NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

March 20, 2025

11:15 a.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Wednesday, March 19, 2025, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Tuesday, March 18, 2025, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon -- morning, Madam President.

On behalf of Senator Stavisky, on page 25 I offer the following amendments to Calendar 458, Senate Print 4892A, and ask that said bill retain its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

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

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up previously adopted Resolution 493, by Senator Fernandez, read its title, and recognize Senator Fernandez.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 493, by Senator Fernandez, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2025 as Problem Gambling

Awareness Month in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Fernandez on the resolution.

SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madam President.

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month, and today we are passing this resolution to memorialize the national awareness of this concern. As gambling has become more accessible through online gaming and with possible expansions of casinos, we need to make sure that we're very aware of the problems that still remain amongst those that may be harmed. This includes young people, older people, anybody could be at the concern of problem gambling.

So I also want to identify that we have taken serious measures in the state as we've advanced online gambling. One percent of those revenues goes towards gambling addiction services. And in our one-house resolution we propose a 2 percent -- a 1 percent increase, making it a 2 percent to put further funds into the resources needed to help New Yorkers combat gambling addiction.

So I thank this body for bringing

the resolution to the floor, and to support.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Addabbo on the resolution.

SENATOR ADDABBO: Good morning. And thank you, Madam President. Good morning, all.

I want to thank my good friend and colleague Senator Fernandez for this resolution on Problem Gaming Awareness Month for the month of March.

And I do want to highlight something that Senator Fernandez mentioned. New Yorkers are gaming -- they are gambling, let's not be naive about this, they are gambling in other states. But worse is that more and more so, they are gambling online illegally. It's accessible. Sometimes it's targeted towards minors.

And so all the more reason why we deal with this issue as a body, that we regulate gaming in New York. Because when you regulate gaming in New York, you make it safer for New Yorkers. And you also put our state in a far, far better position to help an individual

who not only has an addiction but, more importantly, is on their way to having an addiction.

It is critical that we catch an individual before they get an addiction. Pre-addiction is critical. And you only really can do that if you regulate it.

I want to thank those that are in our state providing these programs. The New York Council for Problem Gambling, Safe Foundation. And others are gaming operators who operate their business in New York and have programs within their operation. I want to thank the operators who do business in New York for helping us with the addiction issue.

But once again, I want to thank my good friend and colleague Senator Fernandez for this resolution, on which I'll be voting aye.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

The resolution was adopted on March 18th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up is

previously adopted Resolution 496, by Senator Hinchey. Please read that resolution's title and recognize Senator Hinchey.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 496, by Senator Hinchey, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 17-23, 2025, as Agriculture Week in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Hinchey on the resolution.

SENATOR HINCHEY: Thank you, Madam President.

Happy Agriculture Week. It's impossible to overstate the importance of agriculture to New York and our world. But as chair of the Senate Agriculture and Food Committee, I'll give it a try.

Every part of our lives connects back to agriculture. The food we eat and the drinks we enjoy, that's agriculture. The clothes we wear, that's agriculture. The furniture we use, that's agriculture. Footballs and baseballs, those are agricultural products. The music we listen to; many of those instruments

come from agriculture.

For an industry that sustains so much of what we love and need to survive, agriculture deserves our continuous support and protection.

New York is unique in the sense that our farmers grow and produce what's called the full plate -- from fruits and vegetables to grains, meat and dairy, we lead the Northeast in ag production, generating $85.8 billion in economic impact, and we have over 30,000 farms, mostly small and family-run. Because of their work, we are number one in yogurt, sour cream and cottage cheese, number two in maple syrup, apples and cabbage, number three in grapes and snap beans, and number four in squash.

For most New York farmers, the job is about continuing a legacy passed down through generations. It runs in their blood, and they want to see that legacy continue for generations to come.

From the Hudson Valley to Long Island, from Buffalo to Brooklyn, and the North Country to the Southern Tier, I've seen the love that goes into growing food, caring for

livestock, stewarding the land, and feeding people.

That economic impact number I mentioned earlier is significant, but I want to clear up any misconceptions. No farmer in New York is in this business to get rich. Our local farms are small operations, not corporate giants. They don't control the prices of what they grow, because farmers are price takers, not price makers.

