NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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3:36 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR JAMAAL T. BAILEY, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Granthi Dilsher Singh, of the Sikh Center in Queens, New York, will deliver today's invocation.

GRANTHI DILSHER SINGH: Waheguruwe. Waheguruwe. Waheguruwe. {Chanting in Punjabi.} Waheguru ji ka Khalsa waheguru ji ki fateh ji.

O Almighty Waheguru, the Eternal Truth, we stand before You today in remembrance of the countless sacrifices made by the Sikhs in their pursuit of justice, truth, and equality.

For over six centuries, the Khalsa has upheld the divine rule of Guru Nanak Patshah -- Halemi Raj -- a vision of Benevolent Rule where all humanity is one, free from tyranny and oppression and human suffering are addressed.

O Waheguru, we remember the atrocities committed against the Sikh faith, from

the oppressive rule of the Mughals to the betrayal by the British, and the injustices of independent India. Despite Sikhs shedding blood for freedom, our people were branded as criminals, our history distorted, and our Guru's sacred throne desecrated in 1984. Thousands of innocent Sikhs were massacred, their homes burned, property looted, daughters dishonored -- but the Khalsa did not bow.

O Akaal Purakh, bless us with the indomitable spirit of our countless ancestors who embraced martyrdom for truth -- Guru Arjan Patshah's serenity, Guru Tegh Bahadur Patshah's supreme sacrifice, and General Banda Singh Bahadar's fearless courage.

May we always stand against tyranny, not for revenge, but for righteousness. May our voices rise against injustice, not for division, but for unity.

O Protector of the meek, grant us the strength to uphold to build Begampura -- a world without sorrow where no one lives in fear, no downfall, no extra taxes, where truth prevails over falsehood and universal brotherhood, equality, love, peace and justice reign supreme.

May the Khalsa remain forever free, fearless, and devoted to the divine Hukam (the Lord Command) and work for coexistence and the well-being of all.

Guru Nanak Patshah in his hymns says: If you desire to play this game of love with Me {in Punjabi}, be fearless and be ready for sacrifice {in Punjabi}; if choose this path {in Punjabi}, be ready for sacrifice and do not show your back.

O Waheguru, we pray for the Chardi Kala of our great New York State Legislature, and samoh Gurdwara Sahibs of New York and Sangat, as well as our fearless leaders State Senator Jessica Ramos and community activist Japneet Singh, for fighting for justice and equity for the most marginalized.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

(Response from the galleries.)

(Extended chanting in Punjabi, with response from the galleries.)

GRANTHI DILSHER SINGH: Thank you, everyone.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Reading

of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Friday, March 21, 2025, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Thursday, March 20, 2025, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

Amendments are offered to the following Third Reading Calendar bills:

By Senator Jackson, page 10, Calendar 260, Senate Print 1892.

By Senator Rivera, page 20, Calendar 430, Senate Print 3819A.

By Senator Sanders, page 28, Calendar 538, Senate Print 3178.

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

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, there's a privileged resolution at the desk, Privileged Resolution 569, by Senator Ramos. Please take that up, read its title, and recognize Senator Ramos.

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

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 569, by Senator Ramos, recognizing the contributions of the Sikh community and commemorating the Sikh massacre of 1984.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ramos on the resolution.

SENATOR RAMOS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I proudly rise today representing my neighbors, who are here today for a historic Sikh Day of Action organized by the New York City Sikh

Council, hosting over a hundred Sikh brothers and sisters, many of whom are present in today's gallery.

With today's resolution, the New York State Senate is making history. We recognize the many contributions of the Sikh community to our state and nation, acknowledging the painful history that has shaped their resilience and strength.

In 1984, after the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, state-sanctioned violence was unleashed upon the Sikh community in India. Over the next several days, tens of thousands of Sikhs were brutally murdered, women were assaulted and raped, men were burned alive, families were torn apart, and entire neighborhoods were set on fire. Sikh homes, businesses and Gurdwaras, their sacred places of worship, were also destroyed.

It was not a random act of violence. And while the federal government doesn't yet recognize it as such, it was a genocide. It was organized, it was deliberate, and it was carried out with the complicity of government officials: A coordinated effort to silence, oppress and

terrorize the Sikh people.

And nearly 40 years later, survivors and human rights activists and organizations are still fighting for justice. Today Sikhs still face persecution, not only in India but across the world, including right here in the United States, where even after 9/11 the surveillance of the Muslim community was used as an excuse to scapegoat the Sikh community. This persecution continues through the ongoing scourge of transnational repression.

