NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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March 19, 2025

4:00 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR JAMAAL T. BAILEY, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, will deliver today's invocation.

His Eminence.

ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS: May we bow our heads in prayer.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

O God, we offer our abundant thanks and praise for gathering us together today in the Senate Chamber of the great State of New York to pray for the good estate of our government.

Bless all these servants who represent the people, that they may always uphold justice and the rule of law.

Grant unto them to fulfill their duties, their responsibilities and obligations to

people of New York with honor, with integrity, and with faithfulness to their oath of office.

Bless them to love liberty, the same freedom that we commemorate today in our recognition of March 25th, the day of Greek Independence, and the freedom enshrined in our beloved state and nation.

Keep these lawgivers in Your loving care, that they may ever serve with dignity and grace in their high office and thus may they render glory, reverence and honor to You, the Source of Righteousness and the Law of Love.

Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Tuesday, March 18, 2025, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Monday, March 17, 2025, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

Let's begin by recognizing Senator Gounardes for an introduction.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Gounardes for the purposes of an introduction.

SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you, Mr. President.

In a little while we will read a resolution to commemorate the 204th anniversary of Greece's independence and to declare March as Greek-American Heritage Month.

Today the relationship between the United States, Greece and our sister nation of Cyprus is as strong as it's ever been. Anchored in the shared values of democratic governance, these three nations are joined together through

mutual economic, political and security matters.

Souda Bay, in Crete, is home to the U.S. Navy's base of operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the enactment of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act in our own U.S. Congress has positioned Greece and Cyprus to play leading roles in securing energy independence for the entire European continent.

The relationship between our countries would not be possible but for the persistent and engaged advocacy of the Greek-American communities that can be found in each and every one of our districts.

And so that's why it's my honor now to recognize that we are joined in this chamber by the Consul General of Greece in New York, Mrs. Iphigenia Kanara. We want to welcome her and thank her for her nation's friendship.

And, Mr. President, I ask that you welcome our guest and bestow on her the full privilege of our chamber.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: To the Consul General, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you all of the privileges

and courtesies of this house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's stick with the theme, Mr. President, and take up previously adopted Resolution 510, by Senator Gianaris, read that resolution's title, and call on the esteemed Senator Gianaris to speak.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 510, by Senator Gianaris, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2025 as Greek History Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the commemoration of the 204th Anniversary of Greek Independence.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The esteemed Senator Gianaris on the resolution.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Mr. President.

First of all, I want to second my colleague Senator Gounardes in welcoming

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros here today. It is always a pleasure to have him join us in the Senate chamber, and of course our friends representing the Greek government. I know the Cyprus Consul General was also here, and he had to head back home. But he was here with us earlier today at the luncheon where many of you were.

This is the day of the year when I stand up and I tell you how much credit the Greeks deserve for everything that we experience in Western civilization. I'm going to leave a lot of that to Senator Gounardes, who's a better student of history than I am, to go through. What I want to spend my time on today, in addition to all the wonderful things about the arts and philosophy and science and mathematics and our very democracy, which is under threat even in this country, is a discussion of architecture.

And I wanted to spend this time talking about something that many of you may not appreciate or understand.

So let's talk about ancient Greek, even ancient Roman architecture. So when you

think about that, when you see it depicted in the movies, when you picture in your mind's eye what it was like back then, you probably think of those beautiful marble white buildings everywhere.

In fact, that is not at all what they looked like. Even our State Education building, in attempting to emulate that classical architecture, shows that.

Did you know that back then all those buildings were painted, in very bright colors. So even the Parthenon or any of the other buildings you see would be red and blue and gold, because they painted things the way we do. It's just that over the thousands of years the paint has worn off, and so they look -- when we found the ruins, they looked to be white.

And so here we are in modern times, like, That's what they were like, let's make them all white. But in fact, not at all the case. I just wanted to share that bit of trivia with all of you. If you want to get a couple of buckets and head over to the Education building, we can make it look --

(Laughter.)

SENATOR GIANARIS: -- more representative of what it was like back then.

I think I'm going to do this every year, is find a new bit of trivia to share with you about our history.

But of course those of us who are of Greek extraction -- my own parents are proud immigrants from Greece; Senator Gounardes, Senator Skoufis here also share our Greek heritage -- are very, very proud of it, because it is the ultimate immigrant story. The story of Greeks in America is the story of people who came here, and it sounds cliche, but it's true, with very little in their pockets, very little in terms of acquaintances or people they knew. They'd often come to this country just because they had a family friend or a cousin or someone who came first, and they'd just show up at their home and start a life.

And a generation or two later, their children are senators or lawyers or doctors or successful in so many different ways in the U.S. because they sacrificed their lives for their children and their children's children. And I, for one, appreciate that so much. You know, I

lost my father last year, and my mom, thank God, is still with us. But I think about that often. I think about, you know, we tend to be selfish -- too selfish, I would say.

But I think about that generation of people who put themselves through pain, who put themselves through suffering just so that we could have it a little better. And that's the Greek story. And that's the story of so many people who have come to this country from elsewhere. And I daresay to this day that is the story of so many others who are trying to get into this country and are facing obstacles unnecessarily and unjustly. Some who are already here and are being ejected unjustly and unnecessarily.