I have a local farm that was actually offered to grow fresh strawberries for one of the large grocery chains in our state. But when the grocery chain told them what they would pay for those strawberries, that didn't even cover the cost of production. That grocery store chain found cheaper options in other states, and that farm actually no longer sells fresh strawberries.

Our farmers take on all the risks and have to accept whatever price the market dictates, even if it's a loss. Farming can be a difficult, labor intensive, and an often thankless job. Yet farmers and farmworkers press on because they believe in what they do.

I couldn't be more proud of the work that we are doing in the Legislature to fight for our farmers and farmworkers and to help get fresh food into the hands of more New Yorkers. This work has been more important. Last week our federal administration told our country that supporting American farmers and feeding hungry kids are not important under this new administration. They canceled $1 billion from USDA programs that provide fresh local food to schools, childcare centers, and food banks.

Then the House proposed cutting $12 billion from CEP, the Community Eligibility Program, which is the program we've been bolstering to help get universal school meals across our state. That's right, the federal cut could jeopardize school meals for over 900,000 New York students.

But we run things differently in New York, and we should be proud of that. In our state, few initiatives have such strong bipartisan support as our food programs -- specifically, programs that connect local farmers, students and families. We see the positive impacts of these initiatives every day,

including our "farm to food bank" program, Nourish New York.

At the height of the pandemic we saw the lines at local food banks grow exponentially, with people newly dependent on food across the state and others who were already struggling. During that time many farmers lost up to 50 percent of their markets as schools, restaurants and hotels shut down. Tragically, produce was left to rot in the fields, fruit dying on the vine, and milk was dumped because supply chains were shattered.

This loss has a domino effect on their ability to take care of their employees and their families. But during this dark time, Nourish New York emerged as a beacon of bipartisan state support, addressing food insecurity while providing critical revenue for farmers. We codified this program in state law with unanimous support from both legislative houses.

Regardless of where you live or what side of the aisle you're on, there are some things we all know to be true. If farmers keep losing markets, they can't stay in business.

Teachers can't teach hungry kids when they can't focus. And no parent should have to choose between feeding their family and keeping the lights on.

While Washington abandons farmers, we are forging new local markets, like expanding the Farm to School program so students can get fresh, local food at breakfast, lunch, and snack time. As federal cuts threaten school meal programs, New York is on the verge of becoming a true universal school meal state.

While the USDA freezes grants and loans already contracted with farmers for conservation and energy projects, we're working to increase capital funding to help farmers keep their operations resilient and cost-effective.

While Washington pushes policies that benefit large corporate farms, New York is fighting for our small family farms. We're helping new farmers start new businesses, helping longstanding farmers lower their costs, providing workforce support and protecting farmland.

In New York, we know that if we do right by our farmers, we protect one of our greatest strengths, a stable local food supply

and local businesses that actually care about the communities that they operate in.

This work, as I said before, has never been more important, and I want to thank all of my colleagues for joining me in standing up for New York agriculture, which supports all of our communities.

Thank you, and Happy Agriculture Week.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Borrello on the resolution.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you, Madam President.

I certainly was going to rise to talk about Ag Week and what a wonderful thing it is, and we do good bipartisan things here. But, you know, I can't let this discussion go unanswered when we start talking about how New York does things differently. We do.

We send damaging legislation not through the Agriculture Committee, but through the Environmental Committee or the Labor Committee, that harms our farmers. We do things like, you know, incentivize them to grow solar

panels instead of food to feed New Yorkers. We do that right here in this chamber by supplying more and more subsidies, taxpayer subsidies, to do things that ultimately are bad for farmers because it eats up valuable farmland. That's how we do things differently here in New York State.

So what do we do for our farmers? Well, we told them, You can't buy these seeds -- even though these seeds are pretty much safe according to everybody else -- but you're going to have to buy these seeds, which are more expensive.

We tell them a lot of things: How they're going to deal with labor, overtime. Did that go through the Ag Committee? It did not.

New York is an ag state. I grew up on farms. My grandfathers farmed the land. I grew up thinking that New York State was an agriculture state. I learned, when I went other places, that people think of New York State as New York City. They don't understand that we have hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland. And those things are under threat here in New York State -- invasive species, all the other things that have had a negative impact on

agriculture.

