

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10

April 9, 2025

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11:20 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: Chaplain
9 Colonel Davis A. Bowlus, of the United States
10 Corps of Cadets, will deliver's today's
11 invocation.

12 Chaplain?

13 CHAPLAIN COLONEL BOWLUS: Good
14 morning. I invite you to pray with me.

15 Almighty God, we gather before You
16 today, at the opening of this historic day, with
17 thankful hearts, seeking Your wisdom, guidance
18 and care upon the leaders assembled here.

19 We give You thanks for the great
20 State of New York, the historic fountainhead of
21 America's legacy of democracy, of inspired
22 leadership, patriotism and sacrificial love for
23 our fellow man.

24 Lord, we also thank You for the
25 support this Legislature provides to West Point,

1 nurturing the development of leaders of character
2 who will faithfully serve our nation in the
3 U.S. Army.

4 And so on this day, grant each
5 leader here the wisdom to discern clearly, the
6 compassion to serve justly, and the courage to
7 act decisively.

8 All of this I ask in the name of the
9 great Friend and Master of all. Amen.

10 (Response of "Amen.")

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Reading
12 of the Journal.

13 THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Tuesday,
14 April 8, 2025, the Senate met pursuant to
15 adjournment. The Journal of Monday, April 7,
16 2025, was read and approved. On motion, the
17 Senate adjourned.

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

20 Presentation of petitions.

21 Messages from the Assembly.

22 Messages from the --

23 Messages from the Assembly.

24 The Secretary will read.

25 THE SECRETARY: Senator Krueger

1 moves to discharge, from the Committee on Health,
2 Assembly Bill Number 565 and substitute it for
3 the identical Senate Bill 3437, Third Reading
4 Calendar 494.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: So
6 ordered.

7 Messages from the Governor.

8 Reports of standing committees.

9 Reports of select committees.

10 Communications and reports from
11 state officers.

12 Motions and resolutions.

13 Senator Gianaris.

14 SENATOR GIANARIS: Good morning,
15 Madam President.

16 On behalf of Senator Kavanagh, on
17 page 18 I offer the following amendments to
18 Calendar 344, Senate Print 952A, and ask that
19 said bill retain its place on the Third Reading
20 Calendar.

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

24 Senator Gianaris.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up

1 previously adopted Resolution 503, by
2 Senator Skoufis, read that resolution's title and
3 recognize Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
5 Secretary will read.

6 THE SECRETARY: Resolution 503, by
7 Senator Skoufis, memorializing Governor
8 Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 9, 2025, as
9 West Point Day in New York State.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Leader
11 Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

12 SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank you
13 so much, Madam President.

14 And I want to thank you,
15 Colonel Bowlus, for your beautiful invocation.
16 Thank you so much for blessing our chamber.

17 Today I have the honor to once again
18 commemorate West Point Day and to celebrate the
19 United States Military Academy, a historic and
20 vital institution that I'm proud to have in our
21 state.

22 This year marks the 73rd Annual
23 West Point Day. So for over 70 years, the Senate
24 has gathered to recognize the excellence of each
25 year's cadets.

1 So welcome and congratulations, and
2 thank you for being here. It is their unwavering
3 devotion to tradition and service that is a
4 testimony to your outstanding character.

5 I also want to thank Colonel Khanh
6 Diep -- thank you so much for being here -- and
7 of course the rest of the West Point leadership
8 team, under whose steady guidance generations of
9 cadets have learned how to lead and live well.

10 I'd now like to take a moment to
11 reflect on the history and legacy of the
12 United States Military Academy.

13 For over two centuries, West Point
14 and its graduates have contributed greatly to the
15 defense and development of the United States.
16 The United States Military Academy, the nation's
17 first military academy, was established in 1802
18 by President Thomas Jefferson.

19 However, even before then, the
20 West Point region had played a crucial military
21 role during the Revolutionary War. President
22 George Washington chose this area as the site of
23 a strategically valuable fortress, and in 1779 he
24 maintained his headquarters there.

25 Under the leadership of

1 General Sylvanus Thayer, father of the military
2 academy, West Point became the first school of
3 engineering in the United States. This school's
4 earliest graduates constructed much of the
5 country's infrastructure in the 19th century,
6 including the Washington Monument.

7 Many distinguished figures, each of
8 whom have valiantly served our nation in war and
9 peace, number among the over 80,000 graduates of
10 West Point -- Presidents Ulysses S. Grant,
11 Dwight D. Eisenhower, Generals William T.
12 Sherman, John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur and
13 Omar Bradley, and Andrea Hollen, who belonged to
14 the first class that included women cadets, which
15 again makes me so happy to see Colonel Diep. A
16 great tradition, thank you.

17 When I look at the cadets with us
18 today, I see the same spirit of devotion, honor,
19 leadership by which all West Point graduates have
20 lived, now live, and will live.

21 You are the heirs to a tradition of
22 excellence and service, and I commend you for all
23 of your bravery in answering our nation's highest
24 call. The brilliant example each of you has set
25 will surely inspire others -- if not to

1 contribute to West Point's tradition, then to
2 serve in some other way.

3 I'm reminded of my own sources of
4 inspiration whose valor and altruism have
5 profoundly shaped my life. My dad was a
6 decorated World War II veteran, my brother a
7 veteran of the Vietnam War. Their service
8 impressed on me the need to fight for the greater
9 good, the good of all, no matter how difficult or
10 daunting.

11 That same valorous altruism is
12 present in you as cadets. You've pledged to
13 defend our nation and its citizens. You've
14 courageously placed the good of the many above
15 your own. I wish each of you the continued
16 strength and will to see through this great,
17 laudable undertaking, and I offer you this
18 chamber's support.

19 Though my father and my brother
20 served in the military, it's always difficult for
21 me and all of us who've not served to really
22 grasp the depth of your passionate and selfless
23 commitment. However, I want you to know that the
24 commitment each of you has made to keep America
25 safe and to uphold our shared values will always

1 be valued and admired by us.

2 We will not forget you or what you
3 have done. New York and the United States will
4 forever be in your debt. And though we cannot
5 repay that debt, we will always honor you and
6 your service. We are grateful for everything you
7 do.

8 I pledge to you now that the Senate
9 will not neglect either your commitment or your
10 service, and we will continue to advocate on your
11 behalf. And we will always strive to back these
12 appreciative words with action.

13 I thank you again for what you are
14 contributing every day to our safety, to our
15 democracy, to the present and to the future, and
16 wish you God speed.

17 Thank you so much, Madam President.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
19 you, Leader.

20 Senator Skoufis on the resolution.

21 SENATOR SKOUFIS: Thank you very
22 much, Madam President.

23 I first want to express my gratitude
24 to the Majority Leader for always very warmly
25 welcoming and hosting our cadets and our officers

1 and our staff on this day each year. It's really
2 a wonderful tradition, and we're so thankful to
3 have all of you with us today.

4 So on the resolution,
5 Madam President, it's my great honor and
6 privilege to rise today as the Senator from the
7 42nd Senate District, home to the United States
8 Military Academy at West Point, on this
9 73rd Annual West Point Day.

10 It's a cherished tradition here in
11 the halls of the Capitol and a morning of great
12 pride for both Senators present, my current
13 colleagues, as well as Senators past, including
14 my predecessor, Colonel Bill Larkin, who really
15 cherished and enjoyed this day each year.

16 High places with a broad vantage
17 point have always made strategic sense. This was
18 likely in George Washington's mind when he chose
19 the location of the fort that would become
20 West Point. The views from the academy are
21 sweeping, taking in the Hudson River for miles in
22 both directions. Effective, too, because in
23 spite of concerted efforts during the
24 Revolutionary War, West Point was never captured
25 and is today the oldest continuously occupied

1 regular Army post in the United States.

2 British forces were well-trained and
3 well-armed, and it took the vision offered by the
4 garrison's location to hold off that invasion.
5 This vision, the ability to see for miles ahead,
6 continues to shape West Point to this day.

7 Prior to its establishment, as the
8 Majority Leader mentioned, the U.S. Army employed
9 European engineers and, propelled by the vision
10 of American-trained engineers, West Point was
11 established by Congress in 1802 with the stated
12 aim to do just that.

13 The success of the academy's
14 education was highlighted during the War of 1812
15 when the British failed to capture even a single
16 work constructed by a graduate of West Point.

17 The vision exercised by those at
18 West Point -- seeing not just what was before
19 them, but for miles ahead as well -- kept the
20 garrison safe from enemy forces, gave West Point
21 graduates the skills they needed to meaningfully
22 contribute to American victories, and keeps the
23 academy one of the most respected institutions in
24 the United States and the world.

25 We need leaders who will make

1 difficult choices, who will grow and evolve,
2 ready not just to meet this moment but every
3 moment that comes after. The cadets that
4 stand -- or sit -- before us here today are those
5 leaders, and my colleagues and I are honored that
6 you've joined us today.

7 We are humbled by your dedication to
8 our country's ideals and your willingness to
9 serve, defending, protecting and uplifting the
10 principles of our true democracy.

11 Thank you for coming today. Thank
12 you for the opportunity to speak on the
13 resolution. And last but not least,
14 Madam President: Go Army, beat Navy!

15 Thank you.

16 (Laughter.)

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
18 you, Senator.

19 Minority Leader Ortt on the
20 resolution.

21 SENATOR ORTT: Thank you,
22 Madam President.

23 I too want to extend my gratitude to
24 all of my colleagues, to the Majority Leader,
25 Andrea Stewart-Cousins, to Senator Skoufis, as

1 well as all of our colleagues who continue to
2 make this day a day in this chamber -- 73 years,
3 it is a great tradition.

4 Not just as New York State Senators
5 but I think as New Yorkers, very proud to be a
6 state that hosts the United States Military
7 Academy. I'm sure Senator Skoufis, very proud to
8 be the Senator that represents the United States
9 Military Academy and all the history. You've
10 heard the history from my colleague Senator
11 Stewart-Cousins. It is a storied history.

12 It is fitting we're here today on
13 April 9th, because it was on this day that one
14 West Point graduate, Robert E. Lee, surrendered
15 to another West Point graduate, Ulysses S. Grant,
16 bringing to a conclusion maybe the worst of
17 calamities, a civil war. And I think that's a
18 reminder of the pivotal role that graduates from
19 the United States Military Academy have played
20 and continue to play in this country's story, in
21 the story of our nation and of our republic.

22 It is a place where you don't just
23 get an education. There's a lot of places you
24 can get a top-flight education. Maybe not as
25 many today as there was, but there's certainly a

1 lot of places you can go. But you're being
2 trained to be leaders, to be the future leaders
3 of the United States military, the future leaders
4 of the United States Army, future public
5 servants, future leaders in business. You are
6 being trained to be leaders for this country at a
7 time when this country needs leaders.

8 Now, maybe it's always been that
9 way, but I think the need and the dearth of
10 leaders is more apparent than ever. And you're
11 going to be asked to be those leaders for this
12 country for this next generation, and it might
13 come upon you faster than you think. So pay
14 attention. Listen to your leaders.

15 Listen to your leadership at
16 West Point. I want to thank them for their
17 continued service to this country, for their
18 continued service to one of our finest
19 institutions, and for being here today, for also
20 taking part in this. We can't do it, obviously.
21 West Point Day wouldn't be the same without the
22 West Point cadets and the West Point leadership
23 here. So I want to thank them for their
24 continued support of this day.

25 And again, I want to thank you for

1 your commitment to serve America and to place all
2 of your hopes and dreams and aspirations -- I
3 think there's something always unique for an
4 18-year-old or a 19-year-old who has everything
5 in front of them, to place that on the altar of
6 liberty and to say, I'm willing to maybe
7 sacrifice all of that because I believe so
8 strongly in the promise of this country -- the
9 promise of the country is greater than maybe the
10 promise of my own life.

