

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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3  
4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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8  
9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10 February 5, 2024

11 3:10 p.m.

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13  
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 to please rise and  
5 recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: I'd like  
9 to invite the Reverend Dr. Sabu Varghese, of the  
10 India Christian Assembly in Levittown, New York,  
11 to deliver today's invocation.

12 Pastor.

13 REVEREND DR. VARGHESE: Let us  
14 pray.

15 Our Father who art in heaven,  
16 hallowed be Thy name. Your kingdom come, Your  
17 will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

18 As we gather here today, we ask that  
19 You give our lawmakers here wisdom from above for  
20 the doing of Your will, so that this state may  
21 shine with justice, righteousness and peace.

22 As we read in Romans 13:1, everyone  
23 must submit himself to the governing authorities,  
24 for there is no authority except which God  
25 has established. The authorities that exist have

1       been established by God.

2                   We acknowledge that Your divine  
3       authority reigns over our government and its  
4       people. We pray that these servants of Yours  
5       will be united in their decisions and always have  
6       the good of the citizens at the forefront of  
7       their minds. May Your people be blessed by their  
8       service to them.

9                   We thank You for lending Your ears  
10      to our prayers, because we have asked these  
11      things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and  
12      Savior. Amen.

13                   (Response of "Amen.")

14                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     Reading  
15      of the Journal.

16                   THE SECRETARY:     In Senate, Sunday,  
17      February 4, 2024, the Senate met pursuant to  
18      adjournment. The Journal of Saturday,  
19      February 3, 2024, was read and approved. On  
20      motion, the Senate adjourned.

21                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     Without  
22      objection, the Journal stands approved as read.

23                   Presentation of petitions.

24                   Messages from the Assembly.

25                   The Secretary will read.

1                   THE SECRETARY:     Senator O'Mara  
2     moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules,  
3     Assembly Bill Number 8567 and substitute it for  
4     the identical Senate Bill 8081, Third Reading  
5     Calendar 63.

6                   Senator Rivera moves to discharge,  
7     from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill  
8     Number 8522 and substitute it for the identical  
9     Senate Bill 8056, Third Reading Calendar 191.

10                  Senator Cleare moves to discharge,  
11     from the Committee on Rules, Assembly Bill  
12     Number 8604 and substitute it for the identical  
13     Senate Bill 8063, Third Reading Calendar 193.

14                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     So  
15     ordered.

16                  Messages from the Governor.

17                  Reports of standing committees.

18                  Reports of select committees.

19                  Communications and reports from  
20     state officers.

21                  Motions and resolutions.

22                  Senator Gianaris.

23                  SENATOR GIANARIS:     Good afternoon,  
24     Mr. President.

25                  Let's begin by taking up the reading

1 of the calendar.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
3 Secretary will read.

4 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 63,  
5 Assembly Print Number 8567, by Assemblymember  
6 Palmesano, an act to amend a chapter of the Laws  
7 of 2023.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the  
9 last section.

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

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the  
13 roll.

14 (The Secretary called the roll.)

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce  
16 the results.

17 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 50.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill  
19 is passed.

20 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
21 191, Assembly Bill Number 8522, by  
22 Assemblymember Paulin, an act to amend a chapter  
23 of the Laws of 2023.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the  
25 last section.

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

3 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the  
4 roll.

5 (The Secretary called the roll.)

6 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce  
7 the results.

8 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 50.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill  
10 is passed.

11 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
12 193, Assembly Bill Number 8604, by  
13 Assemblymember Clark, an act to amend the  
14 Judiciary Law.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the  
16 last section.

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

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the  
20 roll.

21 (The Secretary called the roll.)

22 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce  
23 the results.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 50.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill

1 is passed.

2 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
3 194, Senate Print 8067, by Senator Skoufis, an  
4 act to amend the Parks, Recreation and Historic  
5 Preservation Law.

6 SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Lay it  
8 aside.

9 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
10 197, Senate Print 8074, by Senator Krueger, an  
11 act to amend the General Construction Law.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the  
13 last section.

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

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 Number 197, those Senators voting in the  
24 negative are Senators Griffo, Helming, Lanza,  
25 Mattera, Oberacker, Ortt, Stec, Tedisco and Weik.