But the biggest threat to New York agriculture is what happens right here in Albany. That's why we're losing farms at a record pace here in New York State, twice the rate of the national average.

I'm here to support agriculture. I don't like when I see interference in what is basic business, being able to feed people. But I also believe that our hands are not clean here. And to point fingers when we're celebrating agriculture is counterproductive.

So I stand with agriculture, I stand with farmers, I stand with those folks that actually lose money to provide food. But I don't stand with politics that makes it impossible for farmers to do the job that they need to do, which is provide food.

No farms, no food. New York State is an ag state. And I am proud to have an agriculture heritage in my family.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Tedisco on the resolution.

SENATOR TEDISCO: Well, I'm proud to stand up today with my colleagues publicly, with this resolution, to salute our family farms, small, middle, large farms in New York State. As has been said, they have a number of challenges in this state, which all of us should be cognizant of trying to overcome in many ways.

They're doing more with less. And there are a lot of regulations, a lot of mandates. But they put the food on the table for us, which is so important. This is something we do today, salute Agriculture Day, salute our family farms. Probably something we should say when we say our prayers either in the morning when we get up, or before we go to bed: Please, help these farmers, the family farmers who provide this food and serve us so well in this state, to be able to continue. I mean, they're being challenged by industries where they want to develop their land and put solar up.

And, you know, it's a temptation because they're breaking even sometimes, they're not even making a profit sometimes. But they love what they do. They love the history.

And I couldn't be prouder today to

know -- and several of my colleagues on our side of the aisle who are sponsoring the bill that we -- I authored and we sponsored, several of my colleagues, in a bipartisan way with one of our other colleagues and several of the colleagues in the New York State Assembly.

You know, we have this tax credit that we've provided and put in place, and it's fantastic for their machinery, the tractors, the fertilizers, all the equipment they need to develop the products, to get it to market so they can sustain the work they do.

What we didn't provide is the workers that could help them do that, an incentive for them, because a lot of people look at a farm and say, Jeez, that's a tremendous amount of hard work. I'm looking for a job, but I'm not sure I want to work on a farm because I see the challenges they have.

Well, when we open that particular tax credit up to our farmers, which is the bill that I authored, several of my colleagues sponsored here, it's sponsored in the Assembly, and we provide an incentive for a tax credit for housing development for our small family farms

and our farmers in New York State. I'm proud we took the initiative to put that into legislation, to have it in both houses.

And I'm almost as proud that the Governor, who didn't put it in, but this house put it this, and the house on the other side put it in the budget.

Holistically, I can't say a lot for the size in the budget itself. It's not going to solve that problem of affordability. But I'm proud you took our legislation and put it into this budget to provide that tax credit for small businesses, medium businesses, large farm businesses in the State of New York so they can continue to get the workers that can try to overcome all the things Senator Borrello was talking about, and Senator Hinchey was talking about, so we can help them overcome it. Because if you don't bring the workers onto the farms, you don't get the product and the produce out to the market, they don't survive.

And it's a real challenge for them. They wouldn't have brought it to this body and said, Help us have an incentive to get workers to want to work on our farms so we can get that

product to the public and we can sustain ourselves.

We reacted to that. We put the bill in place. And I'm proud that it's in the Senate budget and it's also in the Assembly budget. If there's anything we fight for in this body before this budget becomes actuated and in place, it's to keep that tax credit so they can have the workers in place to get that food to the market and they can rejoice in the fact that they can keep a family farm and the great history they've had in this important agricultural system that we have in this state.

So I'm very proud that it's in the budget right now, that we authored it. And I salute all those farmers out there, all the family farms, all the individuals who work on those farms. And when it gets in place, I urge you out there, if you're looking for a job that makes a difference in New York State, go to work for one of our family farms. It would be fantastic.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I remind my colleagues, Madam President, that this is a resolution to celebrate Agriculture Week. There will be plenty of opportunity for policy debates as we going through the session. But let's try and keep our comments on the resolution.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Senator Bailey on the resolution.

SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you, Madam President.

Who knew that this type of discussion would grow out of a resolution for Agriculture Week?

