NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Saturday, January 13, 2024, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Friday, January 12, 2024, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon, Madam President.

Can we begin by taking up Privileged Resolution 1667, read that resolution's title only, and recognize Leader Stewart-Cousins.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: There is a privileged resolution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution 1667, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, congratulating the Pace University Women's Lacrosse Team upon the occasion of capturing the 2023 NCAA Division II Women's Lacrosse Championship on May 21, 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Leader Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank you, Madam President.

I am so honored to welcome the

Pace Women's Lacrosse Team, who are champions, national champions in their sport.

(Applause.)

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: These women started out, they ranked No. 3, and they got to be No. 1. They are the first NCAA collegiate team in Westchester County to win a national championship. Good to know.

(Applause.)

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And I thought that it would be great to have them here, because not only are they extraordinary -- and I happen to be a double alum from Pace, and I happen to represent them -- but they also, under the leadership of their coach, Tricia Molfetta, most of them are New Yorkers, most of them have never been to our beautiful Capitol, and most of them were -- certainly all of them were born after the Title IX enactment which allowed for the government to acknowledge women's ability to play sports and to be funded the way that men's teams were funded.

I grew up in a time where girls were expected to be cheerleaders, stay on the sidelines, and not really participate in serious

sports. It's important to know that government works in many ways to level the playing field. And when we level the playing field, we get to see excellence from everyone.

So these young women, who proudly took Westchester County and New York State into a national arena in a very, very tough game -- lacrosse is not an easy -- easy sport, certainly not for the faint of heart. But they emerged not only champions, but representing a new level of excellence for the people of our state, for certainly the people of my county, and for women everywhere.

So I want to congratulate our team. And thank you for coming. You braved one of the toughest days of the year to be here. But I hope that you have found your trip here gratifying, and know that we are inspired by your national success.

Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Madam Leader.

Senator Bailey on the resolution.

SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,

Madam President.

Thank you, Madam Leader, for introducing this resolution. Title IX -- you made it from Title IX to national title. I think that is an incredible accomplishment.

And if not for the recognition that women are not just equal, but can exceed us as men in sports. I look at Serena Williams, who is the greatest athlete of all time, in my humble opinion. To do what she's been able to do while pregnant in a major, if you know the story, has been nothing short of fantastic.

But nothing short of fantastic is -- is bringing a national championship home to Pace. And I'm -- I start thinking about it because I'm a huge sports fan, and so I think about the levels that you had to go through, not just during the games. Because during the games, yes, you can be on. But the hours of practice that nobody saw, the dedication that it took, the -- the -- it's not only because you're student athletes, and the student is first. So you have to make sure that you continue to keep your minimum grade point average in order to be eligible to play. And I'm sure that you're more

than eligible to play.

In order to do that, you had to balance an incredibly challenging academic and rigorous academic schedule, with a really rigorous national championship level of play.

And so I just wanted to congratulate you as -- as a resident -- excuse me, as a representative of Westchester County and as a father of two daughters who are athletically inclined, well more so than their father --

(Laughter.)

SENATOR BAILEY: -- who hopefully, I don't know if they're going to pick up lacrosse. They -- they haven't done so as of yet. They've both got a mean crossover and a good jump shot, so maybe they'll be national champions of their own.

But you should know that there are legions of young girls that you don't know, that you haven't met and you may not meet, that look up to you, that idolize you, that appreciate you.

So understand that. Understand that you are incredible, you are amazing, and you are national champions.

Congratulations.

(Applause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Mayer on the resolution.

SENATOR MAYER: Thank you, Madam President.

And thank you, Leader, for bringing this important resolution to the floor.

And as someone who lives in Westchester, and proud to represent Westchester, I just could not be more thrilled than to see you all up there with those beautiful smiles, really taking in this day and this beautiful place.

I want to remind everybody that your winning game was 19 to 9, the most goals ever scored in a Division II women's lacrosse game. And it is an incredible accomplishment.

The other thing I want to say is I always say that people should engage in team sports before they run for office, because you do learn this lesson of teamwork. You do learn to trust each other. You learn to put yourself not always first. And you also put your faith in -- in your coach.

And I want to thank you, Coach, Coach Molfetta for her leadership and obviously

her incredible talents in getting you there.

But if you all want to run for office, some of us are getting old and live in Westchester, so just come see me afterwards.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR MAYER: I look forward to coaching you in the -- in the paths of -- of politics. But you have all the skills you'll need to succeed.

Congratulations.

(Applause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Weber on the resolution.

SENATOR WEBER: Thank you.

Thank you, Leader, for bringing this resolution forward today. You know, I'm a 1991 proud alumni of Pace University in Pleasantville, so we're proud to recognize you here today.

You know, as -- as a lot of us here, I have young daughters, two young daughters, one who plays field hockey at RPI who played lacrosse for Suffern. And, you know, Suffern grows great girls lacrosse teams. Over the years she went into field hockey. But I know the commitment

that it takes to really excel at that level. And, you know, you did -- you did Pace proud, you did -- you did New York proud. And I congratulate you and thank you for being here today.

And thank you, Leader, for bringing this to the floor.

(Applause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Harckham on the resolution.

SENATOR HARCKHAM: Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, Madam Leader, for bringing this resolution to the floor.

Congratulations. I stand because until recently with redistricting, I used to represent Pace. And I'm right -- right over the line is the district line, and was proud to work with the administration on the Student Veterans Center, which is in the Student Center.

But I want to follow up on -- on what -- what my colleagues were talking about regarding Title IX and the development of young women and leadership abilities. Because as was mentioned, it's not just about sports. Yes, you

did an incredible thing, and you will remember this for the rest of the -- your lives. But the skills that you are learning -- teamwork, setting goals, overcoming obstacles, overcoming challenges -- these will serve you for the rest of your life.

And -- and I -- I used to coach youth soccer in -- in my town, just a town league. But some of these -- these then young girls, then young women, went on to play travel and sports at a higher level. And there are times when I'm -- I'll be in the grocery store and just this remarkably polished and accomplished young woman will come up to me: "Coach Pete, Coach Pete!" And -- and it's certainly nothing that I did. But the process they were on. And doctors, academics, now in the business community, and it's because of the skills that they learned in athletics and being part of team sports, as Senator Mayer mentioned.

So we're glad you're here. Congratulations. Godspeed. And come back with number two next year. Thank you.

(Applause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator

Fernandez on the resolution.

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madam President.

