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NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

February 6, 2024

3:18 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

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

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: 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 PERSAUD: Bishop
9 Philip Elliott, of the Antioch Baptist Church of
10 Hempstead, New York, will deliver's today's
11 invocation.

12 BISHOP ELLIOTT: God, I stand in the
13 gap in this moment of prayer for the leaders in
14 our community, our state, our region, our
15 country, and especially for those whom You have
16 raised to exact the business of our fair State of
17 New York.

18 I ask Your blessings upon every
19 person and position that has been appointed or
20 elected.

21 I pray that You, O God, would sever
22 all cords that would cause principalities,
23 powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and
24 spiritual wickedness in high places, to control
25 the positions and offices of our generation.

1 Father, give us -- and we thank You
2 for that -- godly leaders, who will carry on the
3 heritage of the dedication of our nation and our
4 beloved state.

5 Lord, let our leaders be guided by
6 the voice of their conscience, and grant that
7 they may never veer off from the foundation of
8 the essence of this nation.

9 We thank You that You have given us
10 leaders who will cause the families of our state
11 and communities to be blessed.

12 Lord, let Your glory be declared
13 among the people, and let the healing waters flow
14 in every village, every community, every hamlet,
15 every city, every town, every municipality, and
16 every citizen or stranger within the gates of our
17 great State of New York.

18 I pray that the leaders of this
19 New York State Senate will submit their rule to
20 the rule of law and to the reign of Your will,
21 O God. I pray that the government and peace of
22 God will bring continual increase to our country
23 and our state. Let every veil of deception be
24 removed. And as deception is removed, allow laws
25 to be passed where our children may have hope for

1 all their future.

2 And Lord, grant that our economy
3 will be healed through decisions made in these
4 very chambers, so that people will be able to
5 build affordable houses and inhabit them, plant
6 vineyards and eat the fruit of them, and enjoy
7 the work of their hands.

8 Hear our prayer, O Lord. Hear our
9 prayer, O Lord. Incline Thine ear to us and
10 grant us Thy shalom, peace.

11 Amen.

12 (Response of "Amen.")

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Reading
14 of the Journal.

15 THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Monday,
16 February 5, 2024, the Senate met pursuant to
17 adjournment. The Journal of Sunday, February 4,
18 2024, was read and approved. On motion, the
19 Senate adjourned.

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

22 Presentation of petitions.

23 Messages from the Assembly.

24 The Secretary will read.

25 THE SECRETARY: Senator Mannion

1 moves to discharge, from the Committee on Rules,
2 Assembly Bill Number 8530 and substitute it for
3 the identical Senate Bill 8077, Third Reading
4 Calendar 198.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: So
6 ordered.

7 Messages from the Governor.

8 Reports of standing committees.

9 Reports of select committees.

10 Communications and reports from
11 state officers.

12 Motions and resolutions.

13 Senator Gianaris.

14 SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adopt
15 the Resolution Calendar, with the exception of
16 Resolutions 1689, 1753, 1765 and 1769.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: All
18 those in favor of adopting the Resolution
19 Calendar, with the exception of Resolutions 1689,
20 1753, 1769 and 1765, please signify by saying
21 aye.

22 (Response of "Aye.")

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed,
24 nay.

25 (No response.)

1 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
2 Resolution Calendar is adopted.

3 Senator Gianaris.

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
5 we're going to begin with previously adopted
6 Resolution 1747, by Leader Stewart-Cousins.
7 Please read that resolution in its entirety and
8 recognize Senator Parker to speak on the
9 resolution.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
11 Secretary will read.

12 THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1747, by
13 Senator Stewart-Cousins, memorializing Governor
14 Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 2024 as
15 Black History Month in the State of New York.

16 "WHEREAS, Black History Month,
17 previously known as Negro History Week, was
18 founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, and was first
19 celebrated on February 1, 1926; since 1976, it
20 has become a nationally recognized month-long
21 celebration, held each year during the month of
22 February to acknowledge and pay tribute to
23 African-Americans neglected by both society and
24 the history books; and

25 "WHEREAS, The month of February

1 observes the rich and diverse heritage of our
2 great state and nation and encourages the
3 celebration of Black History Month to provide a
4 continuing opportunity for all people in the
5 United States to learn from the past, and
6 understand the factors that have shaped and
7 guided the course of our present-day experiences;
8 and

9 "WHEREAS, Black History Month seeks
10 to emphasize that Black history is American
11 history; and

12 "WHEREAS, Black History Month is a
13 time to reflect on the struggles and victories of
14 African-Americans throughout our country's
15 history and to recognize their numerous valuable
16 contributions to the protection of our democratic
17 society in war and in peace; and

18 "WHEREAS, Some African-American
19 pioneers whose many accomplishments, all which
20 took place during the month of February, went
21 unnoticed, as well as numerous symbolic events in
22 February that deserve to be memorialized
23 include: John Sweat Rock, a noted Boston lawyer
24 who became the first African-American admitted to
25 argue before the U.S. Supreme Court on

1 February 1, 1865, and the first African-American
2 to be received on the floor of the U.S. House of
3 Representatives; Jonathan Jasper Wright, the
4 first African-American to hold a major judicial
5 position, who was elected to the South Carolina
6 Supreme Court on February 1, 1870; President
7 Abraham Lincoln submitted the proposed 13th
8 Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, abolishing
9 slavery, to the states for ratification on
10 February 1, 1865; civil rights protester Jimmie
11 Lee Jackson died from wounds inflicted during a
12 protest on February 26, 1965, leading to the
13 historic Selma, Alabama, civil rights
14 demonstrations, including Bloody Sunday, in which
15 600 demonstrators, including Martin Luther King,
16 Jr., were attacked by police; Autherine J. Lucy
17 became the first African-American student to
18 attend the University of Alabama on February 3,
19 1956; she was expelled three days later 'for her
20 own safety' in response to threats from a mob; in
21 1992, Autherine Lucy Foster graduated from the
22 University of Alabama with a master's degree in
23 education, the same day her daughter, Grazia
24 Foster, graduated with a bachelor's degree in
25 corporate finance; the Negro Baseball League was

1 founded on February 3, 1920; Jack Johnson, the
2 first African-American World Heavyweight Boxing
3 Champion, won his first title on February 3,
4 1903; and Reginald F. Lewis, born on December 7,
5 1942, in Baltimore, Maryland, received his law
6 degree from Harvard Law School in 1968, and was a
7 partner in Murphy, Thorpes & Lewis, the first
8 Black law firm on Wall Street, and in 1989 he
9 became president and CEO of TLC Beatrice
10 International Food Company, the largest
11 Black-owned business in the United States; and
12 "WHEREAS, Furthermore, the impact of
13 African-American contributions to the moral
14 fabric and history of this great nation are
15 ever-growing and unprecedented; more recently, on
16 January 20, 2009, Barack Obama became the first
17 Black President of the United States, earning his
18 wife, Michelle Obama, the same distinction in her
19 role as First Lady; Lloyd J. Austin has the
20 unique distinction of being the first Black
21 United States Secretary of Defense, sworn in on
22 January 22, 2021; Ketanji Brown Jackson made
23 history in her becoming the first Black woman to
24 serve on the United States Supreme Court, on
25 June 30, 2022; and

1 "WHEREAS, More notable
2 African-American trailblazers who serve as a
3 testament to the success, growth, and strength of
4 our nation are: Carole Gist, the first Black
5 Miss USA of 1990; Toni Morrison, the first Black
6 person to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in
7 1993; Robert Stanton, the first Black director
8 of the National Park Service in 1997; Venus
9 Williams, the first Black woman to be ranked
10 number-one in tennis in the United States in
11 2002; Sophia Danenberg, reaching unprecedented
12 heights, was the first Black woman to reach the
13 peak of Mount Everest in 2006; Cheryl Boone
14 Isaacs, who became the first Black president of
15 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
16 in 2013; Paulette Brown, the first Black woman to
17 become the American Bar Association president in
18 2015; Dr. Carla Hayden, the first Black
19 Librarian of Congress in 2016; Jennifer King, the
20 first full-time Black woman NFL coach, heading
21 the Washington Commanders in 2020; Maya Angelou,
22 the first Black woman to appear on U.S. currency
23 in 2022; and Sika Henry, the first Black woman to
24 be recognized as a professional triathlete in the
25 United States in 2021, and inductee of the

1 National Black Distance Running Hall of Fame in
2 2022, all of whom encompass the many more
3 powerful Black individuals who pushed through
4 countless obstacles to earn the respect of their
5 peers and this great state and nation; and

6 "WHEREAS, In recognition of the vast
7 contributions of African-Americans, a joyful
8 month-long celebration is held across New York
9 State and across the United States with many
10 commemorative events to honor and display the
11 cultural heritage of African-Americans; and

12 "WHEREAS, This Legislative Body
13 commends the African-American community for
14 preserving, for future generations, its
15 centuries-old traditions that benefit us all and
16 add to the color and beauty of the tapestry which
17 is our American society; now, therefore, be it

18 "RESOLVED, That this Legislative
19 Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize
20 Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 2024
21 as Black History Month in the State of New York;
22 and be it further

23 "RESOLVED, That copies of this
24 resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to
25 the Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State

1 of New York, and to the events commemorating
2 Black History Month throughout New York State."