11 That is a very -- we can talk about
12 it, but fewer people do it. And yet you've all
13 done that by going to West Point. Yes, you're
14 going to get a top-flight education. Yes, you're
15 going to have the distinction of saying, I'm a
16 graduate of West Point, of the United States
17 Military Academy. But there's a commitment that
18 comes along with that, and you're willing to
19 honor that commitment and put a lot on the line,
20 including maybe your life, for this great country
21 of ours.

22 And so for that I thank you.
23 Certainly as an Army veteran, I thank you. I
24 never went to West Point. If you saw my
25 transcripts, you'd know why.

1 (Laughter.)

2 SENATOR ORTT: But I served, I had
3 many drills at Camp Smith, which is right next
4 door there to West Point. I've been at
5 West Point. I've done some combat swimming
6 training in the pool at West Point, which was
7 fun. For anyone who hasn't done that, I
8 encourage you, go over and check it out. It's a
9 great experience.

10 But certainly I'll leave you with
11 this, more on a lighter note. So there's -- my
12 colleagues here, I have a colleague here who
13 is -- Senator Stec, who's a Navy veteran. And we
14 have a bet every year for the Army-Navy game.
15 Last year I didn't do so well. Right? So this
16 year, if you can talk to the football team --

17 (Laughter.)

18 SENATOR ORTT: -- please, it's
19 really important to me that we get a win this
20 coming year because I have to display the
21 Midshipmen flag in our conference room when we
22 don't win. I get to display the Black Knights
23 flag when we do win, for a whole year.

24 So I would encourage you, whatever
25 you can do to motivate those -- the football team

1 for next year, if they need any further
2 motivation.

3 But it is a great honor for me to
4 rise and speak on this resolution. And I wish
5 you all the best. Godspeed. Go Army, beat Navy!

6 Thank you, Madam President.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
8 you, Senator.

9 It is now my honor to introduce
10 Colonel Khanh Diep, chief of staff of the
11 United States Military Academy.

12 Colonel?

13 (Standing ovation.)

14 COLONEL DIEP: Ladies and
15 gentlemen, good morning.

16 Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins,
17 Minority Leader Ortt -- sir, we will take on that
18 challenge to "Go Army, beat Navy" there -- and
19 members of this distinguished chamber.

20 On behalf of the 61st
21 Superintendent, Lieutenant General Steve Gilland,
22 we are so grateful for being here. Again, it's
23 the 73rd year of West Point Day. We wouldn't do
24 it without your support and for you hosting us.

25 Leader Stewart-Cousins, thank you

1 for the opportunity to address this chamber.

2 Senator Skoufis, sir, thank you for
3 hosting us today.

4 And Senator Jessica
5 Scarcella-Spanton, thank you for your committee,
6 for all you do for our veterans and service
7 members in this great state.

8 Joining me today is our
9 First Captain, Cadet Caroline Robinson. She is
10 the only one not from New York, so please be
11 fair. And then along with her is -- rightly so,
12 thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 COLONEL DIEP: She actually -- she
15 leads over 4400 cadets. She is the -- that's why
16 she's called the Cadet First Captain.

17 And with her is the Brigade
18 Executive Officer, Shepherd Dzina, from New York
19 City. How about that? There you go.

20 (Applause.)

21 COLONEL DIEP: I'm not sure if you
22 got the opportunity to read his bio, but he is a
23 Rhodes Scholar, he's heading off to Oxford this
24 May for graduation, and he's in international
25 politics, right, Shepherd, you mentioned to me

1 earlier.

2 So please -- and then along with the
3 team here we have 12 other cadets from throughout
4 the State of New York, representing nearly
5 300 cadets from this Empire State. So please,
6 again, give them a warm round of applause.

7 (Applause.)

8 COLONEL DIEP: As mentioned, this
9 year the United States Army celebrates its
10 250th birthday -- older than our nation itself.
11 America's Army has a rich history, a legacy of
12 service, sacrifice and dedication, defending our
13 nation and its values at home and around the
14 globe. Throughout the past 250 years, the
15 Empire State has been an important part of that
16 rich history, from its humble beginnings in May
17 of 1775 with the establishment of a handful of
18 infantry regiments. But the New York Line,
19 right, which would distinguish itself in battle
20 through our War of Independence and become one of
21 the most respected fighting forces in the
22 Continental Army.

23 That legacy also includes a point of
24 land at the west bank of the Hudson just south of
25 Newburgh, where George Washington would call the

1 key to the continent -- a critical strategic
2 outpost in the defense of this fledgling nation.

3 Today, as America's oldest
4 continuously occupied military post, West Point
5 plays an important strategic role in the
6 United States Army and our nation, home to the
7 United States Military Academy, charged with
8 developing leaders of character ready to defend
9 the Army and the nation for its mission to win
10 and fight our nation's wars.

11 As we celebrate the establishment of
12 America's Army, we also celebrate those who have
13 proudly served, whether on active duty or
14 citizen-soldiers of the Army Reserve and
15 National Guard, whose leadership, dedication to
16 duty, and contributions in peacetime and war have
17 shaped our nation's history and the Army's legacy
18 of excellence.

19 Among them are of course countless
20 proud New Yorkers, including a young clerk from
21 right here in Albany named John Brennan, who
22 volunteered to serve as part of General
23 Pershing's American expeditionary force during
24 World War I. Brennan served in combat in France
25 and Belgium as a saddler in the 27th Infantry

1 Division, enduring endless mud and rain and
2 shellings and mustard gas attacks.

3 After the war, he would write about
4 his experiences, beginning his memoir with these
5 words: "This is not the diary of a hero, but one
6 of the many men who enlisted in the Army to serve
7 his country, to carry out whatever job he was
8 assigned to do." He went on to conclude in his
9 memoir with this: "I'm glad I did enlist. We
10 did it to protect our country. It was our duty."

11 This is the legacy of America's
12 Army. More than the campaigns and battles fought
13 and won, it is the men and women who put on the
14 cloth of our nation and proudly bore the title of
15 American soldier -- all unified by a shared love
16 of country and a dedication to duty and service
17 that John Brennan wrote about more than a century
18 ago.

19 That love of country and dedication
20 to duty is shared by every son and daughter of
21 the Empire State, and indeed every American who
22 has served in defense of our nation. It is
23 shared by all those who made the ultimate
24 sacrifice. It is shared by all those serving
25 today at home and around the globe. And it is

1 shared by those who are preparing to assume the
2 mantle of service and leadership like these
3 outstanding young men and women with us here
4 today, preparing to continue the Army's legacy of
5 excellence and make their own mark on the Army's
6 story, unified by the values and ideals of duty,
7 honor, country.

8 This would not be possible without
9 the tremendous support of our state leaders here
10 in Albany as well as from our neighbors
11 throughout New York, Orange County, and the
12 Hudson Valley region. I would like to recognize
13 the members of this chamber for your enduring
14 dedication to the people of this state and to the
15 principles of democracy. Your work shapes the
16 future of generations to come, and it is a future
17 that we at West Point proudly stand ready to
18 support.

19 As we look to the future, I ask for
20 your continued support of the United States
21 Military Academy and our cadets. The academy is
22 not only a national asset, but it is also a
23 symbol of the strength of New York: New York
24 State's commitment to producing leaders of
25 character who will guide our nation in times of

1 peace and war. Your support, whether through
2 infrastructure, funding or recognition, has a
3 profound impact on the education and the
4 development of our future leaders.

5 Again, we are so honored to be here,
6 and we're proud to be part of New York's legacy
7 of service. We appreciate your continued help
8 and support in inspiring a renewed call to
9 service in our young citizens, to help them see
10 the Army and West Point as unique pathways to
11 service.

12 On behalf of the United States
13 Military Academy, thank you for your time, your
14 support, and the honor of being here today.

15 Go Army!

16 (Standing ovation.)

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
18 you, Colonel.

19 Senator Scarcella-Spanton on the
20 resolution.

21 SENATOR SCARCELLA-SPANTON: Thank
22 you, Madam President.

23 And thank you so much for that
24 amazing speech.

25 It is one of my favorite days of the

1 year, especially as chair of Veterans, Homeland
2 Security and Military Affairs. I'm proud to join
3 my colleagues in honoring West Point Day right
4 here on the Senate floor. Thank you so much,
5 Senator Skoufis, for hosting us every year.

6 West Point is an historic
7 institution here in New York, having produced
8 generations of military officers who have served
9 our country with valor. For more than 200 years
10 it has remained one of the top training grounds
11 for military leaders across the world. But
12 West Point is more than just a military school.
13 It teaches its cadets the value of duty, honor
14 and country.

15 And thank you so much to all of the
16 cadets who are here today. You make us so
17 incredibly proud.

18 These cadets continue to inspire me.
19 Individuals like Cadet Olivia Raykhman, from my
20 district, who was driven to pursue a path of
21 service after her family's experience. And I
22 want to read a text I got from Olivia today. I
23 had the pleasure of meeting her last year, so I
24 wanted to check in and say hello and just, you
25 know, let her know today is West Point Day.

1 And she said: "A quick update on my
2 next steps. I'm graduating on May 24th and
3 headed to Stanford for my master's in journalism
4 as a Knight-Hennessy Scholar. Then I'm heading
5 to Destin, Florida, to the Eglin Air Force Base,
6 to be an information operations officer at the
7 1st Special Operations Wing."

8 So, West Point, you have produced
9 tremendous individuals. And I am proud to
10 represent Olivia and her family. And it's just
11 so nice to see where everyone is going. It was
12 great to chat with all of you earlier, too, to
13 hear what your next steps are.

14 Olivia was here for West Point last
15 year, and her fellow cadets represent the
16 brightest in our country. And today we recognize
17 not only the accomplishments of this respected
18 institution, but also the sacrifices made by
19 every cadet who chooses to serve our nation
20 through their education and training.

21 I'm proud to honor West Point Day
22 alongside its current cadets, the graduates
23 currently serving our country, and the countless
24 veterans who came through its ranks. Thank you
25 for choosing a path of service and leadership,

1 and Happy West Point Day.

2 I proudly vote aye. Thank you.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
4 you, Senator.

5 Senator Skoufis to speak about his
6 cadet.

7 SENATOR SKOUFIS: Thank you very
8 much, Madam President.

9 And thanks for affording some of our
10 colleagues as well some time to introduce their
11 constituent cadets who are here.

12 Before I get to the introduction, I
13 just want to acknowledge some of the officers and
14 staff who have joined us who take time out of
15 their very busy schedule to be up here on West
16 Point Day.

17 Certainly first and foremost we
18 heard from Colonel Khanh Diep, chief of staff.
19 Thank you for your words, which were
20 inspirational, and certainly for your service
21 back home as well.

22 She is joined by Major Kelechi
23 Odocha, who is the G3 operations officer and
24 instructor; Major Michael Oakes, tactical officer
25 for the Corps of Cadets. We heard earlier from

1 Colonel David Bowlus, the chaplain: Thank you
2 for your invocation, your words earlier today.

3 Support personnel include
4 Mr. Matthew Hintz, from the Public Affairs and
5 Community Engagement Office; Mr. Eric Bartelt,
6 photographer from Public Affairs; Mr. David
7 Nagel, deputy of the Commander's Action Group;
8 and Ms. Alison Schwartz, G3 operations
9 specialist.

10 I also want to give particular
11 thanks on the Senate side to, in addition to the
12 Majority Leader, of course, Senator
13 Scarcella-Spanton, who we just heard from and
14 does an incredible job serving on the Veterans
15 Affairs, Homeland Security and Military Affairs
16 Committee as chair.