I will be remiss as a fellow lady legislator from Westchester that I do not stand up and congratulate you amazing ladies for your achievement. Nationals is a big deal. So we all know, all over this country, many students such as like yourself have done the -- the time, the dedication, the training, the teamwork building to get to this level. And you have done it.

You're making New York proud. You're making us women proud. Congratulations again and again and again. And I look forward to seeing you again in No. 1 place.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: So before I congratulate you on behalf of the Senate, as a Pace University alum from New York City multiple times over, congratulations, ladies. It is great to see you doing great things. Congratulations to all of you.

So to our guests, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the

privileges and courtesies of this house. Please all stand and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, we have an additional privileged resolution at the desk, Resolution 1668. Let's take that one up next, read it in its entirety, and recognize Leader Stewart-Cousins.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: There's a privileged resolution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution 1668, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, commemorating the observance of the 39th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in the State of New York, on

January 15, 2024.

"WHEREAS, From time to time we take note of certain individuals whom we wish to recognize for their valued contributions and to publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

"WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the custom of this Legislative Body to join the people of this great Empire State in proudly observing the 39th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in the State of New York, on January 15, 2024, taking note of his many accomplishments and contributions to mankind; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born the grandson of a slave into a segregated society in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929, and was instrumental in formulating a policy which ultimately destroyed legal apartheid in the southern states of our nation; and

"WHEREAS, In February of 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke about the inevitability of his death and hoped that when we

spoke of his life, we would not concentrate on his academic achievements: that he graduated from Morehouse College, that he attended the Crozer Theological Seminary and Boston University, where he earned a doctorate in systematic theology; and

"WHEREAS, After returning from Crozer, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his first sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and became the church's co-pastor with his father; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a truly humble man, also did not find it important that we mention that he won the Nobel Peace Prize and over 300 other awards; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s finest legacy of greater social justice for all Americans was truly reflected in his devotion to serve and respect others, and in his steadfast love for all humanity; and

"WHEREAS, Standing in a long line of great American Black leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. represents the historical culmination and the living embodiment of a spirit of united purpose rooted in Black African culture and the American dream; and

"WHEREAS, An apostle of peace, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought unrelentingly for the civil rights of all Americans and taught us that, through nonviolence, courage displaces fear, love transforms hate, acceptance dissipates prejudice and mutual regard cancels enmity; and

"WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. manifestly contributed to the cause of America's freedom, and his commitment to human dignity is visibly mirrored in the spiritual, economic and political dimensions of the civil rights movement; and

"WHEREAS, In addition, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life was devoted to the liberation of his people, and his courage transcended the advocates of mindless retrenchment; and

"WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the common and shared responsibility of governance demands an irrevocable commitment to the preservation and enhancement of human dignity as exemplified by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

"WHEREAS, Upon the occasion of the celebration of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr., it is the practice of this Legislative Body to commemorate the heroic efforts of Dr. King, who loved and served humanity, and who was a drum major for peace, justice and righteousness; and

"WHEREAS, The 2024 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday observance marks the 95th anniversary of his birth, and the 39th annual holiday celebrated in the State of New York in his honor; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize and pay tribute to the legendary life and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., upon the occasion of the anniversary of his birth and the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in the State of New York and throughout the nation; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus."

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Leader Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank

you, Madam President.

Yesterday was the celebration of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, and it's one that I have the privilege to mark in my district and beyond. Fortunately, there were about five different events that I had the privilege of attending. And I'm happy that there were five different events because each event reminds us of where we came from, where we are, and where we have to go.

And as I think of this celebration not only of our team, but now the recognition of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, and how it is also intertwined. Dr. King's struggle for the American dream was deeply and still is deeply rooted in our Constitution, and the Constitution that says that all men are created equal.

And the expansion of what that means through voting, through electing people who will understand the magnitude of creating equal justice for all, allows for the emergence of legislation and policies that bring the talents of all people to this great nation.

So back in 1965 when the Voting Rights Act was signed, as a result of the

marches, the peaceful marches, the journey which was not peaceful over the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where people were hosed and -- and dogs set upon them, beaten, was so that people could have the right to vote, so that people would be brought into these chambers and given an opportunity to articulate legislatively the American dream.

The American dream that allows for me to stand here as the leader of the Senate, for you to be acting as presiding officer, and for all of us, no matter where we came from, the different shores that many of us traveled from, to be in this chamber, to be able to create policy that continues to bring forth the Constitution that says all men are created equal.

That's what Dr. King stood for. And that's why we continue to honor his legacy. Some years you feel that everybody gets it and we're all doing well, and the celebration of Dr. King is perfunctory: Oh, Dr. King, we shall overcome.

My two-and-a-half-year-old twin grandchildren sing a song about Dr. Martin Luther King. They can barely figure out what they're saying, but they do know how to say "No fighting, no fighting." My 21-year-old grandson turned 21

on Dr. King's birthday. The difference in understanding of my two and-a-half-year-olds and my 21-year-old are quite profound. And I think it represents a lot of us. Some of us never understood the struggle, and some of us struggle every single day. Some of us know the words but not the music, and some of us just know the music.

But I who had the privilege of being alive when the civil rights struggle was at its height, I who have stood in this chamber over and over again talking about where my parents were disenfranchised and, you know, my grandparents before them, but stand here as a dream keeper because of the life and legacy of Doctor -- Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, who believed in nonviolent protest, who believed that social change could happen if we allowed our hearts and our minds to be unified in the love for humanity.

I am so happy that I can stand in this chamber today with colleagues who understand what Dr. King's legacy means, whose shoulders we all stand on, who can celebrate young people who because of a vision of expansion and equality are able to achieve national championships, and I

hope year after year the dream of Dr. King is more manifest not only in these chambers but beyond.

And again, thank you so much for honoring this day.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Madam Leader.

Senator Bailey on the resolution.

SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you, Madam President.

As always, an incredibly difficult act to follow. Madam Leader struck a chord speaking music. And -- and it's -- something resonates about music in this day for me.

It is always an honor to be able to speak on this resolution on this floor because it's the first thing that I spoke about as a member of the New York State Senate. And in my time here it's -- the meaning of it has changed, because my children have gotten older and I see life through the lens of my children. And each year -- now, my fourth-grader and my second-grader, they learn different things. Their level of understanding about who Dr. King was and what he did increases year by year.

And it's a really proud moment for me to check in about what they're learning in school about who he was, but most importantly about what he has continued to do.

