

1 NEW YORK STATE SENATE

2

3

4 THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

5

6

7

8

9 ALBANY, NEW YORK

10

March 11, 2026

11

3:10 p.m.

12

13

14

REGULAR SESSION

15

16

17

18

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTONIO DELGADO, President

19

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

20

21

22

23

24

25

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

2 THE PRESIDENT: The Senate will
3 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 THE PRESIDENT: His Eminence
9 Archbishop Elpidophoros, of the Greek Orthodox
10 Archdiocese of America, will deliver today's
11 invocation.

12 ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS: May we bow
13 our heads in prayer:

14 In the Name of God, the Creator and
15 Sustainer of the universe, and of all that is
16 contained therein. Amen.

17 We offer thanks and praise, O God,
18 for gathering us together today in the Senate of
19 the great State of New York, that we may appeal
20 to Your righteousness and goodness, to bless all
21 the representatives of the people with Your mercy
22 and Your grace.

23 Grant unto them to fulfill their
24 duties, responsibilities, and obligations to the
25 people of New York with honor, integrity, and

1 unalloyed allegiance to the Constitution.

2 Bless them to love liberty -- the
3 freedom that we commemorate today recognizing
4 March 25th, the day of Greek Independence, and
5 the freedom enshrined in these United States of
6 America, now in our 250th year since our
7 Declaration of Independence.

8 Hold all these lawmakers fast in
9 Your loving care, that they may ever serve with
10 the dignity of their high office, and thus render
11 glory, reverence and honor to You, the
12 Fountainhead of all Law and Justice.

13 Amen.

14 (Response of "Amen.")

15 THE PRESIDENT: Reading of the
16 Journal.

17 THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Tuesday,
18 March 10, 2026, the Senate met pursuant to
19 adjournment. The Journal of Monday, March 9,
20 2026, was read and approved. On motion, the
21 Senate adjourned.

22 THE PRESIDENT: Without objection,
23 the Journal stands approved as read.

24 Presentation of petitions.

25 Messages from the Assembly.

1 Messages from the Governor.
2 Reports of standing committees.
3 Reports of select committees.
4 Communications and reports from
5 state officers.

6 Motions and resolutions.

7 Senator Gianaris.

8 SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon,
9 Mr. President.

10 THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

11 SENATOR GIANARIS: I wish to call
12 up, on behalf of Senator Sanders, Senate Print
13 3179A, recalled from the Assembly, which is now
14 at the desk.

15 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
16 read.

17 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
18 101, Senate Print 3179A, by Senator Sanders, an
19 act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

20 SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to
21 reconsider the vote by which this bill was
22 passed.

23 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
24 call the roll on reconsideration.

25 (The Secretary called the roll.)

1 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

2 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is
3 restored to its place on the Third Reading
4 Calendar.

5 SENATOR GIANARIS: I offer the
6 following amendments.

7 THE PRESIDENT: The amendments are
8 received.

9 SENATOR GIANARIS: On behalf of
10 Senator Hinchey, on page 21 I offer the following
11 amendments to Calendar Number 400, Senate Print
12 8491, and ask that said bill retain its place on
13 the Third Reading Calendar.

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

17 Senator Gianaris.

18 SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time
19 please take up previously adopted
20 Resolution 1716, by Senator Gianaris, read its
21 title, and call on me, please.

22 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
23 read.

24 THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1716, by
25 Senator Gianaris, memorializing Governor

1 Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026 as
2 Greek History Month in the State of New York.

3 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris on
4 the resolution.

5 SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you,
6 Mr. President.

7 My colleagues, soak it up. This is
8 the --

9 (Laughter.)

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: This is the last
11 time you're going to hear me speak about this
12 Greek Independence resolution.

13 (Response of "Awww"; laughter.)

14 SENATOR GIANARIS: I get up every
15 year and I tell you how everything you have you
16 owe to the Greeks. Your science, your
17 mathematics, your arts, and indeed the very
18 democracy that we practice in this chamber.

19 Those of us who are of Greek descent
20 hold that very dear. And while we are of course
21 proud New Yorkers and proud Americans, we never
22 forget where we came from and what those who have
23 preceded us have given us in this chamber.