(Laughter.)

SENATOR BAILEY: But in all seriousness, if -- I know we're not debating the policy, but no majority has been more responsible and responsive to the needs of making sure that we continue the growth -- no pun intended, I promise you this time -- of agriculture in this state.

But when I originally raised my

hand, and I will go back to that point, I wanted to talk about how important food is to everything that we do. And there was something that Senator Hinchey said, that Senator Murray has alluded to, that many of our colleagues have alluded to about food and hungry children.

I'm going to use my time to talk about if we don't feed our kids, if our children are not nourished, they cannot function. If you cannot drive a car without gas or an electric vehicle without a charge, how can you expect a child to learn, how can you expect a child to reach the levels that we want them to reach in society?

So when you're talking about agriculture, it's more than just, you know, the upstate trip that my -- like as far -- like when I was younger, the furthest we ever went was apple picking, Madam President. I thought that Newburgh, New York, was the North Country.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR BAILEY: I thought it was the outpost of America. I thought it was as far as you can go in New York.

But being a member in this body has

taught me one great thing about this great state, is that there's a great state everywhere in New York. And there are so many great different small family farms, large farms, in agriculture that we rely upon in this great state.

And so apples to apples, oranges to oranges, I'm grateful to be in this state and having been a part of this majority that is really showing the focus that, like, food is essential to the way that we live. I know that sounds cliche, and it sounds like something rather perfunctory to say. But you ever talk to a really hungry kid? You ever seen a really hungry kid, a really hungry person in their inability to function in their job, in their school, in life and in general?

We have to make sure we continue to feed New York. And this is the reason why Agriculture Week is important, Agriculture Month is important, anything agriculture-related is important. And I salute our chair and the sponsor of this resolution and all of my colleagues. Regardless of whatever you believe, if you believe in food and families and farms, I stand with you today.

I vote aye on the resolution, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Stec on the resolution.

SENATOR STEC: Thank you, Madam President.

This resolution certainly goes to speak to our love and affection for our agriculture sector in this state, obviously one of the most important and largest contributors to our state's economy.

However, as some of my colleagues have pointed out, we are sending mixed messages and the activities that we're doing here are not benefiting our farms. When I was a kid growing up, on the occasions of Christmas, my dad's birthday or Father's Day, my sister and I would run in: "Dad, Dad, we love you, we love you." And he used to say something I thought was a little odd as a kid, but the older I get, the more I appreciate his wisdom. He said, "Don't tell me you love me, show me you love me."

So it's nice that we're pausing today to tell our farmers that we love them, but

then when we look at the legislation that comes out of Albany, it certainly doesn't show that love. We're piling on costs to our farmers. A lot of our farmers are dairy farmers. It's important for us to remember, they are price takers, not price makers. They don't get to pass along the costs that we pass on to them onto the consumer. They eat it, or they lose it, and they go under. Workers' comp, minimum wage, unemployment insurance, exorbitant and rising energy costs, telling them what seeds they can't use despite the fact that the rest of the planet is using these seeds but they're not good enough in New York State. Or certain pesticides that are widely used everywhere else on the planet and tested in other very blue and environmentally minded states, yet not good enough in New York State.

All these things, it's a death of a thousand cuts that we are risking with our farms. Again, in particular the dairy industry, they are price takers, not price makers. They can't pass these costs along. They're competing with the Midwest. And the Midwest, if they don't pile these costs on, then guess what? Our farmers

aren't competitive. Our farmers lose money, our farmers close.

And the last thing that I think any of us want to see happen to an industry that we say we love is to see those beautiful agricultural fields get turned over to solar farms.

So again, while it's important to thank and honor our agriculture sector here today, we need to look in the mirror. And are we telling them that we love them or are we showing them that we love them?

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Senator Fahy on the resolution.

SENATOR FAHY: Thank you.

I'd be remiss if I didn't stand today as the daughter of two farmers in some ways who never really recovered from leaving the farm.

And I'm reminded that if I learned anything from them, it was this profound, profound respect and love for the land. Land and water, and as well as learning hard work from them and a dedication to the land.