The leader spoke about music; I thought about J. Cole's song Love Yourz when he says there's "beauty in the struggle, ugliness in the success." That that struggle was beautiful, but that -- that success that he had, it's still ugly. There's still rampant racism. There's still redlining. There's still voter suppression. There's still so many things -- economic injustice, the list goes on and on. These things are still happening that Dr. King fought for.

So it's important to separate who he was and -- but what his message is. Dr. King was a reverend first, and as a reverend he talked about probably the Book of James. And the Book of James says "Faith without works is dead." So he wasn't just a dreamer, he was a doer. So just to dream isn't enough. We must do.

And so I -- I was thinking about some things that I was -- that were happening and how much I love sneakers, Madam President. And

not just because I couldn't walk a mile in Dr. King's shoes. None of us could. Not just because of the miles that he marched.

I thought about sneakers and sometimes you have sneakers and you have things that you want to wait to wear. Right? And you wait for the right time. And you're waiting for that moment -- I don't know about today, I don't know about tomorrow. But sometimes we got to realize that we got to put those sneakers on before they don't fit or, even worse, we run out of steps.

In 39 years of life, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King traveled over 6 million miles, delivered over 2,500 speeches, wrote five books -- and is the only person, the only singular person to have a holiday named after them. He made the most out of his time. He squeezed every single bit of life into the 39 years that he had on this earth. And when we read about him, when we speak about him, it still seems unreal, it seems surreal that he was only 39 at the time of his passing. Yet he was.

You know, he had a phrase "live together as brothers or perish as fools." And at

one of the MLK celebrations yesterday there was a gentleman by the name of Dr. Durley who actually walked with Dr. King. And so it's always interesting when we hear like an interpretation: This is what Dr. King would have said, this is what Dr. King would have done. There was a brother there who walked with the man.

And he had a medallion on, an "I Have a Dream" medallion. In order to wear that medallion publicly, you have to call someone who marched with Dr. King. These are -- these are -- I was yesterday years old, as they say, when I learned that.

There are things about the movement that we're still learning, and there are things that we still have yet to learn you know, he -- he said that everybody can be great because anybody can serve. Those of us that serve in government in this chamber, but who serve in life, realize that.

You know, as I close I think about a quote from John Greenleaf Whittier, a poem -- a Quaker American poet in the 19th century who said in his poem Maud Muller: "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: 'It

might have been!'"

We should make sure that we live out Dr. King's dream, and not just his dream -- what he did, and how to continue to further it.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Senator Sanders on the resolution.

SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you, Madam President.

The previous speakers have done so well, so I won't go in -- in their direction I'll take in a different direction.

I -- I thank our leader for bringing this resolution. It is so important, especially in this day and age of media disinformation, where outside of the Bible I would argue that the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is probably the most misquoted, misdirected. People are taking his conversations completely into areas almost exactly opposite of what he is speaking about.

Whether we speak about the Middle East, affirmative action, Black Lives Matter, his conversation has been taken and distorted by so

many people that -- that sometimes it's necessary to drill down a little bit deeper and to try to figure out what are some core concepts that he believed in. And I will offer you three. And I'm sure everyone in here, God willing, will have their own three. But I'll give three to you.

I would argue that he is speaking of a refusal to participate in injustice, first and foremost. Not going to participate in injustice.

He's also saying that he believes in the possible redemption of the human -- of the human family. That whoever he is opposing at that moment is not without redemption, that you can -- that we can get to a higher place.

But he -- he tops it all off by saying -- by bringing a commitment to putting his body on the line, that he is going to personally put his body on the line and say I'm not only going to be against this injustice, I do believe in the redemption, but I'm going to give the people -- the person or the situation a chance to redeem themselves by me putting my body here and saying this injustice will not continue, you'll have to come through me and the others. But we want you to change. We want you to change in a

different way.

And he did this while rallying, educating and rallying and growing the list of the righteous, of those who are on the right side of a cause, and offering everybody a chance to get -- you're not stuck in your history, that you can -- you can get out of that. You're not stuck on stupid. That we can get to a greater place and all of us can go forward.

So I would suggest to you again that those are three concepts that I think are important to understand when we speak of King. And otherwise we're going to -- you know, the day will descend into buy -- I mean buying stupid things and a day of holiday without meaning. Where we don't know why we're doing it or what we're doing, we're just out there doing something. We'll sing songs we have no idea what they mean and don't -- probably don't agree with the songs otherwise.

So having said that, again, I am grateful for the opportunity, Madam Leader. I think it's so important to bring this again and again until finally we get there. Because we can't all get to that beloved community that he

spoke of when we learn to turn to each other and not on each other.

Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator May on the resolution.

SENATOR MAY: Thank you, Madam President.

And thank you, Madam Leader, for bringing this resolution and for your powerful words.

I was 7 years old when my family and hundreds of thousands of white families all around the country were shocked and horrified by the images on our television of the brutality that met Dr. King and John Lewis and the others who made that first attempt to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma.

And we watched the interview with Dr. King where he said he was planning to try again, and he called on white allies around the country to join him. My grandfather was one of the allies who joined him. He left his comfortable home in Los Angeles, took a short leave from his job, and he went to Selma. And we

were terrified. We were afraid for his safety. But we were also very proud.

Dr. King taught us a lot of lessons with his words and with his actions. The one that sticks with me the most is the lesson never to be a bystander. And I think that's a lesson, sadly, that we still carry today when it comes to racial injustice.

I'm -- I was honored and grateful that my committee was able to hold a hearing last month about concentrated poverty in our smaller cities. The city I represent and a number of other cities along the Thruway are perennially ranked among the worst for child poverty in the entire country. And this is a legacy of racial injustice which still shapes our cities today.

I'm grateful to Dr. King for the lessons he taught, and -- and I try on a daily basis not to be a bystander. But I think there is an awful lot that we still need to do to make his words ring true for us today. I was at an event, a beautiful event in Auburn on Sunday where young people read the words of Dr. King, and I couldn't help but feel like the vision, the beautiful vision that he had for a world of much

greater tolerance and -- and less racial division, in -- in the world where I live, that's not true today.

So we still have to make sure we are not bystanders and that we continue to do the hard work, sometimes the dangerous work, sometimes the -- the truly difficult work of trying to make his words the truth.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Kennedy on the resolution.

SENATOR KENNEDY: Thank you, Madam President.