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
4 Parker on the resolution.

5 SENATOR PARKER: Thank you,
6 Madam President.

7 I rise today to give a little bit of
8 a conversation that we should be having not just
9 during the month of February, but throughout the
10 year, around Black history.

11 I want to begin by thanking the
12 leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, for bringing this
13 forth and always bringing her leadership and
14 being a great exemplar of Black history within
15 the midst of this august body.

16 We all know that -- and in past
17 years I've gotten up and had the privilege of
18 speaking on this resolution, and we've talked
19 about Negro History Week that was created in 1926
20 by Carter G. Woodson that has now evolved into
21 what we now celebrate as Black History Month or
22 African-American History Month.

23 This is not just a month that is
24 celebrated in New York State, but around this
25 nation. And not just around this nation, but in

1 about 15 or 16 countries around the world,
2 including Canada and Mexico, that have adopted
3 some form of Black History Month.

4 Carter G. Woodson, the second Black
5 graduate of Harvard -- everybody remembers W.E.B.
6 Du Bois, but when you're the second guy, you kind
7 of fade into the ether. One of my favorite
8 things about Carter G. Woodson is that he was a
9 teacher. He wasn't a college professor. He
10 wasn't like, you know, somebody who did something
11 grand. He went to Harvard and then went back to
12 his community and like taught high school.

13 And an amazing exemplar of what is
14 important both about this history and about the
15 community. Right? That at the base of
16 understanding African-American history is the
17 idea of education.

18 And even at a time when people of
19 African descent were brought to the shores of the
20 Americas and they were banned and forbidden, by
21 penalty of death, to learn and to read, they read
22 anyway. And they taught themselves and they had
23 other folks help them learn how to read and to
24 write. And you develop people like, you know,
25 Phyllis Wheatley and David Walker, who become,

1 you know, significant writers even in the early
2 1700s because of this thirst around knowledge.

3 February was chosen not because it's
4 the shortest month -- it was actually chosen
5 because there's two important dates that happened
6 in February. One was the birth of Lincoln on the
7 12th, and the other was the birth of Frederick
8 Douglass on the 14th. Right? And they were
9 actually -- and by the way, I know everybody's
10 like, On Valentine's Day? Frederick Douglass was
11 born before Valentine's Day. There was no
12 Valentine's Day. The 14th was his birthday.

13 And there was actually a number of
14 celebrations in African-American communities in
15 the colonies during that time around Douglass's
16 birthday. Right? Because he was not big -- you
17 know, he's been supplanted to a large degree in
18 current times by Martin Luther King, the Reverend
19 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. But at his time he
20 was -- he was King and Sharpton and those people
21 all in one. Right? And his birth was something
22 that was celebrated in a real significant way in
23 the country.

24 I also always want to bring the
25 point that African-American history doesn't begin

1 in 1619 when the first ships bring African people
2 onto the shores of Virginia. That, you know,
3 that there is literally thousands of years of the
4 history of people of African descent. And we
5 kind of focus, during this time, on the history
6 of African people here in the Americas, right?
7 But that history really is a longer history.

8 And at times I like to point people
9 to a book that you should check out -- there's
10 actually two. One is by Larone Bennett Jr.
11 called Before the Mayflower. Right?

12 And another is Ayi Kwei Armah's book
13 called Two Thousand Seasons. And in that book he
14 documents the length of time that African people
15 have been walking on this planet and had
16 accomplished great things. And not accomplished
17 great things because they were better than
18 anybody else. They accomplished great things
19 because they were first.

20 That in fact, if there is -- you
21 know, I don't know what people's faiths are here,
22 but if there is a Garden of Eden, that Garden of
23 Eden exists on the continent of Africa.

24 They say that the first people,
25 right, that we see -- not just the first

1 humanoids, but the first people, the first homo
2 sapien sapiens -- which we are, right,
3 anthropologically, right -- are found in a valley
4 that they say, you know, sits beneath the
5 Mountain of the Moon, which is Kilimanjaro.
6 Right? It was never Mount Kilimanjaro.

7 Kilimanjaro means "Mountain of the Moon." Right?

8 And so it's in that valley that they
9 believe that the first people, the Khoi people or
10 the San people, were the first groups of folks
11 that you begin to understand as human beings. So
12 to the degree that there is an Adam and Eve and
13 there is a garden, that is where the garden
14 exists at.

15 And so in -- so just through African
16 culture, which becomes the precursor for the
17 African people which we have descended from, we
18 have amazing empires, Madam President. You have
19 the Empire of Kemet that people may know as
20 ancient Egypt. You have the Empire of Kush that
21 comes out of Nubia. You have the Mali Empire,
22 the Zimbabwe Empire, right? Understand that the
23 country of Zimbabwe is named after the empire
24 that preceded it. The Empire of Mali also,
25 again, named -- the country of Mali named after

1 the empire that preceded it. The Empire of
2 Benin. The Zulu Empire. The Songhai Empire.
3 The Ghana Empire. You know, early on, after the
4 imperialization of what was called the Gold
5 Coast, it becomes Ghana. Named after, again, the
6 Empire of Ghana.

7 And so we in this time during this
8 month, we lean on the concept of "sankofa."
9 Right? So sankofa, in the language that comes
10 out of Ghana, West Africa, amongst the people
11 called the Twi, you have a set of symbols called
12 the Adinkra symbols. And one of those symbols is
13 the symbol of a bird looking back at itself. And
14 the symbol literally means "go fetch."

15 It means that for you to know where
16 you're going, you have to know where you've been.
17 And so you go back and you look at what your
18 ancestors have done.

19 And so this moment, for particularly
20 people of African descent, becomes a time in
21 which we in fact look back and remember those who
22 have come before us -- both in our families and
23 in our communities, but also in the larger
24 society -- that have given birth to our ability
25 to be here at this place and at this time.

1 And we remember those who went
2 through the great Maafa. And if you have not
3 heard of that before, it is the African
4 Holocaust. Right? We're over -- they believe
5 something like 200 million people were lost
6 during the century of enslavement of African
7 people and then being brought across from the
8 African continent.

9 And so we remember those nameless
10 people who decided that -- that simply died on
11 the voyage or decided that they were going to
12 fight and were killed in resistance. Or just
13 simply said that they would not be prisoners and
14 they jumped overboard and gave their fate to the
15 ocean.

16 That in this moment, this month and
17 this celebration of African-American history
18 becomes particularly critical because of the
19 retrenchment that we see around the country.
20 That there is in fact a determined and
21 intentional attempt to wipe out the history of
22 African people and of African-Americans. And
23 it's not one that we can allow.

24 But if you know your history, you
25 should know that past is prologue. And so when

1 you read W.E.B. Du Bois's book, right, Black
2 Reconstruction, and you read what happened when
3 they started -- when African-Americans are
4 released from bondage and start running for
5 office and start owning property and start
6 running businesses and getting married -- that in
7 fact this is what happens when you have Black
8 advancement, that you then have white
9 retrenchment. Or an attempt, at least, at white
10 retrenchment. Right?