I'm very proud to be a new committee member of the Ag Committee and am proud to represent many amazing farms in the 46th District. The -- one of them, I was speaking to one of the farms, the manager I was speaking to just a week or so ago, and that is a beloved and renowned farm, Indian Ladder Farm.

There's a lot of nervousness and a lot of apprehension about what is going on right now despite the investments that I'm so proud of that have helped fuel Nourish New York, helped grow our school lunch and breakfast programs. But they're nervous with the cuts, the billion-dollar cut on food purchases, the threats -- the $12 billion threat on the community eligibility program, the CEP, the threats with the tariffs on the potash tariff on just even one, one item that is threatened, which is the potash fertilizer that we import from Canada. So threats on what that will do to the price of food.

So there is a tremendous nervousness out there. And yet we have to remind ourselves that despite that nervousness, we have to continue to invest in our farms, we have to

continue to expand good healthy clean food and clean water, especially in our schools. Well before I ever heard of Nourish New York, my father was a little obsessed with fresh foods, fresh vegetables and fresh fruit.

So it is important that we continue to grow those farmers' markets, continue to expand despite the head winds that we are facing every single day at the national level. And I think it's important to remind ourselves of that today as we celebrate Ag Week.

Farms do matter. And I learned this the hard way, I'm afraid: Good food is good medicine. So when we promote good food, when we expand access to good food, we are by definition providing good medicine.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Murray on the resolution.

Senator Martins on the resolution.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Madam President.

You know, there is one fact -- and I think we can all agree on that -- it's that the

greatest environmentalists in the state and in the world are our farmers, who care deeply about the soil and deeply about the tradition of farming in our state.

As many of my colleagues have said, I'm also one generation removed from farming. It's tradition in my family going back, frankly, for many generations.

But I wanted to dispel some myths here in the room, because I heard about farming in upstate New York and the Hudson Valley and Western New York and the North Country. Well, ladies and gentlemen, my colleagues, the reality is nowhere is farming more vibrant, alive and more of a contributor to our state economy than right on Long Island, certainly on the East End of Long Island, with the farms that we have there.

And I want to take the opportunity not only to celebrating Agriculture Day and understand how important that is, but also remind everyone that we find agriculture everywhere in all four corners of this state, and that's something that we should celebrate. Because it is critical to the DNA of our state, farming is.

And we should embrace -- all of us, both sides of the aisle, when we decide policies, also prioritize those policies that actually make it -- frankly, make it so that our farmers are multigenerational farmers, can continue to survive in a state that is ever more difficult for people to do business in.

Madam President, I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Rhoads on the resolution.

SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you, Madam President.

And I rise in support of this resolution. I thank the sponsor for introducing it. To dovetail off of Senator Martins' comments, while Long Island is often viewed as Albany's ATM, it is also well known -- it should be well known that Long Island is one of our primary farming regions.

And just some of the numbers. Long Island is actually the home of 592 farms, 89 percent of which are family-owned. There's over 31,000 acres of farmland right in Nassau and Suffolk County.

And as we pause today to celebrate our farmers and the amazing work that they do in providing for all of us, we do have to -- and by the way, I want to mention Long Island farms, number one in aquaculture, number one in horticulture, number one in wineries -- we actually have 69 wineries on Long Island.

But as we pause today to celebrate our farmers, instead of turning our eyes down to Washington, let's focus on what we're doing right here in this chamber to make it more difficult for these farmers to be able to do their job, stay in business. And let's rededicate ourselves to promoting the cause of farming.

Happy Ag Week, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator May on the resolution.

SENATOR MAY: Thank you, Madam President.

I rise, first of all, to thank the sponsor for this resolution and our -- and the Senate for supporting agriculture in as many ways as it does.

I also represent Cayuga County,

which is the largest producer of agricultural products in the state. And I'm very proud to represent this county. I wanted to -- and also I'm proud to be the mother of an aspiring farmer, one of the young farmers coming up to try to rejuvenate agriculture in this state.

But I wanted to raise one additional way that we're supporting agriculture that Senator Hinchey didn't mention, but I think we need to lift it up, and that is agricultural research. We do a lot in our one-house budget to support research, to support Cornell Cooperative Extension and the many university research programs around this state. Again, at a time when they are under threat from cuts from the federal government, I'm proud that we're supporting them.