I stand with an extraordinary honor to recognize the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I want to thank our Majority Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, for bringing this resolution to the floor. What a -- what a real privilege it is to be able to stand on this floor and honor such an extraordinary man, a true man of honor, of integrity, of devotion -- someone who I was not alive to see in action as I was born eight years after his untimely death, but that over the years I've learned more and more about, including each and every day, each and

every year we celebrate and honor his legacy.

And it's a constant reminder as we celebrate this individual who had such an indelible mark on our democracy, on our nation, on human rights across the world. And, you know, you think about what he stood for, the greatest of society needs he stood for and fought for -- human rights and civil rights and labor rights and equality and justice -- each and every day of his life.

And when I think about the legacy he left behind, I think about the work that we do here still today and all of the needs in society that still remain, his work is yet to be done. His vision is yet to be satisfied. We have an obligation to see his vision through to reality.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington. And you think about how far our nation has come, and you think about how far we still need to go. You think about the dire poverty that still exists. You think about the horrific statistics in healthcare discrepancies between people of color and their white counterparts. You think about the children that go to school, even here in the great Empire

State of New York, that are distracted through their education because they haven't had a meal to start the day because of the conditions they're coming from in poverty at home.

We've got so much work to do as communities across New York, as a state, and as a nation. But we have Dr. King's vision. We have Dr. King's commitment to doing what is right. We have his dream and his words and his actions that we can follow.

And each and every time I have the opportunity to learn more about him, it -- it to me is an enlightening moment. For example, last night as I was watching a documentary on his life called I am MLK, Jr. -- if you haven't seen it, it's worth a watch. And you had some of the greatest civil rights leaders of all time that stood by and with Dr. King, some of which still are here today.

The great Reverend Jesse Jackson that I and my family had the opportunity to meet at Rosie O'Grady's. He was in for a bite to eat with his family down in Manhattan as I was there with my family. And I went up and I said, "Oh, my God," I said, "Reverend Jackson, what an

opportunity, what an amazing honor it is to meet you." You know what he did? He moved the table. He said, "Come on, bring your family over, sit on down." And he starts talking to us. You know what his shirt said? Anybody? "Vote." V-O-T-E, vote.

And then you hear him in this documentary talk about the struggles that Dr. King had and the despair that he had watching the nation going in the wrong direction when it pertained to civil rights, when it pertained to the Vietnam War. What an incredible visionary prophet Dr. King was.

And you look back, and hindsight's 20/20. And that includes in our nation's history. And you see the vision of peace and prosperity that the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. had and drove forward as a national message.

So it is right that we honor him here today on the Senate floor here in New York. But it's right that we honor him through our actions every day, whether we're here in this chamber, governing and making laws, or whether we're out it in the community, whether we're elected or whether we're community leaders.

Thinking about his vision for America and following in his footprints through our actions is the greatest tribute we can ever have to that extraordinary and wonderful man.

And I will say one last thing, that one of his children posted last night that one way that we can continue to honor Dr. King is also by honoring his wife, Coretta Scott King. And as I often say, behind every great man is an even better woman. And she stood by him through all the trials and tribulations and struggles, and I think was the rock in his life behind his great success and determination in transforming the trajectory of this great nation.

And as one of his colleagues mentioned in this documentary last night -- and I'll end with this -- aside from the election of President Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation, the 12 years that the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led the Civil Rights Movement before his death in 1968 was the most transformational piece of history in the entirety of the history of this great United States of America.

Thank you, Dr. King.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Webb on the resolution.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to thank our Majority Leader for bringing this resolution forward to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King and his legacy, who would have been 95 years old this year.

You know, as we're here in the -- the Senate chamber remembering the legacy of Dr. King, someone who was not only, as my colleague Senator Kennedy just noted, one of the most pivotal and greatest leaders for civil rights here in this country but also the world -- I mean, he was a global leader on efforts around humanitarianism. His efforts were designed to really advance justice and liberation.

And so it is worth noting we all are familiar with his speech that was given during the March on Washington, the "I Have A Dream" speech. And one of the things that I often like to lift up is that after that time in reflecting on the state of this nation during that time and subsequently, Dr. King also realized the very daunting challenge that we have of actualizing

that dream. And he talks about it in his book Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?

And when you think about the climate that we're in right now, that same idea of where do we go from here, here in this chamber we have an obligation and an opportunity to really create community through equitable policies and practices.

And so in looking at his legacy and lifting up the importance of women, as we were talking about earlier when we recognized the lacrosse team breaking records, we also know women played a very pivotal role in assisting and guiding Dr. King in the legacy that he created.

His wife, Coretta Scott, a few days after he was assassinated -- to be clear, he didn't sacrifice his life, he was killed -- his wife a few days later led the effort and kept pushing until -- in working with a lot of national leaders, to actually get his birthday memorialized. And also establishing his legacy center that's down in Georgia.

And so, you know, again, when we talk about legacy and how we are leaving our communities better than when we found them, it's

important that we lift up the voices that are often marginalized and make sure that we are being more intentional in lifting up the legacy and living it through policies and practices of Dr. King. Because he was most certainly committed to eradicating racism, eradicating poverty, and eradicating war.

And so it is with that legacy that, as I said earlier, we have a responsibility to do that. And we can do that in this chamber through our policies.

When you think about some of the stats that a lot of our families, working families are dealing with still to this day -- and now we're in the budget, and so we're going to have those conversations around where do we make those investments, I think it is paramount, especially on a day like today where we are recalling this great man's legacy, that it is imperative that we continue to work diligently to center the voices and needs of those who are often most forgotten.

And so as I, you know, close, I would be remiss if I didn't lift up another important woman in Dr. King's life, and that was

his daughter Dr. Bernice King, who also shared yesterday that especially for folks like us who are elected and other leaders, that when we invoke the name of her father, it is paramount that we tell the totality of his legacy and, more importantly, beyond words but through actions, policies and practices, that is how we honor him.

Again, I want to thank all of my colleagues for your -- your remarks, and I look forward to us doing the good work and continuing to advance the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thank you so much.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Ramos on the resolution.

SENATOR RAMOS: Thank you, Madam President.

I too rise to celebrate one of the greatest Americans to have ever lived, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I want to celebrate the radical King, the Dr. King who was an economic crusader and a teacher to Americans, who reminded us that although Black people weren't emancipated until 1863, less than 20 years before the American

government had enacted a sense of manifest destiny, of westward expansion, where homesteads and acres and acres of land were given, gifted, to European immigrants, allowing them to have an economic base, while Black people, recently liberated Black people, were not.

