, bringing this up,
9 and Assemblymember Solages for their work that
10 that they've done in this field. So happy to be
11 joined today, from the Buffalo Bills family,
12 Nate Breske and Athletic Trainer Denny
13 Kellington, for the work they do.

14 You know, we heard it, it's National
15 Athletic Training Month. But let me tell you, I
16 learned a few things today at the press
17 conference. I thought we were really going to be
18 here to talk about these two heroic folks from
19 the Buffalo Bills who made a save on national TV
20 that we all saw. But I learned a few things. I
21 learned that the athletic trainers, they are
22 members of a huge family, and they treat each
23 other as equal. I saw Nate and Denny interacting
24 with high school athletic trainers, and I
25 realized they're all on the same team. It was

1 heartwarming.

2 And then I heard sort of anecdote
3 after anecdote about an athletic trainer, you
4 know, going to be at a softball game and
5 recognizing somebody in distress in the
6 bleachers. Saved a life. You know, that's what
7 they do. Then I heard about a trainer who saved
8 somebody who was going to die from heat stroke.
9 And then you hear about a fortuitous trainer who
10 just happened to go to a softball game that she
11 wasn't scheduled to go to, and somebody was hit
12 in the chest and their heart stopped. Another
13 save.

14 So what we saw on national TV, you
15 know, played out over the whole country, you
16 know, from Nate and Denny, turns out is played
17 out in school districts and high school sports
18 and college sports all over America all the time.

19 So, you know, thank you to Nate and
20 Denny for doing what you did on national TV. But
21 thank you to the people who do this week in and
22 week out, whether you're working for the
23 Buffalo Bills or Tappan Zee High School, you are
24 out there and you are keeping athletes safe and
25 you're keeping people who come to spectate safe.

1 So as Senator Bailey, you know,
2 called it, usually I would end these statements
3 by saying "Go, Bills." So I will say Go, Bills,
4 but also to say, Go, athletic trainers, and thank
5 you, athletic trainers.

6 Thank you.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
8 Kennedy on the resolution.

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

11 First of all, let me start by
12 thanking our colleague and my dear friend
13 Senator Jamaal Bailey for introducing this
14 resolution and for honoring these extraordinary
15 heroes that are here with us today, because
16 that's what they are: Heroes.

17 We saw firsthand this year when,
18 during the first quarter of a game between the
19 Buffalo Bills and the Cincinnati Bengals,
20 Damar Hamlin, a 24-year-old safety with the
21 Bills, went into cardiac arrest after being
22 tackled. Athletic trainers on both sides jumped
23 into action, administering CPR and restoring his
24 heartbeat as his teammates prayed and cried
25 around him.

1 Those players witnessed a life being
2 saved that night. Damar Hamlin is with his
3 family today because of the quick response from
4 the Bills' medical personnel and athletic
5 training team.

6 Now, Athletic Trainer Nate Breske is
7 here with us, along with Assistant Athletic
8 Trainer Denny Kellington: They will be the first
9 ones to tell us that it was a team effort that
10 saved his life. I think that's telling about the
11 type of people these two gentlemen are. Along
12 with them that evening, Physical Therapist
13 Joe Micca, Assistant Athletic Trainer Tabani
14 Richards, Medical Director Dr. Leslie Bisson,
15 Team Internist Dr. Tom White, Team Internist
16 Dr. Mark Kim, Team Orthopedist Dr. Marc Fineberg,
17 Director of Sports Performance Joe Collins,
18 Team Sports Psychologist Dr. Desaree Festa,
19 Athletic Training Intern Marissa Figueroa,
20 Team Chiropractor Dr. Zachary Musial,
21 Coordinator of Player Services Kelsey Harkins,
22 and Equipment Assistant Kori Reblin.

23 Some of these very heroes are with
24 us here in Albany in this chamber today, and I
25 ask that we honor them in this Senate body. I

1 call these individuals heroes, but they humbly
2 decline that label every single time that it's
3 used. Because even though they've saved lives,
4 including Damar's on that January night, they'll
5 be the first to tell you that they were simply
6 doing their job.

7 Athletic trainers are in the
8 business of decreasing the risk of injuries and
9 rehabilitating those who have been hurt. As an
10 occupational therapist myself, I know how
11 critical the work they do is to the wellness of
12 athletes. But more than anything, they're in the
13 business of helping people. And quite frankly,
14 we could use a lot more helpers in this world.

15 Which is why, for so many reasons,
16 I'm honored to join Senator Bailey and our
17 colleagues here today in recognizing March as
18 Athletic Training Month here in New York.

19 And as a lifelong Buffalonian and
20 Bills fan, I have to remind my colleagues that
21 there is only one NFL team in the State of
22 New York, the Buffalo Bills. With that,
23 Mr. President, I say "Go, Bills," and I vote aye.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
25 Borrello on the resolution.

1 SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you,
2 Mr. President.

3 As a proud Bills fan and Western New
4 Yorker, I'm proud to stand here today to support
5 this resolution. Thank you, Senator Bailey.

6 You know, we talk about pressure
7 sometimes in life, and maybe a pressure to be
8 here and doing this job as a Senator. The
9 pressure of being in a football game in the
10 Super Bowl, that's a lot of pressure. I can't
11 imagine the pressure on January 2nd. Denny
12 Kellington and Nate Breske performed under
13 probably the most stressful situation ever, a
14 playoff game being watched by hundreds of
15 thousands of people around the world. A stadium
16 filled with tens of thousands of people. All of
17 us watching on TV didn't know what was going on.
18 We actually assumed the worst. While, under all
19 that pressure, they performed.

20 I can't think of a more valuable
21 member of the team that day than those folks that
22 saved the life of Damar Hamlin and really ensured
23 that people around the world knew that even under
24 that intense pressure, they could do their job.

25 Thank you all for what you've done.

1 God bless you all, and I'm happy to vote aye.

2 Thank you.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
4 Gullivan on the resolution.

5 SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you,
6 Mr. President.

7 I stand up also to say "Go, Bills"
8 and thank Senator Bailey for bringing this
9 resolution forward to recognize all of the
10 athletic trainers in the state and the work that
11 they do.

12 But in particular, I would like to
13 join my colleagues in recognizing the
14 representatives from the Bills, the work that
15 they did as part of the team that they were a
16 part of in saving Damar Hamlin's life -- a tragic
17 situation that turned extremely positive.

18 And one of the good things I think
19 it did for the athletic trainers and those people
20 that are first responders who respond to things
21 like that in general is that they call attention
22 to the work that you do, even though you don't
23 want the attention called to you.

24 But you deserve the attention. You
25 deserve our thanks. And you deserve our

1 congratulations for a job well done.

2 Thank you, Mr. President.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: To our
4 guests, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate.
5 We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of
6 this house.

7 Please rise and be recognized, and
8 Go, Bills.

9 (Standing ovation.)

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
11 resolution was previously adopted on March 28th.

12 Senator Gianaris.

13 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
14 we're going to move now to previously adopted
15 Resolution 466, by Senator Harckham. Let's have
16 that resolution's title read and recognize
17 Senator Harckham.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
19 Secretary will read.

20 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
21 466, by Senator Harckham, memorializing
22 Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 29, 2023,
23 as Vietnam Veterans Day in the State of New York.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
25 Harckham on the resolution.

1 SENATOR HARCKHAM: Thank you,
2 Mr. President.

3 First I'd like to thank our
4 Majority Leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins,
5 for moving this resolution to the floor. I want
6 to thank the chair of the Veterans Committee,
7 Senator Scarcella-Spanton, for her leadership. I
8 want to thank Senator Mayer for her leadership in
9 helping make this day possible.

10 Today is National Vietnam Veterans
11 Day. It's the 11th anniversary of its first
12 commemoration back in 2012.

13 From the time the United States
14 carried out its first combat mission against the
15 Viet Cong on January 12, 1962, until the last
16 American troops left Vietnam on March 29, 1973,
17 more than 3 million Americans served our country
18 and more than 58,000 sacrificed their lives
19 during the war. Three hundred thousand Americans
20 were wounded, and 75,000 permanently disabled.
21 And, sadly, 1200 still remain missing and
22 unaccounted for.

23 The names of those 58,318 lives lost
24 forever are engraved in the black granite panels
25 of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

1 But today we pay homage to the brave
2 men and women who served in Vietnam, knowing full
3 well that they all served with tremendous
4 bravery, courage and sacrifice.

5 And we know full well that many of
6 them returned home alive with physical and
7 emotional scars, many of them life-lasting.

8 Now, history will judge the wisdom
9 of the geopolitical decisions that were made
10 around the Vietnam War, and that is not why we're
11 here today. We're here today to honor the
12 sacrifice and the heroism of the men this
13 nation -- and women this nation asked to serve
14 our country.

15 And the stain of our country and the
16 stain on our history is not that geopolitical
17 mistakes were made, but how our society treated
18 these brave men and women when they returned home
19 from war. They were disparaged, they were
20 dishonored. They unfairly faced blame and shame.
21 They were denigrated and vilified. That was a
22 disgraceful period in our history.

23 And today we know better. And today
24 we honor and respect and give them gratitude that
25 they deserve for putting on the uniform of our

1 nation, with the flag on their shoulder, and
2 traveling to the far side of the globe to carry
3 out their missions.

4 And today we understand how Vietnam
5 veterans back then protected each other and how
6 they serve each other and their communities
7 today.

8 And when the next generation came
9 back from the Middle East, from Iraq and
10 Afghanistan, it was the Vietnam veterans who said
11 "Never again." It was the Vietnam veterans who
12 stood at airports and said "Welcome home." It
13 was our Vietnam veterans who pushed the Dwyer
14 program that we fund here in this chamber and
15 that we fought to expand, in a bipartisan way,
16 statewide.

17 So today we enter into the
18 proceedings here a resolution that all of us here
19 in the State of New York wish to show our Vietnam
20 veterans all across the state the respect and
21 appreciation that they've always deserved but did
22 not always receive when they returned home.

23 So today we have veterans from all
24 over the state. I'm proud to introduce some who
25 are here from my district: Michael DeGloria,

1 Michael O'Conner, James Mecca, Robert Somerville,
2 Kevin O'Sullivan, Charles McKay, Bill Wasser,
3 Louis Ferrari, Patricia Ephraim, Luigi Villani
4 and his wife Susan, who are here; Robert
5 Anderson, Lu Caldara, Steve Kucerak, Neil Gross,
6 Jack Litchauer, Hilton Ortiz, John Pagliuca and
7 Chester Edwards.

8 And I've just got to say how moving
9 it was when we sat upstairs and we had lunch
10 together, and to hear them sharing their stories.
11 And some of them didn't know each other, and the
12 connections they made and the emotional bonds and
13 the support were remarkable.

14 So today we say thank you, we say
15 welcome home, and you are true heroes.

16 Mr. President, I'm proud to vote
17 aye.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Minority
19 Leader Ortt on the resolution.

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

22 I want to thank my colleague
23 Senator Harckham for bringing this resolution to
24 the floor.

25 Fifty years is a long time. But

1 I'll be willing to bet that the veterans who sit
2 up there remember it like it was yesterday. I
3 bet they remember the faces of their brothers in
4 arms who didn't come home like they saw them
5 yesterday.