1                   Ayes, 43.   Nays, 9.

2                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    The bill  
3   is passed.

4                   THE SECRETARY:    Calendar Number  
5   204, Senate Print 3385A, by Senator Brisport, an  
6   act to establish a task force on educator  
7   diversity in New York State.

8                   SENATOR LANZA:    Lay it aside.

9                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    Lay it  
10  aside.

11                  THE SECRETARY:    Calendar Number  
12  258, Senate Print 1032, by Senator Jackson, an  
13  act to amend the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law.

14                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    Read the  
15  last section.

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

18                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    Call the  
19  roll.

20                  (The Secretary called the roll.)

21                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    Senator  
22  Jackson to explain his vote.

23                  SENATOR JACKSON:    Thank you.

24                  My colleagues, I stand in front of  
25  you today to advocate for this bill that enhances



1 the mission of the Amistad Commission. The bill  
2 number is 1032. It was established by the  
3 Legislature in 2005, the commission's role to be  
4 pivotal in integrating the history of chattel  
5 slavery into our state curriculum.

6 Despite its initial placement within  
7 the State Department, a 2016 report recommended a  
8 strategic shift, proposing its integration into  
9 the State Education Department, a move aligning  
10 more closely with its educational objectives.

11 Named after the historic 1839  
12 Amistad uprising led by enslaved Africans on a  
13 Spanish vessel, the commission embodies a story  
14 of courage and justice. This uprising, which  
15 remarkably led to their liberation by the U.S.  
16 Supreme Court, stands as a symbol of resistance  
17 and rights.

18 In times when influential figures  
19 and groups attempt to underplay the significance  
20 of Black history, the necessity to amplify this  
21 fundamental aspect of our past becomes even more  
22 pressing. It's a critical moment to reexamine  
23 and bolster the commission's mandate.

24 My bill, S1032, advocates for a  
25 logical and widely endorsed shift of the

1 Amistad Commission under the Department of  
2 Education purview. And this move not only  
3 enhances its effectiveness, but also aligns with  
4 our commitment to educate the next generation  
5 about the harrowing history and enduring impact  
6 of slavery upon systemic racism.

7 So I call upon my colleagues to  
8 support this pivotal legislation. Let us heed  
9 the timeless warning: "Those who do not learn  
10 history are doomed to repeat it." In unity,  
11 let's collectively ensure our educational system  
12 becomes a powerful tool for learning.

13 Thank you.

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

16 Announce the results.

17 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 56.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill  
19 is passed.

20 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
21 261, Senate Print 1192, by Senator Persaud, an  
22 act to amend the Education Law.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the  
24 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 261, voting in the negative are  
9 Senators Helming, Lanza, Oberacker and Ortt.

10 Ayes, 52. Nays, 4.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill  
12 is passed.

13 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
14 264, Senate Print 1988, by Senator Jackson, an  
15 act to amend the Education Law.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the  
17 last section.

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

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the  
21 roll.

22 (The Secretary called the roll.)

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
24 Jackson to explain his vote.

25 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you,

1 Mr. President.

2 My colleagues, I stand before you  
3 today to advocate for Bill 1988, a measure I'm  
4 proud to sponsor.

5 In the diverse landscape of  
6 New York's public schools, New York faces a  
7 teacher diversity problem. In public schools  
8 across New York the number of minority students  
9 significantly exceeds half the total student  
10 population, especially in central urban  
11 districts, where nine out of ten students are not  
12 white.

13 Being a teacher from an  
14 underrepresented racial or ethnic group can  
15 isolate, making it challenging for performance  
16 regarding the job effectively.

17 However, the percentage of educators  
18 of color has remained stagnant, despite a growing  
19 body of research demonstrating that a diverse  
20 teacher workforce has a positive impact on the  
21 entire student body.

22 This imbalance not only places an  
23 undue burden on these educators, who become  
24 inadvertent role models and mentors for students  
25 of color, but also leads to a feeling of

1 alienation among their peers.

2 Bill 1988 is a step toward  
3 rectifying this imbalance. Its aim is to provide  
4 resources for mentorship and networking  
5 opportunities for underrepresented teachers,  
6 enabling them to share best practices and  
7 experiences.