11 And so those of us of good heart
12 must understand and fight against the -- the --
13 you know, the forces of evil. I don't know how
14 to put it any other way. Because you have to be
15 truly evil to literally dismiss other people's
16 humanity. And that when you erase people's
17 history, that's exactly the activity that you're
18 involved in, is erasing other people's humanity.

19 And that understanding that this
20 whole movement around white supremacy or what you
21 want to call racism was a sociological device,
22 Madam President, that was literally created to
23 justify the enslavement of African people.
24 Because those first people who took -- you know,
25 who brought African people from the shores of

1 West Africa knew who they were. They knew who
2 they were. There was no -- there was no, We
3 don't think these people are smart or educated,
4 we don't think that they're human beings, we
5 don't think that they're the same people who
6 have -- literally we created here in America the
7 whole field of study of anthropology that
8 literally got created in order to justify
9 enslavement of African people. Right?

10 The first anthropological studies
11 they used to use they used to call cranial
12 capacity tests. And they would take a skull that
13 they claimed was a white skull and a skull that
14 they claimed was a Black skull and they would
15 fill it with beans. And then they would count
16 the beans and say, Oh, you know, the white skull
17 held more beans. That means it had greater
18 cranial capacity, and that means a greater
19 intelligence. And the Black one had less, and so
20 that means it had less intelligence. And that
21 proves that these were essentially a different
22 species. Right?

23 And you look and see that they used
24 different beans. They used actually smaller
25 beans in the white skull, and so of course there

1 were more.

2 Outside of the fact that we also
3 know scientifically that cranial capacity has
4 nothing to do with intelligence. Right? A lot
5 of people walking around here with big heads and
6 not that many brains.

7 (Laughter.)

8 SENATOR PARKER: Right?

9 And so, you know, we look at, you
10 know, the work of anthropology historically and
11 understand what it's about.

12 Now, conversely, the field of
13 sociology was actually created by W.E.B. Du Bois,
14 the first Black Ph.D. graduate from Harvard.
15 Right? And he writes the first sociological
16 examination we've ever seen, which is an
17 examination of the Philadelphia Negro. Right?
18 And that becomes the basis of literally
19 sociology. So anybody who was a sociology major,
20 say "You're welcome" to Dr. Du Bois. Right?

21 These understandings of who we are
22 as people is critical for us, because it dictates
23 how we interact with each other. And that all of
24 us -- black, white, blue, green -- all need to
25 understand each other's history. And today we

1 begin here because this becomes a jumping-off
2 point for the access for other people to gain
3 rights in understanding their history and
4 creating space for other folks to step up.
5 Right?

6 You don't get Puerto Rican studies
7 unless you have Black studies. You don't get,
8 you know, LGBTQ+ studies without Black history.
9 You don't get women's studies without Black
10 studies. Right? All these things kind of --
11 they exist in tandem and amongst one another.

12 And so that those of us who stand in
13 this moment and say, Oh, they're just stopping
14 black history from being taught -- you're next.
15 Because they're not going to stop at just erasing
16 the humanity of Black people. That those who
17 don't think that everybody's deserving, that
18 everyone who is deserving of the resources of the
19 state or the society, who think that they're the
20 only ones who should have it and that there's not
21 enough, are not going to stop at just erasing
22 Black people's humanity.

23 And so we must bond together and
24 understand that if you know nothing else about
25 Black history, that it is an independent history.

1 Black history is American history. Part of what
2 you heard in the resolution are numbers of people
3 who have, you know, contributed to the American
4 experience and experiment. Right? And so that
5 must become an important part of how we move
6 forward.

7 In past years I have talked about
8 just the history of this great state and how even
9 in this moment we are living in a virtual
10 Wakanda, with a Black Lieutenant Governor, Black
11 heads of the two houses of the State Legislature,
12 a Black Attorney General, a Black Chief Judge.
13 More Black women are serving right this moment in
14 the State Legislature than have served in any
15 other state legislature in the history of the
16 United States.

17 Not to talk about the city, where we
18 have now the second Black mayor, the first Black
19 woman to be Speaker of the City Council. Right?
20 You talk about Darcel Clark, you know, first
21 African-American woman to be a DA in the State of
22 New York. Right? Huge important things. You
23 know, Alvin Bragg, who is the first
24 African-American to be a DA in Manhattan. Right?

25 These moments are historical. And

1 many of my colleagues now who are serving in
2 committees, oftentimes you are the first person
3 of color, sometimes the first non-male, you know,
4 to be in these positions.

5 And so all those histories are
6 connected. Right? And so in this moment, I ask
7 people who don't feel like they're connected
8 because they think that, I'm not Black, that
9 you're connected to that history in some way.
10 There's something that you are doing, something
11 that you're involved in, something you're engaged
12 in has been made possible by the contributions of
13 people of African descent. And as you get deep
14 in that, you'll see that that has led to other
15 people who have also been contributing to our
16 society.

17 And so today, as I take my seat, the
18 theme that we have spoke about this year more
19 than anything else has been the issue of -- has
20 been the categories of arts and culture. And so
21 we have made a attempt to kind of uplift the
22 names of those who have been engaged in that
23 area. People like Jean-Michel Basquiat. Right?
24 A Haitian artist from Brooklyn. We've got to
25 start with Basquiat because, you know -- just for

1 no reason. If you don't know Basquiat, get on it
2 twice before you all blow it once.

3 James Baldwin, novelist, playwright,
4 essayist, poet, activist.

5 Oprah Winfrey. I mean, how do you
6 get more iconic and historical than somebody like
7 Oprah Winfrey, who's a media mogul, actress, talk
8 show host, television producer, philanthropist.

9 Zora Neale Hurston. Author,
10 anthropologist, filmmaker. If you don't know who
11 Zora Neale Hurston is and you like Alice Walker,
12 you've got to check out Zora Neale Hurston.
13 Because Alice Walker, you know, essentially
14 adopts her style and extends the legacy of Zora
15 through her work. And if you've seen The Color
16 Purple, that way that they engage in dialect
17 comes out of Zora's work as a historian.

18 Zora Neale Hurston also wrote for
19 the Black Star News, which is the newspaper that
20 Garvey created when he created the UNIA, the
21 Universal Negro Improvement Association, the
22 largest organization of Black people in the
23 history of the world, actually.

24 You have Langston Hughes, who was a
25 poet, social activist, novelist, playwright,

1 columnist. One of my favorite writers. You
2 should check out his writing about a character
3 called Simple. Simple, by Langston Hughes,
4 really good.

5 Sidney Poitier, who was an actor,
6 film director, activist. Carl Weathers, who we
7 recently lost, said he became an actor after
8 being an NFL linebacker for the Raiders, became
9 an actor after receiving his degree in drama
10 because of the work of Sidney Poitier, and
11 particularly in The Defiant Ones. Later on Carl
12 Weathers, who was also African-American, if you
13 don't know who Carl Weathers is -- you know, you
14 should know. Apollo Creed, Rocky. You all seen
15 that, familiar with that movie?

16 SENATOR GIANARIS: He was also in
17 The Mandalorian.

18 SENATOR PARKER: Also in
19 Mandalorian, yes.

20 But Carl Weathers actually gets to
21 play the same role as Sidney Poitier in a remake
22 of The Defiant Ones. Right? So amazing piece
23 there.

24 Jacob Lawrence, who's an amazing
25 painter, somebody you should check out if you are

1 into artwork.

2 Miles Davis, influential jazz
3 trumpeter, band leader and composer. He was the
4 Jay-Z of my father's time. My father like always
5 talked about Miles Davis. And at that time jazz
6 wasn't what it is right now. Right? It was, you
7 know, Cordell, like when we were coming up, what
8 hip-hop was. Like you'd go somewhere, like a
9 small place, and there'd be, you know, one guy
10 rapping. Like, you know, he'd just be there and
11 there would be like a band and like 10 chairs,
12 right, 20 chairs. You know, it wasn't the way we
13 think of Miles Davis now.

14 But that music has been influential
15 in all of our lives, as we talk about jazz as one
16 of the only, you know, truly American musical art
17 forms.