But I don't want to diverge too far from the importance of Greek History Month. As a proud American of Greek descent, I thank my colleagues for giving us a moment to talk about this on the floor today. And thank you, Mr. President for the time to discuss the resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Gianaris.

Senator Gounardes on the resolution.

SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you, Mr. President.

And thank you, Senator Gianaris, and Senator Skoufis.

We think and feel differently because of what a little Greek town did during a century or two 2400 years ago. That's how esteemed classicist Edith Hamilton described the impact that Greece and the Greek people have had on the world for two-and-a-half millennia. And like Senator Gianaris, I'll spare you the litany of ways in which Greece has shaped our world today, but it's objectively true that Professor Hamilton's statement is 100 percent fact. That's why I'm incredibly proud, as a fourth-generation Greek-American, to stand here today and recognize March as Greek Heritage Month.

But it's not just what happened in the days of Socrates and Pericles that inspire us to celebrate Greek heritage. Indeed, it's the vast span of history over the last 2500 years and the collective impact of that history on our world today that gives Greeks and philhellenes a

a swell of pride and jubilee.

The rich glory of the Byzantine Empire that lasted for a thousand years; the tenacious resilience that survived 400 years of Ottoman oppression and enslavement; the fierce courageousness of the war for independence that sparked revolutionary change across the European continent; the determined resistance that stymied Nazi occupiers and bought enough time for Allied forces to shift the balance of war along the Eastern Front of World War II; and the soaring heights of success that Greeks in the diaspora have achieved throughout the world today -- these are all reasons why Greeks and people of Greek heritage have enormous pride in who we are.

This year -- next week -- we'll be celebrating 204 years of Greece's independence. On March 25, 1821, revolutionary fighters gathered together with Metropolitan Germanos in the Monastery of Agia Lavra, in the village of Kalavryta -- which is where Senator Gianaris's family is from -- and declared independence against Ottoman occupation and enslavement.

The war was hard-fought, resulting in countless acts of devastation and atrocities,

as war so often brings, including the Massacre of the Island of Chíos, the island where my family is from, where nearly 100,000 people were killed or expelled from the island forcibly.

And much like our own Revolutionary War here in America, seven years after declaring independence, the people of Greece -- the farmers, the sailors, the merchants, the shepherds who lived in towns and villages all across the Greek countryside won the war and formed their own Hellenic republic.

Today we celebrate this history and reflect on the rich contributions that the Greek-American community has made to our own nation's history. We cheer the incredible success that Greek-Americans have achieved in law, media, business, science, medicine, politics and other fields.

But it should not be forgotten by us that at one time our forefathers were unwanted in this country. And at one time it was not uncommon to see crosses burning on the lawns of Greek houses.

We cherish the personal stories of our own families who came to this country to seek

their American dream and to create a better life for themselves. But it should not be forgotten by us that there was a time when this country would not accept more than 100 immigrants a year from Greece. And yet we still smuggled ourselves in by the thousands and tens of thousands.

We applaud at the remembrance of Archbishop Iakovos boldly standing beside Dr. King at the funeral of Reverend Reeb and then crossing the Pettus Bridge. Or even our own Archbishop Elpidophoros, who is here with us today, marching in the streets for Black lives. But it should not be forgotten by us that there were many, even in our own community, who did not and still do not see value in the struggle for civil rights and equality and condemned the actions of our own leaders.

So as I reflect on today's commemoration of Greek heritage and I think about the moment that we are living in right now, I find wisdom and guidance in the totality of the Greek-American experience. I draw inspiration from the high points of our stories as well as the trials our community has faced. And I remain ever hopeful that we as a community will remember

the struggles our ancestors faced and we open our hands and we open our hearts to all those whose stories mirror our own and embrace our fellow human beings as true brothers and sisters.

And so with that, Mr. President, I say with great pride: Happy Greek independence Day. Zhtw h Ellas!

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Gounardes.

The resolution is adopted on March 18th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Can we now take up privileged Resolution 529, by Leader Stewart-Cousins. This is the resolution honoring the Legislative Women's Caucus. We have agreed that there will be one Senator from each side of the aisle speaking on this, only so we don't spend the whole afternoon on it.

So please call on Senator Webb after we have take up this resolution, and then Senator Helming.

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

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 529, by Senator Stewart-Cousins, recognizing the honorees of the New York State Legislative Women's Caucus, in conjunction with the observance of Women's History Month.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Webb on the resolution.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise, as the proud chair of our Women's Issues Committee, with the distinct honor and privilege to recognize all of our honorees who have come from all over the state as part of our Legislative Women's Caucus Women's History Month celebration.

New York's history as the birthplace of the suffrage movement, the home of change-makers and glass-ceiling breakers -- and, in most cases, especially for women of color, brick-ceiling breakers -- like Shirley Chisholm, Constance Baker Motley, Ida Sammis, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and countless others, makes today particularly auspicious.

We all stand on the great shoulders

of women who have come before us, some walking through these very doors, with the responsibility to pass the torch forward and continue blazing a a path forward for our collective change and progress.

There is hardly a more urgent time and moment for us to continue this fight, as we are seeing and experiencing firsthand the systemic and deliberate erasure of women's excellence from both public records and commemorations, in a backwards purge of our own history by the federal government.

Some people falsely believe that if we are out of sight, we will be out of mind and our indelible contributions as women can be chipped away, that our existence will be subdued, relegated, and in some cases subjugated to a point where we are considered less than human.