8 It directs NYSED, the New York State  
9 Education Department, to organize annual  
10 statewide and five regional conventions for  
11 underrepresented teachers. By doing so, we are  
12 allocating resources to enhance the support  
13 network for these teachers, ultimately improving  
14 the education provided to the diverse children of  
15 New York State.

16 So let's pave the way for greater  
17 diversity in New York State's educational system,  
18 and I hope you will join me in voting aye on this  
19 bill.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
21 Jackson to be recorded in the affirmative.

22 Senator May to explain her vote.

23 SENATOR MAY: Thank you,  
24 Mr. President.

25 I'm very pleased to support this

1 package of bills that are promoting recruitment  
2 and retention of underrepresented teachers.

3 I had the opportunity last year to  
4 visit a school in my district that has about --  
5 really, 99 percent of the students are Black or  
6 brown. And I went from class to class, and the  
7 teachers were working hard to engage the  
8 students. And the students were mostly paying  
9 attention.

10 But then we went into a classroom  
11 that was taught by a young Black teacher who  
12 literally had the kids in the palm of her hand.  
13 They -- they were so excited and wanted to answer  
14 every question. They were falling all over  
15 themselves to answer her questions.

16 And it was mostly because she was a  
17 very gifted teacher, but it was also clearly  
18 because she looked like them, and they could  
19 imagine being like her someday.

20 And it made me realize not just how  
21 important it is for kids to have role models that  
22 they can identify with in their classrooms, but  
23 how lonely the job of that teacher must have  
24 been.

25 And so this -- this effort to bring

1 teachers together all across the state so that  
2 they can support each other and help each other,  
3 recruit additional people who look like them --  
4 this is a really important effort for the  
5 teachers as well as for the students.

6 So I am proud to vote aye.

7 Thank you.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
9 May to be recorded in the affirmative.

10 Announce the results.

11 THE SECRETARY: In relation to  
12 Calendar 264, voting in the negative:  
13 Senator Lanza.

14 Ayes, 60. Nays, 1.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill  
16 is passed.

17 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
18 271, Senate Print 3408, by Senator Parker, an act  
19 to amend the Education Law.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the  
21 last section.

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

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the  
25 roll.

1 (The Secretary called the roll.)

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
3 Parker to explain his vote.

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

6 We know that education is not simply  
7 a key to open up the door of opportunity, but is  
8 a sledgehammer to knock that door of opportunity  
9 down. So I'm happy to support this package and  
10 want to thank the leadership for bringing this  
11 package of bills that actually addresses the  
12 issues around diversity and equity and inclusion,  
13 and by retaining teachers that in fact fit the  
14 model of not just looking like the people in the  
15 classroom but also providing a cultural  
16 competency that those students need in order for  
17 them to best learn.

18 This bill coming to the floor is a  
19 testament to the idea that the slow and the  
20 steady win the race. I was a cosponsor of this  
21 bill with now Congressman but at the time  
22 Assemblyman Espaillat back in 2005, when I first  
23 started in this body the Democratic Task Force on  
24 New Americans. And the idea is to create a space  
25 in which inclusion was a necessity.



1                   When you look at some school  
2     districts, especially in places like Queens, when  
3     you have literally schools where like 50, 60,  
4     70 languages -- more than that, okay, 90, 100  
5     languages being spoken in school districts and in  
6     individual schools, this bill is really necessary  
7     because it provides the kind of economic  
8     incentive and boost that teachers need in order  
9     to make sure that bilingual teachers are  
10    available in our schools.

11                  We must continue to push to make  
12    sure that we create every opportunity for our  
13    young people to be educated, because they are the  
14    future, and the better we educate them, the  
15    better our society will be going forward.

16                  I vote aye and encourage my  
17    colleagues to vote aye as well.

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

20                  Announce the results.

21                  THE SECRETARY:    In relation to  
22    Calendar Number 271, voting in the negative:  
23    Senator Oberacker.

24                  Ayes, 60.   Nays, 1.

25                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    The bill

1 is passed.

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

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: In that case,  
5 let's move to the reading of the controversial  
6 calendar.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
8 Secretary will ring the bell.

9 The Secretary will read.

10 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
11 194, Senate Print 8067, by Senator Skoufis, an  
12 act to amend the Parks, Recreation and Historic  
13 Preservation Law.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
15 Lanza, why do you rise?