18 August Wilson, who's a black
19 playwright who's written and composed a number of
20 real significant dramatic pieces.

21 Misty Copeland, who's a ballerina
22 for the American Ballet Theatre.

23 You know, in this time as we think
24 through how we're going to celebrate this month,
25 find a book, find a play. Right? Listen to some

1 music from your favorite black artist. This is
2 the moment to bask in it. You know, because this
3 month everybody gets to be part of Black history.
4 Even you, Andy Lanza.

5 (Laughter.)

6 SENATOR PARKER: And so,
7 Madam President, I want to thank you for the
8 opportunity.

9 I want us to remember that,
10 particularly those of us who are people of
11 African descent, that we are the people who were
12 here the day before yesterday. Right? And we're
13 going to be the people who're going to be here
14 the day after tomorrow. And that historical line
15 may not be broken if we continue to live and love
16 and laugh with one another.

17 Thank you so much.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
19 you.

20 Senator Webb on the resolution.

21 SENATOR WEBB: Thank you,
22 Madam President.

23 I want to thank Senate Majority
24 Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for bringing this
25 resolution forward, and Governor Hochul for

1 proclaiming the month of February as Black
2 History Month in the State of New York.

3 So I have the privilege of
4 representing the Southern Tier in the
5 State Senate, and I am proud to celebrate not
6 only Black History Month but a legacy of courage,
7 resilience, and the unwavering spirit of
8 countless African-American individuals from my
9 district who have greatly contributed to our
10 state's role in Black History Month and also our
11 country.

12 So I'm from Binghamton originally,
13 and we recently celebrated the inception of the
14 Freedom Trail, which was started by Dr. Anne
15 Bailey and Dr. Sharon Bryant, two educators who
16 are also Black women. This was their brain
17 child, to serve as a 365-day-a-year educational
18 reminder and experience with respect to the
19 importance of Harriet Tubman and our collective
20 human story here in America.

21 And so the fact that it's in my
22 district in Binghamton, which folks may not be
23 aware of, this trail is a two-mile trail. And
24 it's more than a pathway, it is a journey through
25 time, marked by the courage of numerous

1 individuals who worked to advance Black history,
2 which is also part of American history.

3 And where our City Hall stands in
4 Binghamton, it was once a location on the
5 Underground Railroad that aided escaped slaves
6 and embedded the essence of freedom in the very
7 soil of our city.

8 And this trail, as I mentioned
9 before, which was founded by Binghamton
10 University in 2019, continues to lift up the
11 importance of addressing racial disparities that
12 we collectively work to create and foster an
13 inclusive environment.

14 Also from Binghamton we draw
15 inspiration from Frances M. Beal, a luminary in
16 the realms of feminism, racial justice and peace.
17 Her seminal work, Double Jeopardy: To Be Black
18 and Female, is not merely literature, it's a
19 blueprint for understanding the intricate
20 interplay of race, class and gender, a narrative
21 that resonates with the struggles and triumphs of
22 countless individuals.

23 Across my district in Ithaca, we are
24 reminded of the profound impact of Alex Haley.
25 Some of you are familiar with him. He was born

1 there, and his pen etched the iconic books *Roots*
2 and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which are
3 vivid testimonies of our collective journey
4 marked by perseverance in the fight for justice
5 and freedom.

6 And lastly, in Cortland, the legacy
7 of Abraham Lincoln DeMond shines as a beacon of
8 hope and achievement. He was the first Black
9 graduate of the Cortland Normal School, now known
10 as SUNY Cortland. His eloquence and advocacy
11 resonate through his seminal oration: *The Negro*
12 *Element in American Life*, a treasure rightfully
13 enshrined in the Library of Congress.

14 I was proud to celebrate the
15 inaugural Abraham Lincoln DeMond Day in 2023 and
16 again this year. And this is a day that
17 reaffirms our commitment to acknowledging
18 contributions and embracing the diverse
19 perspectives of every Black individual who's been
20 a part of SUNY Cortland's rich history.

21 And as the first Black person to
22 represent the Southern Tier in the New York State
23 Senate, I stand before you not just as a Senator
24 but as a testament to the resilience and
25 indomitable spirit of our Black community. And

1 at the same time, it serves as a reminder of the
2 collective work that needs to be done to achieve
3 equity in all of our institutions.

4 New York State is a mosaic of
5 cultures, which we all know. We often celebrate
6 our diversity, the richness of it, and it is
7 enriched by the threads of Black history. And
8 the Southern Tier in New York holds a special
9 place in this narrative, a narrative not only
10 celebrated during Black History Month, but it is
11 paramount that we cherish and uphold every single
12 day, that we work to ensure that our communities
13 are treated with the fundamental need for human
14 dignity and respect.

15 Again, I want to thank Senate
16 Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for
17 bringing forth this resolution. I am very proud
18 to be voting in favor of it, and I hope my
19 colleagues will do the same.

20 Happy Black History Month.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
22 you.

23 Senator Bailey on the resolution.

24 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
25 Madam President.

1 Let me also thank Majority Leader
2 Andrea Stewart-Cousins for this critically
3 important resolution, and my colleagues
4 Senator Parker and Senator Webb for their
5 perspective on Black history.

6 I come to you from the Book of
7 KRS-One. In 1989 he said:

8 "I believe that if you're teaching history
9 Filled with straight-up facts no mystery
10 Teach the student what needs to be taught
11 'Cause Black and White kids both take shorts
12 When one doesn't know about the other ones'
13 culture
14 Ignorance swoops down like a vulture
15 'Cause you don't know that you ain't just a
16 janitor
17 No one told you about Benjamin Banneker
18 A brilliant Black man that invented the
19 almanac
20 Can't you see where KRS is coming at
21 With Eli Whitney, Haile Selassie
22 Granville Woods made the walkie-talkie
23 Lewis Latimer improved on Edison
24 Charles Drew did a lot for medicine
25 Garrett Morgan made the traffic lights

1 Harriet Tubman freed the slaves at night
2 Madam C.J. Walker made the straightening comb
3 But you won't know this if you weren't shown
4 The point I'm gettin' at it, it might be
5 harsh
6 'Cause we're just walkin' around brainwashed
7 So what I'm sayin' is not to diss a man
8 We need the {new} school system
9 One that caters to a Black return because
10 You must learn."

11 That's KRS-One in 1989. In 1989,
12 Kris Parker was saying the same things that we
13 are saying today. If we do not learn more about
14 each other's cultures, we are doomed to repeat
15 the failures of the past. And even more so.

16 But there's positivity in this
17 message. I come to you in the spirit of Ubuntu.
18 Ubuntu is an African phrase means "I am because
19 you are." All of us that walk in a path walk in
20 a path because of our ancestors.

21 We are our ancestors' wildest
22 dreams. They couldn't contemplate people that
23 look like us sitting in these seats. And books
24 have been written about the Harlem Renaissance,
25 with Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes. And I

1 dare to say, Madam President, in the future
2 they're going to write a book about this time,
3 about this renaissance in this building. Because
4 at no other time in history have we seen the
5 Black renaissance of what we've seen in this
6 building.

7 When you have a leader in Andrea
8 Stewart-Cousins, a speaker in Carl Heastie, an
9 Attorney General in Tish James, and so many
10 more -- this is our renaissance here. So when
11 they learn about this in the future, we're all
12 part of this living history. We are all part of
13 it.

14 And I'm proud. I'm proud. Pac said
15 it. I remember Marvin Gaye used to sing to me,
16 he had me feeling like Black was the thing to be.
17 I may not be a Senator forever, I may not be a
18 lawyer forever, but I'm going to be Black till
19 the day I die, Madam President.

20 And that -- that history, that
21 feeling, that pride that I have -- I consider it
22 incumbent upon me to share the good news with
23 everybody else, about what it means, about what
24 my blackness means.

25 We can't define other people's

1 blackness, Madam President. Because we play a
2 game called Oppression Olympics. We start
3 talking about, well, I'm a little bit darker than
4 you in skin tone, so that means I'm blacker.

5 Madam President, we all know that in
6 the Middle Passage we were all in the same ship,
7 they just dropped us off in different places.