This research is critical to agriculture. It includes developing new seed varieties that can withstand a rapidly changing climate, new ways to deal with biosolids and runoff from farms so that farmers can do their jobs and not be in conflict with the health of our lakes and waterways. New grape varieties that are resistant to various pests and other

threats, so that farmers don't have to use as many pesticides on them.

New ways of storing and preserving milk products. Cayuga Milk is a cooperative milk processing concern that is very successful. But it depended on a lot of research to get where it is.

Fiber production. We are figuring out through research a number of ways to take New York State fiber and really create a scaled-up industry that can produce fabrics and other materials from the fibers we produce.

And then, finally, agrivoltaics, which is a way that we can both be generating green energy and generating food on the same land.

So I salute our agriculture in general in this state, but agricultural research as well, and hope that we can preserve a lot of these important programs.

I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

The resolution was adopted on March 18th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Senator Hinchey and Senator Fernandez would like to open the resolutions we took up today for cosponsorship.

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

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up the calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 190, Senate Print 1837, by Senator Hinchey, an act to amend the Public Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 253, Senate Print 1673, by Senator Gounardes, an act to amend the Labor Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 253, voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk and Weik.

Ayes, 41. Nays, 18.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 477, Senate Print Number 2073, by Senator Scarcella-Spanton, an act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 511, Senate Print 397, by Senator Myrie, an act to amend the General Business Law.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Lay it aside for the day, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is laid aside for the day.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number

513, Senate Print 5599, by Senator May, an act to amend the General Business Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 513, voting in the negative:

Senator Walczyk.

Ayes, 58. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 521, Senate Print 118, by Senator Cleare, an act to amend the Elder Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Cleare to explain her vote.

SENATOR CLEARE: Thank you, Madam President.

There are over 400,000 New Yorkers living with Alzheimer's, and this number is sadly on the rise and expected to increase with each passing year. Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that does not just affect the individual, but it affects the whole family and caregiver systems.

There are over 540,000 individuals and caregivers who are actively taking care of those afflicted, many on a full-time basis. We must do everything within our power to make sure that family members and caregivers have positive, proactive and empowering support to optimally care for their loved ones.

This bill requires a state-level centrally located database of successful dementia and Alzheimer's disease programs to be made available on the State Office for the Aging, SOFA's website.

In a state as vast as New York, with the number of local community-centered approaches, it is wise to have all best practices collected in one place so they may be replicated.

It's also essentially to collect and centralize proven approaches so family members have a place to turn with confidence for strategies, ideas, and interventions to improve everyone's collective quality of life.

I proudly vote aye.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 532, Senate Print 5177, by Senator Comrie, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the

roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick to explain her vote.

SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Madam President.

As an attorney practicing law for 30 years, I'm sad to say -- I can't believe I've reached that milestone -- but in the course of my practice, I've notarized thousands of deeds. I handle real estate matters, I handle estate matters, and this is an area that I'm familiar with.

I understand the purpose of this bill is to combat the fraud that we're seeing where people are losing their homes by fraudulent deeds. However, I don't think, in my opinion, that this bill is going to address that issue properly. It's simply going to burden the notaries who are doing their job, keeping the records, asking for I.D.

The people that are accomplishing these fraudulent transfers are sophisticated enough to also, you know, forge the notary's signature, steal their identity, and try to

notarize a deed that is not legitimate.

And I've unfortunately incurred that in my practice, where we've been contacted to say did you notarize this deed, and realize that it's not a true notary.

So I also want to comment that the New York State Bar Association issued a report, and that report was focused on the notary recordkeeping requirements and specifically stated that putting more burdens on our notaries is not going to address this problem.

So while I understand that we have an issue that we need to address, I don't believe this bill does it. And therefore, Madam President, I'm voting in the negative.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Comrie to explain his vote.

SENATOR COMRIE: Thank you, Madam President.

I rise today to just try to enlighten my colleagues as to why we're doing this.

Deed theft has become a major problem within the state and within this country. It has required that we try to do everything we can to close the gaps to prevent fraudulent actors from utilizing the notaries and the notary stamps, to prevent deed theft.