To the survivors who are here with us today, and the families who have lived through this unimaginable pain, we want you to know that you are seen and heard and that we stand with you. Your fight for justice is our fight as well. Here in New York we stand for justice and against religious persecution, and with the Sikh community in their pursuit of truth.

Today is not just about remembrance, it's about action. It's about ensuring that voices are heard, that stories of survivors are told, and that no government anywhere in the world is allowed to commit such atrocities without consequences.

Passing this resolution is a strong statement. It says that New York is a state built on diversity, inclusion and justice, stands with the victims of the 1984 genocide, and it says that New York recognizes the pain and the suffering of the Sikh community. And it says that we will not allow history to be rewritten or erased.

You are not alone, and your fight for justice is our fight too.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Ramos.

Senator Liu on the resolution.

SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Mr. President.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

I want to thank Senator Ramos for offering this important resolution, which I wholeheartedly support. I support what she said; I'm not going to repeat everything.

But the Sikh community, Mr. President, has been persecuted in many ways around the world and right here, unfortunately,

in our own state. Which is why we have to recognize -- why we have to pass this important resolution.

We all remember not too long ago the Sikh community was unfairly targeted and extremely scapegoated for the attacks of September 11th. And since then there have been many instances of discrimination, on-the-job discrimination as well as a massacre in a Sikh temple, a Sikh Gudwara, not too long ago.

So we have to remember this community for what they've gone through, but also remember them for the extreme contributions, the positive contributions in business, in education, in media, in the corporate world, and in the professions. And we would not be New York State without the incredible contributions of the Sikh community.

And indeed, a few years ago we did pass legislation that was signed into law that prohibits discrimination in public or private places of work against people because of what they wear or their garb, especially when it's required for their religious faith.

So, Mr. President, I urge all of our

colleagues to support this resolution.

Thanks very much.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Liu.

Senator Sanders on the resolution.

SENATOR SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. President.

My colleagues have spoken well about the Sikh community. I will just add that one of the things that I have found most amazing about the Sikh community is the -- is something that they may consider very simple, but for the colleagues who don't know, they have a meal that they serve to the public. And anyone who is hungry, of any faith, can walk in and sit down and get something to eat, the same thing that everyone else is eating.

And I think that this is just something amazing. I think it's something that perhaps every religious group should do. And it's done every day. And I have always found that interesting.

And I've been blessed to have had many members of the Sikh community. For most of my term I've covered the Richmond Hill,

South Ozone, Ozone Park community, so I've had the pleasure of being with the Sikh community and learning from them.

So of course having learned from them in so many different ways, I am very grateful to be here and to support this resolution. I thank the sponsor, and I thank this body for being bold enough.

And I encourage all of us, on another day, treat yourself right and go to one of their temples and sit down and have some food and some good conversation. And imagine what America could be if all of us went out of our way to some other -- out of our comfort zone and sat down and learned from other people.

I gladly vote yes, Mr. President. Namaste.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Sanders.

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

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Opposed, nay.

(No response.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution is adopted.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, Senator Ramos would like to open this resolution for cosponsorship.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The resolution is open for cosponsorship. Should you choose not to be a cosponsor, please notify the desk.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up the calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 9, Senate Print 1356A, by Senator Skoufis, an act to amend the Election Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 57.

SENATOR GIANARIS: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 128, Senate Print 1617, by Senator Rivera, an act to amend the Public Health Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 4. This act shall take effect on the 180th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Borrello to explain his vote.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

I have a lot of concerns with this bill. First and foremost, it's going to automatically renew Medicaid applications. The problem in New York State we don't know how many people are actually eligible.

Right now there's a report out that says roughly 3 million people are eligible for Medicaid that are actually collecting, right now, courtesy of New York State taxpayer, to the tune of $20 billion a year, a million of which we can't even prove actually exist. There's a lot of fraud in this system.

What's more disturbing is 44 percent of New Yorkers and 60 percent of people in New York City are on Medicaid. We have to ask ourselves, is this the right path?

Everyone who deserves help should get help. But the fact that we have more than a million people that the Department of Health has refused to identify as being qualified is incredibly disturbing. And automatically renewing people for this I think is going to be an even bigger mistake.

