

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10

March 20, 2025

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11:15 a.m.

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REGULAR SESSION

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18 SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD, Acting President

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ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

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

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
3 Senate will come to order.

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

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

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

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

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Reading
14 of the Journal.

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

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

22 Presentation of petitions.

23 Messages from the Assembly.

24 Messages from the Governor.

25 Reports of standing committees.

1 Reports of select committees.

2 Communications and reports from
3 state officers.

4 Motions and resolutions.

5 Senator Gianaris.

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

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

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

16 Senator Gianaris.

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

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
22 Secretary will read.

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

1 Awareness Month in the State of New York.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
3 Fernandez on the resolution.

4 SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you,
5 Madam President.

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

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

25 So I thank this body for bringing

1 the resolution to the floor, and to support.

2 Thank you.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
4 you, Senator.

5 Senator Addabbo on the resolution.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 Thank you, Madam President.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
21 you.

22 The resolution was adopted on
23 March 18th.

24 Senator Gianaris.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up is

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

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
5 Secretary will read.

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

10 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
11 Hinchey on the resolution.

12 SENATOR HINCHEY: Thank you,
13 Madam President.

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

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

1 come from agriculture.

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

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

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

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

1 livestock, stewarding the land, and feeding
2 people.

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

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

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

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

12 Then the House proposed cutting
13 \$12 billion from CEP, the Community Eligibility
14 Program, which is the program we've been
15 bolstering to help get universal school meals
16 across our state. That's right, the federal cut
17 could jeopardize school meals for over 900,000
18 New York students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 Thank you, and Happy Agriculture
9 Week.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
11 you, Senator.

12 Senator Borrello on the resolution.

13 SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you,
14 Madam President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 agriculture.

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

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

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

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

22 Thank you, Madam President.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
24 you, Senator.

25 Senator Tedisco on the resolution.

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

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

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

25 And I couldn't be prouder today to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 product to the public and we can sustain
2 ourselves.

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

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

23 Thank you, Madam President.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
25 you, Senator.

1 Senator Gianaris.

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

8 Thank you.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
10 you.

11 Senator Bailey on the resolution.

12 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
13 Madam President.

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

17 (Laughter.)

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

25 But when I originally raised my

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

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

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

21 (Laughter.)

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

25 But being a member in this body has

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

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

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

1 I vote aye on the resolution,
2 Madam President.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
4 you, Senator.

5 Senator Stec on the resolution.

6 SENATOR STEC: Thank you,
7 Madam President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 Thank you, Madam President.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
15 you.

16 Senator Fahy on the resolution.

17 SENATOR FAHY: Thank you.

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

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

1 I'm very proud to be a new committee
2 member of the Ag Committee and am proud to
3 represent many amazing farms in the
4 46th District. The -- one of them, I was
5 speaking to one of the farms, the manager I was
6 speaking to just a week or so ago, and that is a
7 beloved and renowned farm, Indian Ladder Farm.

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

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

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

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

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

17 Thank you.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
19 you, Senator.

20 Senator Murray on the resolution.

21 Senator Martins on the resolution.

22 SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you,
23 Madam President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 Madam President, I vote aye.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
10 you, Senator.

11 Senator Rhoads on the resolution.

12 SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you,
13 Madam President.

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

21 And just some of the numbers.
22 Long Island is actually the home of 592 farms,
23 89 percent of which are family-owned. There's
24 over 31,000 acres of farmland right in Nassau and
25 Suffolk County.

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

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

15 Happy Ag Week, Madam President.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
17 you, Senator.

18 Senator May on the resolution.

19 SENATOR MAY: Thank you,
20 Madam President.

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

25 I also represent Cayuga County,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 I vote aye.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
23 you, Senator.

24 The resolution was adopted on
25 March 18th.

1 Senator Gianaris.

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

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

9 Senator Gianaris.

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up
11 the calendar.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
13 Secretary will read.