I am here as proof, along with my follow colleagues who broke their own glass ceilings and served as firsts in their own ways, that those hard battles won can never be undone because we all benefit from it.

Together, we have made the New York State Senate a more representative body and

advanced transformational policies around women's healthcare, antidiscrimination, maternal well-being, equal opportunity, that help to shape a much wider path for all of us to follow. And we will continue our work in this great state in the face of any opposition that may come our way or challenges that present themselves in our path, just like those who came before us and just like those who will inevitably follow behind us.

Being in Albany today with other Women of Excellence from across our state only reaffirms this truth that the talent, the tenacity, the prestige that fills every corner of New York in numbers far greater than any who wish to diminish our contributions. Adjectives like trailblazer, visionary, determined, legacy-builder, change-maker and others are just a few of the many ways that our honorees who are here today not only represent the best of our communities, but they are working to improve our collective lives.

I am proud to be joined here today with my own Women's History Month honoree, Dr. Leslyn McBean Clairborne, who served for more than 20 years on the Tompkins County Legislature,

who was the first woman of color to serve as the chair. As an accomplished academic, highly decorated activist, and prolific member of our community, Leslyn makes our community very proud.

And she is joined by many other incredible women here in our chamber from across the state that my colleagues have chosen to honor this particular month, but honor them every single day, to be clear.

They are lifelong advocates, educators, electeds, leaders who hold many titles, some that are paid and, most often, some that are not. But they are committed to ensuring that our state continues to thrive. And they make us better.

You bring us all great pride, and we thank you all for the work that you have done and the work that you will continue to do on behalf of all of our communities that make us the Empire State.

I want to thank our Majority Leader, who continues to shatter barriers every single day, our Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

Also, all of our members of the New

York State Legislative Women's Caucus for elevating this year's honorees and once again commemorating this important month this year and for many more months and years to come.

Mr. President, I proudly vote aye and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Happy Women's History Month.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Webb.

(Applause from gallery.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: There will be opportunity for more applause later.

Senator Helming on the resolution.

SENATOR HELMING: I thought it was for me!

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Yes, indeed.

SENATOR HELMING: Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, Senator Webb, for those wonderful words.

I'm so honored to stand before this body to commemorate Women's History Month and our Legislative Women's Caucus honorees. There's a saying that I think probably all of us are

familiar with: In order to know where you're going, it's important to know where you've been.

By understanding the challenges women have endured throughout our state and our nation's history and, importantly, the contributions they have made, we not only deepen our understanding of the past but we heighten our collective determination to keep going, to achieve the progress that we need and, honestly, the progress that we deserve.

This year's Women's History Month theme is "Moving Forward Together: Women Educating and Inspiring Generations." We are celebrating women who have dedicated their lives to education, mentorship, and to leadership.

So it's fitting that my Women's History Month honoree this year is Amy West.

Amy is a wonderful person. She's an entrepreneur, she's a leader in the education field. She serves as a Monroe County BOCES No. 1 school board member. She had been a past school board president for the Honeoye Falls-Lima School District. She is a small businesses owner. She owns two grocery stores, and she is a mentor. And just as importantly, she is a mother.

I'd like to congratulate Amy and all of the Women's History Month honorees. I have to say it was such a treat at the luncheon this afternoon hearing about these incredible women. All across the state women are leading courageously, fiercely -- sometimes quietly, but oftentimes fiercely -- for equal rights, for equal pay, equal protection, and equal opportunity.

My Senate district, the 54th District, is home of the Ontario County Courthouse, where in 1873 Susan B. Anthony was tried and convicted of voting illegally as a woman. This year we proudly mark the 105th anniversary of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote.

As the saying goes, we've come a long way. Yet we recognize the ways in which we must still go. And we have so far to go.

And, you know, I was reminded of that downstairs, on display as part of the Women's History Month, there are a number of banners and there's one that really, it grabbed me. First of all, because the quote is from Clara Barton. Many of us know her as the founder

of the American Red Cross. But the quote reads: "I shall never do a man's work for less than a man's pay."

That resonates with me today because, you know what, women are still not being paid equally. The United States Census data shows that women are earning, in equal jobs, 84 cents to a man's $1. We've got to continue to fight, push back against that, for equal pay.

To all the women who are here today, to the female leaders everywhere who inspire all of us and, most importantly, to our young girls and our young women, we see you, we celebrate you, and we thank you.

In order to know where you're going, like I said, it's important to know where you've been. Together, we are going to keep going for our daughters and our granddaughters and for the good of our great Empire State.

Mr. President, I vote yes on this resolution and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Helming.

To our guests, our phenomenal

honorees, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you all of the privileges and courtesies of this house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time, Mr. President, please call on Senator Cleare for an introduction.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Cleare for the purposes of an introduction.

SENATOR CLEARE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm excited to rise today. It is my honor to welcome SkillSpring to Albany today. I appreciate your indulgence as you allow me to

brag about a program that is equal parts healthcare, workforce, education, empowerment and economic development all at the same time.

The New Jewish Home's SkillSpring program reaches out to high school students, often from public housing, and pays them to become certified nurse assistants, while guaranteeing permanent job placement at the end.

SkillSpring is an initiative that has major intergenerational effects. Our youth learn a valuable skill, responsibility, and compassion, and our older New Yorkers have someone to pass along their wisdom, insight and share life experiences with. Lifetime bonds are often formed.