6 Fifty years since the withdrawal of
7 troops from Vietnam. And the geopolitical
8 environment -- while that's not what we're here
9 to remember, it's impossible to divorce it from
10 the men and women who went to Vietnam, because
11 they did so amongst a lot of political turmoil,
12 social turmoil. They did not have a unified
13 country behind them, they had a very divided
14 country behind them. We as a nation made the
15 mistake, we -- we attacked the soldiers, like my
16 father-in-law and others, who went to Vietnam --
17 many of whom were drafted. They simply responded
18 to the call. They felt it was their patriotic
19 duty to go and serve their country: 18-year-old
20 boys, 19-year-old Americans.

21 And there were, there were real
22 questions about policy, was it the right policy,
23 was the escalation of the war the right policy.
24 But we should never mistake the policymakers for
25 18- and 19- and 20-year-olds who are simply doing

1 what they believe their country asked them to do.

2 They didn't get a vote in Congress.

3 They didn't get a vote in the U.S. Senate. They
4 weren't in President Johnson's war cabinet. They
5 were raised -- no doubt by the greatest
6 generation, the World War II generation -- to
7 believe that when your country calls you, you go.
8 And they did. And 58,000 -- more -- never came
9 back home.

10 And for those that did, they
11 returned to a nation that -- there's no other way
12 to put it -- that was not appreciative of their
13 service and of the sacrifice of their brothers
14 and sisters in arms.

15 And I can't imagine what that would
16 be like, Mr. President. I can't imagine what it
17 would be like to come home, like I did from
18 Afghanistan, and instead of coming home to people
19 at the airport applauding you, with parades, with
20 parties, with the, you know, thank-a-vet programs
21 and discounts to honor your service the best way
22 we can -- instead of that, it was quite the
23 opposite. Couldn't get a job, called names, spit
24 on. Those wounds last a lifetime.

25 And so while the 58,000 are

1 enshrined in granite -- or right across the
2 street here in Albany. I would encourage my
3 colleagues to visit that memorial. I didn't even
4 know that was there. There's a great Vietnam
5 memorial right here across State Street. While
6 their names are enshrined forever, the folks who
7 came home, they bear those wounds for the rest of
8 their lives.

9 And Senator Harckham said something
10 that was very true: My generation owes a debt of
11 gratitude to the Vietnam generation. It's
12 because of them that I got people at the airport
13 applauding us when we came home. It's because of
14 Vietnam veterans that when I returned home, there
15 were all kinds of programs, there were added
16 additional benefits through the VA. It's Vietnam
17 veterans -- because they took that horrible
18 experience and they made sure that there would
19 not be a future generation of veterans, so long
20 as they live, that that would happen to again.

21 So everything that Iraq and
22 Afghanistan veterans have today, we really owe in
23 large part to our brothers who served in the
24 Vietnam War, and sisters.

25 And so I want to thank the veterans

1 who are here today. From one veteran to another,
2 I want to thank you for your service, I want to
3 thank you for your sacrifice, I want to thank my
4 colleagues for supporting this resolution and I
5 want to say welcome home.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
7 Scarcella-Spanton on the resolution.

8 SENATOR SCARCELLA-SPANTON: Thank
9 you, Mr. President.

10 I would like to thank Senator
11 Harckham for introducing this important
12 resolution today.

13 Vietnam Veterans Day commemorates
14 the sacrifices of Vietnam veterans and their
15 families and is part of a national effort to
16 recognize the men and women who were denied a
17 proper welcome upon returning home more than
18 40 years ago.

19 The Department of Veteran Affairs
20 estimates that today there are more than
21 7 million U.S. Vietnam veterans living in America
22 and abroad, along with 10 million families of
23 those who served during this time.

24 I had the privilege to meet with
25 many of these Vietnam veterans this afternoon and

1 hear their stories -- the trauma of war, how it
2 still affects them to this day, and the
3 disrespect they were shown upon their return.

4 I had the good fortune of attending
5 two welcome-home ceremonies for my own husband
6 when he was returning home from Afghanistan. And
7 I'm proud to say that we've come a long way as a
8 nation in giving respect to the veterans that
9 they deserve, and we really have our Vietnam-era
10 veterans to thank for that.

11 Today I am proud to give our Vietnam
12 vets a proper thank you and welcome home, and I'm
13 proud to support this resolution.

14 Thank you.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
16 Ashby on the resolution.

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

19 I want to thank the veterans and
20 their families that are here today. And so much
21 has been said already about the environment of
22 when our Vietnam veterans returned home. And I
23 remember the resolution that we passed not too
24 long ago celebrating the 50th anniversary of
25 Operation Homecoming.

1 They weren't celebrated, they were
2 literally assaulted. And I can remember even as
3 a young child hearing about a neighbor who served
4 in the Marine Corps during Vietnam, and he
5 decided to march in our Memorial Day Parade. And
6 this is a very, very small village. And his
7 high school English teacher spit on him during
8 the parade. And that's just -- that's one of
9 many, many stories. And for those veterans who
10 were Black and minorities, it was often much
11 worse.

12 And to think of how far we've come
13 from that is -- it's because of them. They could
14 have, in one turn, become bitter, understandably
15 so, and not tried to make things better for
16 future generations. But instead of doing that,
17 instead of harboring resentments, they decided to
18 make it better. They decided to dig deeper than
19 that and understand that this mistake would eat
20 at our nation's core had they not decided to do
21 the right thing.

22 They've improved the lives of future
23 veterans and their families. Oftentimes when
24 veterans are away, whether overseas or serving
25 stateside, their families can be left in limbo in

1 certain regards. And it's our Vietnam veterans
2 and the veteran community that oftentimes step in
3 and help out with a variety of things that, you
4 know, so often come to mind. And they help with
5 the reintegration process.

6 I can tell you personally that I
7 would not be in this chamber today -- and I think
8 of so many other veterans -- wouldn't be in here
9 today without for the help of Vietnam veterans.
10 Think of our dear friend down the hall, Mr. Wayne
11 Jackson. How many people has he helped over his
12 time here? It's remarkable. And I'm grateful to
13 be a part of it, and I'm grateful to carry on
14 your tradition.

15 I proudly vote aye.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
17 Mayer on the resolution.

18 SENATOR MAYER: Thank you,
19 Mr. President.

20 And a special thank you to
21 Senator Harckham for sponsoring this resolution
22 honoring Vietnam veterans.

23 Today, March 29, 2023 -- I remember
24 the day before -- marks the 50th anniversary of
25 U.S. troops returning home from the Vietnam War.

1 And the date is also recognized annually as
2 National Vietnam War Veterans Day, when we pause
3 to give thanks to Vietnam veterans for their
4 service. But that's really not enough.

5 For each of us in our districts who
6 are privileged to have Vietnam veterans as part
7 of their communities, a day is not enough. A
8 resolution is not enough. We owe you an
9 outstanding debt of gratitude for your service,
10 but also to make up for the terrible errors of
11 our nation when you returned. And also for our
12 failures, frankly, to do as much as we need to do
13 to recognize what a war really does to an
14 individual.

15 Today, like my colleagues, I was
16 privileged to hear many of your stories during
17 lunch, when you acknowledged that whether you
18 were there for a year or longer, the experience
19 that you had transformed the rest of your life.
20 And here we are 50 years later, not only saying
21 we honor and recognize you, but it is our job to
22 ensure that whatever trauma or experience changed
23 you, we must do our best to serve you.

24 And so I'm honored to be part of
25 this resolution, and I want to acknowledge

1 someone from my district who is here, Colonel
2 Chet Edwards, who is a U.S. Navy veteran whose
3 service included combat duty in Vietnam as an
4 assault support patrol boat coxswain with the
5 Mobile Riverine Force.

6 And after the tragic events of 9/11,
7 Chet reenlisted in the New York State Guard in
8 2003, and he served until his retirement in 2018.

9 And when we were speaking today,
10 Chet reminded me: "This is what I do, help other
11 veterans. This is my life's work." And I want
12 to point out that Chet, in addition to many other
13 things, has been a leader in the Honor Flight,
14 which takes many of our World War II veterans and
15 our Korean War veterans, and now our Vietnam
16 veterans, to D.C. for the day, all expenses paid,
17 to honor them and to allow them to celebrate some
18 of the best things in our nation's capital.

19 So I want to shout out my
20 constituent, Chet Edwards, Colonel Chet Edwards,
21 for his devotion to all the veterans that we
22 have. Let us not leave any of them behind. We
23 honor and thank you all for being here, for your
24 service. And we will not forget. We will never
25 forget.

1 Thank you.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
3 Helming on the resolution.

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

6 I too rise in support of this
7 resolution and in support of our Vietnam
8 veterans. I'd like to thank Senator Harckham for
9 bringing this resolution to the floor.

10 As the resolution reads, from the
11 first mission in January 1962 to the last in
12 March of 1973, over 58,000 Americans sacrificed
13 their lives for our freedoms and liberties.
14 Sixteen hundred servicemembers remain missing.

15 It's with deep gratitude and respect
16 that we honor the heroic sacrifice of these brave
17 men and women. As we all know, as we've heard on
18 the floor today, those who returned home, the
19 Vietnam veterans who were lucky enough to return
20 home, never received the warm welcome home or the
21 thanks that they deserve. That's why it's so
22 important that we hold public recognition
23 ceremonies like today. They're a part of what we
24 should be doing to right those wrongs.

25 What some of you may not realize is

1 that today is the 15th year since the passage of
2 the bill establishing March 29th as Vietnam
3 Veterans Day. New York State, our state, was one
4 of the first states in the nation to officially
5 designate a day set aside to honor, recognize and
6 welcome home our Vietnam veterans.

7 And although I know he's not going
8 to be happy with me saying this, I wanted to
9 thank Senator Andrew Lanza for his leadership and
10 his unwavering support in making sure that this
11 happened for our Vietnam veterans. Thank you,
12 Senator Lanza.

13 As legislators we must continue to
14 find ways to assist and recognize veterans in our
15 communities. Senator Harckham mentioned the
16 importance of the funding in the budget for
17 programs like the Dwyer program. I couldn't
18 agree more. But recently I was reminded that
19 this assistance can be as simple as helping a
20 veteran secure their high school diploma.

21 I want to tell you a story about a
22 Vietnam veteran who lives in my district:
23 Mr. Rudolph van der Velden. He lives in
24 Farmington, New York. Rudy was born in the
25 Netherlands. He moved to the United States with

1 his family in 1960. Seven years later, before he
2 was an American citizen, he was drafted into the
3 United States Army.

4 He served in Vietnam as a
5 Specialist 4 and returned home in October 1969.
6 Six months later, Rudy became a proud United
7 States citizen.

8 Last year I had the privilege of
9 recognizing Rudy as one of my Veterans Hall of
10 Fame nominees. Two weeks ago, Rudy's wife
11 Diana -- they've been married for more than
12 50 years -- reached out to me for help. She let
13 me know that Rudy was in hospice and he was
14 really hoping to secure his high school diploma.

15 I have to say, it was an honor to
16 help them. Yesterday was Rudy's 79th birthday,
17 and with the help of representatives from the
18 Town of Farmington and Victor Schools, we were
19 able to deliver an early birthday present to
20 Rudy. I take a breath, because I wish you could
21 have all been there for that moment. He was so
22 overcome with joy and emotion. He said, "This is
23 all I ever wanted my entire life."