8 So your skin tone, the way that you
9 orate, the way that you wear your hair, the way
10 that you dress does not define your blackness.
11 There is no metric for blackness. There is no
12 metric for the definition of who you are. But
13 it's important to make sure that we continue to
14 teach about the accomplishments that Black folks
15 have done -- have made in this country,
16 Madam President.

17 We know about Jackie Robinson.
18 Right? And we know about -- you may know about
19 Larry Doby. Larry Doby was the first Black
20 person in the American League. But do we know
21 about Willie O'Ree, the first Black man to play
22 in the NHL?

23 So many -- so many firsts. Arthur
24 Ashe. The greatest athlete of all time,
25 Serena Williams. Michael Jordan. LeBron James.

1 Jalen Brunson. The Knicks are ballin' now.

2 Jalen, he -- yes, Black history. Jalen Brunson.

3 But in all seriousness, so many
4 cultural contributions have been made by Black
5 folks in this country. And I think that
6 Senator Parker really hit the nail on the head
7 when we talk about Black history is American
8 history. And that so while we may have -- the
9 beautiful thing again, Madam President, this year
10 we got an extra day of Black history. Some
11 people call it Leap Day. I don't call it
12 Leap Day. It's an extra Black history day.
13 There are more Black history facts that you can
14 learn.

15 And I would ask that my -- not just
16 colleagues, but anybody that's watching or
17 learning, do yourself a favor. Find an unsung
18 Black hero, somebody that did something. My
19 youngest daughter, Carina, came home the other
20 day and she had to do something about Black
21 history. And she was going to choose somebody --
22 and, you know, I wasn't sure who she was going to
23 choose.

24 She chose a famous artist that I had
25 to learn about by the name of Alma Woodsey

1 Thomas. She was a famous Black artist, the first
2 Black woman to have her art in the
3 Whitney Museum. I learned that from a
4 7-year-old.

5 It is time for us to continue to
6 learn about Black history. About the struggle,
7 about the power, the prosperity, the love. And
8 most importantly, the accomplishments. We are
9 living in a time where we can say we were a part
10 of the Albany renaissance.

11 Madam President, I proudly vote aye
12 on the resolution.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
14 Cleare on the resolution.

15 SENATOR CLEARE: Thank you,
16 Madam President.

17 And I want to thank our leader,
18 Andrea Stewart-Cousins, for bringing this very
19 important resolution.

20 And I never thought I would say
21 this, but I could have listened all day to
22 Senator Parker.

23 (Laughter.)

24 SENATOR CLEARE: And I thought,
25 why? Why? It's because we are so thirsty. Even

1 at this age in life, so thirsty for our history.
2 I'm learning something new every day. And why?
3 Because we were not complete. We didn't learn
4 what we were supposed to learn. They didn't give
5 us what we were supposed to be given. But we've
6 learned many of these things on our own.

7 And I thought I wouldn't speak
8 today, but I said, No, I think I will. I
9 represent probably the most historic Black
10 community in the world: Harlem. I'm proud of
11 Harlem. Proud of Langston and Zora. Proud of
12 Thurgood and Malcolm. Adam, Rangel, Baker
13 Motley. Sutton. Paterson. Dinkins. Garvey.

14 Proud. Proud of Ossie and Ruby.
15 Belafonte. Angelou. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. A.
16 Philip Randolph. Bayard Rustin. The birthplace
17 of the March on Washington.

18 Black people have and continue to
19 contribute to every part of humanity all over
20 this country and throughout the world. We have
21 to continue to celebrate and teach this rich
22 culture to people of all races and all
23 ethnicities, to battle the misconceptions, the
24 preconceived notions held by others and
25 sometimes, sadly, even by ourselves, due to the

1 lack of information and positive imagery and
2 inclusion that some of us have been missing
3 throughout our lives.

4 So today, this is Black History
5 Month. But I continue to do more to make sure
6 that we teach our children more, all of our
7 children more about the great contributions.
8 It's -- it's a deficit to all of us, not to have
9 the education of knowing about Black history.

10 So I'm going to keep on learning
11 myself. I learned some things here today, I'm
12 not ashamed to say. But we have to continue to
13 teach that, and we have to continue to represent
14 that.

15 And that is why I feel I come here
16 with a great sensitivity to inclusion, a great
17 sensitivity to others and their history. And I'm
18 very proud of my Black history. And I want to
19 share it with everyone and make sure we share it
20 with the state.

21 I thank you. And today I proudly
22 vote aye and echo the words of all my colleagues
23 that spoke here today. This is a great day.

24 Thank you.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The

1 resolution was adopted on January 30th.

2 A luta continua.

3 Senator Gianaris.

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
5 speaking of Black history, we are joined today by
6 a distinguished former member of this chamber and
7 the first Black mayor of the City of Buffalo,
8 Byron Brown.

9 (Standing ovation.)

10 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
11 Gianaris.

12 SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's move on
13 now to Resolution 1765, by Senator Hinchey, read
14 its title and recognize Senator Hinchey.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
16 Secretary will read.

17 THE SECRETARY: Senate Resolution
18 1765, by Senator Hinchey, memorializing
19 Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 17-24,
20 2024, as National Future Farmers of America
21 Organization Week in the State of New York.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
23 Hinchey on the resolution.

24 SENATOR HINCHEY: Thank you,
25 Madam President.

1 FFA does two important things.

2 First, it promotes the importance of agriculture
3 across our state. Agriculture is a \$6 billion
4 industry. It's one that supports our state's
5 economy, it supports our rural economies. But
6 more importantly, it nourishes us. We all know:
7 No farms, no food.

8 But second, FFA is a leadership
9 organization, teaching our students how to be the
10 best versions of themselves, bringing them out of
11 their comfort zones, teaching them public
12 speaking, and giving them the tools and the skill
13 sets that they need to be successful in the rest
14 of their lives.

15 Today was FFA Day here at the
16 Capitol. And it is absolutely one of my favorite
17 days. We have 150 FFA students here walking
18 these halls, engaging with government. Some
19 walking these halls, taking legislative meetings
20 for the first time. Others may be seeing
21 themselves in the offices that they visit, in the
22 rooms that we occupy today that many of them will
23 be occupying in the future.

24 We have a number of FFA students
25 with us today watching our session. And in that

1 group are the state FFA officers. These are
2 students that represent the entire FFA
3 organization from across the state.

4 We have Courtney Taibi, state vice
5 president, from Greenville, my district. We've
6 got Eric Heath, state treasurer, also from
7 Greenville, the beautiful 41st. We have Ella
8 Underberg, the state president; Jacob Lucak, the
9 state secretary; Ellie Tarrants, the state
10 reporter; and Kealy Schilde, the state sentinel.

11 In my district, across the 41st, we
12 have eight incredible FFA chapters. And I'm
13 really proud to share that in 2023, FFA in our
14 state saw a 27 percent increase in membership.
15 That's exactly what we need to see and we hope to
16 see, and we're incredibly proud of that. And we
17 know that in the future that number will continue
18 to rise.

19 FFA is an incredible organization,
20 and I'm incredibly honored and proud to sponsor
21 the resolution designating February 17th through
22 24th as National FFA Week in the State of
23 New York.

24 Thank you very much.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank

1 you, Senator.

2 Senator Borrello on the resolution.

3 SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you,
4 Madam President.

5 This is, as Senator Hinchey said, a
6 great day, to see the blue jackets all over the
7 Capitol today. The Future Farmers of America
8 have descended on the Capitol, and they're here
9 to tell their story.

10 And it's an important story. As
11 someone who represents probably more farms than
12 any other Senate district, I am proud of the fact
13 that agriculture is not only the cornerstone of
14 our economy, but we have young people like those
15 that are here today to advocate.

16 You know, what struck me the most is
17 so many members of FFA are actually not from farm
18 families. They are those who became interested
19 in agriculture and decided to join this
20 organization. A great leadership organization,
21 as Senator Hinchey said, that builds great
22 citizens and future leaders in this state.

23 And they are here to express their
24 concerns and their hopes for the future of
25 agriculture in New York State. They are young,

1 articulate, motivated, and they are here to tell
2 everyone that agriculture is important to the
3 future of New York State.