To date, SkillSpring has created healthcare career pathways for over 1100 young people, providing them the mentoring, training and allied health accreditation that leads to good-paying jobs, career pathways, and the rewards of a profession well pursued.

I've never missed an opportunity to attend a graduation, and I hope that I never do. Every time I attend, I see the work that's being done. I see our money pay off in our young

people. I see pride, I see purpose. And I think that is something that we have to do much, much more for our young people, and also build our workforce.

So today I just want to thank you for all that you do. I know some of the students had to leave, they had a train to catch. But today I'm going to welcome -- well, he was here -- SkillSpring alumni Christopher Kelly Davis and Damian Harvey. SkillSpring staff Alyssa Herman, Tanya Isaacs, Alita Maristany. Sarah Daly from LeadingAge, thank you for your support. Laura Niland from the Metropolitan Jewish Health System, and ArchCare.

Mr. President, please recognize them and afford them all the cordialities of the Senate. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Cleare.

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

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator

Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, let's move on to previously adopted Resolution 487, by Senator John Liu, read that resolution's title, and recognize Senator Liu.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 487, by Senator Liu, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 23, 2025, as Pakistan-American Heritage Day in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Liu on the resolution.

SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Mr. President.

I am so happy and excited to be joined by many friends from the very proud Pakistani-American community. We have many friends and leaders in the Senate gallery. And we are joined on the floor by none other than the Bangladesh ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed -- we are joined by the Pakistan ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh. Thank you, Your Excellency, for joining us on the Senate floor.

We're also joined by the Consul General from Bangladesh to New York, Mr. Aamer Ahmed Atozai, thank you very much. And of course our friend and brother Ali Rashid, who is the head of the American Pakistani Advocacy Group. Thank you so much.

You know, a lot's been said about different communities today already, but the Pakistani-American community is one that's very proud that boasts all parts of our American society and economy. They are accomplished in their small businesses, whether it be in stores or restaurants or transportation services, as well as the most professional endeavors, including physicians, attorneys, engineers and the like.

And we would not be the State of New York today if not for this very important and influential Pakistani-American community that we celebrate with the designation of Pakistani-American Day on March 23rd.

So, Mr. President, please accord our distinguished guests all the celebration and valor of this chamber.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Liu.

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

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution was previously adopted on March 11th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up is previously adopted Resolution 497, by Senator Sean Ryan. Please read that resolution's title and recognize Senator Ryan, comma, S.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 497, by Senator Sean Ryan, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 19, 2025, as Small Business Development Centers Day in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Sean Ryan on the resolution.

SENATOR SEAN RYAN: Thank you,

Mr. President. I rise today to celebrate the Small Business Development Centers Day in New York State.

Small businesses make up 90 percent -- 96 percent of New York State businesses and employ half of our workforce. They're the backbone of our economy. When they're thriving, New York's thriving.

As a legislature, it's our job to make sure they're getting the support that they need. We do that by funding things with a proven track record of helping small businesses, things like investing in proven infrastructure, broadband deployment, cheap hydropower, supporting programs to grow our state workforces, like universal pre-K and childcare, and funding Small Business Development Centers.

Small Business Development Centers provide advice, training and research that helps New York's budding entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. They're affiliated with 13 SUNY and five CUNY campuses, as well as St. Thomas Aquinas and Pace University. It's a connection that makes them a pipeline between our colleges, universities, communities and small

businesses that rely on them to educate the workforce.

They're a huge help to individual businesses, and they're an important economic development tool.

I know firsthand; there's a Small Business Development Center at Buffalo State. I go there several times a year, and each time I'm blown away by the creativity, the stick-to-it-iveness of the entrepreneurs there, and the stick-to-it-iveness of the trainers, led by Sue McCartney, who runs that program.

But there's a lot of Sue McCartneys all around New York State who are doing this work. This is their 41st year. They've provided over $8 billion in direct financial impact and helped create hundreds and thousands of jobs. In 2024 alone, they helped over 31,000 small businesses to create an economic impact of over $240 million.

As chair of the Economic Development Committee, I'm proud to support their work, and I'll continue to do my part to make sure that they have the support they need from this legislative body.

And today I recognize them by celebrating Small Business Development Centers Day.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Ryan.

The resolution was previously adopted on March 18th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, next up, previously adopted resolution --

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Wait, wait, hold on.

SENATOR SEAN RYAN: Mr. President, I'm sorry to interrupt, but we have several people here from Small Business Development Centers --

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: I was wondering if you had guests, yes.

SENATOR SEAN RYAN: -- around the state. They're our guests today.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: To our guests, we welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you extra privileges, because I forgot you the first time --

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: -- and courtesies of this house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution was previously adopted on March 18th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: And now, Mr. President, let's take up previously adopted Resolution 442, by Senator Hinchey, read that resolution's title, and recognize Senator Hinchey.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 442, by Senator Hinchey, commending New York Maple Producers during the Annual Maple Weekends on March 22-23, 2025, and March 29-30, 2025.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Hinchey on the resolution.

SENATOR HINCHEY: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in honor of Maple Weekends. The first Maple Weekend began as Maple Sunday in

1995, a single-day event to celebrate the maple harvest and connect the public with local producers.

2025 marks the 29th year of Maple Weekends, now spanning four days across two whole weekends, starting this weekend, actually.