24 So I share this story because, like
25 so many veterans, Rudy reminds us of the meaning

1 of patriotism and service, of putting others
2 first, of loyalty to God, to one's community,
3 country, and family. And that it's never too
4 late to realize your dreams.

5 Once again, Mr. President, I rise in
6 support of this resolution. And from the bottom
7 of my heart, I thank all of our Vietnam veterans
8 and I extend to you a warm welcome home.

9 Thank you.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
11 Webb on the resolution.

12 SENATOR WEBB: Thank you,
13 Mr. President.

14 I rise and thank my Senate
15 colleagues for supporting this resolution
16 memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
17 March 29, 2023, as Vietnam Veterans Day in the
18 State of New York, in conjunction with the
19 observance of the National Vietnam Veterans Day.

20 I am proud to stand today to lift up
21 and acknowledge all the members of the armed
22 forces and their families here in New York who
23 have given so much, and in some cases making the
24 ultimate sacrifice for their country.

25 On this day we acknowledge the more

1 than 3 million Americans who served the country
2 during the Vietnam War, and we remember the more
3 than 58,000 servicemembers who lost their lives
4 during the conflict.

5 Mr. Speaker, we pause today to
6 recognize that for many of those servicemembers,
7 as my colleagues have already illustrated, the
8 path home was difficult, especially for those
9 veterans who were veterans of color, and in some
10 cases because their communities did not welcome
11 them home with open arms or due to physical or
12 mental health struggles resulting from their
13 service.

14 It is important that we are
15 recognizing our Vietnam veterans by marking this
16 day and encouraging the people of our great state
17 to do the same. And as I always like to
18 emphasize, that while it's important to mark
19 days, where we also have impact is in the
20 resources and the policies that we provide.

21 And so it is my hope that we will
22 continue to support our veterans by improving
23 access to the resources that they need and
24 deserve from our state and beyond.

25 I want to thank our veterans that

1 are here, and their families, for their service.
2 And I especially want to thank Senator Harckham
3 for bringing forth this resolution.

4 I proudly vote aye, and I encourage
5 my colleagues to do the same.

6 Thank you.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
8 Borrello on the resolution.

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

11 I rise also to honor our Vietnam War
12 veterans today, and I want to thank Senator
13 Harckham for this.

14 My grandmother only had two
15 children: My father, Tony Borrello, and his
16 brother, Frank. Both were drafted, and both
17 served in Vietnam at the same time.

18 You know, this is a war that was
19 fought by the working class, by the poor, by
20 people of color. That's who went to Vietnam.
21 And my father and his brother suffered as a
22 result. It was early on in the war, and my
23 father was a plumber and his skills were needed
24 in areas where they were clearing, using
25 Agent Orange, digging trenches, running pipes.

1 And then when he came home, he
2 wasn't really recognized, because it was a covert
3 part of the war that he fought in. It took
4 years, many years, to recognize the damage that
5 was done. Both he and my uncle suffered from
6 Agent Orange. And when we'd go to the VA and
7 we'd talk to them, we actually had a
8 representative from the VA say to me and my
9 father that the only way he could get benefits is
10 if they could find the tail number of the
11 airplane that my father took to Vietnam.

12 Can you believe that? It took
13 decades. And there are still many Vietnam
14 veterans that are not getting the benefits they
15 deserve.

16 This is a war fought over a lot of
17 things, but it was not a war caused by the people
18 that fought for it. And we did not honor them
19 properly. And still to this day, they fight hard
20 for recognition, for benefits -- but they have
21 also fought, as was said before, for the veterans
22 after them, to ensure that the same thing never
23 happened to them.

24 So we say thank you to them all.
25 Thank you to my father and his brother, who are

1 now passed -- he has now passed on, his brother.
2 And we say welcome home to our Vietnam veterans.

3 Thank you.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
5 Fernandez on the resolution.

6 SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you,
7 Mr. President.

8 And thank you, Senator Harckham, for
9 introducing this very needed and meaningful
10 resolution.

11 And thank you to the brave men and
12 women who have served in our military over the
13 years. And on this day in particular, we
14 highlight the sacrifices made by the veterans of
15 the Vietnam War.

16 New York is home to 200,000 Vietnam
17 veterans, and that is nearly one-third of the
18 state's entire veteran population. New York
19 unfortunately suffered the most casualties in
20 Vietnam, second to California. For those of us
21 born after the war in Vietnam and when it ended,
22 it is important that we do not view this as an
23 abstract moment in U.S. history, but through the
24 veterans who are here with us today as parents,
25 grandparents, friends and neighbors.

1 During a time of unprecedented
2 societal and political upheaval, an entire
3 generation of young people found themselves half
4 a world away trying to stay alive so they could
5 return to their families. Unlike today, those
6 fortunate to return home from Vietnam were not
7 met with the same praise and honor that we are
8 accustomed to today. I can only imagine how such
9 an environment exacerbated the physical and
10 psychological injuries of so many of them.

11 When days of significance like this
12 come around, I try to reflect -- not just on who
13 and what we are honoring, but on what I can do to
14 make a difference. What we can do to make a
15 difference. And when we try to help, my first
16 move is to always listen, listen to the veterans
17 and hear directly from the source what they need
18 to assimilate back into society and live healthy
19 and happy lives.

20 In these conversations so many
21 veterans are advocating for alternative mental
22 health treatments, for PTSD, severe depression
23 and anxiety, and even substance use disorders.
24 The VA has already begun extensive trials finding
25 the benefits of psychedelic-assisted treatment

1 for mental health. Medical psilocybin mushrooms
2 in particular have been shown to severely impact
3 the lives of veterans for the better.

4 But we cannot afford to wait while a
5 proven treatment method can be saving lives.
6 When we lose nearly 20 veterans a day to suicide,
7 I refuse to sit by and let it continue.

8 We need to raise awareness and we
9 need to amplify the voices of the veteran
10 advocates. They know what they need, and it is
11 time that we let them lead the conversation.

12 But to end, I thank our veterans. I
13 thank you for the freedom you've allowed me and
14 my neighbors and my community and this country to
15 live. I thank you for your service, and I thank
16 you for your blessing. And I welcome you home,
17 today and every day, and forever keep you in my
18 fight to better New York State.

19 Thank you.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
21 Kennedy on the resolution.

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

24 First of all, I want to start by
25 acknowledging our friend, colleague, Senator

1 Harckham for bringing this resolution to the
2 floor.

3 I want to recognize the chairwoman
4 of the Veterans Affairs Committee, who is also a
5 family member of a two-time active military
6 veteran, Senator Scarcella-Spanton.

7 I want to recognize the veterans on
8 the floor that join us here -- Senator Sanders,
9 Senator Ortt, Senator Ashby, Senator Stec. If
10 there are others, please charge it to my head,
11 not my heart.

12 I want to, most importantly, rise to
13 acknowledge these heroes among us, true heroes,
14 American heroes. Combat veterans. Those that
15 stopped their lives in its tracks as they knew it
16 and went off to war. And as the saying goes, all
17 give some, some give all. It's been 50 years
18 since the last -- 50 years ago today since the
19 last American combat veteran left the Republic of
20 Vietnam.

21 I'm 46 years old. That means,
22 because of your service and sacrifice, I grew up
23 in a world where my generation didn't have to go
24 off to the war like you did.

25 I cannot begin to tell you how

1 grateful I am for your service to this great
2 country, how indebted our country is to your
3 sacrifices and those that didn't make it home.
4 We owe you a debt of gratitude we can never
5 repay, but it's absolutely essential that each
6 and every one of us, both here in New York and
7 across this country, remember the sacrifices that
8 you made, and continue to make.

9 And as my colleagues on both sides
10 of the aisle have so articulately said today, we
11 have to continue to do more. We have to continue
12 to tell the story of those that went off and
13 fought in the war in Vietnam, and those that went
14 off and fought in all of these military events
15 that allow us the freedom to stand here and
16 debate without bloodshed.

17 You are the heroes that give us the
18 ability to do what it is that we do each and
19 every day in this chamber and in this Capitol. I
20 honor you, I thank you.

21 And with that Mr. President, I vote
22 aye.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
24 Stec on the resolution.

25 SENATOR STEC: Thank you,

1 Mr. President.

2 I too rise to give my thanks to our
3 Vietnam veterans that are here with us today.
4 Senator Harckham, for bringing this resolution
5 forward to recognize 50 years ago today was when
6 the last American forces left Vietnam.

7 I thank everyone for their eloquent
8 remarks, and I want to just extend them all.
9 Also, this is a personally important topic to me.
10 Senator Borrello mentioned his father and uncle
11 had served in Vietnam. My father is one of
12 12 children. Him and all six of his brothers
13 served in the military.

14 My father, George Stec, and his
15 oldest brother, Henry Stec, were both Marines
16 that served in Vietnam. My father was -- went
17 into Vietnam March 8, 1965, as part of the first
18 American battle forces that -- ground forces that
19 entered Vietnam as part of the 9th Marine
20 Expeditionary Battalion. And fortunately for
21 me -- and maybe for the rest of you, maybe -- he
22 survived okay and went on to have a family, and I
23 was born a few years later.

24 But his brother likewise was career
25 Marines. He retired from the Marine Corps as a

1 sergeant major. And again, also fortunate to
2 come home safely from Vietnam. But unfortunately
3 58,318 other Americans, men and women, were not
4 so fortunate to come home. And their families
5 lost something that was near and dear to them.

6 And as so many of you have already
7 remarked on the floor here today, unfortunately
8 this particular war of our country's, our
9 returning veterans were maltreated, unlike any
10 conflict before or since. It's a national
11 embarrassment the way that these people were
12 treated when they returned home. Not all of them
13 went of their own desire. Some of them, as was
14 brought up, did it as a sense of duty, patriotic
15 duty. I think you probably can tell from my
16 family's history, you know, that this was
17 something that was part of the family. Polish
18 immigrants came over, it's our job to learn the
19 language, to assimilate, to serve. And we took
20 that on, and it's carried forward at least a
21 couple of generations now.

22 In the Marines, they weren't -- at
23 least in my father's case, I don't know what the
24 policy was, but my understanding was they were
25 not drafted, they enlisted. They raised their

1 hand. I asked my dad, "Why did you join the
2 Marines? You know, you weren't drafted, why did
3 you enlist in the Marines?" "I wanted to be with
4 the best." That's what he said.

5 But a lot of them were over there
6 because it was that -- because that was the law
7 of the land, they were drafted, they were told to
8 go there. They weren't -- not only weren't they
9 policymakers, they didn't have a vote on the
10 floor of Congress whether or not to send kids
11 over to Vietnam. You know, the Neil Young song,
12 right, about "senator's son." They were ordered
13 to go there. And if they didn't go there, they
14 went to prison.

15 So whether you went there because
16 you felt it was your duty or because that was the
17 law of the land, they served. And they risked
18 all. And no one deserved to come back and be
19 treated the way that they were.

20 And so we always, and I think
21 rightly so -- and I think as Senator Ortt pointed
22 out earlier, we as a country have done a much
23 better job in recent conflicts of paying the
24 respect that's due and showing the gratitude
25 that's deserved to our men and women that served.

1 And it's largely because of the
2 Vietnam veterans that experienced that and said
3 "never again." And thank God that for the most
4 part we, our fellow Americans, have learned that
5 lesson and have taken that inside and are doing
6 right by our servicemen and -women. But we still
7 have tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans in the
8 country here today, and that's -- yes, it's
9 50 years ago that they left, that we pulled out.
10 And yes, it's right that we stop every chance we
11 do, especially on Memorial Day, on Veterans Day,
12 on days like Vietnam Veterans Day and say thank
13 you to them that served.