17 Shelley Andrews and the floor team;
18 Jordan Jones and the Senate services team --
19 Shane Jones and the Senate events team;
20 Ale Paulino, Secretary of the Senate. And from
21 my team, or my entire office, but in particular
22 Will Alexander and Michael Dulaney.

23 A lot goes into this day and putting
24 all these events and activities together, and so
25 thanks to everyone on the Senate team that did

1 that.

2 Now, I have two introductions.

3 First, we heard a little bit about him before,
4 but Shepherd Dzina. I'm going to take a little
5 bit of pride of ownership here. Yes, he was born
6 and raised and spent most of his life in New York
7 City, but more recently he is an Orange County
8 resident, let's all be clear, and I'm proud to
9 have him as a constituent currently residing in
10 Tuxedo.

11 We heard really impressive
12 background and certainly years ahead as a Rhodes
13 Scholar going to Oxford to study economics and
14 international relations. He plans to be posted,
15 after that, in Hawaii, following graduate school,
16 and is in the infantry branch studying, as his
17 major, economics at West Point.

18 Thank you for being here. Thank you
19 for your leadership among the cadets as well. So
20 please stand.

21 And then with him I want to
22 introduce Caroline Robinson, who was also
23 mentioned a little bit earlier. She is a little
24 bit of an orphan in terms of introductions as the
25 non-New Yorker here among the cadets, so I'm

1 going to take the liberty to introduce and
2 acknowledge her as well.

3 She hails from Mountain Brook,
4 Alabama, daughter of a single mom who has
5 overcome a lot of adversity to get to West Point
6 and be here. Is looking forward to getting
7 posted also to Hawaii, and then at some point
8 after her Army career looks forward to actually
9 coming back to West Point as a history instructor
10 as well.

11 Thank you both for being here. And
12 Madam President, after the introductions, if you
13 can afford them all the liberties of the floor.

14 Thank you.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
16 you, Senator.

17 Senator Harckham for his
18 introduction.

19 SENATOR HARCKHAM: Thank you very
20 much, Madam President.

21 I am proud to introduce Aiden Meza,
22 from the neighboring town of Somers. Aiden, if
23 you could stand and join us.

24 He is a geospatial information
25 science major. And I say that because when we

1 spoke earlier, nothing like that existed when I
2 went to college, so that was news to me.

3 Wants to be in the infantry,
4 participates in mock trial and Frisbee, and this
5 summer will be attending air assault training.

6 So we thank you for being here with
7 us. We thank you for your commitment to the
8 academy.

9 And I'll just say very briefly to
10 all of you, I grew up in the footsteps of
11 West Point as a Rockland County resident. We're
12 there frequently for the Parade of Cadets, we go
13 to the museum. And we had season tickets to
14 Army Football. And although you fell short
15 against Navy this year, you're enjoying relative
16 success right now. Back in the -- dare I say the
17 '60s, the '70s and the '80s, Army Football was
18 horrible. And we sat through many a cold
19 afternoon at Michie Stadium watching some really
20 bad football. So please, enjoy what you have
21 right now.

22 But the other reason why West Point
23 was special to us, my father served in the
24 infantry in World War II in France and Germany,
25 and he said that there was something special

1 about the officers who were trained at
2 West Point. And I say that to you because you
3 will be recognized as special. And I mention
4 that not out of arrogance, but hopefully out of
5 humility, because with being recognized as
6 special comes a unique responsibility to those
7 who serve under you.

8 And we are all so proud of you. We
9 thank you for your commitment to service. As was
10 referenced earlier today, we need more people of
11 your generation in public service. You have all
12 stepped up to the challenge.

13 Thank you, and God bless you.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
15 you, Senator.

16 Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick for
17 her introduction.

18 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:
19 Thank you, Madam President.

20 I too want to express my thanks to
21 the Majority Leader for continuing this
22 time-honored tradition. As the granddaughter of
23 a World War I vet who served in the Army, I'm
24 always proud to recognize Army. Thank you,
25 Colonel, thank you, Major, for being here and

1 taking the time and for your input.

2 I'd like to give a quick shout out
3 to one of my constituents, Johnny Devino, a
4 member of your Men's Lacrosse Team who is
5 graduating this year.

6 But I'd like to introduce
7 Shafay Ahmed, from Floral Park. Shafay, you are
8 the American dream, having emigrated to the
9 United States when you were just six years old.

10 He graduated from Floral Park
11 Memorial High School, and upon graduation
12 enlisted for four years as a CBRN specialist --
13 not the traditional path to get to West Point.
14 He was even deployed overseas prior to attending
15 the academy.

16 He's now studying engineering
17 management. And also I'm happy to say that you
18 attended my alma mater, St. John's, prior to
19 enlisting and prior to joining the academy.

20 You're a role model for all youth
21 and certainly a shining star of the 9th Senate
22 District. I proudly congratulate you on being
23 here, wish you well in your time at the academy,
24 and wish you all the best. And know that we're
25 all rooting for your success.

1 Thank you, Madam President.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
3 you, Senator.

4 Senator Weber for his introduction.

5 SENATOR WEBER: Thank you,
6 Madam President.

7 I want to also thank the Majority
8 Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and
9 Senator Skoufis, for both making this day happen,
10 a very important day.

11 Welcome to the leadership of
12 West Point for being here. This is, as it was
13 said earlier, one of our favorite days as
14 Senators, so we're so happy to have you here as
15 well.

16 So Rockland County, Senate District
17 38, is lucky to have two cadets here today.

18 First I want to introduce
19 Christina Vozzo. Christina is from Clarkstown,
20 Valley Cottage. She is a kinesiology major. She
21 is heading off to the First Brigade of
22 Fort Cavazos, I think, Texas. She would like to
23 eventually attend law school -- and we have a lot
24 of lawyers in here, so we might want to connect
25 you with the lawyers here as well -- upon

1 retirement from the Army, and wants to obviously
2 transition into hospital administration and run a
3 hospital.

4 We're happy and thrilled to have you
5 here today as well.

6 We also have Cadet Steven Trombetta.
7 Steven, please rise. Steven Trombetta is a
8 fellow Suffern Mountie, like my kids, someone who
9 probably was in school with my oldest daughter,
10 Rachel.

11 You know, when you see movies you
12 see officers and they're older. Right? But, you
13 know, I like to say two things can be true at
14 once. We are all getting old in this chamber,
15 and the cadets look a lot younger every year,
16 don't they?

17 (Laughter.)

18 SENATOR WEBER: But it's something
19 that I think is a reminder to our leaders in
20 Washington now and in the future that when we
21 send people to war, it's these younger kids that
22 are going to war fighting for us.

23 So we're happy to have you here
24 today, Steven, as well.

25 A little bit about Steven. Steven

1 will commission as an adjutant general officer.
2 He will post in Fort George Meade, Maryland, and
3 will be working in Intelligence and Security
4 Commander Battalion.

5 Welcome, Cadet. Good luck to you.
6 Godspeed. Be safe.

7 And I proudly vote aye on this
8 resolution. Thank you.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
10 you, Senator.

11 Senator Weik for her introduction.

12 SENATOR WEIK: Thank you,
13 Madam President.

14 I'm so proud that I get to recognize
15 two cadets from my district: Matthew Stueber.
16 Matthew is from West Islip, and he's a mechanical
17 engineering student. I'm so proud that he's here
18 again this year.

19 We have also Navroop Singh, from
20 Massapequa. These two gentlemen truly make us
21 proud with their service to our country.

22 I'd like to make sure that we thank
23 West Point leadership for being here today. And
24 I want to thank you all for your service to our
25 great nation. May God bless you and guide you.

1 Thank you.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
3 you, Senator.

4 Senator Tedisco for his
5 introduction.

6 SENATOR TEDISCO: Thank you,
7 Madam President.

8 Madam President and my colleagues,
9 I'm often fond of saying to anyone in earshot:
10 All good things emanate from the 44th Senatorial
11 District. And I just happen to be the Senator
12 from the 44th Senatorial District.

13 And with us today is the best
14 example I can think of, of an outstanding
15 individual who is emanating from that
16 44th Senatorial District. It's my West Point
17 honoree, Eve Crossett, if she would stand up.

18 Eve hails from Saratoga Springs.
19 She is a Nordic skier from a big Army family and
20 living out her dream attending the U.S. Military
21 Academy. Eve is majoring in management, and her
22 intended branch is field artillery. Following
23 graduation, she will post to Fort Cavazos, in
24 Texas.

25 In her free time she enjoys a nice

1 cup of iced coffee. Now, don't we all, Eve?
2 It's the best. But also she loves attending
3 country music concerts and spending time with
4 family and friends.

5 Her commitment to the academy will
6 extend beyond her cadet years as she intends to
7 return to West Point to teach PL-300 or work in
8 the Simon Center.

9 Madam President, I ask you to
10 welcome Eve here to this august body and offer
11 all the cordialities of our house.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
13 you, Senator.

14 Senator Stavisky for her
15 introduction.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you,
17 Madam President.

18 Thank you, Madam Leader and
19 Senator Skoufis and Senator Scarcella-Spanton and
20 really the folks at West Point and the
21 Legislature.

22 If you took a look at last year's
23 West Point Day when I introduced the cadet from
24 my district, I could almost do a rerun. It's
25 déjà vu. The previous cadet, her name was

1 Tracy Chen. And today we're here to honor her
2 twin sister, Tricia Chen.

3 And I notice that there seems to be
4 a common thread in the Chen family because they
5 have a younger brother who is currently planning,
6 hoping to come to West Point.

7 Tricia graduated from Cardozo
8 High School and then enlisted in the Army. She
9 trained in Missouri and then was stationed at the
10 Scofield Barracks in Hawaii.

11 She and her sister live in the
12 College Point, Flushing, area with their parents.
13 Can you imagine how proud those parents are? Not
14 just for what their daughters and their son are
15 accomplishing, not just what's going to happen in
16 the future, but they raised three remarkable
17 young people trained to serve others.

18 This is I think a remarkable family.
19 We pay tribute to them and, through them, to
20 their children who are living literally the
21 American dream, and that is service to others and
22 to be ready in case we need their special skills.

23 So Madam President, I congratulate
24 not just the three cadet -- or the two cadet
25 Chen sisters, but also their family and the

1 family of every other cadet who is here today.
2 We thank you for what you do, and we thank you
3 for what you are going to do to help defend our
4 country.

5 Thank you, Madam President.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
7 you, Senator.

8 Senator Fahy for her introduction.

9 SENATOR FAHY: Thank you,
10 Madam President.

11 It's a true honor, especially as a
12 new member of the Senate, to have a cadet to
13 introduce, a hometown one. And her name is
14 Cadet Morgan Lawler. She's from Knox, New York,
15 which is here in Albany County, and a graduate of
16 the Academy of Holy Names, and of course a
17 constituent of the 46th Senate District.

18 She also comes in a long, long line
19 of those who have also served our country. And I
20 couldn't be more proud. As our leader,
21 Andrea Stewart-Cousins, mentioned earlier, you
22 are trained and you are part of an esteemed
23 institution who is there to fight for our greater
24 good. And that's so much of what this is about.

25 At a time when leadership is really

1 something we need now more than ever, it's
2 wonderful to see this younger generation and it
3 gives us so much hope for the future. Not only
4 is she a cadet here, but her intention is to go
5 on to be a medical doctor.

6 So it is a lifelong service that you
7 are embarking on, and could not be more
8 impressive. The education system that you are a
9 part of is really rooted in character, ethics and
10 service, and it's something that we as public
11 officials also strive to uphold. So I think this
12 is such an important day.