16 SENATOR LANZA: Mr. President, I  
17 believe there's an amendment at the desk. I  
18 waive the reading of that amendment and ask that  
19 you recognize Senator Helming.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank  
21 you, Senator Lanza.

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

25 SENATOR LANZA: Accordingly,

1 Mr. President, I appeal the ruling of the chair  
2 and ask that Senator Helming be heard on the  
3 appeal.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
5 appeal has been made and recognized, and  
6 Senator Helming may be heard.

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

9 Mr. President, the proposed  
10 amendment is clearly germane as both the  
11 amendment and the bill before this chamber  
12 recognize the significant service and sacrifice  
13 of our veterans and propose eliminating fees for  
14 veterans.

15 The bill before the chamber would  
16 allow veterans and Gold Star families to visit  
17 public campsites, parks and other places of  
18 recreation free of charge. This is a fantastic  
19 proposal that I wholeheartedly support.

20 Veterans and their families make  
21 tremendous sacrifices to serve our country, and  
22 this bill is just the beginning of the steps this  
23 body should take to acknowledge their sacrifice.

24 I'm proposing an amendment that  
25 would further acknowledge our state's veterans

1 and provide another small benefit in return for  
2 their great sacrifice. This amendment, based on  
3 Senate Bill 3205, would eliminate sporting  
4 license fees for honorably discharged veterans  
5 with a 40 percent or greater service-connected  
6 disability.

7               Hunting, fishing and trapping are a  
8 way of life for many New Yorkers and offer  
9 residents the opportunity to experience our  
10 natural beauty and the abundance of our great  
11 state. In addition, these outdoor activities  
12 have been shown to improve mental health and to  
13 help our veterans cope with posttraumatic stress  
14 disorder.

15               A study by the United States  
16 Department of Veterans Affairs found that roughly  
17 7 percent of veterans will experience PTSD. Even  
18 more staggering, 29 percent of the veterans of  
19 the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will experience  
20 PTSD in their lifetime. In many cases PTSD can  
21 lead to a disability determination for veterans  
22 returning to civilian life.

23               This is a reminder for this body we  
24 should take every step possible to provide  
25 outlets and opportunities for veterans suffering

1 from service-related disabilities, to improve  
2 their mental health and take advantage of the  
3 many recreational opportunities throughout our  
4 state.

5 This is exactly what my proposed  
6 amendment would accomplish by removing the  
7 financial barrier that stands in the way for many  
8 veterans hoping to pursue hunting, fishing or  
9 trapping.

10 For these reasons, Mr. President, I  
11 strongly urge you to reconsider your ruling.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank  
13 you, Senator Helming.

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

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

19 (Response of "Aye.")

20 SENATOR LANZA: Show of hands.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: A show of  
22 hands has been requested and so ordered.

23 Announce the results.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 20.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The

1 ruling of the chair stands, and the bill-in-chief  
2 is before the house.

3 Read the last section.

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

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the  
8 roll.

9 (The Secretary called the roll.)

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce  
11 the results.

12 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill  
14 is passed.

15 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number  
16 204, Senate Print 3385A, by Senator Brisport, an  
17 act to establish a task force on educator  
18 diversity in New York State.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
20 Lanza, why do you rise?

21 SENATOR LANZA: Mr. President, I  
22 believe there's an amendment at the desk. I  
23 waive the reading of that amendment and ask that  
24 you recognize Senator Tedisco.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank

1       you, Senator Lanza.

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

5                   SENATOR LANZA:     Accordingly,  
6       Mr. President, I appeal the ruling of the chair  
7       and ask that Senator Tedisco be recognized to be  
8       heard on the appeal.

9                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     The  
10      appeal has been made and recognized, and  
11      Senator Tedisco may be heard.

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

14                  As I rise to appeal the ruling of  
15      the chair, it's clear the proposed amendment is  
16      germane to the bill at hand because the bill at  
17      hand creates an educational task force, which the  
18      amendment I have brought today also creates.

19                  This task force is centered on the  
20      impact of pandemic learning loss on our children.  
21      The pandemic forced children out of classroom and  
22      onto iPads. It put extra burdens on teachers,  
23      who had to come up with every avenue possible to  
24      educate students, many of whom were not engaged  
25      with their schooling as they would have been in a

1 classroom environment.