We have -- and I could read you just something that was released by District Attorney Melinda Katz yesterday dealing with a fraud -- deed fraud scheme that included falsifying documents filing false deeds with the city register's office. This is happening throughout the state. Property ownership is a problem for a lot of people in our communities, older people, people that don't understand lawyers or people that are moving into their house.

We have actually, in Queens, cases where people moved into seniors' homes, threatened them, and took over their deeds.

We have to find every way possible to stop this. Making sure that a person that is a notary has a responsible record, has paperwork that can prove that they -- what they signed and how they signed it, makes it easier for the district attorneys to follow through and go after

folks that are acting fraudulently.

But unfortunately there's too many people that have now taken up this deed theft as a way of doing business and making money, and we have to stop it.

So while it may not be the most amenable thing for folks that are acting as notaries, it's something that's necessary to protect our homeowners.

Therefore, I would urge everyone to sign this bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

Senator Bailey to explain his vote.

SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you, Madam President.

Like Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, I too am an attorney and I have done some of these real estate cases. And I also live in what I like to always comment about Senator Comrie's district, I'm like the mirror image of Senator Comrie's district in the Northeast Bronx. And the loss of homeownership based upon these deed theft schemes has been staggering. They're

going to our seniors that -- when people pass away, they're going to Surrogate's Court, they're getting the public notices, they're going right to their homes and they're intimidating them and they're doing all of these types of fraudulent things, and it's losing generational wealth.

Generational homeownership that has come from people who are, as we like to say, cash-poor and house-rich, but that can no longer be maybe passed down to those generations because of these scams.

Is this the one tool in the toolbox that will stop all of it? Of course not. And I don't think anybody's saying that. But I think giving more tools to individuals to be able to stop this sort of rampant deed theft is critically important.

And so I applaud Senator Comrie for introducing this bill, and I think that we need to -- we should add more tools to the proverbial toolbox so that we can stop this.

I do think this is a step in the right direction. I think this is a great bill. And I simply say yes, maybe it's going to be burdensome for notaries. And that's not

something I say lightly. We don't want any burden on anybody.

But I'd rather there to be a burden on notaries than for people to lose generational wealth and thousands -- a hundred thousand dollars and maybe even a million dollars lost by somebody who was intimidated or coerced or scared into signing something that they weren't knowledgeable of or have a -- and the notary was aiding them in that.

I vote aye, Madam President.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 532, voting in the negative are Senators Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Gallivan, Griffo, Oberacker, O'Mara, Rhoads, Tedisco and Walczyk.

Ayes, 51. Nays, 8.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 535, Senate Print 2436, by Senator Krueger, an act to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 535, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Scarcella-Spanton, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk and Weik.

Ayes, 38. Nays, 21.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 543, Senate Print 5559, by Senator Hoylman-Sigal, an act to amend the Judiciary Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 4. This act shall take effect on the 30th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 543, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco and Weik.

Ayes, 41. Nays, 18.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 546, Senate Print 2051, by Senator Webb, an act to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Webb to explain her vote.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Madam President.

This legislation would allow bed-and-breakfasts to sell New York State liquor, wine, beer and cider to their guests while creating parity between bed-and-breakfasts along with similar establishments such as hotels, restaurants and catering establishments.

By permitting a licensed brewery, farm brewery, farm cidery, distillery, farm winery or winery to operate a bed-and-breakfast, this legislation will not only support the bed-and-breakfast economy but also boost our local agritourism industry and all of the delicious beer, cider, spirits and wine produced right here in New York State. This is helping to expand our markets for our farmers.

Further, this bill removes a requirement that a patron must be an overnight guest in order for a B&B to sell an alcoholic

beverage, which will lead to expanded opportunities for these small businesses to expand their customer base.

This bill expands choices for tourists coming to our great state, allowing them to enjoy some of the same comforts at a B&B that they might expect and experience at a hotel.

Madam President, this legislation is not only good for the small businesses, our farmers and tourism industry in our communities, but it also provides some important support to New York State's growing wine distillery, brewery and cider industry.

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

Thank you.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Is there any

further business at the desk?

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adjourn until Monday, March 24th, at 3:00 p.m., with the intervening days being legislative days.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Monday, March 24th, at 3:00 p.m., with intervening days being legislative days.

(Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)