14 But in the case of the Vietnam
15 veteran, we as a country can never say thank you
16 enough after the way they were treated when they
17 came home, and were called names or spit on by
18 their English teacher from high school. That is
19 disgraceful and un-American behavior. Again, for
20 people that were going over there to do what they
21 felt was their patriotic duty, or they were
22 ordered by their country to do.

23 So I ask that we all internalize
24 that, remember that. And again, to my fellow
25 veterans that are here today, thank you for your

1 service, for your sacrifice. I hope that you
2 look back on your life now and are proud of your
3 service. I hope that you look back on your life
4 now at our country and feel it was worth the
5 sacrifice.

6 But thank you all, and God bless you
7 all. Thank you again, Senator Harckham, for
8 bringing this forward.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
10 Comrie on the resolution.

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

13 I rise today to support the
14 resolution of Senator Harckham to honor our
15 Vietnam veterans on the 50th anniversary and the
16 12th anniversary of the state providing an
17 opportunity for them to be recognized.

18 I don't want to be repetitive and
19 recite all of the history that has been recited.
20 I just want to echo and say that it's important
21 that we never forget, we never forget the mistake
22 that was done to them when they came back. We
23 should never forget that they wanted to serve,
24 many of them. Many of them were drafted, but
25 they went willingly because they believed in a

1 greater America. They believed in this country's
2 desire to have a presence in this world.

3 They went to fight admirably, and we
4 need to never forget that. We need to make sure
5 that we do everything we can within our state
6 budget to help Vietnam veterans, no matter what
7 stage they are in their life, making sure we
8 provide opportunities for them and their children
9 to be part of this state, because they gave to
10 us.

11 We should also continue to make sure
12 that we work to fund and fix the veterans' halls
13 that are -- most of them are in disrepair now.
14 We need to make sure we utilize state monies to
15 fix the VFWs and the other facilities that the
16 veterans are using, because that's where they
17 socialize, that's where they are able to tell
18 their stories and talk to each other in a setting
19 where they can be understood.

20 We need to make sure that their
21 health benefits are taken care of. We need to
22 make sure that we do everything we can as a state
23 to ensure that our veterans understand that we
24 now respect their service in a real way.

25 I'm proud to work with the veterans

1 groups in my district because the veterans in my
2 area are working hard to provide opportunities
3 for people that have come out of service now. We
4 can't forget the people that are serving to make
5 our country strong to allow us to be here, as was
6 said, to have positive debate with each other
7 about the needs of our country.

8 We should do everything we can to
9 ensure that all veterans that have served our
10 country get everything that they need from this
11 state.

12 I proudly vote aye. Thank you,
13 Senator Harckham.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
15 Lanza on the resolution.

16 SENATOR LANZA: Thank you,
17 Mr. President.

18 First I want to thank
19 Senator Harckham for bringing this resolution to
20 the floor.

21 Of course I want to thank all of my
22 colleagues in this chamber for the wonderful
23 words, words that, as has been said, are
24 necessary and deserved by our great Vietnam
25 veterans.

1 You know, Senator Helming mentioned
2 me, and so I rise in order to make sure -- and I
3 appreciate it, Senator Helming. But I rise to
4 make sure that the gratitude is placed where it
5 belongs.

6 We have this day here in New York
7 because of a Staten Islander by the name of
8 Lester Modelowitz. He was deployed in Vietnam in
9 the First Aviation Brigade Assault Helicopter
10 Company. In my first year here in the Senate, he
11 came to me and he said, "I need you to do
12 something that is very important, if you can."
13 And he presented the idea of creating Vietnam
14 Veterans Day here in the State of New York.

15 And of course my first thought was
16 why isn't that already the case. We agreed. My
17 job was simple, we just put words on a page. At
18 that time Assemblyman Titone, my good friend from
19 Staten Island, was in the Assembly. He carried
20 it there. You would think it would have been a
21 no-brainer. There was some resistance -- not
22 from any of my colleagues in the Legislature, but
23 from certain quarters who said, Why do we need
24 Vietnam Veterans Day? We have Veterans Day, we
25 have Memorial Day, why do we need another day?

1 And of course we all in this chamber
2 know the reason. It is because what happened to
3 our Vietnam veterans when they arrived home was
4 unbefitting of the courage and valor they
5 demonstrated over there. Something very tragic
6 and something very shameful.

7 And so I believed, and I believe
8 now -- I know you all do as well -- that we
9 needed to do something different in order to
10 recognize what happened so that, as Lester
11 Modelowitz told me, this would, as Senator Comrie
12 just mentioned, never happen again.

13 So what did happen? On March 29,
14 1973, the last combat troops were pulled out of
15 Vietnam. They came home, and as has been
16 mentioned and as we all know by historical
17 accounts, they were spat on, they were
18 mistreated, they were not welcomed home. That
19 was not the message that they heard when they
20 came back to America, when they came back to the
21 ports of New York.

22 Why did this happen? I think it is
23 important to mention so that it does not happen
24 again. It happened because people here were
25 misled, were lost. We had those from academia,

1 those from the media, those in Hollywood and
2 really across the country who lost their way, who
3 turned away from what is right and turned against
4 those who fought for and delivered the very
5 freedom that allowed them to become so lost.

6 One of the things I wasn't taught in
7 school -- I don't think it is taught even now --
8 was what it is they did there. We know that in
9 1962 President Kennedy, as he said, drew a line
10 in the sand, escalated the war, sent the first
11 combat American troops there, and then we know
12 the rest. If you read the accounts and you look
13 at how they were treated, you would have thought
14 that somehow they let America down. They did
15 not.

16 To the contrary, there were many
17 battles, 30 major battles -- battles like
18 la Drang, Khe Sanh, the Tet Offensive, the
19 Easter Offensive, Quang Tri, Operation
20 Linebacker, and many more. And if I listed every
21 battle fought in the Vietnam War by
22 American soldiers, you know what they would all
23 have in common? They won every single one of
24 them. I didn't learn that until I did the
25 research for the bill some 15 years ago in my

1 first year here.

2 They didn't let us down. They held
3 us up. And yet they came home to this shameful
4 treatment.

5 And so you say, Why do we do it
6 every year? I had a ceremony back on
7 Staten Island this past Saturday. And I can tell
8 you, I'm not big on ceremonies. You don't hear
9 me rise too often when it comes to resolutions
10 here on the floor. It's not my cup of tea, as
11 they say. I generally get up to speak on the
12 Martin Luther King resolution because I believe
13 it is that important. And I rise every year, or
14 I try to rise every year, with respect to this.

15 But we do it every year because I
16 think it is important for three reasons. First,
17 my faith teaches me that you need to show
18 contrition. When you do something wrong, you
19 acknowledge it, you say you're sorry, and you do
20 your best to fix it.

21 America did wrong, America made a
22 mistake, America did harm when it came to our
23 Vietnam War veterans. And so we do this every
24 year together, my colleagues, because we say we
25 are sorry, as a nation and a state, for what

1 happened. And I think it's important to do that.

2 We do that, again, as Lester
3 Modelowitz and Vietnam veterans say all the time:
4 Never again. Never again. And I think by doing
5 this together, and doing this every year, we do
6 our part to make sure that it is never again.
7 Because we don't do this just because we want to
8 hear ourselves speak. But really, together, my
9 brothers and sisters, we do it because we want to
10 educate each generation of Americans that
11 something happened here that should never have
12 happened and must never happen again.

13 And so we hope by doing this -- and
14 I believe we will be doing that -- we will do our
15 part to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

16 And finally, we do it because they
17 deserve it. They deserve it. I think we all
18 agree that every day ought to be a day that we
19 honor our veterans. We live in the greatest,
20 freest nation on earth. We have a Constitution
21 that guarantees our individual liberties. That
22 Constitution would not be worth the paper it is
23 printed on if not for every generation of
24 American soldier who has stood up and said, I
25 will defend your freedom, my fellow American. I

1 will go to the corners of the earth, I will put
2 my life on the line and even sacrifice it so that
3 you and your children and, God willing, your
4 grandchildren can continue to live free.

5 And so our Vietnam veterans are no
6 different than every veteran and every soldier
7 that has ever fought to defend that freedom. So
8 because of what happened to them, we must say
9 we're sorry, welcome home, you deserve this
10 recognition. I think it is important. And at a
11 time when we disagree about so much -- and that
12 is okay, and that is the American way. And that
13 is what we do here, and we mix it up. And
14 sometimes it's rough and tumble and bare
15 knuckles. We wouldn't have it any other way.
16 It's the American way. It is the freedom we have
17 to do that, again, because of the Constitution as
18 defended by the American soldier.

19 But on today, I also believe that it
20 is wonderful and great that the people of the
21 State of New York see us, Republican and
22 Democrat, standing together in unanimity, being
23 brought together by our love for our country, our
24 love for our veterans, and our love for our
25 Vietnam War veterans. And so we say, together:

1 Welcome home, welcome home, welcome home.

2 And I just have one last point.

3 Last year -- I apologize, I don't know who it was
4 on that side of the aisle who brought legislation
5 to create a Vietnam War recognition medal, and we
6 passed that. And it is a great idea, and we all
7 supported it. I've been told that it has not yet
8 been created because the money is not yet in the
9 budget. It hasn't been funded.

10 I made a promise to the Vietnam
11 veterans this past Saturday that when it is
12 created, that I, together with my colleagues on
13 Staten Island, Senator Scarcella-Spanton and the
14 rest of the Staten Island delegation, will
15 personally hand that medal to each and every
16 Vietnam War veteran on Staten Island and beyond,
17 if they so desire.

18 So please, my Democratic friends
19 across the aisle, please make sure that funding
20 is in this budget whenever it may be passed.

21 Mr. President, thank you.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
23 Bailey on the resolution.

24 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
25 Mr. President.

1 I want to thank the heroes in the
2 crowd. I want to thank you for doing what we
3 couldn't do, what many of us would never dream to
4 do.

5 And Senator Ortt often asks the vets
6 when he comes here, unofficially -- and I think
7 that this will probably go for all of you -- you
8 would probably go back in a second. You'd
9 probably do it all over again just to make sure
10 that you defended your country. That kind of
11 courage and valor is not something that you can
12 create in a statute or in a vacuum or in a
13 laboratory. That's all in your heart. So I
14 thank you for having that. And I thank you for
15 keeping that.

16 You know, when they say life
17 imitates art or art imitates life, it really is
18 depending on the situation. When I was learning
19 about the -- when I was going through, as a
20 preteen, the war in Iraq, I was learning about
21 the Vietnam War by virtue of popular culture. I
22 saw a movie called "Dead Presidents." And I saw
23 the movie "Dead "Presidents" was loosely based on
24 a book by Wallace Terry about the experience of
25 African-American veterans in the Vietnam War.

1 And they came home, and the film was based about
2 veterans coming back to the Bronx and having
3 little to no opportunity.

4 But a small ember can spark a big
5 flame, and that caused me to research more. Once
6 upon a time they had these things called
7 encyclopedias, before the internet. Or it was
8 during the AOL internet. And I was doing some
9 research about the Vietnam War. And as
10 Senator Ashby so astutely pointed out, yes, most
11 definitely, people of color were adversely
12 affected in a major way.