And that had fundamentally sowed the years of segregation, of prejudice, and of racism that we continue to try to end today.

Dr. King talked about how Black people and people of color -- because he wasn't only a leader for Black people, but for all working families, who talked about how people had to work full time to get part-time income.

It's been 55 years since the assassination of Dr. King, and I as chair of the Labor Committee here in this legislative body continue with our committee to crusade ourselves towards greater income equality, which is so sorely needed here in New York State where there are so many working families who are constantly on the brink of eviction, entire generations who are saddled with student debt and who have been unable to realize the American dream, which is supposedly to buy a home.

In fact, it's been so dire, our economic condition, that just last year in 2023 we saw nearly 500,000 workers across this country engage in nearly 300 work stoppages. Because at the end of the day, there is no greater nonviolent collective action than the right to strike. The right to be able as a worker to tell your boss, No, I will not work for crumbs. Yes, you will recognize my dignity. And dignity is defined by the honest respect that every human being has, the right that every human being has to a living wage, to benefits, to time off. So many of the things that we've been able to champion precisely here in this Senate body.

It's incredible to see how his dream -- and I -- I truly do believe that we should redefine what we tend to think is the American dream to actually make sure it matches with Dr. King's dream, to judge a person by the content of their character. Meaning by their ability to be of service to others, meaning by their ability to be able to provide for themselves and their family, no matter where they come from.

What matters is that we have a

shared mutuality and therefore we have a shared destiny. That it is about where we are going together.

And so with that, I just want to say how proud I am that we are once again engaging in this annual tradition of recognizing Dr. King and his work. Because without him, I would not be here, and neither would nearly every other legislator of color in this body.

Many people don't recognize that in 1965 with the Voting Rights Act it wasn't just about securing suffrage for Black people. It took the Voting Rights Act for Latinos to be able to vote in this country.

I would not be able to vote as a New York Queens-born Colombiana if it wasn't for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. And if I couldn't vote, I wouldn't be able to run for office and stand before you here today.

And for that, all I want to say is gracias, Dr. King, y Feliz Cumpleaños.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Lanza on the resolution.

SENATOR LANZA: Thank you, Madam President. It is an honor to rise to speak

on this resolution.

First, of course, I want to thank Senator, Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for bringing this to the floor.

You know, I enjoy listening to all my colleagues. But I especially enjoy listening to you, Leader, on this resolution. You speak with such intelligence, tenderness and strength. And I think that is so appropriate and fitting, given who it is that you are speaking of.

You know, you all know I don't speak on resolutions, it's not my "thing," as Senator Bailey would say. But every year I make an exception for this one.

And I do enjoy listening to my colleagues. Because while we have our differences, I think the words that you hear on this day every year truly reflects our collective aspirations and really describes why it is, from whatever walk of life, from whatever side of the aisle, from whatever our belief system is, explains why we serve.

I think when we speak about Dr. Martin Luther King, at its core we talk about public service. And we talk about where we one

day hope to be.

You know, Senator Bailey talked about this. You know, as a -- as a Christian growing up, whenever you thought about making sure you were doing the right thing, one of the things you might ask is what would Jesus do, or what would Jesus say. And you don't see that anywhere else in our society, in our culture, at least that I know of, except for when you talk about MLK.

And people do say what would he have said, what would he be doing. And I think that speaks to the profound nature of what he represented, who he was and who he is. The moral certainty and certitude.

But as Senator Sanders said, this is complicated. When you think about someone as great as Dr. Martin Luther King, we all want to make him our own. We all want to use his words to prove that we are right. We sometimes want to weaponize those words to say "You are wrong." And that's what's complicated.

I'm not saying we shouldn't do that. Because we need to, I think, dip into the well of all that he gave us as guidance for what we've

tried to accomplish today. So I think it's appropriate, but it's complicated.

And I think Abraham Lincoln said this in one of the greatest inaugural addresses ever, the second one. He alluded to this idea when he said that -- about the Civil War that both sides read the same Bible, both sides pray to the same God, and both sides invoke his aid against the other. And you see that with Dr. Martin Luther King. So it's complicated.

So I'm not going to today speculate as to what he would be saying right now. And the great thing about his life and when he lived is that we know what he said. We don't have to guess.

So some of the things I think about, that are as pertinent today as they ever were, that he said was that hatred paralyzes and love releases it. He warned -- and these are his words -- that we should not love publicity, we should love justice. And of course my favorite is that he said hate cannot defeat hate, only love can conquer hate.

So whatever you want to think about what Dr. Martin Luther King would say today, we

have his words. And I can't think of any better words for this time than those words and many of the others that he spoke to me. It was said, I agree, he was one of the greatest Americans who ever lived, even though he was a Republican.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR LANZA: You know, I think Dr. Martin Luther King's story is America's story. The struggle for freedom and liberty. And yes, it's a struggle. Life is a struggle. But I truly do believe that if we ever wipe tyranny in all its wicked forms from this earth, it was Dr. Martin Luther King who helped show the way.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Helming on the resolution.

SENATOR HELMING: Thank you, Madam President.

I too would like to thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for continuing to bring this important resolution to the floor.

And I want to join with everybody

who has offered so many profound words, if you will, honoring the life and enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although I will say right up front that my message is going to be much simpler, much shorter, but I believe just as important as what's already been said.

I think back to just a couple of weeks ago on the opening day of this year's legislative session. The Lieutenant Governor, Antonio Delgado, presiding as Temporary President of the Senate, standing in the same -- very same spot you are, Madam President, encouraged us as State Senators to be mindful of what Dr. King referred to as unenforceable obligations.

I've been thinking about that a lot since the LG brought it up. Dr. King said: "These obligations are beyond the reach of the laws of society. They concern inner attitudes, genuine person-to-person relations, and expressions of compassion that law books cannot regulate and jails cannot rectify. Such obligations are met by one's commitment to inner laws, what's written on the heart."

Dr. King's words are a reminder to me, and I imagine to every single person who's in

this chamber, of the profound responsibility we carry as individuals and also as elected leaders to look deep within our hearts about the choices we make and how our words and actions impact others.

We all can lead by example. We can all treat others how we want to be treated. We can show kindness and compassion to our neighbors. We can be good Samaritans and serve others. And although here on this Senate floor we may not always agree, we can approach each conversation and each debate with love and respect in our hearts.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Harckham on the resolution.

SENATOR HARCKHAM: Thank you very much, Madam President.

I -- I normally don't speak on this resolution because I think it's more important for me to listen and learn how I can better be of service on this day.