13 So thank you for the sacrifices that
14 you are already making, and thank you for being a
15 part of our future as military leaders. And I
16 love that part of your training is service before
17 self. And I think that's one of my favorite
18 sayings in the military, is the service before
19 self. We as a nation owe you an undying
20 gratitude, and we wish Cadet Morgan Lawler only
21 the best in all of her future endeavors.

22 Thank you, Madam President, for this
23 opportunity.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
25 you, Senator.

1 Senator Walczyk for his
2 introduction.

3 SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you,
4 Madam President.

5 Cadet Anthony Tejkl, on your feet.
6 (Laughter.)

7 SENATOR WALCZYK: Out of Theresa,
8 New York, and now in Company Foxtrot 3. He
9 enlisted in the United States Army Reserve to
10 serve his nation, went down to Texas Tech, was in
11 the ROTC program, deployed to CENTCOM in OSS, so
12 he understands what the sands of Arabia feel
13 like. He is now serving and leading from the
14 front and looking to go into Cyber Command in the
15 U.S. Army.

16 We are very grateful for your
17 service thus far, and excited about your future
18 in leadership.

19 Duty, honor and country. That's a
20 motto that they know well at West Point.
21 Congratulations on joining the Thin Gray Line,
22 for signing a promissory note for this nation up
23 to and including your life, for placing the
24 mission first and the mission of our nation and
25 our Constitution first, for never accepting

1 defeat, for never quitting, for always moving
2 forward.

3 And remember, take care of your
4 soldiers. We're very proud of you.

5 Thank you, Madam President.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
7 you, Senator.

8 Senator Webb for her introduction.

9 SENATOR WEBB: Thank you,
10 Madam President.

11 And thank you, Majority Leader, and
12 Senator Skoufis and Senator Scarcella-Spanton,
13 for continuing this great tradition.

14 I'm very excited to stand today for
15 the first time because I have a cadet from
16 Senate District 52: Bryce Sinclair. And I'm
17 going to brag a little bit about Bryce -- well, a
18 lot of bit.

19 So Bryce hails from Maine-Endwell,
20 New York. And his connection to West Point is a
21 testament to the power of hard work and
22 dedication that he embodies. His story is one of
23 dreams turned into action.

24 From an early age, Bryce dreamed of
25 becoming an astronaut, and at West Point he

1 actively sought out opportunities to make that
2 dream a reality. His entrepreneurial spirit led
3 him to cofound West Point's first Model Rocketry
4 Club, a project borne out of his desire to
5 explore the possibilities of space.

6 This initiative not only provided an
7 outlet for creativity but also demonstrated his
8 leadership and ability to collaborate with his
9 peers. Together they made history by launching a
10 rocket into space, setting a new amateur rocketry
11 altitude record. Bryce's work is a reminder that
12 no dream is too big if you have the drive to
13 pursue it.

14 Academically, Bryce's commitment is
15 unparalleled. As a mechanical engineering major,
16 Bryce demonstrates his ability to balance the
17 demands of both rigorous coursework and military
18 training. But what stands out even more is his
19 ambition to continue advancing his education.

20 Bryce has been accepted into the Georgia
21 Institute of Technology, where he will pursue a
22 master's in aerospace engineering, an incredibly
23 prestigious program.

24 His pursuit of further academic
25 excellence is a reflection of his determination

1 to push the boundaries of what he can achieve,
2 whether it's the design of new technologies or
3 his service to our nation.

4 Looking beyond his time at
5 West Point, Bryce has clear goals set for his
6 future in the military. He plans to branch into
7 infantry, a field that demands exceptional
8 leadership and courage, and ultimately will serve
9 in special operations.

10 After completing his service as a
11 lieutenant, Bryce's path will lead him to
12 Fort Bragg, where he will no doubt bring his
13 innovation and strategic thinking to new heights.

14 I look forward to the continued
15 great work that Bryce will do, not just simply in
16 the Army but beyond. And one of the things that
17 I appreciate about this day, and for all of our
18 cadets that are here, and the entire team that's
19 with them, is that they demonstrate the
20 importance of not only good public service but
21 determination to lift each other up.

22 Congratulations, everyone, and thank
23 you so much, Bryce.

24 Thank you, Madam President.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank

1 you, Senator.

2 Senator Hinchey for her
3 introduction.

4 SENATOR HINCHEY: Thank you,
5 Madam President.

6 I too want to thank the leader for
7 so graciously hosting this day every year. It's
8 really one of the best, where we get to see the
9 future, right? It's a really incredible day.

10 I also want to thank Senator Skoufis
11 for hosting and for being such a wonderful
12 representative for West Point, always advocating
13 on behalf of the institution.

14 I rise today proudly to introduce a
15 constituent of the 41st District, Cadet Jonah
16 Dohr -- thank you -- who is also a company spirit
17 officer. Jonah hails from Austerlitz, New York,
18 in Columbia County. And he has five sisters, and
19 attended Christian Brothers Academy here in
20 Albany, which is what he credits for inspiring
21 him to apply and go to West Point.

22 At West Point he's had incredible
23 opportunities, including studying abroad at the
24 Chilean Military Academy, which in this moment I
25 think is so important -- building relationships,

1 understanding our global world, seeing how we all
2 fit together. Taking that opportunity to study
3 abroad really was a leadership moment, and so I
4 appreciate you taking that opportunity.

5 At West Point he also is on the Ski
6 and Trap Team. He enjoys fishing. As cochair of
7 the Sportsmen's Caucus, I appreciate both of
8 these activities. And he also enjoys running
9 with his friends.

10 Upon graduating from West Point,
11 Jonah will attend the Infantry Basic Officer
12 Leader Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. And
13 after that, he plans to attend and graduate from
14 Ranger School, and then returning to New York to
15 serve as an infantry platoon leader in the
16 Second Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

17 We could not be more thrilled of
18 your plans to return to New York and continue
19 your service here. We appreciate it.

20 Jonah, you truly represent an -- and
21 everyone -- but you truly represent the best of
22 us. Having this day where we get to honor you
23 and your service, putting our country, putting
24 our people before yourselves is such an
25 inspiring, inspiring choice. Thank you for your

1 commitment. Thank you for joining us here today.
2 And I'm so proud to have you from our district.

3 Thank you.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
5 you, Senator.

6 To our guests, the cadets and
7 administrators from West Point, I welcome you on
8 behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the
9 privileges and courtesies of this house. Thank
10 you for your service.

11 Please rise and be recognized.

12 (Standing ovation.)

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
14 Gianaris.

15 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you,
16 Madam President.

17 I know our friends from West Point
18 have to get to the Assembly chamber as well, so
19 we'll let them make their exit while we continue
20 our work here.

21 Please recognize at this time
22 Senator Fahy for an introduction.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
24 Fahy for an introduction.

25 SENATOR FAHY: It's a busy day of

1 introductions.

2 And please allow me,
3 Madam President, to switch gears a little bit as
4 I rise to recognize in the gallery there the
5 University of Albany Women's Basketball Team,
6 which is -- if you'd rise for a moment so we can
7 recognize you.

8 It's led by Coach Colleen Mullen.
9 And this was not planned, I assure you, but prior
10 to her service as coach to the University at
11 Albany Basketball Team -- Coach Mullen, would you
12 just wave, please -- she coached for seven years
13 at West Point. So make note, folks, you maybe
14 recognize her, some of those with older siblings.

15 So she understands service and has
16 helped translate that into an amazing team here
17 at UAlbany. Sixty years we've had this
18 basketball team, but they have truly developed a
19 reputation as fierce and formidable opponents as
20 part of the NCAA Division 1 American East
21 Conference.

22 This year the Great Danes, under
23 Coach Mullen's leadership, have had 26 wins,
24 seven losses, and a conference record of 14 wins
25 and two losses, which has allowed them to also

1 capture the American East regular season title.

2 The coach clearly has taught our
3 seniors in particular many skills, but overall
4 has noted -- the coach has noted, and I quote,
5 "the resilience and hard work that the team
6 demonstrates." She particularly calls out the
7 seniors and this winning mindset that now
8 prevails throughout their championship.

9 I'd like to make special note of
10 Kayla Cooper, who earned and has been named the
11 Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference First Team
12 All-Conference Team. Can you please just wave
13 from our gallery, please, Kayla.

14 So we're just incredibly proud to
15 have them. And it is that type of strength and
16 service that we've just talked about all morning.
17 Sports I think teaches us leadership, teaches us
18 resiliency, and teaches us a host of character
19 development.

20 So it is an honor to have them here
21 this morning. And if you would, I urge my
22 colleagues to join in recognizing again the
23 University at Albany Women's Basketball Team.

24 Thank you.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank

1 you, Senator.

2 To our guests, the UAlbany Great
3 Danes and your coach, I welcome you on behalf of
4 the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and
5 courtesies of this house.

6 Please remain standing and be
7 recognized.

8 (Standing ovation.)

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
10 Gianaris.

11 SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up is
12 Senator Addabbo's previously adopted
13 Resolution 622. Please read that resolution's
14 title and recognize Senator Addabbo.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
16 Secretary will read.

17 THE SECRETARY: Resolution 622, by
18 Senator Addabbo, memorializing Governor Kathy
19 Hochul to proclaim April 2025 as Sikh Awareness
20 Month in the State of New York.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
22 Addabbo on the resolution.

23 SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you,
24 Madam President. Good afternoon, everyone.

25 April is Sikh Awareness Month, and

1 we take a moment to recognize the positive
2 contributions of our Sikh residents within the
3 State of New York. Positive contributions in
4 business, economics, the arts, agriculture,
5 education, and on even West Point Day, our U.S.
6 military.

7 We recognize their contributions
8 because they are part of the fabric of this great
9 state for many years -- over a hundred years.
10 And actually in New York we are second only to
11 California for the most population for our Sikh
12 community. Roughly 78,000 residents of New York
13 are part of the Sikh community, many of which are
14 in my district in Richmond Hill. And I'm proud
15 to represent them.

16 And so I am proud to introduce this
17 resolution. I vote yes. And Madam President,
18 actually give our guests here all the courtesies
19 of the house. Thank you very much.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
21 you, Senator.

22 Senator Cooney on the resolution.

23 SENATOR COONEY: Thank you,
24 Madam President.

25 And thank you, Senator Addabbo, for

1 bringing forth this resolution. Incredibly
2 important that we recognize and celebrate our
3 Sikh culture in New York. Of course from
4 Richmond Hill to Rochester, we know that the Sikh
5 community is of course a big, vibrant part of our
6 business community, of our civic community, and
7 have been adding many contributions to the State
8 of New York for many years.

9 I want to highlight one particular
10 constituent of mine who was recently elected as
11 the first Sikh trial judge in New York State,
12 Judge Vikram Singh Vilku, who is serving as the
13 Brighton Town Justice and who is bringing great
14 pride to our Sikh community not just here in
15 New York but across our states.

16 We know that the continued
17 commitment and spirit and faith of the Sikh
18 tradition will continue to generate a new
19 generation of Sikh-Americans who contribute back
20 to our state in so many ways. And we're so
21 grateful to recognize this during the month of
22 April and during all months of the year.

23 Thank you, Madam President.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
25 you, Senator.

1 Senator Stavisky on the resolution.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah, very
3 briefly, Madam President.

4 I thank Senator Addabbo for his
5 description of the wonderful contributions of the
6 Sikh community. I represent many of them in my
7 district in Queens.

8 And we welcome you to Albany, and we
9 look forward to working with the entire community
10 in the days ahead.

11 Thank you, Madam President.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
13 you, Senator.

14 To our guests representing the Sikh
15 community, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate.
16 We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of
17 this house.

18 Please rise and be recognized.

19 (Standing ovation.)