4 Thank you all in FFA for being here.
5 God bless you. And welcome to Albany.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
7 you.

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

10 (Response of "Aye.")

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed,
12 nay.

13 (No response.)

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
15 resolution is adopted.

16 To our guests, I welcome you on
17 behalf of the Senate. We extend to you
18 privileges and courtesies of this house. Please
19 rise and be recognized.

20 (Standing ovation.)

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
22 Gianaris.

23 SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up,
24 Madam President, Resolution 1753, by Senator Chu.
25 Read that resolution's title and recognize

1 Senator Chu.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
3 Secretary will read.

4 THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1753, by
5 Senator Chu, commemorating the Asian-American
6 community's celebration of the Lunar New Year,
7 the Year of the Dragon, on February 10, 2024.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
9 Chu.

10 SENATOR CHU: Thank you,
11 Madam President.

12 Today is truly a day to honor our
13 history, to celebrate our heritage, and to be
14 proud of ourselves.

15 So for those who celebrate
16 Lunar New Year in this chamber, and for the
17 families back in our districts who celebrate
18 Lunar New Year, or if you got invited by a
19 friend, by a community member to celebrate with
20 them, I want to say Happy New Year, Xin Nian Kuai
21 Le!

22 Beginning on this coming Friday,
23 Friday night, hundreds of thousands of
24 Asian-American families throughout the state with
25 a heritage from China, Indonesia, Japan,

1 South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia,
2 Singapore, Taiwan and the Philippines will begin
3 their 30-day-long celebrations to ring in the
4 Year of the Dragon.

5 2024 is the Year of the Dragon,
6 which symbolize greatness, leadership, and
7 wisdom. As we enter a period of festivities for
8 the Lunar New Year, let us all remember the
9 diverse contributions brought into the fabric of
10 our lives as New Yorkers by not only the
11 individual Asian nation communities and cultures,
12 but also our contribution as a totality of the
13 Asian-American Pacific Islanders community.

14 It is truly my honor to carry such
15 an important resolution, and I want to encourage
16 you all to continue your support for all
17 Asian-Americans in New York State and celebrate
18 our Lunar New Year all together.

19 May this new year bring everyone
20 prosperity, success and happiness. I would like
21 to wish you a Happy New Year.

22 Xin Nian Kuai Le! Wan Shi Ru Yi!
23 Xie Xie!

24 Thank you, Madam President.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank

1 you, Senator.

2 Senator Martins on the resolution.

3 SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you,
4 Madam President. I too rise to wish everyone a
5 Happy Lunar New Year.

6 It's a special year for us. It's
7 the Year of the Dragon, something I think we
8 should all take inspiration from. It means
9 success, perseverance. But I think for all of us
10 it should all embody good luck for our
11 communities in all four corners of our great
12 state.

13 You know, I had an opportunity to
14 attend a number of Lunar New Year celebrations
15 over the past week. And Madam President, it was
16 described to me as a combination between
17 New Year's and Thanksgiving. And so I think if
18 we think about it that way, those celebrations --
19 and I understand the opportunity we have, through
20 Lunar New Year, to not only look backwards, as
21 Senator Bailey mentioned earlier, the opportunity
22 to go back and think about the past and consider
23 where we are historically, our ancestors, the
24 path that they took to get here, and to
25 appreciate where we are, but also an opportunity

1 to look forward with hope.

2 And so a Happy Lunar New Year to
3 everyone here, to all of our communities, and
4 Godspeed.

5 I'm happy to vote aye,
6 Madam President.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
8 you, Senator.

9 Senator Gounardes on the resolution.

10 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you,
11 Madam President.

12 It's a pleasure to be able to join
13 my colleagues here in wishing those who celebrate
14 the Lunar New Year a very happy New Year this
15 year.

16 I am proud to represent a very large
17 Asian community in both my old district and my
18 new district, and so I know the coming weeks are
19 going to be filled with joyous celebrations.

20 It's great that we are celebrating the Year of
21 the Dragon, which is typically associated with
22 positive qualities such as strength, good luck,
23 and wisdom.

24 It is said that those born under the
25 Sign of the Dragon are often celebrated for their

1 innovative thinking and inquisitive nature --
2 qualities that I think we can all stand to
3 benefit from.

4 Luminaries born in the Year of the
5 Dragon include Martin Luther King, Jr.,
6 Michelle Obama, John Lennon, and Bruce Lee, just
7 to name a few. Not bad company, if you ask me.

8 The Lunar New Year is an opportunity
9 for families to celebrate, gather together to
10 enjoy food, give gifts, and enjoy each other,
11 watch Lion Dances and Dragon Dances, and to
12 welcome the year as a community.

13 I was proud that last year we were
14 able to pass the law that made Lunar New Year an
15 official school holiday, because that
16 long-overdue change will allow millions of
17 New Yorkers who celebrate to be able to do so
18 with dignity and without having to choose between
19 their education and their heritage.

20 This holiday is also a reflection of
21 the great diversity of the people who call
22 New York home. And it does come at a time when
23 that diversity and community feels under threat.
24 It's been a number of challenging years for many
25 in the Asian community, particularly in the

1 Chinese community, who are worried about their
2 safety and about facing bias in New York and
3 elsewhere.

4 As we celebrate in the streets and
5 homes in the coming weeks, I remain committed to
6 ensuring that all New Yorkers feel truly safe and
7 comfortable within their communities. We will
8 fight back against hate with all of the resources
9 we have and truly build a state built on a strong
10 foundation of love and community.

11 I want to thank Senator Chu for
12 introducing this resolution, and I want to offer
13 my -- extend my best wishes to all who celebrate
14 a very happy Lunar New Year.

15 Thank you.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
17 you.

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

20 (Response of "Aye.")

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed,
22 nay.

23 (No response.)

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
25 resolution is adopted.

1 Senator Gianaris.

2 SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up is
3 Resolution 1769, by Senator Bailey. Please read
4 its title and recognize Senator Bailey.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
6 Secretary will read.

7 THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1769, by
8 Senator Bailey, mourning the death of
9 Luciel Boles-Wilson, distinguished citizen and
10 member of her community.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
12 Bailey on the resolution.

13 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
14 Madam President.

15 We come to you with a heavy heart
16 but a joyous heart to commemorate the life and
17 legacy of Luciel Bowes-Wilson. On Saturday I was
18 today years old, as they say, to see that her
19 name was actually pronounced Lucy-el. But we all
20 called her Lucille. She was Miss Lucille.

21 She was one of those constituents
22 who was everybody's constituent. Whether you
23 represented her in your specific district or not,
24 she came to every event. I wonder who her
25 scheduler was, because she would often be at more

1 events than the elected officials, and she would
2 be there before we were. And she didn't drive.
3 She didn't ambulate pretty well, she walked on a
4 walker, but she was able to get anywhere. She
5 had such a positive spirit, and she was truly a
6 one-of-a-kind individual.

7 So, Madam President, we had her
8 home-going this past Saturday, and usually at
9 home-goings there's more crying than laughing.
10 There was a lot more laughter at this one,
11 because her spirit was so positive.

12 Miss Lucille would -- she didn't
13 have a filter, like many seniors in our
14 community. And she said what she wanted to when
15 she wanted how she wanted to, regardless of where
16 she was at. So that made for some really
17 interesting times from time to time.

18 But there was one particular time
19 that we -- when Senator Fernandez was in the
20 Assembly and we did a Thanksgiving giveaway, a
21 dinner at Lexa Bar. I will never forget this.
22 Miss Lucille comes there, comes to the back, and
23 she asks me, "Do you want to rap battle?" And
24 I'm like, "What?" Then she starts battling. She
25 starts rapping and she starts going on and on,

1 and she has the whole crowd there, people --
2 people -- she had that ability to let you forget
3 about your troubles because her vibe was so
4 positive.

5 For the record, Madam President,
6 yes, she beat me in the battle. And she would
7 always threaten to battle me again, and I said I
8 didn't want any parts of her.