13 I want to read an excerpt from that
14 book by Wallace Terry: "You know, they decorated
15 me, awarded me for bravery in Vietnam. Two
16 Bronze Stars. Yes, they did. I was wounded
17 three times. The officers, the generals, and
18 whoever came out to the hospital to see you, they
19 respected you and they'd pat you on the back.
20 They said, You're brave and you're courageous.
21 You're America's finest, America's best. But
22 back in the States, the same officers that pat me
23 on the back wouldn't even speak to me." That's
24 by Specialist Richard J. Ford III, of the
25 U.S. Army.

1 You know, and Senator Ashby brought
2 up Wayne Jackson. When I started here as an
3 intern in 2004, Wayne Jackson showed me so much
4 love. And I think that it was by virtue of his
5 experiences in the armed forces, and
6 understanding that in order for us to exist
7 today, that we had to have somebody that paved
8 the way for us. And I'm grateful to you all for
9 paving the way.

10 And all this talking about how I
11 could have never done, never served, because I
12 couldn't have gone through what you've gone
13 through, I just thought about the concept of the
14 phrase "basic training." Basic training. To my
15 colleagues that are vets, I've never served, but
16 I'm sure that there is nothing basic about basic
17 training. It is teaching you how to represent
18 your country. It is teaching you how to
19 represent your fellow man or woman. It is
20 teaching you at the same time to utilize every
21 God-given talent that you have, physical, mental
22 and otherwise, to make sure that you are fighting
23 for people that you are never going to meet.
24 There's nothing basic about it.

25 I want to thank you for going

1 through that and more. I want to thank you for
2 coming home. I want to thank you for not letting
3 us forget. Some of my favorite times are when I
4 see you all with those hats, because it makes me
5 stop, pay attention, and say thank you.

6 So many of my colleagues have said
7 it's not enough, thank-yous will never be enough.
8 But I can thank the Senate sponsor,
9 Senator Harckham, for making sure that this is
10 not going to be forgotten in any county in the
11 State of New York, by any member of this body, by
12 anybody with some sense that understands how the
13 world actually works and not in theoretical
14 practice. So I just want to say thank you. I
15 want to say thank you for inspiring us. I want
16 to say thank you for continuing to simply just
17 inspire by your presence.

18 And so I'll leave you with this.
19 Wallace Terry, the writer of that book, at some
20 point when he was shopping the book around,
21 people wouldn't even buy the script, because they
22 didn't want to hear about the stories of what you
23 went through in Vietnam. Whether you agree with
24 the reason why this country is occupying
25 something, let us be very clear. We always must

1 stand with those who are helping us do it.

2 Thank you for everything that you've
3 done. God bless you.

4 I vote aye, Mr. President.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
6 Ryan on the resolution.

7 SENATOR RYAN: Thank you,
8 Mr. President.

9 And thank you, Senator Harckham, for
10 bringing this resolution and for your comments
11 today.

12 So I stand today to support the
13 resolution, to thank all the Vietnam veterans.

14 But, you know, during the Vietnam
15 conflict there was a draft, and that brought
16 people from all different economic sectors into
17 the conflict and into the war. And the Vietnam
18 conflict really touched every American,
19 regardless of your class or your educational
20 status. And I've got, you know, three quick
21 stories about how Vietnam affected, you know, my
22 community.

23 My uncle, Billy McQuillen, he was a
24 Marine. He served in Vietnam and came home
25 safely. We're all very happy of that.

1 But in my high school, just next to
2 the case with all the trophies, was also a
3 picture of another Lackawanna High School
4 graduate named Joseph Urbanczyk. He graduated
5 from my high school, went over to Vietnam in the
6 late '60s, and he was one of the 58,000 who
7 didn't come back. He's buried in Holy Cross
8 Cemetery, and his relatives still miss him
9 dearly.

10 I have another family friend who has
11 a totally different story of Vietnam. Her name
12 is Mary Lee Slakowsky. And Mary Lee was a nurse.
13 And she was a combat nurse and, you know, spent a
14 lot of time patching people up. And she came
15 home and continued to be a nurse, but as she got
16 into her later adulthood, she started recognizing
17 that other nurses that she served with in Vietnam
18 were suffering.

19 So she ended up working extensively
20 with nurses, you know, who were home 20 years by
21 then, and helped them. But she also fought to
22 make sure that nurses were recognized and women
23 who served in the theater were recognized.

24 Two hundred sixty-five thousand
25 women served in Vietnam. None were drafted, all

1 were volunteers -- everything from nurses to
2 supply chain people to air traffic controllers.
3 But after Mary Lee stopped doing advocacy around
4 helping nurses in need, she turned her advocacy
5 toward making sure that women were recognized for
6 their service in Vietnam.

7 And, you know, I'm very happy to
8 report that there is a woman's monument now in
9 Washington, D.C. But it's because of the
10 advocacy of people like Mary Lee, and many other
11 women who served, that there's also a recognition
12 of them through the Vietnam Women's Memorial.

13 So I stand today to support the
14 resolution, to thank everybody, man and woman,
15 who served in Vietnam in service to their
16 country.

17 Thank you, Mr. President.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
19 Sanders on the resolution.

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

22 Thank you, Senator Harckham.

23 Thanks to all of the vets. But I
24 didn't come here to blow taps for you, my
25 friends. I came here to blow the charge.

1 Let me explain myself. I come from
2 a military family. My father served, my uncle
3 served in World War II. My brother served in the
4 Vietnam War. I am a post-Vietnam grunt. I am a
5 Marine. I served in the Old Breed, the most
6 decorated branch of the Marine Corps. My
7 nephew -- my brother served in the 82nd Airborne,
8 but my nephew takes the cake. He did two tours
9 Afghanistan, one tour Iraq, one tour DMZ, one
10 tour that he can't tell me about. And he's still
11 serving. So I come from a military family. We
12 serve.

13 Now, I have learned a couple of
14 things, and I think that General Colin Powell is
15 one that we should learn from. And Colin Powell
16 said Before the nation goes to war, any war, a
17 couple of things need to happen. First, we
18 shouldn't go into any war that doesn't threaten
19 the American interests or the world's interests.
20 If it does not threaten our interests, we should
21 not be there.

22 Second, that we have to unite a
23 nation before you go into war. Don't go running
24 into war and you haven't united a nation.

25 Vietnam shows us the necessity --

1 let me give you your charge, my veterans.
2 Vietnam shows you the necessity of veterans
3 involving themselves in this. We need to vote as
4 veterans, and we need to run and be -- be there.

5 Here's your charge. Civilians are
6 more willing to send people into harm's way than
7 veterans are. Civilians who have never been and
8 never will be and won't allow their children to
9 go are far more willing to go into war than
10 veterans. Because veterans who have been -- the
11 closer you've been to war, the more you love
12 peace. It's those folk who perhaps have never
13 been that are the most warlike people that you
14 could ever meet. The closer you've been, the
15 more you like peace.

16 We need to -- it's -- it's -- we're
17 not here to blow -- we should not be here to blow
18 taps for you. You're not through. You got a
19 couple more rounds left in you. Otherwise, you
20 wouldn't have come to this place where there's
21 fights up here. We need you and need you
22 desperately to go back to the American people and
23 tell them to rouse themselves and involve
24 themselves in the life of their country.

25 To me, it doesn't matter what you

1 are as long as you believe in this country and
2 you're willing to fight for it. Believe in it.
3 You need to go back and tell them that we're not
4 done yet. Our greatest days are not behind us,
5 but ahead of us. And anybody talking about
6 America is beaten and all this is down in the
7 dumps -- that's not the America that I know
8 about, and that's not the one that we were
9 willing to fight for. And I encourage you to
10 fight for the better America. We're not done
11 yet.

12 It is true, my friends, as I close,
13 that all gave some and some gave all. But it's
14 also true that we took an oath to defend this
15 country from enemies foreign and domestic. And
16 if there ever was a time that we need to live up
17 to that oath, that time is now.

18 I blow the charge that we need to
19 not put America on the shelf, but we need to make
20 America that shining star for the world that we
21 need to have. Welcome home. Let's get to work.

22 Thank you.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
24 Krueger on the resolution.

25 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you very

1 much, Mr. President.

2 I have to say -- first off, thank
3 you, Pete Harckham, for bringing this resolution.
4 But thank you to all my colleagues for everything
5 you've said on the floor today. Every one of you
6 was moving and accurate.

7 And so thank you for being here, the
8 members of the Vietnam veterans I'm looking up at
9 now, to remind us of who we are as a country and
10 what our jobs are here in the Legislature.

11 And I'd just like to add one other
12 point. You make us remember back 50 years, what
13 happened in this country. You make us remember
14 the tragedy that you experienced when you came
15 home.

16 But as I'm sitting here and I'm
17 reading back about Vietnam, you also should make
18 us remember what a fragile concept democracy is,
19 how it goes wrong. It can go wrong. We can name
20 it going wrong here any day of the week, trust
21 me. But in Vietnam, what we learned from
22 something like the Pentagon Papers, was that our
23 national leaders were wrong. You didn't make the
24 mistakes being soldiers going off to war. Our
25 leaders made the mistakes, in both lying to our

1 country, lying to each other through two
2 administrations, Republican and Democrat.
3 Everybody had blame there. And as was said here
4 many times, 58,000 Americans died. And all of
5 the analysis after the war teaches us that very
6 bad decisions were made by our leaders.

7 Now, that's reality. It's reality
8 throughout history, because we do go into wars.
9 And it is the most complicated issue any
10 government can deal with, sending its young
11 people out to fight and risk their lives for our
12 concept of democracy. Which means -- and I think
13 my colleague Senator Sanders said it so well --
14 that we better be damn sure that we're doing the
15 right thing before we're asking our young men and
16 women to go and put their lives on the line for
17 us.

18 And so I know that 50 years after
19 the war, "welcome home" sounds like a funny thing
20 to say. So I'm going to say thank you for
21 reminding me that I need to always be reminded of
22 history, both the victories and the failures of
23 our concept of democracy. Because if we don't
24 remember those things and if we're not prepared
25 to confront them and talk about them, I can

1 guarantee you we will lose our democracy.

2 So I thank you for reminding all of
3 us to look at the whole picture. Because our job
4 here in New York is to try to protect 20 million
5 New Yorkers every day of every year, and it is
6 crucial that we are willing to look at the hard
7 issues, just like we look at the
8 easier-to-understand issues.

9 So again, thank you to my
10 colleagues. Thank you to everyone who's
11 served -- Vietnam, and my colleagues here who
12 obviously were post-Vietnam. And really thank
13 you for being willing to come up here today and
14 participate with us.

15 Thank you, Mr. President. Of course
16 I am aye.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
18 Hoylman-Sigal on the resolution.

19 SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: Thank you,
20 Mr. President.

21 I guess if there is a day to pile
22 on, it is today, in honor of our guests. And
23 thank you, Senator Harckham and Senator
24 Scarcella-Spanton, for your work in this area.

25 I'm moved also because of the

1 history, but also knowing that you served when at
2 the same time so many others who were privileged
3 did not. They chose deferments due to
4 educational opportunities. They said they had
5 bad feet. They lied, they lied to get out of
6 going to Vietnam.