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
21 West Point Day resolution was adopted on
22 March 18th, and the Sikh resolution was adopted
23 on April 8th.

24 Senator Gianaris.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: Today's

1 resolutions are open for cosponsorship,
2 Madam President.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: At the
4 request of the sponsors, the resolutions are open
5 for cosponsorship. Should you choose not to
6 become a cosponsor, please notify the desk.

7 SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time,
8 Madam President, there's a report of the
9 Finance Committee at the desk. Let's take that
10 up.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
12 Secretary will read.

13 THE SECRETARY: Senator Krueger,
14 from the Committee on Finance, reports the
15 following nominations.

16 As a member of the Metropolitan
17 Transportation Authority, Blanca Lopez.

18 As nonvoting members of the
19 Metropolitan Transportation Authority:
20 Christopher Leathers and Edward R. Valenti.

21 SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to accept
22 the report of the Finance Committee.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: All
24 those in favor of accepting the report of the
25 Finance Committee signify by saying aye.

1 (Response of "Aye.")

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed,
3 nay.

4 (Response of "Nay.")

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
6 report of the Finance Committee is accepted.

7 Senator Krueger on the nominations.

8 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you very
9 much, Madam President.

10 So yesterday the three committees
11 overlapping jurisdiction held one meeting -- the
12 Finance Committee, the Transportation Committee,
13 and the Corporations Committee. And

14 We had a very in-depth interview
15 with the Westchester County representative, who
16 is being renewed because of a change in county
17 executive needing to either nominate again
18 someone to serve or choose a new person. And
19 happily the new county exec chose to keep the
20 Westchester County representative, and she did a
21 very fine job answering questions in the
22 committee.

23 And the other two we are supporting
24 today are actually required representatives from
25 labor, both of whom were extremely supportive.

1 And we are grateful that all three
2 are willing to serve on the MTA Board, because
3 let's be honest: It's a lot of work and you take
4 a lot of crap for being on the MTA Board.
5 Somebody always has some complaints.

6 So I am very delighted that all
7 three are willing to continue their roles on the
8 MTA Board and take such important responsibility
9 for a mass transit system that is the largest in
10 the country. It's critically important to the
11 economy, not just of the 12 counties where the
12 MTA provides services, but actually helps ensure
13 that the region of the New York City MTA counties
14 ends up being a bread basket for the economies of
15 multiple states here in the Northeast.

16 So I am certainly urging a yes vote
17 on everyone, and I again am always appreciative
18 that there are people out there who are talented,
19 skilled, have other jobs, and are still willing
20 to serve the people of New York State through
21 their volunteer commitment to such important
22 boards like the board of the MTA.

23 Thank you, Madam President.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
25 you, Senator.

1 The question is on the nominations.

2 Call the roll.

3 (The Secretary called the roll.)

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
5 the results.

6 THE SECRETARY: In relation to the
7 nominations, voting in the negative are
8 Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick,
9 Chan, Gallivan, Griffio, Helming, Lanza, Martinez,
10 Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara,
11 Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco,
12 Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

13 Ayes, 37. Nays, 23.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
15 nominees are confirmed.

16 Senator Gianaris.

17 SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time,
18 Madam President, there will be an immediate
19 meeting of the Rules Committee in Room 332.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: There
21 will be an immediate meeting of the
22 Rules Committee in Room 332.

23 SENATOR GIANARIS: The Senate
24 stands at ease.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The

1 Senate will stand at ease.

2 (Whereupon, the Senate stood at ease
3 at 12:23 p.m.)

4 (Whereupon, the Senate reconvened at
5 12:32 p.m.)

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
7 Senate will return to order.

8 Senator Gianaris.

9 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
10 there's a report of the Rules Committee at the
11 desk. Let's take that up, please.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
13 Secretary will read.

14 May we have some order in the
15 chamber, please.

16 THE SECRETARY: Senator
17 Stewart-Cousins, from the Committee on Rules,
18 reports the following bill:

19 Senate Print 3786, by
20 Senator Felder, an act to amend the
21 Education Law.

22 Bill ordered direct to third
23 reading.

24 SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to accept
25 the report of the Rules Committee.

1 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: All
2 those in favor of accepting the Rules Committee
3 report please signify by saying aye.

4 (Response of "Aye.")

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed,
6 nay.

7 (No response.)

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
9 report of the Rules Committee is accepted.
10 Senator Gianaris.

11 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up
12 the calendar, Madam President.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
14 Secretary will read.

15 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
16 122, Senate Print 1919, by Senator Skoufis, an
17 act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
19 last section.

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

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
23 roll.

24 (The Secretary called the roll.)

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce

1 the results.

2 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
4 is passed.

5 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
6 141, Senate Print 904A, by Senator Gonzalez, an
7 act to amend the Public Service Law.

8 SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Lay it
10 aside.

11 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
12 268, Senate Print 2071, by Senator
13 Scarcella-Spanton, an act to amend the Labor Law.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
15 last section.

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

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
19 roll.

20 (The Secretary called the roll.)

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
22 the results.

23 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
25 is passed.

1 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
2 436, Senate Print 4816, by Senator C. Ryan, an
3 act to amend the Workers' Compensation Law.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
5 last section.

6 THE SECRETARY: Section 7. This
7 act shall take effect on the 120th after it shall
8 have become a law.

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: In relation to
15 Calendar 436, voting in the negative:
16 Senator Walczyk.

17 Ayes, 59. Nays, 1.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
19 is passed.

20 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
21 494, Assembly Bill 565, by Assemblymember Paulin,
22 an act to amend the Public Health Law.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
24 last section.

25 THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This

1 act shall take effect immediately.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
3 roll.

4 (The Secretary called the roll.)

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
6 the results.

7 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
8 Calendar 494, voting in the negative are
9 Senators Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan,
10 Griffo, Lanza, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker,
11 O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads, Stec and Tedisco.

12 Ayes, 47. Nays, 13.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
14 is passed.

15 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
16 514, Senate Print 5600, by Senator May, an act to
17 amend the Personal Property Law.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
19 last section.

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

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
23 roll.

24 (The Secretary called the roll.)

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce

1 the results.

2 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
3 Calendar 514, voting in the negative:
4 Senator Walczyk.

5 Ayes, 59. Nays, 1.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
7 is passed.

8 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
9 519, Senate Print 5982, by Senator Harckham, an
10 act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
12 last section.

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

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
17 roll.

18 (The Secretary called the roll.)

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
20 the results.

21 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
22 Calendar 519, voting in the negative are
23 Senators Skoufis and Walczyk.

24 Ayes, 58. Nays, 2.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill

1 is passed.

2 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
3 531, Senate Print 4204, by Senator Comrie, an act
4 to amend Chapter 154 of the Laws of 1921.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
6 last section.

7 THE SECRETARY: Section 5. 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, 60.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
16 is passed.

17 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
18 540, Senate Print 3690, by Senator Sanders, an
19 act to amend the Lien Law.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
21 last section.

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

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
25 roll.

1 (The Secretary called the roll.)

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
3 the results.

4 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
5 Calendar 540, voting in the negative are
6 Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick,
7 Chan, Gallivan, Griffio, Helming, Martins,
8 Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt,
9 Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, C. Ryan, Stec, Tedisco,
10 Walczyk, Weber and Weik. Also Senator Lanza.

11 Ayes, 37. Nays, 23.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
13 is passed.

14 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
15 583, Senate Print 4867, by Senator Fahy, an act
16 to amend the Insurance Law.

17 SENATOR GIANARIS: Lay it aside for
18 the day.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
20 will be laid aside for the day.

21 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
22 595, Senate Print 5286, by Senator Sepúlveda, an
23 act to amend the Lien Law.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
25 last section.

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

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
4 roll.

5 (The Secretary called the roll.)

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
7 the results.

8 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
9 Calendar 595, voting in the negative are
10 Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick,
11 Chan, Gallivan, Griffio, Helming, Lanza, Martins,
12 Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt,
13 Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Skoufis, Stec, Tedisco,
14 Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

15 Ayes, 37. Nays, 23.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
17 is passed.

18 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
19 611, Senate Print 490, by Senator Fernandez, an
20 act to amend the Penal Law.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
22 last section.

23 THE SECRETARY: Section 4 this act
24 shall take effect immediately.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the

1 roll.

2 (The Secretary called the roll.)

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
4 Fernandez to explain her vote.

5 SENATOR FERNANDEZ: Thank you,
6 Madam President.

7 Under current law, survivors of
8 sexual -- child sexual assault must recall exact
9 dates for every act of violence committed against
10 them, including if abuse occurred over a number
11 of years. Prosecutors are often forced to walk
12 away from credible cases of child sexual abuse
13 when the child is not able to remember the
14 details required under the law to pursue charges.

15 This bill will exempt children who
16 experience sexual misconduct or predatory sexual
17 assault up until the age of 17 from needing to
18 specify every date abuse occurred as if it
19 happened -- or if it happened over an extended
20 period of time. It will ensure that child
21 survivors are not retraumatized by the mandate of
22 pinpointing specific times of repeated abuse and
23 that prosecutors can hold predators fully
24 accountable.

25 Our laws must reflect the -- our

1 laws must reflect the reality of how trauma
2 works, especially with the nuances of child
3 trauma. It's a necessary step to strengthen the
4 protections for vulnerable children and give
5 survivors the justice they deserve.

6 I thank my colleagues for supporting
7 this bill, and I urge everyone to vote aye.

8 Thank you.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
10 Fernandez to be recorded in the affirmative.

11 Announce the results.

12 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
14 is passed.

15 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
16 614, Senate Print 2494, by Senator Gounardes, an
17 act to amend the Civil Rights Law.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
19 last section.

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

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
23 roll.

24 (The Secretary called the roll.)

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce

1 the results.

2 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
4 is passed.

5 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
6 616, Senate Print 4389, by Senator May, an act to
7 amend the Executive Law.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
9 last section.

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

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
13 roll.

14 (The Secretary called the roll.)

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
16 May to explain her vote.

17 SENATOR MAY: Thank you,
18 Madam President.

19 This is a bill that we passed last
20 year. It was developed by one of my session
21 assistants a few years ago who had experience
22 with discrimination based on color blindness.

23 This will allow more people to apply
24 and potentially become police officers and not be
25 just blanket disqualified from that job because

1 of color blindness.

2 So I hope this time around the
3 Governor will see her way to signing it into law,
4 and I vote aye.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
6 May to be recorded in the affirmative.

7 Senator Oberacker to explain his
8 vote.

9 SENATOR OBERACKER: Thank you,
10 Madam President.

11 As one who is color blind, I feel as
12 though I could speak -- I'll use the word
13 intelligently on this bill, and I can tell you
14 that color blindness really doesn't affect my
15 everyday either interactions or the duties of my
16 prestigious job as being a Senator. Although my
17 wife would probably counter that it may have some
18 effect on my hearing. I can unequivocally tell
19 all here that it does not.

20 Senator May, thank you for bringing
21 this bill forward. It is a great bill. Anything
22 that would increase our ranks or potentially
23 increase our ranks for those in any type of first
24 responder and/or law enforcement is a good bill.

25 I want to thank you. And I also

1 want to thank your former staff that brought it
2 forward. It is something that I guess we don't
3 really think about much.

4 And the only other time I can tell
5 you that it was challenging was a trip one time
6 into Syracuse. Up on Tipperary Hill, there is
7 one stop light that is not in the correct
8 position for those of us of color blindness. Top
9 I stop, bottom I go, middle I go very fast.

10 This one was inverted. So just -- I
11 would say it was always something that was
12 brought forward.

13 And I proudly, Madam President,
14 proudly vote aye. Thank you.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
16 Oberacker to be recorded in the affirmative.