But I was -- I was struck by something that happened here today. The leader was talking about -- and thank you,

Madam Majority Leader, for bringing this resolution and for your continued leadership -- the issue of progress and challenges and the dichotomy of both of those things, and the example we had in this chamber today. We just honored some national champions, some remarkable young women who because of Title IX had the same resources and the same opportunities as men and became national champions.

The town that Pace University is located in has just been filed in a lawsuit brought under the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act because five Hispanic residents felt disenfranchised because of the at-large voting system.

So I -- I want to be careful not to disparage the town of Mount Pleasant. They will have their day in court. But the fact that people today are still feeling disenfranchised because of who they are, their race or their origin, and the fact that we in this chamber, in this case through the leadership of Senator Myrie and the Majority Leader and others, have given them an avenue of redress, is an important example of the role that we continue to play

as -- as we try to advance Dr. King's -- his -- not only his life, but his legacy and the work that we still need to do.

So I vote aye on this important resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Thomas on the resolution.

SENATOR THOMAS: Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, Leader and other speakers before me.

I owe a lot to Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement. And just like we heard from Senator Jessica Ramos about the Voting Rights Act, if it wasn't for the civil rights movement, immigration laws would not have changed. People from the South Asian community would not have been able to emigrate here decades ago. I would not be able to go to the schools that I went to if it wasn't for the civil rights movement and Dr. Martin Luther King. My family would not have been able to buy the home that they live in if wasn't for the civil rights movement. I owe a lot to Martin Luther King.

You know, all of us here in this

chamber have so much power to do good and to make changes. But we don't have to be a Senator or an elected official to do -- to do that. Martin Luther King said it best: Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, be a trail. If you can't be the sun, be a little star. Be the best of whatever you are.

I serve today as a Senator to help others. Thank you, Dr. King, for leading the way. I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Rolison on the resolution.

SENATOR ROLISON: Thank you, Madam President.

I too, like my -- my friend and colleague Senator Harckham, generally listen. And -- but I -- I wanted to just briefly talk about two services that I went to to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The first one was at Beulah Baptist Church, and it's always the Sunday before. And a friend of the leader -- Leader, thank you for bringing this forward -- Bishop James Hassell from the City of Yonkers was there.

And I've listened to a lot of

preachers at that church, and I will tell you that was one of the most riveting acts of preaching that I have ever heard. And I was troubled when I left because what he talked about was Dr. King's "I Have A Dream" speech, and how he talked about dreams today are not like dreams before. Dreams are deferred for lots of reasons. It's almost like we're not allowed to dream. Children growing up are exposed to so many things which are deferring those dreams. How can you dream when everything you see or hear can be negative? And we all sat there with this look on our face. He was speaking about something that is so true.

And so when I left there that night, I was troubled. I was upset. I said to myself, maybe I'm not even dreaming anymore. Maybe I'm worried about too much. Maybe I'm thinking about too much.

So the next day, I went to Springfield Baptist Church in the City of Beacon. And we sang and we marched, and I felt good. And we went back to the church for a service, but it started out with song and reflective prayer. But then there was an essay contest where the winners

from the Beacon City School District, from second grade right up to senior, five of them, were picked out of 23 essays from that school district about Dr. King and what he stood for and what he said.

And what I will tell you is dreams were on display at Springfield Baptist Church. And I felt good about that, because I learned something, from the tiniest to the senior, about the things that he said and what they thought they meant. They were thinking. And they were dreaming about things that he dreamed about.

So as my colleague and friend Senator Kennedy said, we've done a lot, we've got a lot to do. And together, Madam President, we can do that.

And I proudly vote aye.

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The

resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, I know we've already voted on the resolution, but just to correct the record. In all the wonderful accolades about Martin Luther King, it was slipped in there that he was a Republican. In fact, that is absolutely untrue. Scholars will tell you that that is something invented by Trump supporters in the last several years to advance their cause.

So let's just be very clear so nobody thinks that was actually true.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Oh, my God.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, the sponsor of both resolutions we took up today would like to open them up for cosponsorship.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The resolutions are open for cosponsorship. Should you choose not to be a cosponsor of the resolutions, please notify the desk.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Can we now take

up the reading of the calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 14, Senate Print 8005, by Senator Mayer, an act to amend the Public Health Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 29, Senate Print 8026, by Senator Webb, an act to amend a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This

act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Call the roll.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Sorry, call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Webb to explain her vote.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to explain my vote.

You know, again, last year I had the honor of being before this chamber and lifting up this important bill that in my remarks last year, I lifted up the fact that BIPOC missing and murdered women and girls is a growing epidemic nationally, and most certainly we are seeing it here in New York.

You know, as the numbers continue to go up, unfortunately, we also learned that the manner in which resources are allocated to address this public safety issue is not the same for BIPOC missing and murdered women and girls.

And so New York being a major

gateway state, for a variety of reasons -- our location, we're a big state for tourism, and so many other positive attributes -- and at the same time we still have significant challenges around human trafficking. And when it comes to this issue, unfortunately BIPOC women and girls are often mischaracterized as runaways and so they're not given the same level of consideration.

We also saw in Rochester, for instance, that when a young woman of color went missing, an Amber Alert was not issued for her. And so the stories continue to compile.

And so this legislation is taking a long-overdue and important step to remedying this issue here in our state by addressing the gap in care and concern for BIPOC victims of abduction and human trafficking.

And so again I want to thank my colleagues for their support, unanimous support for this legislation. It is imperative that with this task force, which this legislation creates and brings together state agencies along with community advocates, we really have an opportunity and an obligation to not only render justice for BIPOC missing and murdered women and

girls, but also justice and supports for their families so that they can -- can heal.

And so I want to thank the Majority Leader for her support of this legislation. Also, all of you, my colleagues. Assemblymember Karines Reyes, who is the Assembly sponsor on this important legislation. Also the advocates, such as Girl Vow. You know, this type of landmark legislation doesn't happen in a vacuum. It takes many people to make it happen. And so I want to thank everyone that's worked on this.

I proudly vote aye for this, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you so much, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Webb to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Ramos to explain her vote.

SENATOR RAMOS: Thank you, Madam President.

I just wanted to very quickly applaud Senator Webb for her persistence in passing this bill, insisting that it become law as soon as possible.