9 But she was an advocate for seniors,
10 advocate for grandparents around the world. She
11 was an advocate for people with disabilities.
12 She just -- any cause that needed to be
13 championed, Miss Lucille was your champion. And
14 she did so in style. Her favorite color was
15 purple, and she used to wear these extravagant
16 hats, all while doing that while using a walker.
17 She had the strength to ambulate.

18 And I keep bringing that up, because
19 there are some people who don't -- who are
20 able-bodied, so to speak, and they don't want to
21 go anywhere. Miss Lucille made sure she was
22 everywhere. She didn't miss a thing.

23 And the last time I saw her was at
24 a -- was at a -- was in the middle of December,
25 it was at a Christmas party. And she was still

1 Miss Lucille. Despite, you know, what we now
2 know about her then-failing health, she never
3 hesitated to dance, to laugh, to joke.

4 And she was the unofficial poetess
5 laureate of the Bronx. If she saw you, she'd
6 make up a poem on the spot about you, using the
7 letters of your name.

8 So to Miss Luciel: L is for the
9 love that you gave; U is for how understanding
10 you were; C is for how courageous you were; I is
11 for how intelligent you were; E is because you
12 were everywhere; and L, because of the legacy you
13 leave.

14 God rest the soul of Miss Luciel
15 Bowes-Wilson.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
17 you, Senator.

18 Senator Fernandez on the resolution.

19 SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you,
20 Madam President.

21 And thank you, Senator Bailey, for
22 reviving all the memories that I have with
23 Miss Lucille.

24 She may have been your actual
25 constituent. But like it was said, she was my

1 constituent. And she was one of my biggest fans
2 when I first started in this political world,
3 coming to me in her walker, in her beautiful hat
4 and outfit, saying: "I see you. And I'm going
5 to be your grandmother, because you need someone
6 to pray for you, guide you, and show up for you.
7 And I'm going to do that."

8 And she really did that to all of
9 us. And it was amazing, because she was in her
10 walker. First one there, last one out. First
11 one on the dance floor, first one to remind you
12 of what you just did as a leader, "Don't forget
13 this leader did that one."

14 She was the biggest cheerleader for
15 all of us. And one of the most amazing moments
16 that I remember about her, that I'm like, My God,
17 this woman has so much tenacity, so much
18 dedication, energy to what she was doing that
19 day.

20 And it was our District Attorney
21 Darcel Clark's 5K for domestic violence. And I
22 show up in my actual like running outfit, because
23 I'm like, you know what, I need a workout, I'm
24 going to run. And we're going down the
25 Grand Concourse, and before we start she was

1 there, sitting in, you know, the waiting area.

2 And she's like, "Good to see you
3 here, Fernandez. You're going to run, right?"
4 And I was like, "Well, I got my sneakers on,
5 yes." And she's like, "Well, me too. I'll be
6 right behind you." And I'm like, "In your
7 walker? Really?" And she was like, "Of course.
8 We've got to do this. We've got to show up."

9 And she ran the Grand Concourse from
10 161 to I think it was 180th, the last one of this
11 5K, but she did it -- in her walker and all, her
12 hat and all, and the spirit still there.

13 So I'm going to miss her. And I
14 really thought -- I didn't want to cry, but --
15 and I'm not going to cry. But she really did
16 leave a legacy of what it means to be supportive,
17 of what it means to care. Showing up.

18 And, you know, it's said all the
19 time, half the job is just showing up. And she
20 did that tenfold. And for all of us in the
21 Bronx. She has a part of all of our successes.
22 And I know we're all going to miss her.

23 And to live with her energy every
24 day, like that's something I'm going to take back
25 with me. To be like Luciel, be happy that we are

1 here today. Be happy that we are together and
2 working, and extend that happiness to someone who
3 may not have it.

4 So God bless her. And rest in
5 peace. I'm going to miss her very much.

6 Thank you, Luciel.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
8 Sepúlveda on the resolution.

9 SENATOR SEPÚLVEDA: Thank you,
10 Madam President, for allowing me to speak about
11 just an incredible individual, an incredible
12 human being.

13 In politics -- 31, 33 years in this
14 business for me. And you remember people over
15 those years, but you remember people especially
16 those who brighten your day, people who you wish
17 you could be like. We saw Luciel at many of our
18 events. As my colleague just said, first one
19 there, last one out. And always telling us to
20 keep working hard. Always offering us
21 encouraging words.

22 And unlike most of us in our lives,
23 I never heard her utter a negative word about any
24 individual during the time that I met her. And I
25 knew Lucille for many years.

1 We miss -- we're missing a -- we're
2 going to miss a wonderful soul. We're going to
3 miss someone that everyone in the Bronx, anyone
4 who knew her loved her. We're going to miss her
5 extravagant outfits, her beautiful hats, and the
6 energy. Even during her illness, she was always
7 there. When I found out about Luciel's death, I
8 felt like I lost a family member.

9 And even though she was
10 Senator Jamaal Bailey's constituent, the reality
11 is that she was everyone's constituent in the
12 Bronx. Everyone loved her. And the world has
13 lost just a wonderful human being, and she will
14 be sorely missed.

15 Thank you.

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

19 (Response of "Aye.")

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed,
21 nay.

22 (No response.)

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
24 resolution is adopted.

25 Senator Gianaris.

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

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

9 Senator Gianaris.

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up
11 the reading of the calendar.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
13 Secretary will read.

14 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
15 110, Senate Print 363, by Senator Thomas, an act
16 to amend the Personal Property Law.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
18 last section.

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

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
22 roll.

23 (The Secretary called the roll.)

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
25 the results.

1 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
2 Calendar Number 110, voting in the negative:
3 Senator Rhoads.

4 Ayes, 61. Nays, 1.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
6 is passed.

7 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
8 111, Senate Print 932C, by Senator Persaud, an
9 act to amend the General Business Law.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
11 last section.

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

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
16 roll.

17 (The Secretary called the roll.)

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
19 the results.

20 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
22 is passed.

23 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
24 113, Senate Print 7783B, by Senator Gianaris, an
25 act to amend the General Business Law.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
2 last section.

3 THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This
4 act shall take effect on the first of January.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
6 roll.

7 (The Secretary called the roll.)

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
9 the results.

10 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
11 Calendar 113, those Senators voting in the
12 negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Martins,
13 Mattera, Ortt, Palumbo, Stec and Tedisco. Also
14 Senator Helming.

15 Ayes, 53. Nays, 9.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
17 is passed.

18 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
19 114, Senate Print 492B, by Senator Comrie, an act
20 to amend the Public Authorities Law.

21 SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Lay it
23 aside.

24 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
25 116, Senate Print 1242A, by Senator Felder, an

1 act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
3 last section.

4 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
5 act shall take effect on the first of April.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
7 roll.

8 (The Secretary called the roll.)

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
10 the results.

11 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
12 Calendar 116, those Senators voting in the
13 negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Gallivan,
14 Griffo, Helming, Krueger, O'Mara, Ortt, Stec and
15 Weik.

16 Ayes, 52. Nays, 10.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
18 is passed.

19 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
20 117, Senate Print 1361A, by Senator Kennedy, an
21 act to amend the Public Authorities Law.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
23 last section.

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

1 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
2 roll.

3 (The Secretary called the roll.)

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
5 the results.

6 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
8 is passed.

9 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
10 119, Senate Print 177, by Senator Gianaris, an
11 act to amend the Banking Law.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
13 last section.

14 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
15 act shall take effect on the 180th day after it
16 shall have become a law.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
18 roll.

19 (The Secretary called the roll.)

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
21 the results.

22 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
23 Calendar 119, those Senators voting in the
24 negative are Senators Borrello, Gallivan, Griffio,
25 Helming, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Stec

1 and Tedisco.

2 Ayes, 52. Nays, 10.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
4 is passed.

5 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
6 121, Senate Print 1065, by Senator Mayer, an act
7 to amend the Banking Law.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
9 last section.

10 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This
11 act shall take effect one year after it shall
12 have become a law.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
14 roll.

15 (The Secretary called the roll.)

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
17 the results.

18 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
19 Calendar 121, those Senators voting in the
20 negative are Senators Borrello,
21 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Griffo, Oberacker, O'Mara,
22 Palumbo, Stec and Tedisco.