17 Senator O'Mara to explain his vote.

18 Senator Bailey to explain his vote.

19 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
20 Madam President.

21 I always applaud Senator May for
22 this bill because it really shows a couple of
23 things that we can do in this Legislature.

24 First and foremost, as was said, it
25 is allowing individuals who are color blind to be

1 able to be police officers. And, you know, we
2 need to make sure that people that are willing to
3 serve us in the ranks of law enforcement, that we
4 do anything we can to make sure we open that up
5 and create diversity. And diversity is -- you
6 know, diversity takes shape in many forms, and
7 color blindness is one of them.

8 But one of the most important things
9 to me is that 21 years ago I started on a journey
10 in a different chamber as an intern myself. I
11 interned for a second-term Assemblymember, a guy
12 from the Bronx, and you -- it's a guy named Carl,
13 and he's the Speaker over there. And what that
14 internship taught me for now Speaker Heastie is
15 that as an intern, not just coming here and doing
16 perfunctory duties, that being a part of
17 something to make your state important is
18 crucial.

19 And when Liam came from
20 Senator May's office to her and to me with this
21 idea, it was something I was ecstatic about
22 because to everybody listening, especially those
23 who are interning or fellows, you do make a
24 difference. Not you can, you do make a
25 difference. Your presence in this building is a

1 gift.

2 So continue to advocate, continue to
3 agitate and continue to come up with great ideas
4 like Liam's law, for lack of a better term.
5 Right? It was vetoed last year. I hope that the
6 Governor will, no pun intended, see the right
7 thing and makes sure she sees to it that it is
8 signed so that folks like Liam and other folks
9 will benefit from this legislation.

10 I proudly -- and hopefully for the
11 last time because it will be law after this --
12 vote aye, Madam President.

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

15 Announce the results.

16 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
17 Calendar 616, voting in the negative:
18 Senator Brisport.

19 Ayes, 59. Nays, 1.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
21 is passed.

22 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
23 617, Senate Print 4466, by Senator Mayer, an act
24 to amend the Civil Rights Law.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the

1 last section.

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

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 617, voting in the negative:
12 Senator Walczyk.

13 Ayes, 59. Nays, 1.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
15 is passed.

16 Senator Gianaris, that completes the
17 reading of the calendar.

18 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
19 as members of this chamber know, every Wednesday
20 in this chamber is Walczyk Wednesday. So --

21 (Laughter.)

22 SENATOR GIANARIS: -- if we can
23 take the controversial calendar up, please, and
24 let Senator Walczyk have his debate for the day.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The

1 Secretary will ring the bell.

2 The Secretary will read.

3 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
4 141, Senate Print 904A, by Senator Gonzalez, an
5 act to amend the Public Service Law.

6 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
7 Walczyk, why do you rise?

8 SENATOR WALCZYK: I rise in a
9 time-honored tradition of this chamber,
10 Madam President.

11 (Laughter.)

12 SENATOR WALCZYK: I hope the
13 sponsor will yield for some questions.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: In the
15 spirit of time-honored tradition, will the
16 sponsor yield?

17 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Absolutely,
18 Madam President.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
20 sponsor will yield.

21 SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,
22 Madam President. So the Section 16A of this bill
23 is about reporting on utility investigations.
24 And I was reading through the language here. The
25 reporting is to committee chairs, to the

1 President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the
2 Assembly, all of whom are Democrats.

3 Why weren't any minority leadership
4 or rankers of committees included in the
5 reporting requirement here?

6 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
7 Madam President. It is very custom for us to
8 provide reports to chairs of the relevant
9 committees. Certainly those reports are often
10 reviewed within the committee. And in this case
11 I believe the Senator is a part of the Energy and
12 Telecommunications Committee.

13 SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,
14 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
15 yield.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Will the
17 sponsor yield?

18 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
19 Madam President, yes, I do.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
21 sponsor yields.

22 SENATOR WALCZYK: So the
23 Public Service Commission currently has the
24 authority to stay penalties, fees, interest
25 charges, some of the things that you're getting

1 at here, even temporarily suspending bills.

2 Have they failed in certain
3 instances, has the Public Service Commission
4 failed in certain instances in the State of
5 New York in doing that, and that's why you're
6 proposing this legislation?

7 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
8 Madam President, while we're aware that the PSC
9 has this ability, they don't consistently use it.
10 So it's important to have a piece of legislation
11 like this one to provide that consistency.

12 There is precedent -- for example,
13 what happened with Central Hudson Gas & Electric
14 in 2021, where over 8,000 customers were billed
15 incorrectly, that those customers were impacted
16 and not intervene by the PSC to protect them from
17 certain fees.

18 So we are introducing this bill
19 because there has been a history here, and I'm
20 proud that we're providing that consistency for
21 all customers regardless of the case in question.

22 SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,
23 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
24 yield.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the

1 sponsor yield?

2 SENATOR GONZALEZ: I do.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
4 sponsor yields.

5 SENATOR WALCZYK: But in the
6 Central Hudson case, didn't the Public Service
7 Commission actually do what you're proposing
8 here? Didn't they exercise their authority to
9 stay additional fees, penalties, interest
10 charges, terminations while the billing was
11 straightened out on that issue?

12 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
13 Madam President. This bill provides that at the
14 end of a case and determination, that customers
15 are protected for 120 days from termination, late
16 fees and penalties regarding the case. And once
17 the PSC has released their report and determined
18 whether or not the utility company is owed any of
19 those fees, then those customers are required to
20 pay.

21 So while I will understand that the
22 PSC did intervene in part of the Central Hudson
23 case, there is a clear standard and consistent
24 standard being put forward in the process in this
25 bill.

1 SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,
2 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
3 yield.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
5 sponsor yield?

6 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
8 sponsor yields.

9 SENATOR WALCZYK: So the Public
10 Service Commission has acted under its authority
11 in order to do exactly what you're proposing
12 here, but we are codifying additional things in
13 law here, if your bill becomes a law, in order to
14 make sure that they do those things, I guess.

15 And I want to talk to you about some
16 of the things that you've proposed in the change
17 here.

18 So for investigations for
19 combination utilities -- for example, a gas and
20 an electric utility -- if there's an
21 investigation about the gas utility, will that
22 also impact the stay on fees for fees, penalties,
23 interest rates, terminations for the electric
24 charges under a combination utility?

25 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,

1 Madam President, this bill specifically addresses
2 residential gas, electric and steam utility
3 services.

4 If the complaints that triggered the
5 investigation -- and for clarity, the threshold
6 for complaints for the PSC to investigate has to
7 be over 25 individual complaints or a
8 municipality or Department of State submitting a
9 written complaint to DPS. You know, after this
10 happens, then if those complaints are regarding
11 gas and electric, then yes, this would apply to
12 both of those services.

13 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
14 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
15 yield.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
17 sponsor yield?

18 SENATOR GONZALEZ: I do.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
20 sponsor yields.

21 SENATOR WALCZYK: So I want to talk
22 about your definition of investigations. You
23 used "investigations" a couple of times.

24 My read of your legislation here is
25 that there's kind of two different things that

1 could fall under the investigations category.
2 One is a rate case that is brought to the Public
3 Service Commission, and another is from users or
4 municipalities under Section 71. That could be
5 25 users or one municipal leader that files with
6 the Public Service Commission asking for an
7 investigation? Am I understanding that
8 correctly?

9 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
10 Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to
11 clarify the intent of this bill.

12 This does not necessarily cover
13 routine proceedings by the PSC and is not
14 relevant to rate-setting. It is written to
15 address only significant investigations with
16 broad implications for consumers. And it defines
17 investigations as a formal proceeding conducted
18 by the commission to examine the policies,
19 practices, rates, charges, services, facilities,
20 operations or management of a utility corporation
21 or to determine compliance with any law, rule,
22 regulation, order or tariff applicable to such a
23 utility corporation.

24 So the bill's intent is to protect
25 consumers from the impact of major systemic

1 issues. But if a utility company is going
2 through a routine rate case and following all of
3 the relevant laws, then this certainly -- then
4 that process would go along smoothly and this
5 bill would not be covering that.

6 SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,
7 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
8 yield.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
10 sponsor yield?

11 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
13 sponsor yields.

14 SENATOR WALCZYK: Right, so that
15 answered half of my question. This does include
16 rate cases that would be considered an
17 investigation. What about under Section 71?
18 Does this also include 25 members or users or a
19 municipal official that could ask for an
20 investigation from the Public Service Commission?

21 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
22 Madam President. I want to clarify billing
23 rates.

24 So if a consumer or customer has
25 been incorrectly billed and over 25 of them have

1 submitted complaints, for example, and the
2 Department of Public Service, through an informal
3 investigation process, which on average lasts
4 eight to nine months, has determined that there
5 is a reasonable doubt around how those bills have
6 been set, then yes, those rates would be under
7 investigation. And to the member's question,
8 they would be covered under this bill.

9 But again, larger rate cases and
10 routine proceedings are not within the scope of
11 this bill.

12 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
13 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
14 yield.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
16 sponsor yield?

17 SENATOR GONZALEZ: I do.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
19 sponsor yields.

20 SENATOR WALCZYK: But Section 71 of
21 the Public Service Law isn't just about price,
22 complaints as to quality and price of gas and
23 electricity investigation by commission. This is
24 the section of law that outlines 25 members of
25 the public or a trustee of the village town or

1 board, chief executive officer of a legislative
2 body, et cetera.

3 I just want to make sure that
4 Section 71 of the Public Service Law also applies
5 here. Is that called out in your bill?

6 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
7 Madam President, yes, that is correct.

8 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
9 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
10 yield?

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
12 sponsor yield?

13 SENATOR GONZALEZ: I do.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
15 sponsor yields.

16 SENATOR WALCZYK: Are you aware
17 that PSC rate cases take on average 11 months in
18 the State of New York?

19 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
20 Madam President. Yes, I am aware.

21 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
22 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
23 yield?

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
25 sponsor yield?

1 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
3 sponsor yields.

4 SENATOR WALCZYK: So you're
5 proposing here, as one of those investigations, a
6 PSC rate case that for those 11 months the
7 utility could not charge late fees if somebody
8 hasn't paid their bill, cannot charge a penalty,
9 cannot charge interest, and cannot discontinue
10 service? Is that correct?

11 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
12 Madam President, there are currently two paths
13 for rate setting: A litigated process and a
14 settlement track, which are outlined in law. If
15 the rate increase requested by the utility is in
16 compliance with all applicable rules and
17 regulations, then this process should move along
18 smoothly.

19 However, the bill is not relevant to
20 how rate-setting occurs. But if there are
21 concerns about that process, legislators of
22 course are welcome to submit legislation on that
23 issue.

24 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
25 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to

1 yield.

2 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Will the
4 sponsor yield?

5 The sponsor yields.

6 SENATOR WALCZYK: But you do
7 acknowledge that rate cases generally take about
8 11 months in the State of New York?

9 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
10 Madam President, yes, that is correct.

11 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
12 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
13 yield?

14 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
15 sponsor yield?

16 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes, I do.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
18 sponsor yields.

19 SENATOR WALCZYK: And the
20 legislation that you're proposing here goes a
21 little bit further than just the timeline of the
22 11 months where there's a pending rate case --
23 called an investigation under your proposed
24 legislation. It also goes 120 days, four months
25 after that rate case would be settled, where the

1 utility still could not charge late fees, charge
2 a penalty, charge interest or discontinue service
3 for any of the users.

4 Am I reading that correctly?

5 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
6 Madam President, yes.

7 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
8 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
9 yield?

10 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
12 sponsor yield?