14 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
15 190, Senate Print 1837, by Senator Hinchey, an
16 act to amend the Public Service Law.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
18 last section.

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

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
22 roll.

23 (The Secretary called the roll.)

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
25 the results.

1 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
3 is passed.

4 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
5 253, Senate Print 1673, by Senator Gounardes, an
6 act to amend the Labor Law.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
8 last section.

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

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
13 roll.

14 (The Secretary called the roll.)

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
16 the results.

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

23 Ayes, 41. Nays, 18.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
25 is passed.

1 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
2 477, Senate Print Number 2073, by
3 Senator Scarcella-Spanton, an act to amend
4 the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
6 last section.

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

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
10 roll.

11 (The Secretary called the roll.)

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
13 the results.

14 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
16 is passed.

17 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
18 511, Senate Print 397, by Senator Myrie, an act
19 to amend the General Business Law.

20 SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

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

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

25 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number

1 513, Senate Print 5599, by Senator May, an act to
2 amend the General Business Law.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
4 last section.

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

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
8 roll.

9 (The Secretary called the roll.)

10 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
11 the results.

12 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
13 Calendar 513, voting in the negative:
14 Senator Walczyk.

15 Ayes, 58. Nays, 1.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
17 is passed.

18 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
19 521, Senate Print 118, by Senator Cleare, an act
20 to amend the Elder Law.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
22 last section.

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

1 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
2 roll.

3 (The Secretary called the roll.)

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
5 Cleare to explain her vote.

6 SENATOR CLEARE: Thank you,
7 Madam President.

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

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

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

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

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

10 I proudly vote aye.

11 Thank you, Madam President.

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

14 Announce the results.

15 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
17 is passed.

18 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
19 532, Senate Print 5177, by Senator Comrie, an act
20 to amend the Executive Law.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
22 last section.

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

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the

1 roll.

2 (The Secretary called the roll.)

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

5 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

6 Thank you, Madam President.

7 As an attorney practicing law for
8 30 years, I'm sad to say -- I can't believe I've
9 reached that milestone -- but in the course of my
10 practice, I've notarized thousands of deeds. I
11 handle real estate matters, I handle estate
12 matters, and this is an area that I'm familiar
13 with.

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

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

1 notarize a deed that is not legitimate.

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

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

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

16 Thank you.

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

20 Senator Comrie to explain his vote.

21 SENATOR COMRIE: Thank you,
22 Madam President.

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

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

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

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

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

1 folks that are acting fraudulently.

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

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

10 Therefore, I would urge everyone to
11 sign this bill.

12 Thank you, Madam President.

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

15 Senator Bailey to explain his vote.

16 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
17 Madam President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11 I vote aye, Madam President.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD:

13 Senator Bailey to be recorded in the affirmative.

14 Announce the results.

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

19 Ayes, 51. Nays, 8.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
21 is passed.

22 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
23 535, Senate Print 2436, by Senator Krueger, an
24 act to amend the Administrative Code of the City
25 of New York.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
2 last section.

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

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
6 roll.

7 (The Secretary called the roll.)

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
9 the results.

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

18 Ayes, 38. Nays, 21.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
20 is passed.

21 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
22 543, Senate Print 5559, by Senator Hoylman-Sigal,
23 an act to amend the Judiciary Law.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
25 last section.

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

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
5 roll.

6 (The Secretary called the roll.)

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
8 the results.

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

16 Ayes, 41. Nays, 18.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
18 is passed.

19 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
20 546, Senate Print 2051, by Senator Webb, an act
21 to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
23 last section.

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

1 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
2 roll.

3 (The Secretary called the roll.)

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
5 Webb to explain her vote.

6 SENATOR WEBB: Thank you,
7 Madam President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 Thank you.

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

20 Announce the results.

21 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
23 is passed.

24 Senator Gianaris.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: Is there any

1 further business at the desk?

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

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

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

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

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