I represent Jackson Heights in

Queens, one of the places that has most welcomed asylum seekers, who are many times seen as prime targets precisely for human trafficking. Whether it's for sex work, whether it's for nail salon work or farm work, so many people, particularly women and women of color, are targeted because they are thought to be weak, because they are desperate to improve their economic standing and provide for their family.

And we have to be able to put forth a much better way of life for immigrants and for so many people so that they do not fall into these traps and that law enforcement actually do their job in ending so many different human trafficking rings that exist across our city, New York City and state.

I just want to say thank you. I hope that this not only results in creating this division in our criminal justice system, but that it actually manifests an economic opportunity in employment authorization documents, work permits, for people to be able to provide for themselves and their families properly.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator

Ramos to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

There is a substitution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Gounardes moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 8507 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 8029, Third Reading Calendar 31.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Substitution so ordered.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 31, Assembly Bill Number 8507, by Assemblymember Solages, an act to amend the Civil Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 36, Senate Print 8036, by Senator Thomas, an act to amend the General Business Law.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Lay it aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 46, Senate Print 8057, by Senator Rivera, an act to amend the Public Health Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

There's a substitution at the desk.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Jackson moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill Number 8514 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 8079, Third Reading Calendar 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The substitution is so ordered.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 61, Assembly Number 8514, by Assemblymember Pheffer Amato, an act to amend the Civil Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce

the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 64, Senate Print 8082, by Senator Sanders, an act to amend the New York City Charter.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 64, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Gallivan, Helming, Rhoads, Skoufis, Walczyk and Weik.

Ayes, 54. Nays, 6.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 66,

Senate Print 8086, by Senator Addabbo, an act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 66, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Krueger, Skoufis and Walczyk.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 3.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Excuse me. On that last bill -- in relation to Calendar 66, voting in the negative are Senators Krueger, Martinez, Skoufis and Senator Walczyk.

Ayes, 56. Nays, 4.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 69, Senate Print 8089, by Senator Hoylman-Sigal, an act to amend a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Helming to explain her vote.

SENATOR HELMING: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to explain my vote.

Dyslexia can impact a person's mental health in a number of ways. In children, it can cause them to experience symptoms of depression, of anxiety, and make them feel like they aren't smart or capable of learning.

So I support this bill, and I agree that we need to develop better screening methods for dyslexia and provide children with an education that truly meets their needs.

But as we address this issue and others like it, we need to also ensure that our healthcare providers are empowered to provide the services our children need.

I carry a bill, Senate Bill 4463, that would grant diagnosing privileges to current and future mental health counselors, family therapists and psychoanalysts who complete necessary training. This will allow families greater access to much-needed services and ensure that conditions are diagnosed and treatment begins as soon as possible.

Again, I support this bill and efforts to help our students with dyslexia succeed in our education system. But we can do more, we need to do more to help children and families access the services they need. That's why I'm voting yes and also encouraging the Senate Majority to bring my bill, Senate Bill 4463, to the floor for a vote.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Helming to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is -- (pause).

Senator Hoylman-Sigal to explain his vote.

SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to thank my colleagues for their support of the underlying bill in this chapter amendment, including Maria Morrissey and Amanda Godkin for helping negotiate it.

You know, dyslexia affects a quarter of a million students or more. In the State of New York it's estimated about 10 percent of our population struggles with dyslexia or dysgraphia.

The problem has been in our state and in New York City and other municipalities, students are not screened for dyslexia. Parents have no idea that their kids can't read.

My husband and I have a 13-year-old daughter. We did not learn of her dyslexia until the end of her third grade. Which is far too late for remediation.

And, you know, there are so many incredibly creative people with dyslexia. Because as the Apple slogan reads, dyslexia

forces you to think different. And there are people like Steve Jobs, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and other great thinkers of centuries past who have dyslexia.

There are countless, though, men and women of color who never had the opportunity in our educational system to pursue greatness as those names I have mentioned, because again they were never identified as such.

Our legislation will take the first step forward in creating a task force to establish best practices for all of those schoolkids.

I want to thank Governor Hochul for her insightful approach on going back to basics in literacy, teaching phonics in our New York school system. And certainly my colleagues Senator Liu and Senator Mayer understand that effort.

And this legislation was inspired by my 13-year-old daughter Sylvia, who became a bat mitzvah this past Saturday. And if you think reading English is difficult for a child with dyslexia, try Hebrew.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: But she succeeded, as countless other children can and will with dyslexia, hopefully with the assistance of this new task force.

I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Hoylman-Sigal to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 70, Senate Print 8090, by Senator Cleare, an act to amend the State Technology Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar Number 70, voting in the negative are

Senators Ortt and Walczyk. Also Senator O'Mara.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 3.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: Can we now go to the controversial calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will ring the bell.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 36, Senate Print 8036, by Senator Thomas, an act to amend the General Business Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Lanza, why do you rise?

SENATOR LANZA: Madam President, I believe there's an amendment at the desk. I waive the reading of that amendment and ask that you recognize Senator Martins to be heard.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator Lanza.

Upon review of the amendment, in accordance with Rule 6, Section 4B, I rule it nongermane and out of order at this time.

SENATOR LANZA: Accordingly, Madam President, I appeal the ruling of the chair and ask that you recognize Senator Martins.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The appeal has been made and recognized, and Senator Martins may be heard.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to appeal the ruling of the chair. Madam President, the proposed amendment is germane to the underlying bill because the underlying bill relates to the security of residential buildings and the proposed amendment relates to ensuring the security of the community by enhancing penalties for those who obstruct traffic and access to buildings during protests.

The proposed amendment creates a new offense of aggravated disorderly conduct. It would make it a Class A misdemeanor to obstruct traffic or access to any building as part of an unpermitted protest or demonstration.

Frankly, Madam President, I think we've all seen the effects of unpermitted protests in our communities and the effects of those protests on our residents, not only those

who are in residential buildings but those who are going to work, those who are trying to cross bridges and tunnels. We've all seen that impact.

The proposed amendment would also allow for the offense to be charged as a hate crime, elevating the penalty to an E felony where individuals engage in this disruptive and dangerous activity because of their hateful attitudes towards another race, nationality, ancestry or religion.

Madam President, it has been 102 days since Hamas committed the terrorist attacks against Israel on October 7th. We have seen terrorist sympathizers disruptively engaging in protests, blocking traffic and access to public buildings, including airports and train stations. The actions of these hateful antisemites have not only made for the Jewish population to feel less safe, they have also put every resident of these communities at risk by preventing emergency services from getting to people who need them.