13 The sponsor yields.

14 SENATOR WALCZYK: And this
15 legislation that you're proposing today also has
16 a requirement that the utility notify customers
17 within 10 days and post on their website within
18 three days of their filing for a rate case, is
19 that correct?

20 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
21 Madam President, yes, that is in the bill.

22 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
23 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
24 yield?

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the

1 sponsor yield?

2 The sponsor yields.

3 SENATOR WALCZYK: So the total
4 amount of time that somebody would not have to
5 pay their electric or gas bill would be
6 15 months, a year and a quarter, while there's a
7 pending rate case and then the effective
8 120 days? Am I reading that timeline correctly?

9 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
10 Madam President, I'd like to reiterate that this
11 is not about a standard rate case. Again,
12 routine rate cases are not part of the scope of
13 this bill.

14 But it is true, if billing rates are
15 in question for the investigation and the PSC is
16 under -- or investigating the utility, which
17 would qualify as a formal investigation -- which
18 again, I will reiterate, only happens after an
19 informal rate investigation of eight to nine
20 months where the Department of Public Service
21 reviews the complaint and sees if they are
22 credible and there should be a formal
23 investigation. Only then are consumers protected
24 from late fees, from termination of service, and
25 from penalties.

1 I'd also like to reiterate that this
2 bill does not encourage customers or consumers to
3 not pay their bills. But certainly in cases
4 where they are being double-billed or billed at
5 higher rates, there may be customers who are
6 unable to pay the full amount required, and those
7 customers should certainly not be penalized or
8 lose service during that time.

9 SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,
10 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
11 yield.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
13 sponsor yield?

14 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
16 sponsor yields.

17 SENATOR WALCZYK: So to create a
18 formal -- as you were outlining, to create a
19 formula under Section 71, the complaint in
20 writing of not less than 25 customers or
21 purchasers of such gas or electricity, or upon
22 the complaint in writing of the Department of
23 State.

24 So am I understanding 25 customers
25 of that utility could create and trigger the

1 formal investigation that would kick this off?

2 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
3 Madam President. Once more, I'd like to clarify
4 that if over -- if 25 customers or over submit
5 complaints and those complaints are reasonable
6 and determined to be reasonable by the Department
7 of Public Service, then yes, once a formal
8 investigation is triggered, that is absolutely
9 possible.

10 But again, there is an additional
11 review process, and this will only happen in
12 cases where there is a credible reason to have a
13 formal investigation.

14 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
15 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
16 yield.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
18 sponsor yield?

19 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes, I do.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
21 sponsor yields.

22 SENATOR WALCZYK: But you can't
23 really determine whether it's credible until the
24 investigation is complete. I think that's the
25 purpose of the investigation.

1 So when 25 customers of a utility
2 company say, My rates are too high, I want an
3 investigation, and they go to the Public Service
4 Commission and file with the Public Service
5 Commission, then there's an investigation.

6 And your legislation is requiring
7 that while that investigation is ongoing, they
8 can't terminate service, add any of the fees or
9 penalties or that kind of thing. Is that -- am I
10 reading that correctly?

11 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
12 Madam President. Yes, if a formal investigation
13 is underway, while it's true that customers have
14 a responsibility to pay their bills, so do
15 utility companies have to provide timely and
16 accurate billing.

17 So if there is a formal
18 investigation, then yes, this bill would ensure
19 that those customers are not seeing termination
20 of service if they are unable to pay those, you
21 know, unreasonable bills.

22 SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you,
23 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
24 yield?

25 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the

1 sponsor yield?

2 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
4 sponsor yields.

5 SENATOR WALCZYK: Also empowering
6 the Public Service Commission to waive
7 terminations, back-billing, bills in arrears in
8 this legislation, is that correct?

9 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
10 Madam President. Once the formal investigation
11 is completed, the Public Service Commission has
12 the ability to decide if those late fees,
13 penalties are due to the company or only due to
14 them in part.

15 But what's important to note here is
16 if the investigation results in a ruling in favor
17 of a utility company, then that utility company
18 will be made whole and the bills that were due to
19 them will be required to be paid from the
20 customers.

21 SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,
22 Madam President, would the sponsor continue to
23 yield?

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the
25 sponsor yield?

1 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes, I do.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
3 sponsor yields.

4 SENATOR WALCZYK: I appreciate you
5 saying that the utility companies would be made
6 whole. Do you know how many dollars in arrears
7 the utility companies in the State of New York
8 are right now?

9 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through you,
10 Madam President, I'd like to be clear that "made
11 whole" is only if the ruling was in favor of the
12 utility company.

13 But to answer the member's question,
14 if he would like to share that with the chamber,
15 he is welcome to share that number.

16 SENATOR WALCZYK: Madam President,
17 on the bill.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
19 Walczyk on the bill.

20 SENATOR WALCZYK: \$1.3 billion is
21 how much our utilities are in arrears right now.
22 Having interest, penalties, fees for people who
23 are currently not paying their electric bill
24 because their electric and gas bills are too
25 pricey because of the things that come out of

1 this chamber and the chamber down the hall and
2 are signed into law by the Governor.

3 Power production is not free.
4 Neither is transporting that power. The
5 customers of the State of New York are feeling
6 that pain right now.

7 What this legislation does is it
8 allows 25 customers in a utility to file a case
9 with the Public Service Commission in order to
10 not pay their bill for up to 15 months in a rate
11 case. So if there's a rate case pending with the
12 Public Service Commission -- those generally take
13 11 months -- this bill tacks on another
14 four months.

15 And I know how this sounds at face
16 value. It sounds great. Everybody says, Well,
17 great, I don't have to pay my electric or my gas
18 bill for 15 months. That would be a lot of
19 relief. But the companies are going to be made
20 whole, is what the sponsor said. So at what
21 point and who is going to pay that electric bill?
22 They already have \$1.3 billion in arrears.

23 Electricity is not free. It is
24 expensive to produce. It's expensive to
25 transport. The same is true with gas.

1 Yeah, I think I've made my point.

2 This -- yeah, I've made my point. All right,

3 thank you, Madam President.

4 (Laughter.)

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank

6 you, Senator.

7 Are there any other Senators wishing

8 to be heard?

9 Seeing and hearing none, debate is

10 closed. The Secretary will ring the bell.

11 Read the last section.

12 THE SECRETARY: Section 7. This

13 act shall take effect on the 30th day after it

14 shall have become a law.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the

16 roll.

17 (The Secretary called the roll.)

18 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator

19 Gonzalez to explain her vote.

20 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you so

21 much, Madam President.

22 I want to thank my colleagues for

23 passing this very important piece of legislation.

24 While I know that we are in a cost-of-living

25 crisis, one of the driving factors is utility

1 costs. And when utility companies -- for
2 example, last year in the North Country, with
3 National Grid, and I believe certain members of
4 this chamber in their own districts had the
5 lowest customer satisfaction ratings because of
6 their inability to provide quality service. When
7 these issues happen, it is so important for those
8 consumers to have every possible protection in
9 this cost-of-living crisis.

10 So I think this bill is an important
11 step towards doing that. And it's certainly
12 reasonable and common sense to say if a utility
13 is under a formal and credible investigation,
14 that those consumers -- who of course will have
15 to pay if they are not ruled in favor of --
16 should certainly have some sort of protection as
17 they struggle to keep up with their bills.

18 So I am so proud to have sponsored
19 this bill and certainly appreciative of this
20 chamber for voting. And of course I vote aye.

21 Thank you.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
23 Gonzalez to be recorded in the affirmative.

24 Senator Krueger to explain her vote.

25 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you very

1 much.

2 I appreciated the debate. I am
3 voting yes on this bill.

4 My colleague who led the debate
5 against the bill does point out that there's an
6 enormous amount of utility debt out there. And
7 yes, utilities cost something. But the point of
8 this bill, as was clarified over and over again
9 by the sponsor, was these are actual
10 investigations into overcharges, not simply a
11 rate increase.

12 And the truth is most of us have
13 constituents who are in an enormously difficult
14 situation trying to pay their monthly utility
15 bills and then of course falling into default and
16 even risking losing their electricity or heat,
17 which can be a crisis for the family.

18 And so this Legislature, this
19 government, has an obligation to make sure
20 everybody's following the rules of the road.
21 Make sure that utility rates are set
22 appropriately, that if there are investigations
23 they are completed hopefully quickly. But if
24 not, we still need to make sure that our
25 consumers are protected.

1 And there was just the point made
2 that it's expensive. I would say yes, and it
3 would be less expensive if we move more quickly
4 into green alternative energy -- solar, wind,
5 geothermal. That would actually hopefully
6 decrease everybody's utilities and decrease the
7 amount of money people find themselves in default
8 on.

9 Of course, unfortunately, we've also
10 learned that we've just lost about \$500 million
11 from the federal government, who's decided not to
12 continue the LIHEAP program, which is critically
13 important for low-income New Yorkers, those more
14 likely to fall behind on their utility bills as
15 well.

16 So we have a lot of work to do,
17 Madam President. But this bill is a good bill,
18 and I thank my colleague for sponsoring it.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
20 Krueger to be recorded in the affirmative.

21 Senator Walczyk to explain his vote.

22 SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you,
23 Madam President.

24 You can't just blame the Public
25 Service Commission and blame the utilities for

1 the cost of electricity and gas in the State of
2 New York. You have to look in the mirror and
3 look at the policy that you've passed in this
4 chamber.

5 The Empire Center says that electric
6 and gas bills have already gone up 10 percent in
7 the State of New York because of the CLCPA, and
8 estimates at the low end by the Comptroller say
9 that the CLCPA's implementation is going to be
10 \$340 billion. Where does that money come from?

11 If you don't even allow the
12 utilities to collect revenue but you require the
13 utilities to do the entire thing, how does that
14 math? It doesn't. They're already \$1.3 billion
15 in arrears on bills now. But this legislation
16 says, Don't worry, once there's an
17 investigation -- which 25 customers can
18 trigger -- then nobody has to pay their bill and
19 we'll probably waive any late fees even if they
20 do have to pay their bill eventually.

21 And then you have the gall to go out
22 and say that we're trying to make electricity and
23 gas more affordable in the State of New York.
24 I'm not fooled, and neither are the residents.
25 They see it on their bill every single month.

1 And I vote no.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
3 Walczyk again to be recorded in the negative.

4 Senator Tedisco to explain his vote.

5 SENATOR TEDISCO: Thank you. To
6 explain my vote on this bill.

7 You know, I think all of us get a
8 lot of calls and concerns about various issues.
9 At the top of the list, probably the calls you
10 get are the affordability problem, which we're
11 called to solve this year by the Governor and
12 many of my colleagues on the other side have
13 talked about -- some talk about it, some not.
14 Criminal justice reform. But right at the top of
15 the list is the rate increases in the cost of
16 energy for our constituents.

17 I get calls galore about that. And
18 I have to explain to them, why did you -- they
19 say to me, Why did you increase my electric rates
20 or my gas rates or these rates? You know,
21 they're going up astronomically. And they're
22 right, I think.

23 Then I have to explain to them, we
24 have this thing called the Public Service
25 Commission. Well, which legislators are the

1 Public Service Commission? Well, they're not
2 legislators. I say they're faceless bureaucrats,
3 because nobody knows them. And out of nowhere
4 there's a rate increase, and now we're going to
5 investigate them.

6 I have a solution for this. And
7 this may be significant. You might want to
8 investigate them. How about this -- you took an
9 oath of office to protect the best interests of
10 your constituents, their health, their safety,
11 their financial well-being. This is a part of
12 101,000 people leaving the State of New York in
13 the last census, about 3 million over the last
14 three or four years, number one in outmigration.