23 Ayes, 54. Nays, 8.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
25 is passed.

1 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
2 124, Senate Print Number 2601A, by
3 Senator Hoylman-Sigal, an act to amend the
4 Banking Law.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
6 last section.

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

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
10 roll.

11 (The Secretary called the roll.)

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
13 Hoylman-Sigal to explain his vote.

14 SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: Thank you,
15 Madam President.

16 I rise to thank my colleagues for
17 their support of this legislation and our
18 Majority Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, for this
19 package which is meant to stop the
20 nickel-and-diming of so many New Yorkers. Each
21 and every one of these bills goes to that
22 problem.

23 This bill would prevent banks,
24 health clubs, the DMV, or anyone else from taking
25 money out of the pockets of New Yorkers without

1 them even knowing.

2 Our bill would prevent banks from
3 imposing fees on the use of electronic benefit
4 transfer cards, EBTs, issued by the state or
5 other government agencies that is part of this
6 package.

7 Among the many striking and stark
8 scenes we saw during the pandemic in the spring
9 and summer of 2020 were the hundreds of
10 New Yorkers lined up on streets in Midtown
11 Manhattan every day, waiting in line to use a
12 Key Bank ATM machine.

13 Key Bank, which at that time of the
14 pandemic had a contract with the state to provide
15 debit cards for unemployment insurance and other
16 state benefits, had just one location in New York
17 City. Because Key Bank charged a \$1.50 fee to
18 withdraw from any non-network ATM, hundreds of
19 New Yorkers descended on this one Midtown
20 location every day to access their state
21 assistance without fees.

22 We wrote a letter to Key Bank asking
23 them to waive those fees, to relieve New Yorkers
24 from this nuisance at the time of the crisis.
25 And weeks later, we introduced this legislation.

1 I'm glad that the New York State
2 Department of Labor has already moved since 2023
3 to transition to a new debit card provider for
4 unemployment insurance, which appears to have
5 more locations in the city for no-fee
6 withdrawals.

7 Regardless, we can't rely on
8 contractors and big banks to protect consumers
9 from nuisance fees. This legislation, which
10 many of you voted for today, will help prevent
11 that moving forward.

12 I vote aye. Thank you.

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

15 Announce the results.

16 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
17 Calendar 124, those Senators voting in the
18 negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello,
19 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Gallivan, Griffo, Lanza,
20 Martins, Mattera, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Stec,
21 Tedisco, Weber and Weik.

22 Ayes, 47. Nays, 15.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
24 is passed.

25 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number

1 198, Assembly Bill Number 8530, by
2 Assemblymember Magnarelli, an act to amend the
3 Public Service Law.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
5 last section.

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

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
10 roll.

11 (The Secretary called the roll.)

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
13 the results.

14 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
16 is passed.

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

19 SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's please
20 move on to the controversial calendar now.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
22 Secretary will ring the bell.

23 The Secretary will read.

24 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
25 114, Senate Print 492B, by Senator Comrie, an act

1 to amend the Public Authorities Law.

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

4 SENATOR LANZA: Madam President, I
5 believe there's an amendment at the desk. I
6 waive the reading of that amendment and ask that
7 you recognize Senator Martins.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
9 you, Senator Lanza.

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

13 SENATOR LANZA: Madam President,
14 accordingly, I appeal the ruling of the chair and
15 ask that Senator Martins be heard on the appeal.

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

19 Senator Martins.

20 SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you,
21 Madam President.

22 I rise to appeal the ruling of the
23 chair. The proposed amendment is germane to the
24 bill at hand because both the bill at hand,
25 Madam President, and the proposed amendment

1 relate to consequences for violating the law.

2 Madam President, I think we all have
3 seen recently videos of migrants who are here in
4 New York City attacking New York City police
5 officers in Times Square. In some instances,
6 kicking them in the head, interfering with their
7 enforcement of our laws.

8 And, Madam President, I can't see or
9 think of a certain -- of any place in the world
10 where someone who is not in that country
11 lawfully -- visiting, a tourist or otherwise --
12 would be permitted to attack law enforcement
13 officials wantonly and yet face no consequence.

14 You know, all of us in this chamber,
15 we should be outraged. We have a long and proud
16 tradition of respecting and proactively
17 supporting those who keep us safe in law
18 enforcement.

19 We also have a very long tradition
20 of supporting immigrants. As the son of
21 immigrants myself, Madam President, I can tell
22 you firsthand what that looks like, the journey
23 that that is, and how important that is, and that
24 we continue to embrace all cultures. And we
25 spoke about that just earlier today when we were

1 discussing resolutions. All cultures.

2 But when there are attacks on law
3 enforcement and there are no consequences, the
4 message that that sends to every law-abiding
5 citizen, resident of our state, is something that
6 we should all take very, very seriously.

7 Not to mention, Madam President, the
8 message that was sent by those who committed
9 those crimes as they were leaving, to every
10 law-abiding resident and citizen of this state.
11 I think we're all very much aware of that.

12 And it's a call to action of
13 everyone in this chamber that we can and should
14 do better.

15 We heard just a few moments ago a
16 concern about safety in our communities, and that
17 we have communities within our districts that
18 feel unsafe. Well, this is why, Madam President.
19 And this amendment will allow us the opportunity
20 to stop talking about it and actually do
21 something about it.

22 The fact that these defendants were
23 released to their own recognizance, the fact that
24 there was no bail set, and that the fact that
25 most if not all of them have already absconded,

1 should be a concern for everyone in this chamber.
2 Because we're called upon to do something about
3 that and to enforce the rule of law.

4 It's not just in New York City.
5 It's in Western New York. It's in other urban
6 areas. It's in our communities. And we should
7 all be aware of it.

8 Our judges and our district
9 attorneys, Madam President, deserve the tools
10 they need to keep our communities safe. There
11 must be statewide standards set to ensure that
12 any migrant who assaults a first responder
13 remains in custody pending prosecution.

14 And then, yes, after they've served
15 their time, after they've paid their service to
16 the community for breaking our laws wantonly,
17 yes, then, as the Governor has suggested, yes,
18 they should be deported.

19 But first they owe a debt to society
20 for having assaulted our law enforcement
21 officials here in New York.

22 We simply cannot risk the chance of
23 these violent offenders harming anyone else in
24 our communities or moving into entirely different
25 communities. It is a disservice to all of our

1 residents.

2 And you know, Madam President, I
3 hear words like xenophobia, that we should all be
4 concerned. And let me be clear. I don't make
5 this amendment because of the background of the
6 people who committed these crimes. I don't care
7 who they are. I don't care what their background
8 is, I don't care what their race is, I don't care
9 what their religion is, I don't care what their
10 ethnicity is.

11 They committed these acts in broad
12 daylight against law enforcement officials, in
13 Times Square, in the center of our city, and they
14 were released by a district attorney who should
15 have been fired years ago, and is still in
16 office -- and that's a travesty. We have an
17 opportunity in this chamber to do something about
18 it.

19 For that reason, Madam President, I
20 strongly urge you to reconsider your ruling.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
22 you, Senator.

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

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

3 (Response of "Aye.")

4 SENATOR LANZA: Show of hands.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: A show
6 of hands has been requested.

7 Announce the results.

8 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 20.

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

12 Senator Gianaris.

13 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
14 can we please restore this bill to the
15 noncontroversial calendar by agreement.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
17 last section.

18 THE SECRETARY: Section 7. This
19 act shall take effect immediately.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
21 roll.

22 (The Secretary called the roll.)

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
24 the results.

25 THE SECRETARY: In relation to

1 Calendar 114, those Senators voting in the
2 negative are Senators Borrello, Helming, Murray,
3 O'Mara and Palumbo.

4 Ayes, 57. Nays, 5.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
6 is passed.

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

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

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

13 SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to
14 adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 7th,
15 at 11:00 a.m.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: On
17 motion, the Senate stands adjourned until
18 Wednesday, February 7th, at 11:00 a.m.

19 (Whereupon, at 4:38 p.m., the Senate
20 adjourned.)

21

22

23

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