2 It increased pressure on parents,  
3 forcing them to take on the role of substitute  
4 teacher. It put masks on toddlers learning to  
5 speak.

6 The setback this has created for  
7 children of all ages is still unknown. We do  
8 know that many children, especially children of  
9 color, are behind the curve on the very basics of  
10 education. Math and reading scores are down, and  
11 we're losing a generation of talented students  
12 and kids.

13 We must take the steps necessary to  
14 identify how big the problem is and what we are,  
15 as a state, going to do to help those kids back  
16 on track. Instead of cutting money for schools,  
17 as the Governor is proposing, we should put money  
18 back into the budget and help these kids move  
19 forward. This is a start with that, creating a  
20 task force to help them help us move them  
21 forward.

22 For these reasons, I strongly urge  
23 you to reconsider your ruling.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank  
25 you, Senator.



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

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

6 (Response of "Aye.")

7 SENATOR LANZA: Show of hands.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: A show of  
9 hands has been requested and so ordered.

10 Announce the results.

11 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 20.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
13 ruling of the chair stands, and the bill-in-chief  
14 is before the house.

15 Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, why  
16 do you rise?

17 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:  
18 Thank you, Mr. President. I was wondering if the  
19 sponsor would yield for a few questions.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the  
21 sponsor yield?

22 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
24 sponsor yields.

25 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

1 Thank you.

2 Through you, Mr. President, I'd like  
3 to know if the term "educators" is defined in  
4 this bill.

5 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,  
6 Mr. President, "educators" is self-explanatory.

7 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:  
8 Through you, Mr. President, will the sponsor  
9 continue to yield.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the  
11 sponsor yield?

12 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
14 sponsor yields.

15 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:  
16 Will the task force be permitted -- and will it  
17 be within the scope of the task force -- to look  
18 at administrators in addition to educators?

19 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,  
20 Mr. President, the task force is referred to as a  
21 task force on educator diversity.

22 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:  
23 Through you, Mr. President, will the sponsor  
24 continue to yield.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the

1 sponsor yield?

2 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
4 sponsor yields.

5 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:  
6 Thank you.

7 Will this bill be limited to  
8 educators in grades K through 12, or will it also  
9 apply to colleges and universities?

10 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,  
11 Mr. President, this bill does not put  
12 stipulations on the grade levels.

13 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:  
14 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the  
16 sponsor yield?

17 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
19 sponsor yields.

20 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: In  
21 light of what has gone on at CUNY with the senior  
22 leadership, I'd like to know if the sponsor is  
23 aware of the Jewish representation on the CUNY  
24 senior leadership board.

25 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,

1 Mr. President, I don't have that in front of me.

2 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

3 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the  
5 sponsor yield?

6 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
8 sponsor yields.

9 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: So  
10 just last spring it was revealed that the two  
11 Jewish remaining members on CUNY's board were  
12 resigning or removed, leaving no Jewish members  
13 on the 80-member leadership board.

14 And I'm wondering if this task force  
15 could evaluate the representation of groups like  
16 Jewish educators in the confines of their task  
17 force.

18 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,  
19 Mr. President, this task force examines a  
20 comprehensive study on the presence of educator  
21 diversity, state actions taken to promote  
22 educator diversity, and how New York State can  
23 encourage new initiatives to enhance or promote  
24 educator diversity.

25 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

1 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the  
3 sponsor yield?

4 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
6 sponsor yields.

7 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: So  
8 is it the sponsor's position, then, that Jewish  
9 educators are not considered in the concept of  
10 diversity?

11 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,  
12 Mr. President. No, I did not say that.

13 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:  
14 Will the sponsor continue to yield.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the  
16 sponsor yield?

17 SENATOR BRISPORT: Yes.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The  
19 sponsor yields.

20 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: Is  
21 the task force permitted to look at the  
22 representation of Jewish educators in the scope  
23 of their task force?

24 SENATOR BRISPORT: Through you,  
25 Mr. President, there is nothing that prevents the

1 task force from examining that in the bill.

2 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

3 Thank you.

4 On the bill.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
6 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick on the bill.