7 Some of them were conscientious
8 objectors, of course. That's a completely
9 different category.

10 Some outright lied, and some said
11 they were gay when they weren't, because the
12 Department of Defense at that time viewed
13 homosexuality as a moral defect.

14 So I want to call out those LGBTQ
15 veterans who served in silence, who would have
16 received that deferment or be deemed ineligible
17 to serve but chose not to because they wanted to
18 make certain that they represented their nation.

19 And so many of those veterans then
20 returned to the United States after the war and
21 were deemed dishonorable after their sexuality
22 was revealed.

23 And I just want to point out that
24 here in the State Senate we've tried to address
25 their needs in particular. We passed the

1 Restoration of Honor Act, which restored 50 state
2 benefits to those LGBTQ veterans who were
3 dishonorably discharged. That's one small thing
4 we've done here in Albany. We need to do that in
5 Washington, at the federal level.

6 But we also need to continue to
7 address veterans' homelessness and mental health
8 and addiction. And hopefully in this budget
9 we'll take strides in that area once again.

10 So I'm proud to support this
11 resolution, Mr. President, and thank all of you
12 for being here. But mostly, thank you for your
13 service.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
15 Cleare on the resolution.

16 SENATOR CLEARE: Thank you,
17 Mr. President.

18 I rise to thank Senator Harckham.
19 Thank you to all my colleagues and everyone who
20 had a part in bringing this resolution forward.

21 This recognition has been long
22 overdue. Our neighbors and family members who
23 returned were all deserving of so much more, so
24 much better than they were given. They should
25 have received our gratitude, our love, our pride

1 and respect, but instead they were greeted with
2 hostility.

3 The poor treatment and the impact of
4 the lack of resources and support had and still
5 has deep and lasting effects on Vietnam veterans
6 and their families. As mentioned by many of my
7 colleagues accurately, for Blacks and other
8 people of color who served, the effects were even
9 worse. Many even commented while overseas about
10 what was laying wait for them here in their
11 country.

12 Though this is late and certainly
13 long after the fact, I really hope today as we
14 commemorate your service, we impart on you our
15 deepest gratitude and respect. But I thank you
16 for your sacrifice, for your willingness to serve
17 this country, that we all have the opportunity
18 here today to make our state and this country the
19 country I hope that you were fighting to see.

20 So I thank you for your service, and
21 you have my gratitude.

22 I vote aye.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
24 Stavisky on the resolution.

25 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

1 Mr. President, I'm here also to
2 really join everybody in this room in thanking
3 our veterans for what they have done.

4 The difficulty that they experienced
5 on their return in no way reflects the feeling of
6 people. We appreciate what you did, what you've
7 done. The services that you deserve, I hope you
8 are taking advantage of it -- the Veterans
9 Administration, the hospitals and so forth.

10 And I just want to join my
11 colleagues in saying we are very grateful for the
12 sacrifices that you've made.

13 Thank you.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Majority
15 Leader Stewart-Cousins to close.

16 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank you
17 so much, Mr. President.

18 And I too want to thank Senator
19 Harckham for bringing this resolution. I want to
20 thank the new leader of our Veterans Committee,
21 Senator Scarcella-Spanton, and certainly all of
22 the great veterans who serve in this body.

23 I was just commiserating with
24 Senator Breslin, whose brother was a major in
25 Vietnam. And we were talking and he was saying

1 that his brother said that his only job was to
2 make sure he brought young kids home. Which I'm
3 sure he was devastated when some of those kids
4 were lost.

5 We were commiserating about brothers
6 because my brother served in the Marines during
7 Vietnam as well. And he doesn't talk much about
8 the experience. He talks about Agent Orange. He
9 talks about how he knew he was going to get home.
10 He talks sometimes about those who he grew up
11 with who didn't come home.

12 But he knew that there was so much
13 more for him to do. He knew that the legacy of
14 service to this country was, above all, his duty.
15 And he knew that duty because of our dad, who
16 served in World War II. And I usually stand on
17 this floor talking about Robert Lucius Stewart
18 who served in the Army during World War II and
19 how, when he came home as a Black soldier, he was
20 deprived of the GI bill.

21 When my brother came back, he, like
22 other Vietnam veterans, was deprived of the very
23 dignity that they should have had for serving in
24 a war that our nation sent them to serve in. We
25 had no compassion, but our Vietnam veterans did.

1 They not only had compassion for a nation of
2 people that didn't get it, but they had
3 compassion for the next generation who would
4 serve. And they made sure when they came home
5 that they instilled in all of our communities the
6 importance of what must be done to preserve our
7 democracy and our freedom.

8 And that's why, on a day where we
9 would normally be in and out of here, we are
10 thanking you and thanking you and thanking you
11 for the lessons you've taught us before, during
12 and after. And our continuing to thank you and
13 taking all this time to say that is your
14 assurance that we will not forget.

15 When I was texting my brother, I
16 said, "I'm going to thank you on the floor,
17 Bobby." And I said, "It's 50 years." And he's
18 like, "Wow, I can't believe it." I'm sure you
19 who served can't believe it either.

20 But the reason why is because you've
21 continued to serve. You're not checking off
22 days, you're not checking off months, you're not
23 checking off years; your service has never
24 stopped.

25 Thank you, God bless you, and our

1 tribute here is to say that we will always be
2 mindful of your service and our recognition for
3 what you've done and what others continue to do
4 now and in the future, and our responsibility to
5 make sure that they are felt and held in high
6 esteem, the way you should have been -- we will
7 not forget.

8 Thank you for your patience in
9 listening to all of us. Thank you for your
10 service. Travel safely. And until we meet
11 again, God bless.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
13 you, Madam Leader.

14 To our guests, I welcome you on
15 behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the
16 privileges and courtesies of this house.

17 Please rise and be recognized.

18 (Sustained standing ovation.)

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
20 resolution was previously adopted on March 9th.

21 Senator Gianaris.

22 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
23 there is a privileged resolution at the desk,
24 Resolution 664. Let's take that up, please, and
25 read its title only.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
2 Secretary will read.

3 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
4 664, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, celebrating the
5 life and accomplishments of Robert G. Wasiczko,
6 distinguished citizen, family man and devoted
7 member of his community.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Majority
9 Leader Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

10 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank
11 you. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

12 And again, I rise -- it was just
13 this morning that I'd heard that a wonderful
14 friend and someone dear to our community, who was
15 also a soldier who served in World War II,
16 94 years old, Robert Wasiczko passed over the
17 weekend, surrounded by his family.

18 And I just heard about that this
19 morning, and I wanted to make sure that again, as
20 we were honoring servicepeople, that I got a
21 chance on behalf of the Senate and certainly all
22 who he served -- he never stopped serving the
23 community, and he was especially active in the
24 VFW Post 375. He had a million different titles,
25 none was too small or too large.

1 And so we all mourn Robert Wasiczko
2 and again send condolences to his family and,
3 again, thank him not only for his service during
4 World War II but his continued service to our
5 beloved community in Yonkers.

6 So thank you so much.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
8 you, Madam Leader.

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

11 (Response of "Aye.")

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Opposed,
13 Nay.

14 (No response.)

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
16 resolution is adopted.

17 Senator Gianaris.

18 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you,
19 Mr. President.

20 At this time we're going to have an
21 introduction of some guests in the chamber by
22 Senator Hinchey.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
24 Hinchey for an introduction.

25 SENATOR HINCHEY: Thank you. Thank

1 you, Mr. President.

2 I rise to welcome a great community
3 group in our district and across New York State.

4 But I want to start by thanking
5 Pastor Arnold for his wonderful invocation today
6 and for the blessings that he's bestowed upon the
7 members of this body, our veterans, and all
8 New Yorkers.

9 The Bruderhof Community is a
10 community that is integral not just to the
11 41st District, but to State of New York. They
12 were members who manned our COVID vaccination
13 pods at the height of the pandemic. They
14 constantly participate in nearly every community
15 event that I have been to and, even more, lending
16 their time and their talents to support and help
17 others. Many are volunteers with an organization
18 called Mentor Me, and so much more.

19 As chair of the Agriculture
20 Committee, I personally appreciate all of their
21 work with fresh food and in their growing season,
22 sharing the food that they grow with food banks
23 and food pantries across their communities,
24 because they truly believe that everyone should
25 eat locally sourced food. And I've tasted their

1 food and their pies specifically are the best. I
2 should bring them for everybody here, because
3 they are delicious.

4 The Bruderhof Community leads with
5 love. They lead with respect. They lead with
6 unity. And we are a better community, we are a
7 better state because we have their leadership in
8 our areas.

9 And so I rise to welcome them to our
10 chamber today. And Mr. President, I'd like to
11 ask for you to recognize the members of the
12 Bruderhof Community and extend to them the
13 privileges of this chamber.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: To our
15 guests, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate.
16 We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of
17 this house.

18 Please rise and be recognized.

19 (Standing ovation.)

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
21 Gianaris.

22 SENATOR GIANARIS: Now let's move
23 on to previously adopted Resolution 507, by
24 Senator Helming, read that resolution's title,
25 and recognize Senator Helming.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
2 Secretary will read.

3 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
4 507, by Senator Helming, congratulating Sophie
5 Pollack upon the occasion of capturing the
6 185-pound Division wrestling title at the
7 first-ever New York State Public High School
8 Athletic Association Girls State Wrestling
9 Invitational on January 27, 2023.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
11 Helming on the resolution.

12 SENATOR HELMING: Thank you,
13 Mr. President.

14 It is truly my honor to introduce
15 Sophie Pollack, an incredible young woman from my
16 hometown of Canandaigua.

17 The opportunity to celebrate
18 Sophie's accomplishments during Women's History
19 Month makes today's recognition even more
20 meaningful. Sophie is a high school senior
21 attending Canandaigua Academy. She has earned
22 four varsity letters in wrestling, one of the
23 most physically, mentally and emotionally
24 demanding sports, composed predominately of young
25 men.

1 My first meeting with Sophie
2 happened about nine years ago. I was the MC of
3 the annual Cheshire Memorial Day Commemoration
4 ceremony. As the MC of the event, I invited all
5 the young children who were interested to come up
6 front with me and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
7 I remember Sophie as being the only young woman
8 brave enough to step up. She took her role very
9 seriously, and I could see she took great pride
10 in performing the pledge.

11 Sophie, I'll never forget that day.
12 I was so impressed with you as a young girl. And
13 it's no surprise to me that now as a young woman
14 you continue to be a trailblazer, paving the way
15 for other young women in our community across the
16 state and truly across the entire nation.

17 Sophie is a pioneer in wrestling,
18 both in Section 5 and for Canandaigua Academy,
19 wrestling in dual matches against males and
20 females. She is an All-American and ranks in the
21 top 10 in our nation, defeating all of her
22 opponents via pin, with the final match lasting
23 just 47 seconds.

24 This past January Sophie captured
25 the 185-pound Division wrestling title at the

1 first ever -- first ever -- New York State Public
2 High School Athletic Association Girls State
3 Wrestling Invitational. Immediately after she
4 won, a reporter asked her about how she felt
5 about participating in the first ever women's
6 invitational. And Sophie commented that it was
7 so cool because as a senior athlete she thought
8 the wrestling championship was never going to
9 happen during her career.

10 Well, Sophie, it did happen. No one
11 knows that better than you. It happened because
12 of your drive, your determination, and your
13 willingness to push forward even in times of
14 adversity. You made that happen not only for
15 yourself, but for so many other young women. And
16 I want to thank you for that. That is a life
17 lesson that you will carry with you forever.