Maple Weekends is an incredible thing connecting our community to the producers who farm and produce our food. One of the things I love about driving around my district is being able to see the blue lines, knowing that in those woods something that looks just like a tree lot is actually a working farm that's connecting people to the land and creating something incredibly delicious that we all get to participate with.

One of my favorite uses for maple is sweetening my coffee. But there are many, from maple doughnuts to maple cronuts and all kinds of things.

I encourage everyone this coming weekend to get outside, find a maple farm, either in your community or around the state, and visit and talk with some of these producers. They're all small farms, and we're so lucky to have them

in our communities.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Hinchey.

Senator Borrello on the resolution.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you, Mr. President. I don't know how to follow up maple cronuts, but I'll try.

Maple Weekends has been an amazing opportunity to recognize that New York State is the number-two maple producer in the country. And in fact, last year, in 2024, the maple production was 846,000 gallons, up a hundred thousand gallons from the year before.

And I'm told this is going to be another great year as we start to close out tapping of the maple trees around New York State.

And this weekend is our time to celebrate that. In my district I am proud to have several legendary places where you can come and experience maple weekend -- places like Sprague's Maple Farms, Sweet Time Maple, Ulinger's Maple Farm, Wright Farms. And then I myself will be down at Merle Maple.

Come on out to one of the many

places that we have here in New York State. This is a great opportunity to celebrate all the sweet things that make up Maple Weekend.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Borrello.

The resolution was previously adopted on March 11th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Last but not least, previously adopted Resolution 460, by Senator Ashby. Please read that resolution's title and recognize Senator Ashby.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 460, by Senator Ashby, commemorating the Third Annual Honor Flight Day in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ashby on the resolution.

SENATOR ASHBY: Thank you, Mr. President.

Today we celebrate our third annual Honor Flight Day in our State Capitol. Honor Flight is a national organization with more than

100 hubs across America. These Honor Flight hubs provide all-expense-paid trips for our veterans and their families to Washington, D.C., where they visit memorials that are erected in their honor.

Many veterans and organizers call it a flight of a lifetime. It's my honor, as the ranking member of the Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee, to introduce our Honor Flight veterans and organizers.

We have dozens of veterans here with us today representing 10 Honor Flight hubs throughout the State of New York, to include Long Island Honor Flight, Big Apple Honor Flight, Hudson Valley Honor Flight, Patriot Flight Albany, Leatherstocking Honor Flight, Honor Flight Syracuse, Honor Flight Rochester, Twin Tiers Honor Flight, Buffalo-Niagara Honor Flight, and North Country Honor Flight.

We are also joined by veterans of the Vietnam War, the Korea conflict, World War II veterans, and Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, to include 99-year-old Arthur Grabiner, I believe a constituent of Senator Liu, a Navy Pacific Theater veteran who was in the Philippines just

last month commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Manila. He will be receiving the Congressional Gold Medal next month and will be turning 100 in September.

Please welcome them and honor their service.

(Applause from gallery.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Ashby.

Senator Scarcella-Spanton on the resolution.

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

And thank you to my colleague Senator Ashby, who's a wonderful ranking member on this committee, for introducing this resolution today.

It's important to mention each year the Honor Flight Network helps make it possible for about 22,000 veterans to travel to Washington, D.C. And since its inception, approximately 275,000 veterans from all services, from more than 130 locations across the country, have taken this flight.

In New York State alone, over

5,000 members of the armed services have fulfilled their wish to visit our nation's capital and all its sites and memorials honoring our country's great history.

Once again, our nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York.

And it was wonderful to meet so many of you this morning. Thank you again to my colleague Senator Ashby for introducing this.

I proudly vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Scarcella-Spanton.

To our guests, we thank you for your sacrifice and we appreciate and applaud your service. I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you all of the privileges and courtesies of this house.

Please be recognized.

(Cheers; lengthy standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution was previously adopted on March 11th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: At the request of the sponsors, today's resolutions are all open

for cosponsorship.

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

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I have a motion here, Mr. President.

On behalf of Senator Stavisky, on page 27 I offer the following amendments to Calendar 458, Senate Print 4892, and ask that said bill retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The amendments are received, and the bill will retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

Senator Gianaris.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 130, Senate Print 1926, by Senator Persaud, an act to amend the Social Services Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the

last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 2026.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 130, voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Oberacker and Walczyk.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 3.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 289, Senate Print 568, by Senator May, an act to amend the Election Law.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Lay it aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 293, Senate Print 1809, by Senator Fernandez, an act to amend the Election Law.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Lay it

aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 378, Senate Print 4980, by Senator Martinez, an act to amend the General Municipal Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 378, voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Lanza, Martins, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk and Weber.

Ayes, 42. Nays, 18.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 433, Senate Print 4852, by Senator Skoufis, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 433, voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Griffo, Helming, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 42. Nays, 18.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 460, Senate Print Number 5392, by Senator Scarcella-Spanton, an act to amend the Education Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This

act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 460, voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Griffo, Helming, O'Mara, Rhoads, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 51. Nays, 9.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Also Senator Martinez.