So I'll be voting no. Thank you.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 128, 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, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 37. Nays, 20.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 192, Senate Print 2482, by Senator Parker, an act to amend the Public Authorities Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce

the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 192, voting in the negative: Senator Walczyk.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 198, Senate Print 2458, by Senator Comrie, an act to amend the Public Authorities Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 262, Senate Print 1783, by Senator Hinchey, an act to amend the Agriculture and Markets Law.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Lay the bill aside for the day.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 308, Senate Print 2275, by Senator Krueger, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 333, Senate Print 2618, by Senator Addabbo, an act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the

last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 339, Senate Print 2479, by Senator Parker, an directing the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority to study the feasibility and efficiency of a microgrid.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 339, voting in the negative: Senator Oberacker.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 342, Senate Print 413, by Senator Gounardes, an act to amend the General Obligations Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Helming to explain her vote.

SENATOR HELMING: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to explain my vote on the bill before us that, according to the sponsor's bill, bans no-rehire clauses. This bill and the timing and bringing it to this floor are highly,

highly hypocritical, in light of the Governor's extreme no-rehire ban for 2,000 corrections officers.

These men and women stood up for a safer environment within our state-owned and operated correctional facilities, and they have been banned from being rehired by the state.

And if that's not extreme enough, the Governor used her authority to override municipal home rule and county law to further harm our corrections officers and their families by banning the hiring at the local level.

Earlier I heard that it's all about action on this floor, it's all about justice. Well, you know what? Our corrections officers deserve some justice. This overreach and this attack on former state employees should concern everyone in this chamber and elected officials at every level of government.

Mr. President, we should not be picking winners and losers when it comes to no-rehire bans.

For this reason, I'll be voting no and I urge everyone in this body to do the same.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator

Helming to be recorded in the negative.

Senator Borrello to explain his vote.

SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Helming summarized it quite brilliantly. And what we're saying here is that if an agreement has come together between an employee and an employer and actually a compensation has been offered, that we're not going to enforce the ability for an employer to say, You cannot be hired by anyone else.

But yet we have Governor Hochul doing exactly that. Two thousand families that aren't going to be able to earn a living anymore because she felt she was somehow disrespected. Even though they were living in dangerous conditions, working in dangerous conditions in our prisons. Which is the reason why they went on strike.

Even though the reality is they were likely not in violation of the Taylor Act because of the fact that they were actually in fear for their lives working in these prisons, yet she is going to blackball them. As Senator Helming

said, not just at state jobs -- county jobs, local jobs. You want to be an officer at a school? No, you can't do that. But yet this legislation allows it. For a private industry who's already come to an agreement, made a remuneration offer, they can't do it.

So again, completely hypocritical and unfair, and I'll be voting no.

Thank you.

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

Senator Gounardes to explain his vote.

SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you, Mr. President.

I appreciate my colleagues for confusing two different issues that we're talking about at issue here in this bill.

This bill is about victims of the workplace and sexual harassment being told, as a condition of their settlement when they have experienced heinous and egregious behavior by their supervisors or their coworkers, that they don't have to accept the inability of themselves to pursue another job opportunity anywhere in

their company around the entire globe.

We're not talking about corrections officers, we're not talking about the illegal strike that took place last month. We're talking about people being told, You want to stop being touched by your boss? We're not going to let you apply for a job anywhere in this company, worldwide.

Imagine you're a Chase teller at a bank working for Chase, and you have a sexual harassment claim, and the only way you can vindicate your own rights is to say I will never work at a Chase bank anywhere on the globe.

I'm just using that as an example; I'm not singling out Chase.

But that is the point here. That's all this bill is about.

This is a body that is supposed to stand up for the victims of sexual harassment and workplace discrimination, and that's entirely what this bill is meant to do. This is the fifth time that this chamber is passing this bill, because we believe on this side that we're not going to let victims be subject to the coercive power of their supervisors.

And for that reason, Mr. President, I proudly vote aye.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 342, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 36. Nays, 22.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 387, Senate Print 70, by Senator Kavanagh, an act to amend the Banking Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 387, those Senators voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 36. Nays, 22.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 394, Senate Print 1126, by Senator Persaud, an act directing the Department of Environmental Conservation to conduct a study of ecological restoration needs of Jamaica Bay.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 395, Senate Print 1984, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 396, Senate Print 3179, by Senator Sanders, an act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the

last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 396, voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Lanza, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk and Weber.

Ayes, 45. Nays, 13.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

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

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

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adjourn until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 25th -- Greek Independence Day -- at 3:00 p.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 25th -- Greek Independence Day -- at 3:00 p.m.

(Whereupon, at 4:02 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)