18 The most successful people are
19 usually backed by a strong support system.
20 Sophie's supporters include her mother Jill; her
21 father and stepmother Kevin and Jennifer, who are
22 here; her coach, Eric Mullen; and Athletic
23 Director Caroline Chapman, who is also here with
24 us this afternoon.

25 I want to thank all of you for

1 encouraging Sophie to pursue her dreams and her
2 passions, and thank you for being champions of
3 women's athletics.

4 And to AD Chapman, I want to say a
5 special congratulations on your new appointment.
6 It's very exciting to me; Caroline is the first
7 female director of athletics since the school's
8 founding in 1791.

9 And Mr. President, I know you carry
10 a special amount of pride too, being an HWS
11 alumni.

12 Next year Sophie will be pursuing
13 wrestling at Delaware Valley University. And
14 Sophie, know that we'll be watching you and
15 cheering you on.

16 And I want you to know, finally, as
17 a woman, as a mother, and as your New York State
18 Senator, I commend and thank you for your example
19 to young women everywhere. Never, ever, ever be
20 afraid to step up, come forward, and pursue your
21 dream.

22 Mr. President, I ask you to please
23 welcome Sophie Pollack to the New York State
24 Senate chamber.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank

1 you, Senator Helming.

2 To our guests, I welcome you on
3 behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the
4 privileges and courtesies of this house.

5 Please rise and be recognized.

6 (Standing ovation.)

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
8 resolution was previously adopted on March 9th.

9 Senator Gianaris.

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up is
11 previously adopted Resolution 514, by
12 Senator O'Mara. Please read that resolution's
13 title and recognize Senator O'Mara.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
15 Secretary will read.

16 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
17 514, by Senator O'Mara, congratulating
18 David Miller upon the occasion of his retirement
19 after 27 years of distinguished service as
20 executive director of the New York State Trappers
21 Association.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
23 O'Mara on the resolution.

24 SENATOR O'MARA: Yes, thank you,
25 Mr. President, for this opportunity to recognize

1 the career and service of Mr. David Miller,
2 executive director of the New York State Trappers
3 Association, upon his retirement.

4 Unfortunately Mr. Miller was unable
5 to join us today as he had intended. But we have
6 representatives from the New York State Trappers
7 Association with us today up in the balcony, from
8 a reception they had earlier today.

9 Throughout Mr. Miller's career, he
10 worked diligently to preserve the ideals of the
11 New York State Trappers Association, which is
12 comprised of men and women and children who are
13 dedicated to protecting and preserving our
14 heritage as well as the tradition of trapping in
15 the State of New York.

16 In 1987, Mr. Miller became the
17 Region 8 director of the State Trappers
18 Association and has continually worked to
19 increase membership and, continuing the service
20 to the association, serving as vice president and
21 president before being named executive director,
22 where he served, prior to his retirement, for
23 27 years.

24 David was an educator who was
25 committed to protecting and promoting trapping as

1 a part of an effective and necessary wildlife
2 conservation management plan in New York State.
3 Through his passion and experience, he informed
4 the New York State Legislature and the public
5 about the role trapping plays in a successful
6 wildlife conservation model.

7 And he also partnered with the
8 New York State Department of Environmental
9 Conservation, working on improving regulations to
10 reduce and eliminate the incidental capture of
11 dogs and birds of prey while still allowing
12 trappers of New York State practical and
13 effective means of trapping.

14 Prior to his retirement he was
15 inducted into the New York Outdoorsmen Hall of
16 Fame in 2007.

17 So thank you, Mr. President, for the
18 opportunity to recognize Mr. Miller for his
19 dedication, career and service to this important
20 tradition in New York State.

21 And please welcome the members of
22 the association that are with us here today.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
24 you, Senator O'Mara.

25 To our guests, I welcome you on

1 behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the
2 privileges and courtesies of this house.

3 Please rise and be recognized.
4 (Standing ovation.)

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
6 resolution was previously adopted on March 15th.
7 Senator Gianaris.

8 SENATOR GIANARIS: And now
9 previously adopted Resolution 616, by
10 Senator Scarcella-Spanton. Please read its title
11 and recognize Senator Scarcella-Spanton.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
13 Secretary will read.

14 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
15 616, by Senator Scarcella-Spanton, memorializing
16 Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 9, 2023,
17 as Yellow Ribbon Day in the State of New York.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
19 Scarcella-Spanton on the resolution.

20 SENATOR SCARCELLA-SPANTON: Thank
21 you, Mr. President.

22 How befitting that here on Vietnam
23 Veterans Day that I have the opportunity to
24 introduce the Yellow Ribbon Day resolution, which
25 is a bipartisan effort to express support for the

1 designation of April 9th as National Yellow
2 Ribbon Day, a day for all Americans to honor and
3 celebrate our active-duty troops and their
4 families.

5 The yellow ribbon has historical
6 significance and has been used in poetry and
7 marching songs related to our U.S. military,
8 dating back to the late 19th century.

9 Yellow ribbons traditionally
10 represent the message of "Support Our Troops."

11 The yellow ribbon symbol was first
12 used in the U.S. to mark national unity and
13 remembrance for the 52 Americans held hostage for
14 444 days in Iran beginning on November 4, 1979.

15 Active-duty troops risk their lives
16 to protect our freedom. Some 1.3 million
17 active-duty military members and 800,000
18 reservists protect this country. Army troops are
19 often deployed multiple times -- on average,
20 between six and 18 months -- leaving their
21 children and spouses as part of their duty to
22 serve this country.

23 Forty-four-point-two percent of
24 active-duty troops have dependent children living
25 at home. More than 80 percent of the children of

1 active-duty troops are 14 years old or younger.
2 With my family personally, my husband deployed to
3 Afghanistan for the second time when our daughter
4 was just 10 days old.

5 I know firsthand the sacrifices that
6 our veteran families make every day to support
7 their loved ones in the armed forces. I am
8 honored to introduce this resolution to
9 commemorate April 9, 2023, as Yellow Ribbon Day
10 in New York State.

11 Thank you.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
13 you, Senator Scarcella-Spanton.

14 The resolution was previously
15 adopted on March 28th.

16 Senator Gianaris.

17 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
18 at the request of the many sponsors of all these
19 resolutions, they are all open for cosponsorship.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
21 resolutions are open for cosponsorship. Should
22 you choose not to be a cosponsor on the
23 resolutions, please notify the desk.

24 Senator Gianaris.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: And now let's

1 take up the reading of the calendar.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The
3 Secretary will read.

4 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
5 173, Senate Print 579, by Senator Hoylman-Sigal,
6 an act to amend Chapter 174 of the Laws of 1968.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
8 last section.

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

11 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
12 roll.

13 (The Secretary called the roll.)

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
15 Hoylman-Sigal to explain his vote.

16 SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: Thank you,
17 Mr. President.

18 I'll be very brief, knowing the hour
19 is late.

20 I just want to thank my colleagues
21 for their support of small independent arts
22 contractors. You know that arts and culture
23 contribute \$119 billion annually to the economy
24 of New York State. That's more than construction
25 and educational services and a whole host of

1 other sectors.

2 Our arts community, though, was
3 particularly hit hard by the pandemic, and we
4 have worked through this legislation to allow
5 independent arts contractors, including touring
6 musicians, the opportunity to take part in the
7 newly created small business seed funding grant
8 program.

9 I want to thank the Music Workers
10 Alliance and all the advocates and artists that
11 make sure that this issue was brought to our
12 attention, as well as James Katz from the
13 Governor's office and Empire State Development
14 for spending hours working with our staffs and
15 musicians to ensure as many independent arts
16 contractors as possible can benefit from this
17 grant program.

18 I vote aye, Mr. President. Thank
19 you.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank
21 you.

22 Senator Hoylman-Sigal to be recorded
23 in the affirmative.

24 Announce the results.

25 THE SECRETARY: In relation to

1 Calendar Number 173, those Senators voting in the
2 negative are Senators Borrello,
3 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Gallivan, Griffio, Martins,
4 Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads,
5 Skoufis, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

6 Ayes, 45. Nays, 17.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
8 is passed.

9 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
10 223, Senate Print 449, by Senator Gianaris, an
11 act to amend the Criminal Procedure Law and the
12 Civil Practice Law and Rules.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
14 last section.

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

17 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
18 roll.

19 (The Secretary called the roll.)

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
21 the results.

22 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
23 Calendar 223, those Senators voting in the
24 negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello,
25 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Gallivan, Griffio, Helming,

1 Lanza, Martinez, Martins, Mattera, Murray,
2 Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads,
3 Rolison, Scarcella-Spanton, Stec, Tedisco,
4 Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

5 Ayes, 39. Nays, 23.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
7 is passed.

8 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
9 382, Senate Print 2391, by Senator Rivera, an act
10 to amend the Social Services Law.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
12 last section.

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

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
16 roll.

17 (The Secretary called the roll.)

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
19 the results.

20 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
22 is passed.

23 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
24 412, Senate Print 3436, by Senator Skoufis, an
25 act to amend the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
2 last section.

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

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
6 roll.

7 (The Secretary called the roll.)

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
9 the results.

10 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
11 Calendar 412, those Senators voting in the
12 negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Gallivan,
13 Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Mattera, Murray,
14 Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Stec,
15 Tedisco, Walczyk and Weik.

16 Ayes, 45. Nays, 17.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
18 is passed.

19 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
20 453, Senate Print 308, by Senator Salazar, an act
21 to amend the Correction Law.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
23 last section.

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

1 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
2 roll.

3 (The Secretary called the roll.)

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
5 Salazar to explain her vote.

6 SENATOR SALAZAR: Thank you,
7 Mr. President.

8 Temporary release programs, such as
9 work release or educational release, can serve an
10 essential role in an incarcerated individual's
11 growth and rehabilitation, having demonstrated
12 benefits for individuals both during their
13 incarceration and after being released from
14 prison to community supervision.

15 Participating in a temporary release
16 program can be deeply meaningful for people and
17 can bring lasting positive change to their lives.
18 Temporary release programs can strengthen family
19 ties, they can provide skills and tools that may
20 help people obtain housing or employment after
21 their release, and they generally contribute to a
22 smoother reentry process for incarcerated
23 individuals when they eventually return home.

24 However, participation in temporary
25 release programs is unfortunately quite low. The

1 vast majority of incarcerated individuals in our
2 state prisons are not granted the ability to
3 participate in temporary release programs. For
4 example, according to DOCCS Temporary Release
5 Reports issued from 2014 to 2020, a total of only
6 23 individuals applied to participate in
7 educational release, and zero were approved.

8 DOCCS does not currently report on
9 factors that contribute to low participation
10 rates, such as the availability of programs or
11 the rates or reasons for application approvals
12 and denials.

13 The goal of this bill is to require
14 DOCCS to report data regarding temporary release
15 programs so that the state can determine why
16 program participation is so low and take
17 steps to increase it.

18 Mr. President, I vote aye.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
20 Salazar to be recorded in the affirmative.

21 Announce the results.

22 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
23 Calendar 453, those Senators voting in the
24 negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello,
25 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Griffo, Helming, Lanza,

1 Martins, Mattera, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt,
2 Palumbo, Rhoads, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber
3 and Weik.