Ayes, 50. Nays, 10.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 483, Senate Print 4911, by Senator Hinchey, an act to amend the Agriculture and Markets Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 487, Senate Print 1287A, by Senator Persaud, an act to amend the Public Health Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number

528, Senate Print 2011, by Senator Parker, an act to direct the Department of State and Public Service Commission to jointly study and report upon the disclosure to consumer credit reporting agencies.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 528, voting in the negative are Senators Martins, O'Mara and Ortt.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 3.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 529, Senate Print 2587, by Senator Mayer, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Mayer to explain her vote.

SENATOR MAYER: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to vote aye on this legislation.

By establishing January 30th as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution, we are affirming New York's commitment to learning and teaching about the difficult history of the United States' shameful treatment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during World War II. We recognize Fred Korematsu's contributions to helping us reckon with this history, and we recommit to the ongoing fight for civil and constitutional rights for all.

In 1942, the United States forced West Coast residents of Japanese descent to leave their homes and communities to be sent to internment camps for the duration of the war.

Fred Korematsu, who was born to Japanese immigrant parents, refused to go when his family was ordered. He was arrested, convicted in federal court, and sent to an internment camp.

He appealed his conviction, but the United States Supreme Court ultimately affirmed it in Korematsu versus the United States. After the war, when he was released, he began his life as a civil rights advocate, fighting for those who were deeply wronged during the war, to ensure that this did not happen to any other group.

In 1984, his case was reopened and his conviction overturned on the basis of government misconduct. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.

As New York State and the United States see a rise in anti-Asian hate and other forms of hate and discrimination, we must stand united and continue to acknowledge the painful history of discrimination and mistreatment of Japanese-Americans.

Let us ensure that the words of the Constitution, which we swore to when we took our oath, remain our guiding light.

I would like to thank

Assemblymember Grace Lee, who sponsors this bill in the Assembly.

And I'm grateful for the work of Koji Sato and Takeshi and Carolyn Furumoto, who brought this issue to me and have dedicated their lives to advocating for the recognition of Japanese-American history and the contributions of Japanese-Americans to the United States.

I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Mayer to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 544, Senate Print 5105, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend the Mental Hygiene Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the 60th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's move to the controversial calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will ring the bell.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 289, Senate Print 568, by Senator May, an act to amend the Election Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Walczyk, why do you rise?

SENATOR WALCZYK: Mr. President, I rise hoping that the sponsor will yield for some questions.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The

sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President. This bill will allow new portable polling sites during early voting, even two weeks before Election Day.

Will private businesses be eligible to be a location for polling sites?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President, I believe, for example, that a mall would be an eligible site for this.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: So shopping malls. Any other private businesses? Would any private business be eligible to be a polling site for early voting?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. When this has been implemented in Idaho, for example, it sometimes happens -- the

Board of Elections will sometimes set up a mobile site in a parking lot of, say, a Walmart or something like that, where part of the idea is to reach especially rural areas where they may have difficulty getting to early voting sites if there's just one site in their county. So trying to bring the polling to where the people are.

So yes, you could -- at least the parking lot of a major employer or of a major business might be a location for this.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: What about colleges, would they be eligible to be a pop-up or a portable polling site if this bill is passed into law?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. On the same principle, bringing it to people where they are, that would be also a

possibility.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: We've taken up legislation talking about the conflict of interest for certain polling locations recently in this chamber. Any prohibition if it's a state-funded college or a college that gets a lot of state or federal funding? Is there any prohibition in this legislation?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President, no.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The

sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: How about businesses, private businesses, like Micron that's coming to CNY? New York State is investing $100 million. The Federal CHIPS Act, $6 billion. Would they be prohibited from having a portable polling site on location there?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. The purpose of this bill is to bring the voting to where the voters are. So if that was a logical place and both the Republican and the Democratic elections commissioner for the county decided that that was a logical place to put a three-day polling site, that could happen.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: This bill says a polling site would have to be announced 14 days before Election Day, is that right?

SENATOR MAY: I believe it's -- yeah, 14 days before early voting begins, is my understanding.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Looking at lines 8, 9 and 10 of your bill, the designation -- and State Board of Elections, based on pop -- the designation and location of any portable polling place shall be made no later than 14 days before an election. I would take that to be 14 days before Election Day.

Am I reading your legislation wrong, it's 14 days before early voting starts?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President, it doesn't specify in the bill, but my understanding is that it would be when the election begins, which would be the first day of early voting.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: We've asked about security in the past on this legislation. I know you've brought this bill up a number of times. But given that a polling site in your district was broken into this past election, how has that informed any changes to this legislation when it comes to securing polling sites or the pop-up portable polling sites you're proposing here?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. As I have explained in the past, the security -- the protocols for setting up one of these sites would be exactly the same as for setting up any early voting site or Election Day site.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I would.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: So no changes, no consideration for securing those portable polling sites?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. They are the same considerations for all polling sites.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you.

Mr. President, on the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Walczyk on the bill.

SENATOR WALCZYK: A bipartisan group of election commissioners, each year they meet at the beginning of our legislative session. They actually -- they've given pretty clear direction to us as legislators. Sometimes this body and the Assembly have passed as many as 270 different changes to Election Law. They've asked us to really back off on how many times we change the rules for how we run elections in New York State.

But they have supported 19 measures in this legislative session. However, this is not one of the measures that they support.

This bill would allow portable polling locations for early voting to be announced and then, by my read, start operating on early voting just two weeks before Election Day, to be announced and then begin immediately.