15 How about if we pass my bill pending
16 that says we ratify any rate increase that these
17 commissioners you appointed in there say is
18 justified. Then you can stand up and say, Well,
19 we need an investigation. Or if you want to
20 investigate you could say, yeah, we were
21 responsible for that, if you vote for it. Or you
22 could say, Well, I didn't vote for that, and this
23 is the reason why.

24 Now, if you really want to solve
25 this problem, pass my bill, put your name on it,

1 and we'll do the job we were elected to do, not
2 faceless bureaucrats --

3 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
4 Tedisco, how do you vote?

5 SENATOR TEDISCO: -- which you
6 blame them for the rate increases --

7 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
8 Tedisco, how do you vote?

9 SENATOR TEDISCO: But it's you, who
10 were put here to protect --

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
12 Tedisco, how do you vote?

13 SENATOR TEDISCO: -- their
14 financial best interests.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
16 Tedisco to be recorded in the negative.

17 SENATOR TEDISCO: Madam Speaker,
18 thank you very much --

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce
20 the results.

21 SENATOR TEDISCO: -- for your
22 leadership. You look wonderful in that blue
23 outfit today.

24 (Laughter.)

25 SENATOR TEDISCO: It is blue, isn't

1 it? Oh, no, that was the other bill, color
2 blind.

3 (Laughter.)

4 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
5 Calendar 141, voting in the negative are
6 Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick,
7 Chan, Gallivan, Griffio, Helming, Lanza, Martins,
8 Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt,
9 Palumbo, Rhoads, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber
10 and Weik.

11 Ayes, 39. Nays, 21.

12 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
13 is passed.

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

16 SENATOR GIANARIS: For the record,
17 Madam President, your suit is not even blue.

18 (Laughter.)

19 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Maybe
20 he's color blind.

21 (Laughter.)

22 SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's take up
23 the supplemental calendar, please.

24 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The
25 Secretary will read.

1 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
2 674, Senate Print 3786, by Senator Felder, an act
3 to amend the Education Law.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the
5 last section.

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

8 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the
9 roll.

10 (The Secretary called the roll.)

11 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
12 Felder.

13 Call the roll -- announce the
14 results.

15 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill
17 is passed.

18 Senator Gianaris.

19 SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President,
20 I think the members of this chamber know that
21 today is Senator Felder's last day with us here
22 in the Senate.

23 He has served for a little over
24 12 years, if I'm not mistaken. And, you know,
25 the Senate has flipped sides in that time, and

1 somehow Senator Felder has not served one day in
2 the Minority in this chamber.

3 (Laughter.)

4 SENATOR GIANARIS: It's a unique
5 distinction.

6 But I will say that I appreciate
7 that he waited just a few extra months to leave,
8 because he served six years with the Republican
9 conference and six years and three months here
10 with the Democratic Conference. So I guess we've
11 had him for longer than you have.

12 But we do I think all, on both sides
13 of the aisle, appreciate his service, appreciate
14 his good humor, his kindness, and all he has lent
15 to this body as he embarks on a new chapter in
16 his public service.

17 We're going to, by consent, give him
18 a few moments to bid farewell to all of us. So
19 if you could please recognize Senator Felder.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator
21 Felder.

22 SENATOR FELDER: Thank you.

23 During the 12 years that I've been
24 here, there were only two times that I spoke.
25 Once, one session, was -- it was about the need

1 to help special-needs children. And the other
2 time was about the onerous bag tax.

3 In addition, the Citizen -- I think
4 it's the Citizen Union, or one of the good
5 government groups, at one point for whatever
6 reason did a computation on each member, the
7 number of words each member said during the
8 session. And I'd love you to guess who had the
9 most words -- if you'd get it right,
10 Senator Krueger.

11 (Laughter.)

12 SENATOR FELDER: I won the least.

13 It seems that every session they
14 said that you were compelled to say yes at the
15 beginning of session when they said -- when they
16 start a session.

17 So I'm going to make up for it
18 today --

19 (Laughter.)

20 SENATOR FELDER: -- if you don't
21 mind.

22 So Psalm 145 -- in Psalm 145 it
23 says: The Lord is good to all, and His mercies
24 are in all His works.

25 About 25 years ago, the first time I

1 ran for office, I asked a Holocaust survivor who
2 was a congregant in my father's synagogue if he
3 could please pray that I win the election. And
4 he said, "Absolutely not." He said that "I'll
5 pray that you get what's good for you, not that
6 you win the election."

7 And here I am, just wanting to
8 thank -- you know, and I hope -- I apologize to
9 anyone I left -- leave out -- is, you know, all
10 the people that have really -- you know, that
11 I've been able to have a wonderful relationship
12 with and even laughed at the bad jokes that I
13 made.

14 So, you know, the people who run
15 session all the time and, you know, really just
16 get it moving, I thank -- I thank them.

17 You know, I -- I -- my -- my staff,
18 Bryan Best and Peggy Germain; over the years,
19 Jay Bove and Rodney Powis, and of course the
20 entire staff in Brooklyn and my chief of staff,
21 Judah Wohlgernter, who -- so I -- they've been
22 wonderful.

23 I'm not going to, you know, explain
24 each thing why they're wonderful. I'm just going
25 to thank -- thank, you know, the people that I

1 really appreciated having the relationship and
2 working with them.

3 Of course Majority Leader
4 Stewart-Cousins and the leadership and her, you
5 know, staff that I work with and the leadership
6 of Senator Gianaris and all -- again, all the
7 staff, the Secretary of the Senate. And, you
8 know, all the staff like getting extra garbage
9 cans or things like that, which in government is
10 monumental.

11 The Sergeants-at-Arms were
12 wonderful. And I would just ask that we pray for
13 Ben, who has been out and can use our prayers.
14 You know, I've spoken to him a number of times.
15 On one hand, you know, I pray that he gets well.
16 On the other hand, he was too strict, really.

17 (Laughter.)

18 SENATOR FELDER: So we want him
19 back, but softer.

20 (Laughter.)

21 SENATOR FELDER: We want him back
22 softer.

23 I mean, Tim, who runs the lounge,
24 I -- I don't think that I've ever gone into a
25 fancy restaurant with -- as nice and

1 accommodating. And they give you shopping bags
2 even if you don't pay.

3 (Laughter.)

4 SENATOR FELDER: The messenger
5 service, I mean, they're just wonderful. They --
6 and they will tell you that.

7 (Laughter.)

8 SENATOR FELDER: It's just really,
9 really very nice.

10 I've had -- you know, we've had
11 relationships with the custodians, who are like
12 secret -- you know, if you're here late at night,
13 you get to spend some of your time with them.
14 And I would not in any way try to convince you
15 that I was here late at night working. But I did
16 fall asleep on the couch one night, and the staff
17 was gone. And thank God one of the custodians
18 came in, and I -- you know, I left. I won't tell
19 you what time.

20 And of course all of you -- I know
21 over the years many of -- many people who are
22 not -- you know, have just -- who left. It's
23 been, you know, just wonderful in different ways.
24 Somebody said to me, Will you miss being here?
25 And I said, Absolutely not. I will not miss

1 being here. But I will miss the people. With --
2 you know, without exception, I will miss the
3 people, all of you that I've spent some, you
4 know, time. And if you haven't spent some time
5 with me, we can make an appointment to do so.

6 (Laughter.)

7 SENATOR FELDER: But it's --
8 without exception, without exception, it's
9 been -- it's been wonderful working with you.

10 So I just want to end by saying that
11 my mother, may she rest in peace, passed away
12 two, a little more than -- almost three years
13 ago. And she was 102.

14 And she used to wake up very early
15 in the morning and pray. And towards -- towards
16 the end of her life, I used to see that when she
17 was done praying, she, you know, sort of like
18 added. And I finally said to her, "Ma, what --
19 what did you say?" She said, "I told God that
20 it's enough, he should please take me." Because
21 she had a such a variety -- that's not the right
22 word -- of ailments, she just wanted to -- as she
23 said, It's time to check out.

24 That's what she -- and she asked --
25 she asked me and, you know, of course my siblings

1 to pray as well. I said, That I can't do.
2 Because despite the fact that I knew she was
3 suffering, there was no way that I would pray
4 that, you know, she'd leave.

5 She -- she very often would spend
6 time talking about the fact that it's critical
7 that if you love someone, to tell them you love
8 them. It's not enough for that person to know,
9 especially, you know, in families and with
10 children growing up, you know, physical -- a
11 physical hug or something, of course, she used to
12 say that's even better. But if you can't manage
13 that -- and I'm quoting her -- if you can't
14 manage that, she'd say you have to tell people
15 that you love them. You must remember to tell
16 them. It's not enough to indicate or do things
17 that show that you love them.

18 So towards -- I would say it was
19 three days before she passed away, she -- she had
20 shut herself down. That's what the doctor said
21 to me. She was -- her eyes were closed, she was
22 not in coma. She just didn't want to eat, didn't
23 want to do anything. And she remained -- her
24 eyes remained closed. No matter what I did, I
25 could not get her to open her eyes or say

1 anything. And, you know, that was the situation.

2 My oldest daughter, who I believe
3 was her favorite grandchild, even though I have
4 many siblings who will claim otherwise, you know,
5 about this. But I believe that. So my oldest
6 daughter, who lives in South Jersey, said she's
7 coming to see my mother, to visit my mother in
8 the hospital. And I said absolutely not. I did
9 not want her to see my mother in that condition,
10 you know.

11 And she said, "No, I'm coming." I
12 said, "You know, it's one of the Ten
13 Commandments." She said "Too bad." That's what
14 she said, "Too bad, I'm coming." And of course
15 she did not listen, and she came. And I said,
16 "If you're coming, I don't want to be there when
17 you're coming."

18 So about 10 minutes before she
19 arrived, she called. She said, "I'm 10 minutes
20 away." So I left. I -- you know, I couldn't be
21 there to watch her see my mother that way.

22 Anyway, she called me from the
23 hospital and she said, "Ta, I don't know what
24 you're talking about. I whispered into" --
25 "Bobe" is grandmother. "I whispered into Bobe's

1 ears, and I said, 'Hi, it's Teporah. You know,
2 Daddy said that you won't open your eyes or talk.
3 But it's me. You know, I know -- I know you're
4 going to talk to me." That's what she said to
5 me -- to my mother.

6 And my mother opened her eyes and
7 looked right at her and said, "You don't -- you
8 don't really need me to do it, because you know,
9 I keep on telling everyone that you have to tell
10 them you love them. And you know how often I
11 used to tell you how much I love you."

12 And my mother didn't have long
13 conversations. You'd say "How are you?" And
14 she'd usually say "Is everything all right?" And
15 that was the end of the conversation. She would
16 say "I love you, bye," and that was it.

17 So she said -- says to my daughter
18 that "You know how much I love you and how much I
19 will always love you. Even after I'm gone, don't
20 forget that that's so."

21 My daughter called me and said, "Ta,
22 I don't know what you're talking about. I just
23 had a long conversation with Bobe." So of course
24 I came running. And I tried the same, but was
25 not successful in getting her to say anything.

1 So I -- I want to say to you that I
2 love you all, and I hope that God gives you what
3 you need. Thank you.

4 (Sustained standing ovation.)

5 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank
6 you, Senator.

7 Senator Gianaris.

8 SENATOR GIANARIS: Is there any
9 further business at the desk, Madam President?

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

12 SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to
13 adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, April 10th, at
14 11:00 a.m.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: On
16 motion, the Senate stands adjourned until
17 Thursday, April 10th, at 11:00 a.m.

18 Congratulations and best wishes,
19 Senator Felder.

20 (Whereupon, at 1:27 p.m., the Senate
21 adjourned.)

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