This kind of conduct cannot be tolerated, and there must be consequences when someone creates this kind of danger.

So, Madam President, for these reasons I strongly urge you to reconsider your ruling.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

I want to remind the house that the vote is on the procedures of the house and the ruling of the chair.

Those in favor of overruling the chair, signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

SENATOR LANZA: Request a show of hands.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: A show of hands has been requested and so ordered.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 20.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The ruling of the chair stands, and the bill-in-chief is before the house.

Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Borrello.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Would the sponsor yield for some questions.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Thomas, do you yield?

SENATOR THOMAS: Yes, I yield to --

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR THOMAS: -- Senator Borrello, to my first debate of my last session. Let's go.

SENATOR BORRELLO: All right. With that being said, through you, Madam President.

So I supported this bill, I believe, previously. And -- but there are some questions after reading the bill a little more closely.

You mentioned in your sponsor's memo, and I think the Governor also referenced it, that this only applies to third parties that will be installing these keyless entry systems.

So can you ensure that that only still applies to -- in this bill? Because I don't see anything in the bill language that said it only applies strictly to third parties installing one of these keyless entry systems.

SENATOR THOMAS: Through you,

Madam President. This is a chapter amendment, and there are three specific revisions that we made to this bill that passed unanimously last year during session.

With third parties, we didn't change anything on that specific definition.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Madam President, will the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR THOMAS: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Yes, so this is some -- just some concerns on the language, because it doesn't specifically spell out only -- it would only apply to third parties. So that's the concern.

So with that being said, if a -- if the owner of a property installed one of these keyless security entry systems, you know, would they -- would they be subject to the consequences of this bill, and not just a third party?

SENATOR THOMAS: So through you, Madam President, it says here in the bill,

Section 390-e: "Unauthorized installation of certain security devices prohibited. No person, firm, partnership, association or corporation shall install any keyless security device used to control and secure access to the common areas of a residential building without the express written consent of the owner, board of managers, board of directors, or authorized party of such property."

SENATOR BORRELLO: Madam President, will the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR THOMAS: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR BORRELLO: So the property owner, then, would not be impacted by this legislation, is that correct?

SENATOR THOMAS: Through you, Madam President, can you specify "property owner"? Like --

SENATOR BORRELLO: Sure. May I answer the question? Okay, through you, Madam President.

So the issue is is that the understanding was this was only to apply to a third party like Amazon installing a keyless entry system. Unless I'm misreading this, that's the -- this -- this is now saying that the property owner is -- you're saying without the express permission of the property owner. But what if it is the property owner that's installing it?

SENATOR THOMAS: Through you, Madam President, these are specific for residential buildings with more than one or two occupied tenants. So if anyone wants to install such a device, they have to get -- they have to put a notice and permission from those that are living there.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Madam President, will the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR THOMAS: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR BORRELLO: There's some language in the bill that says that property

owners would not be able to raise the rent if one of these systems is installed. Is that -- but it seems rather vague. Is that indefinite?

In other words, if you install a keyless entry system you can never raise the rent, ever, you know, during the term of the -- I realize that that makes you smile. But the reality is if it's not spelled out, that could certainly be interpreted that way, potentially. Legally.

SENATOR THOMAS: Through you, Madam President, let me read the section.

"In no event shall the installation of such a system be considered a service nor be considered a reason for any purpose to increase rent."

So this reading is basically saying it is not an improvement to the property that would lead a landlord to increase the rent.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Madam President, will the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR THOMAS: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: the

sponsor yields.

SENATOR BORRELLO: So -- but that's not spelled out that way. If you were to say that a keyless entry system should not be considered a -- you know, a capital improvement, therefore leading to a potential increase in rent, that would be a better way to say this.

Because the way it reads now is basically saying that if you install a keyless entry system -- some of which, by the way, you can get, you know, at a hardware store for $100 -- that you would not be able to, you know, raise the rent. And I'm just worried that that would be interpreted by someone as you can't raise the rent because you have a keyless entry system on your -- on your property.

SENATOR THOMAS: Through you, Madam President. I mean, just the reading of this, it says the installation of such a system shall not be considered an improvement. So it specifically says that system.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Madam President, will the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR THOMAS: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR BORRELLO: So, you know, so it's your definition -- and I realize it's -- you're reading the language here, but that this would not preclude them from raising the rent.

But what would be the period of time, then, before they would be able to raise the rent if they put in a keyless entry system?

SENATOR THOMAS: Through you, Madam President. This chapter amendment is specific for this -- this installation of a device, which they are not considering as improving anything within the structure.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Madam President, will the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR THOMAS: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR BORRELLO: So I think my last question here. You know, this certainly makes a little bit more sense if you are in a --

like a long-term lease, a one-year lease or whatever, that this wouldn't be considered a capital improvement.

But let's say would this apply to, you know, someone who does a short-term rental, a vacation rental? You know, I know a lot of people in that business, and they put a keyless entry system and change the code for every weekly rental. Would that -- how would that be -- how would they be impacted by that?

SENATOR THOMAS: Through -- through you, Madam President, it does say, one of the last revisions here says it cannot adversely impact the way anyone uses that property. So, you know, we already have that spelled out in the chapter amendment.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Madam President, on the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Borrello on the bill.

SENATOR BORRELLO: First of all, Senator Thomas, thank you again for your kicking off your session with a debate on this.

I think that -- you know, lookit. I didn't stand up here today to ask questions just

to hear myself talk, although I'm sure some of you think that's the case --

(Laughter.)

SENATOR BORRELLO: It's because there are serious questions about this. And it seems like a rather innocuous bill that maybe would help some folks out.

I just -- I fear that the way the language is in the bill, that it could be misinterpreted just to mean that if you put a keyless entry system on your piece of property, you can't raise the rent.

Now, we might all sit around here as very practical people and say, Oh, no, that's not the case. But, you know, there's a lot of folks out there that are in the business of getting paid for legal services that might disagree.

So that concerns me. I have supported this in the past, but due to the questions here, I'm going to be a no.

So thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

Seeing and hearing none, debate is closed. The Secretary will ring the bell.

Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, we've agreed to restore this bill to the noncontroversial calendar, please, and take it up that way.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Okay. Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the Laws of 2023.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 36, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Murray, O'Mara

and Walczyk.

Ayes, 56. Nays, 4.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

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

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

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, January 17th, at 11:00 a.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Wednesday, January 17th, at 11:00 a.m.

(Whereupon, the Senate adjourned at 4:57 p.m.)