They could be at a location where the Governor or a State Senator or a Congressmember had stood just weeks before with a big government check announcing for that business, for that college, for whatever it is, a portable polling location could be at that same location where one of those politicians that's on the ballot was standing with a check just weeks before.

If you want more people to vote, you don't have to buy their votes. Don't ignore elections commissioners and don't do more gimmicks to help one party over the other. There's some things that you could do. You can secure our elections. You could eliminate fraud -- all of it. You could require voter

I.D., listen to our elections commissioners, and you could stop constantly changing the rules for how our elections run in New York State.

This bill will only result in more confusion and skepticism about our electoral process. It will do nothing to change turnout or faith in our democratic process in the State of New York, and I'll be voting no.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Borrello. On the bill?

SENATOR BORRELLO: On the bill, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Borrello on the bill.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you very much, Senator Walczyk, for summarizing what we've talked about before on this bill.

I get it. We want to make sure that anybody and everybody gets to vote. But we can't do it at the expense of security and ensuring that people have faith that our elections are fair and secure.

And unfortunately, this does none of that. We've asked in the past what kind of security, and the answer was, Well, the same kind of security that we have for other polling sites.

I don't know, I'm not a hundred percent sure, but I don't think any polling site is located inside of an RV somewhere on the road. We have to have specific measures to secure these places.

You know, the -- always when we do these things the answer I always hear from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, when we start talking about how these things will be done fairly is that don't worry, we have bipartisan boards of elections throughout New York State. However, they are actively engaged in removing that bipartisanship and turning -- what they term as professionalizing our boards of elections.

Which means no more bipartisanship. It means the party in power in that particular county, municipality, city, whatever it is, is going to decide who works at the Board of Elections. So that's going to go out the window too.

You know, I've referred to these things as "voter food trucks" and kind of made fun of the fact that, you know, we need to put these things on wheels and move them around. But the reality is we need to make sure there is security. I heard earlier today that democracy in our country is under assault and we have a threat to democracy. I hear "threat to democracy" often.

I can't think of a greater threat to the democracy of the United States than people losing faith that our elections are fair and secure and that their vote actually counts. And gimmicks like this will move us in the wrong direction to securing the most important part of democracy, which is ensuring that everyone has faith that our elections are fair, honest and secure.

So I will continue, for I think the fifth time now, to vote no on this bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

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

Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the first of January.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator May to explain her vote.

SENATOR MAY: Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to start by saying that the initial questioning about where these locations could be was deeply disingenuous. Because as it is right now, polling places are located at schools, at colleges, at workplaces of various kinds, and any of the supposed conflicts of interest that my colleague was raising could have been happening for centuries at those locations.

There's nothing different about these particular locations, which aren't necessarily in a mobile site, but they would be only for three days instead of 10 days and allowing the Board of Elections to be a little more nimble about trying to site polling places where the people are.

That's all this is doing. And it grew out of a hearing in 2019 that identified one of the problems with early voting. The first time we experienced it in New York was that rural New Yorkers were struggling to get to early voting sites. So the purpose of this was to help rural voters in particular.

But let me push back even more about the accusations about fraud and insecure elections and undermining voter confidence in our elections. Because every time my colleagues raise some of these issues about -- earlier this week we heard about noncitizen voting. This time we heard about voter fraud.

Every time you raise these issues, knowing full well that voter fraud is extremely rare and it would be extremely hard to find an instance of an election in New York State that had been swayed by voter fraud.

The problem with that is every time you use those phrases you chip away at voter confidence in our elections. And the darkest secret about American elections is that our elections depend, above all, on voter confidence.

Yes, we need good voting laws. Yes,

we need competent and careful election workers and law-abiding voters. But we cannot have a democracy unless we have patriotic citizens who will accept the result of the elections, even if the elections don't go their way.

And it's that kind of patriotism, it's that kind of faith in our elections that's being eroded by this kind of rhetoric, day after day, here in this chamber, in chambers all over the country and social media all over the country.

And I for one can't just sit by and let that happen, so I will speak up about it every time I hear it.

I vote aye on this bill. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator May to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 289, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 38. Nays, 22.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 293, Senate Print 1809, by Senator Fernandez, an act to amend the Election Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Walczyk, why do you rise?

SENATOR WALCZYK: Mr. President, would the sponsor yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Yes, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President. Are college students currently prohibiting from being elections inspectors or poll workers in the State of New York?

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: No. Through you.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Currently they can only be elections inspectors in the county in which they're registered to vote, is that --

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Currently.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: I'm not sure. No, I will, yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: So this bill will allow nonresidents of a county to be elections inspectors as long as they go to college in that county, is that --

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Well, through you, Mr. President, you must be a full-time registered student within a university in the

county. That means that you must be 18 years and older, you must be a New York State-registered voter. And as a college student living in that town, that county, they are technically a resident.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Does this bill that you're presenting today require elections inspectors and poll clerks to be citizens of the United States?

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Well, you must be a citizen to be registered, Mr. President, through you.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you.

Mr. President, on the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Walczyk on the bill.

SENATOR WALCZYK: As I stated

earlier, there's a bipartisan group of elections commissioners. Each year they put together some proposals that they want this Legislature to consider. There were 19 of them this year. This isn't on that list.

This bill would allow college kids with no other connection to a community to be an inspector overseeing integrity of our democratic process at any poll site in that college's county. So a kid that goes to Syracuse University will be paid by Board of Elections to inspect a poll site in the Town of Cicero. Or a student at Potsdam will be paid by St. Lawrence to check in residents in the Town of Rossie.