4 Ayes, 44. Nays, 18.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
6 is passed.

7 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
8 495, Senate Print 1730, by Senator Sanders, an
9 act to amend the Elder Law.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
11 last section.

12 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
13 act shall take effect on the 120th day after it
14 shall have become a law.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
16 roll.

17 (The Secretary called the roll.)

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
19 Cleare to explain her vote.

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

22 As chair of the Aging Committee, I
23 rise to thank my colleague Senator Sanders for
24 this very important bill.

25 I was proud to pass this thoughtful

1 bill out of committee a few weeks ago. It will
2 create an elder abuse awareness and prevention
3 training program within SOFA. This program will
4 proactively disseminate educational and awareness
5 materials, as well as help to develop a direct
6 training program for service providers,
7 employees, and senior centers so situations of
8 elder abuse can be proactively detected,
9 reported, and prevented.

10 Elder abuse is a growing issue that
11 affects over 300,000 older New Yorkers each year,
12 and is an insidious practice that leads to
13 heartbreaking outcomes. This bill should
14 significantly lower the incidence of elder abuse
15 in our state, and as such it deserves our full
16 support.

17 I vote aye.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
19 Cleare to be recorded in the affirmative.

20 Announce the results.

21 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
23 is passed.

24 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
25 503, Assembly Print Number 1771A, by

1 Assemblymember McDonald, Concurrent Resolution of
2 the Senate and Assembly proposing an amendment to
3 Section 4 of Article 8 of the Constitution.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
5 roll on the resolution.

6 (The Secretary called the roll.)

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
8 the results.

9 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
10 Calendar Number 503, voting in the negative are
11 Senators Griffo and Palumbo.

12 Ayes, 60. Nays, 2.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
14 is passed.

15 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
16 538, Senate Print 224, by Senator Myrie, an act
17 to amend the Tax Law.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
19 last section.

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

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
23 roll.

24 (The Secretary called the roll.)

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce

1 the results.

2 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
3 Calendar Number 538, voting in the negative are
4 Senators O'Mara and Walczyk.

5 Ayes, 60. Nays, 2.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
7 is passed.

8 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
9 546, Senate Print 2359, by Senator Brouk, an act
10 directing the Commissioner of Mental Health to
11 establish a maternal mental health workgroup.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
13 last section.

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

16 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
17 roll.

18 (The Secretary called the roll.)

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
20 Brouk to explain her vote.

21 SENATOR BROUK: Thank you,
22 Mr. President.

23 Many of you have heard there is a
24 maternal mortality crisis in this country.
25 Again, the U.S. remains one of the deadliest

1 places to give birth. And here in New York
2 State, Black women continue to be five times more
3 likely to die in childbirth.

4 But perhaps what you don't know is
5 that the number-one most common complication in
6 pregnancy are maternal mental health disorders,
7 affecting one in five birthing people.

8 In fact, here in New York State we
9 have the Maternal Mortality Review Board to
10 review such things, and by their data we see that
11 not only are maternal mental health conditions
12 the third leading cause of death during pregnancy
13 or childbirth, but that they are 100 percent
14 preventable.

15 So what does that tell us? We have
16 the data. We know that something's wrong. But
17 we have not been able to come up with solutions
18 to help people facing maternal mental health
19 conditions. And that's why this workgroup is so
20 important.

21 New York State has done a lot around
22 maternal health, but when we are faced with
23 statistics like this, deadly statistics like
24 this, it tells us that something is not enough.
25 And so that's why I'm grateful to my colleagues

1 for bringing forth this legislation again, and
2 that's why we really will need to put investment
3 behind workgroups like this to make sure that we
4 finally change these deadly statistics.

5 For that reason, I vote aye. Thank
6 you.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
8 Brouk to be recorded in the affirmative.

9 Senator Webb to explain her vote.

10 SENATOR WEBB: Thank you,
11 Mr. President. I rise to explain my vote.

12 I want to first thank Senator Brouk
13 for bringing forth this important legislation
14 and, equally important, for her impactful
15 advocacy for these critical services.

16 In thinking about the premises and
17 the need for this legislation, what it is doing
18 is it is directing the Office of Mental Health to
19 establish a maternal mental health workgroup.
20 This legislation will improve postpartum outcomes
21 for mothers and birthing people and families
22 impacted by maternal mental health disorders and
23 depression annually.

24 And one of the things that, you
25 know, Senator Brouk always points out is that we

1 have to treat the totality of our mothers and
2 their experience and their birthing experience,
3 and this legislation will strengthen our capacity
4 to diagnose and treat women, especially
5 underrepresented and vulnerable populations.
6 Black and brown mothers are most likely to
7 experience postpartum depression and least likely
8 to receive treatment, with a staggering number of
9 cases estimated to go undiagnosed or unreported.

10 This disparity in care puts Black
11 and brown mothers and their families at even more
12 risk for the worst mental health outcomes. And
13 as a state, we can and must do better.

14 As the chair of the Women's Issues
15 Committee, I am proud of the work that we are
16 doing to increase safety and improve outcomes for
17 mothers and birthing people both during birth and
18 during the postpartum period.

19 And again, I want to thank Senator
20 Brouk for her leadership on this issue.

21 I proudly vote aye, and I encourage
22 my colleagues to do the same.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
24 Webb to be recorded in the affirmative.

25 Senator Scarcella-Spanton to explain

1 her vote.

2 SENATOR SCARCELLA-SPANTON: Thank
3 you, Mr. President.

4 And thank you, Senator Brouk, for
5 introducing this legislation that will help
6 support and prioritize maternal mental health.

7 Last year in my district a
8 struggling mother in Coney Island tragically
9 drowned her three children in the ocean due to a
10 postpartum mental breakdown. The health and
11 well-being of our expecting and postpartum
12 mothers is so important, and that includes their
13 mental health.

14 This bill will save countless
15 mothers by directing the Commissioner of
16 Mental Health to establish a maternal mental
17 health workgroup. The workgroup will then study
18 and issue recommendations related to maternal
19 mental health.

20 Postpartum mood and anxiety
21 disorders affect countless mothers nationwide
22 during pregnancy and through the first postpartum
23 year. This bill will not only provide these
24 mothers with support, it will also provide them
25 with insight and clarity and let them know that

1 they are not alone in their feelings of perinatal
2 anxiety and depression, and hopefully prevent
3 worst-case scenarios like the issue we saw in
4 Coney Island.

5 Thank you again, Senator Brouk, for
6 your advocacy on this. I vote aye.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
8 Scarcella-Spanton to be recorded in the
9 affirmative.

10 Senator Krueger to explain her vote.

11 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you very
12 much.

13 I'm so glad to be able to stand in
14 support of Senator Brouk's bill and to hear my
15 other colleagues talking about something that
16 when I first brought a bill to require screening
17 for women with perinatal or postpartum
18 depression, people looked at me like, what are
19 you talking about?

20 But in fact, now we have had on the
21 books for many years the fact that pediatricians
22 during the well-baby visits in the first year of
23 a baby's life are supposed to be screening the
24 mothers for whether they are suffering from
25 depression.

1 Because it was actually a group of
2 OB-GYNs who came to me and said -- excuse me, it
3 was a group of pediatricians who came to me and
4 said: You know, the number-one health issue we
5 see for new babies is the mother going through
6 such serious depression that we have to be
7 worried about whether she will be able to take
8 care of her child, whether she is a risk to
9 herself. And in fact if babies aren't able to
10 bond with their mothers in that first year, there
11 are problems for the rest of their lives.

12 So they begged us in the Legislature
13 to take some action. And yet now, maybe seven,
14 eight years later, we find that we still see a
15 growing rate of this problem. And it requires us
16 to come up with new models, new ideas, and much
17 greater awareness.

18 Because as I think one of my
19 colleagues said, one of the amazing things about
20 depression that is correlated to being pregnant
21 or recently giving birth, a huge percentage of
22 the time it is hormonally related and responds
23 incredibly easily and well to treatment with
24 appropriate drugs.

25 And so when women don't know what is

1 going on, when their doctors don't understand
2 what's going on, they don't get the care they
3 need, and the risk is not just to them, it's to
4 their new babies and in fact to their
5 relationship in the family perhaps for the rest
6 of their lives.

7 So this is a simple and important
8 piece of legislation that will hopefully bring
9 New York State into a new era of making sure that
10 women get the services they need.

11 Thank you, and thank you,
12 Senator Brouk. I vote yes.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
14 Krueger to be recorded in the affirmative.

15 Announce the results.

16 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
18 is passed.

19 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
20 549, Senate Print 1714, by Senator Martinez, an
21 act to amend Chapter 397 of the Laws of 1996.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: There is
23 a home-rule message at the desk.

24 Read the last section.

25 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This

1 act shall take effect immediately.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
3 roll.

4 (The Secretary called the roll.)

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
6 the results.

7 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
8 Calendar Number 549, voting in the negative:
9 Senator Skoufis.

10 Ayes, 61. Nays, 1.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
12 is passed.

13 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
14 550, Senate Print 2200, by Senator Thomas, an act
15 authorizing New York Kali Mandir, Inc., to
16 receive retroactive real property tax exempt
17 status.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
19 last section.

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

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
23 roll.

24 (The Secretary called the roll.)

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce

1 the results.

2 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
3 Calendar Number 530, voting in the negative:
4 Senator O'Mara.

5 Ayes, 61. Nays, 1.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
7 is passed.

8 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
9 551, Senate Print 2574, by Senator Gounardes, an
10 act to amend the Real Property Tax Law.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
12 last section.

13 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
14 act shall take effect on the 90th day after it
15 shall have become a law.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
17 roll.

18 (The Secretary called the roll.)

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce
20 the results.

21 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
23 is passed.

24 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
25 571, Assembly Print Number 5057B, by

1 Assemblymember Bores, an act to amend the
2 Election Law.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the
4 last section.

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

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the
8 roll.

9 (The Secretary called the roll.)

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
11 Murray to explain his vote.

12 SENATOR MURRAY: Thank you,
13 Mr. President, to explain my vote.

14 And thank you, Senator Myrie, for
15 bringing this bill forward and allowing for the
16 observance of Passover. A very important bill.
17 I very much appreciate it.

18 But I have had a couple of calls
19 with concerns, and I have a concern myself that
20 at a time when we should be doing all we can to
21 ensure the integrity of the election process and
22 the public trust, I'm afraid that this bill might
23 leave a little wiggle room for unscrupulous
24 activities.

25 So with the window of the four days

1 between the filing deadline for getting the
2 signatures and the filing deadline itself,
3 there's a little window there for those that may
4 have fallen a bit short to continue gathering the
5 signatures and simply back-date to allow them to
6 get onto the petition when otherwise they may
7 not.

8 So there is that concern. I do
9 support the bill, and I appreciate the reason for
10 it, but I would hope that if the need arises in
11 the future, we'll take that concern into
12 consideration.

13 With that, I vote aye. Thank you.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator
15 Murray to be recorded in the affirmative.

16 Announce the results.

17 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill
19 is passed.

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

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

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: There is
25 no further business at the desk.

1 SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to
2 adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, March 30th, at
3 11:00 a.m.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: On
5 motion, the Senate stands adjourned until
6 Thursday, March 30th, at 11:00 a.m.

7 (Whereupon, at 5:49 p.m., the Senate
8 adjourned.)
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