7 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: In  
8 light of what's gone on since the attack on  
9 October 7th -- and in recent months we've seen an  
10 escalation in antisemitic activity, and we have  
11 to address it at the basic level of our  
12 educational system, because the students are  
13 getting their cues and their guidance from  
14 educators and administrators.

15 This task force is looking at  
16 diversity representation. And I submit to this  
17 body that we should be looking at the  
18 representation of Jewish representatives in our  
19 educational system in order to deal with the  
20 antisemitic problem that we are faced with.

21 So this bill is certainly well on  
22 the right path to addressing issues, but I think  
23 it could be expanded so that we address the other  
24 issues that we know that we're facing.

25 Thank you. I will be voting aye.

1                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    Are there  
2   any other Senators wishing to be heard?

3                   Seeing and hearing none, debate is  
4   now closed.

5                   The Secretary will ring the bell.

6                   Read the last section.

7                   THE SECRETARY:    Section 4.  This  
8   act shall take effect immediately.

9                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    Call the  
10   roll.

11                   (The Secretary called the roll.)

12                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:    Senator  
13   Mayer to explain her vote.

14                   SENATOR MAYER:    Thank you,  
15   Mr. President.  I appreciate the opportunity.

16                   And thank you to Senator Brisport  
17   and my colleagues for voting for this bill.

18                   And I just feel it's necessary to  
19   remind my colleagues -- and I appreciate the  
20   conversation that you had -- that we're not in a  
21   zero-sum issue here about diversity and equity.

22                   I obviously share my colleague's  
23   great concern about issues regarding Jewish  
24   educators and Jewish students, particularly in  
25   higher ed.  And I'm sure I'll be working with our

1 chair of Higher Ed on these issues as they  
2 continue to be real challenges throughout our  
3 state and the nation.

4 But at the same time, that doesn't  
5 mean that it isn't appropriate to have a task  
6 force on educator diversity. As someone who's  
7 traveled around our K through 12 schools  
8 throughout the state, we know the importance, as  
9 Senator Brisport mentioned, of having a diverse  
10 educator pipeline. And in fact the teachers'  
11 union has endorsed a pipeline as well, because  
12 this is an effective way for us to reach a  
13 growingly diverse body of students.

14 So it's not one versus the other.  
15 Our job here is to advance equity, equality,  
16 opportunity and education for all. And I'm  
17 confident we can do that.

18 I'll be voting aye and encourage my  
19 colleagues to do the same.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator  
21 Mayer to record her vote in the affirmative.

22 Senator Bailey to explain his vote.

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

25 Again, thank you, Senator Brisport,



1       for this legislation. Senator  
2       Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick certainly illuminated some  
3       important topics.

4               But if you can't see it, you can't  
5       be it. I went to public schools my entire life,  
6       and the first time I had a Black male teacher, I  
7       was a junior in high school.

8               So if we're talking about diversity  
9       and talking about people that live within certain  
10      communities -- and again, it's important to make  
11      sure that all communities can see individuals  
12      that look like them and sound like them and where  
13      they're from.

14              To do that, I just want to make sure  
15      that we illuminate that fact and show that,  
16      again, you know, a public school system in a  
17      majority Black neighborhood where I went to  
18      school, I did not have a Black male teacher until  
19      I was a junior in high school.

20              So programs like this are critically  
21      important to promote in STEM and try to trigger  
22      diversity. And diversity is not monolithic by  
23      any stretch of the imagination, but diversity is  
24      critically important.

25              And for those reasons I'll be voting

1       aye, Mr. President. Thank you.

2                   ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     Senator  
3       Bailey to be recorded in the affirmative.

4                   Announce the results.

5                   THE SECRETARY:     In relation to  
6       Calendar 204, those Senators voting in the  
7       negative are Senators Lanza, Oberacker, O'Mara  
8       and Ortt.

9                   Ayes, 57. Nays, 4.

10                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     The bill  
11       is passed.

12                  Senator Gianaris, that completes the  
13       reading of the controversial calendar.

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

16                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     There is  
17       no further business at the desk.

18                  SENATOR GIANARIS:     I move to  
19       adjourn until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 6th, at  
20       3:00 p.m.

21                  ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY:     On  
22       motion, the Senate stands adjourned until  
23       Tuesday, February 6th, at 3:00 p.m.

24                  (Whereupon, at 3:39 p.m., the Senate  
25       adjourned.)