The Board of Elections has no mechanism to see the citizenship of someone, whether they're registered to vote. And New York City we all know is attempting to register noncitizens by local law. In fact, commissioners receive calls from immigration lawyers asking them to remove registered voters from the rolls because, as was pointed out by the sponsor, it is illegal to register to vote in the State of New York as a noncitizen.

However, that very function, when

immigration lawyers are calling Board of Elections to remove their client from our voter rolls, shows that noncitizens are registering to vote in the New York State.

You want to win? Do better policy, work hard, get results. Not this.

I'll be no.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

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

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Fernandez to explain her vote.

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you. I stood up early because I'm so ready to explain my vote here.

I need my fellow colleague to understand that college students are not just a stranger in your town, a stranger in your

community. They live there. They invest their time there. As a college student, you do explore your town. You do pay taxes and support businesses in that town. So they are -- there is a connection for a college student to where they go to college.

And there is a crisis we have a shortage of poll workers, of poll inspectors. This is a fair effort to allow someone who wants to get engaged early -- and I think we want young people to be engaged early and understand the democratic process to be able to give back in that sense.

There is no gotcha moment here that a noncitizen is going to register and then become a poll worker and then do something to the polls. There are strict rules that already exist in Election Law that you cannot infiltrate or -- not infiltrate. But you cannot engage with voters to sway a vote. You can't do that already.

So if there's fear that maybe a young person that is in an Ivy League school might have an opinion at the poll site, they have to keep that to themselves. But this offers an opportunity for that young person to get an extra

income; again, to be engaged in the political process much earlier in their life; and to help the crisis that is with the lack of poll workers and poll coordinators.

So I proudly vote for this bill because we should be allowing people that want to help our election system do that and to relieve the crisis that is with poll workers, thus probably limiting polling sites.

So I vote aye, and I thank everyone here for voting aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Fernandez to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Gounardes to explain his vote.

SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you, Mr. President.

I really want to thank Senator Fernandez for this.

I'm just baffled why anyone would take objection to the notion that we should allow college students to experience democracy firsthand, the administration of our elections, which are a complicated thing. Let them see it, learn it, appreciate it, engage with it, and then

maybe it will spark an interest in them to want to pursue some type of path in public service.

It just baffles my mind that we're going to discriminate and that we hear people on the other side say kids who go to college are not worthy enough to be poll watchers or poll inspectors during an election. That just boggles my mind.

The State of Oklahoma is now mandating that students have to learn about election irregularities, right? What better way to actually show people how elections are run and administered than by training college students who want to do this work to learn about how their local elections happen, and then give them the opportunity to do so.

Mr. President, every year for the last couple of years I teach a class on voting rights at Hunter College. And every year when we have an election, I make an opportunity for my students to apply for the Board of Elections so that they can be poll watchers in their district.

You know how many jump at that opportunity? Every single time I've taught that class, Mr. President, more than half of my class

has jumped at that opportunity because they want to learn.

This body should not stand in their way. And for that, I proudly vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Gounardes to be recorded in the affirmative.

Senator Martins to explain his vote.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Mr. President.

You know, look, I don't understand why it's always college students and we always focus on college students. If you want to make it more available to people to work polls, let's talk about commuters. I've got plenty of people in my district who commute to work every day, they commute to work in New York City, they go down into Manhattan, they go up into Westchester, different parts of the state. They do support the local economy, they pay local sales tax.

You know, we always talk about college students. But if we want to make it available, let's make it available to everybody. So if somebody is commuting and they're working in a certain area, let's allow them to work the polls.

But we don't. And there's a reason we don't, because we want to make sure that people who are working the polls have historically been people who live in the area, know the area, know their constituents and their neighbors and are able to properly service them. That's always been the case.

And then we make exceptions. But if we're going to be consistent, if we're going to just allow it and allow the door to swing wide open, then let's consider the idea of allowing more than just colleges and college students. Let's consider the idea that people who are commuting, that people who are not there and living there and sleeping there but actually working there, and give them the opportunity to do so as well.

But you know what? That never comes to the floor in this house. That's never a consideration. But yet time and again we're always talking about colleges and college students.

Mr. President, I vote no.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Martins to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Krueger to explain her vote.

SENATOR KRUEGER: I want to thank Senator Martins. I think we should do exactly that, along with having college students being able to be poll workers at their schools or wherever, because we need more people to be involved in democracy, as my colleague so eloquently pointed out, and what better training ground than actually working in an election?

And for the record, I come from New York City. No one knows the people walking into the poll sites. The poll workers do not know who -- they know who I am, happily. They're very happy to see me each time. But they don't know who's coming and going. The population changes constantly. The population is enormous. And we keep moving our poll sites every election, so it's not even the same location as the last time time.

So I'm not worried about that reality. But I think if more people want to be poll workers in a broader distribution of areas, I say yes, we need poll workers. And we only pay them $300 a day, but they have to get there at 6 a.m., to like 10 p.m. So talk to your

neighbors about that too.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Krueger to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 293, voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 39. Nays, 21.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

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

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

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, March 20th, at 11:00 a.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: On

motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Thursday, March 20th, at 11:00 a.m.

(Whereupon, at 5:12 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)