24 This year we're very fortunate that
25 we are joined by the Archbishop of the Americas,

1 who you just heard give the opening prayer,
2 Archbishop Elpidophoros. Your Eminence, thank
3 you for joining us and for blessing us.

4 We also have the Consul Generals of
5 both Greece and Cyprus here today, who were a
6 part of our program at the luncheon that we had
7 that so many of you also attended.

8 You know, when I was first elected
9 to office to the Assembly, 26 years ago, I was
10 the first Greek-American ever elected to an
11 office from New York City, any office. And at
12 the time I said to my community, "I'm the first.
13 I won't be the last." And lo and behold, we have
14 three in this chamber right now: Senator
15 Gounardes, Senator Skoufis. There are others in
16 the Assembly. Some have even come and gone, like
17 our former colleague Senator Jordan.

18 But it is a classic New York
19 story -- and American story, I would say -- that
20 people come to this country, they're seeking a
21 better life, immigrants -- some documented, some
22 not -- who have worked incredibly hard to give
23 their children, their grandchildren, a chance.

24 And then, lo and behold, eventually
25 they take their places in government,

1 representing this state, this country, and do
2 their best to pave the way for others.

3 And so the fact that we were able to
4 open that door, able to get others coming in
5 behind, is something I'm incredibly proud of as I
6 spend my last few months here in this chamber.
7 And I know that that legacy is in good hands with
8 the people we have here, and for certain people
9 that will be coming in the future.

10 And so as we pause to recognize
11 Greek Independence today, I want to thank all my
12 colleagues for indulging me in these remarks,
13 these condescending remarks I've given you year
14 after year.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SENATOR: More!

16 SENATOR GIANARIS: There will be
17 more to come before I leave in June, don't worry.

18 (Laughter.)

19 SENATOR GIANARIS: But as it
20 relates to what you owe the Greeks, this will
21 be -- this will be the last time you hear that.

22 But I know you're all grateful for
23 that. And I certainly appreciate working with
24 all of you over the years and certainly spending
25 some time every March to pause and recognize the

1 contribution of Greeks and those of Greek descent
2 here in New York.

3 So thank you, Mr. President. And
4 obviously I'm supporting this resolution.

5 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gounardes.

8 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you,
9 Mr. President.

10 And thank you, Senator Gianaris, for
11 this resolution.

12 Before I begin, I do want to
13 acknowledge that we are joined here not only by
14 His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, but by the
15 Consul General of Greece, Mrs. Iphigenia Kanara,
16 and the Consul General of Cyprus, Mr. Kyriakos
17 Pogiatzis, because the history and destiny of the
18 Greek and Cypriot people are shared and linked
19 together. And we thank them all for joining us
20 today.

21 "Tell to the king that the carven
22 hall is fallen in decay. Apollo has no chapel
23 left, no prophesying bay, no talking spring. The
24 stream is dry that had so much to say."

25 Those of you that studied Greek and

1 Roman history may recognize these words as the
2 final oracle delivered by Pythia at Delphi.

3 The story goes that Roman Emperor
4 Julian, who ruled right after Constantine the
5 Great, sought to revive classical Greek culture
6 across the empire, so he sent an emissary to
7 Delphi for advice. The response from the oracle
8 meant that the time of the ancient Greeks had
9 passed and that Julian would need to look not to
10 the past but to the future if he wanted to create
11 a legacy for his new empire.

12 It may very well be that we think
13 and feel differently because of what a little
14 Greek town did during a century or two 2400 years
15 ago, as Edith Hamilton once wrote.

16 But the truth of the matter is the
17 richness of Greek history and culture is not just
18 limited to the days of ancient Greece, it's
19 across the vast span of history over the last
20 2500 years and the collective impact of that
21 history on our world today that gives Greeks and
22 Philhellenes a swell of pride and jubilee.

23 The rich glory of the Byzantine
24 Empire that lasted for a thousand years, the
25 tenacious resilience that survived 400 years of

1 Ottoman oppression, the fierce courageousness of
2 the war for independence that sparked
3 revolutionary change across Europe, the
4 determined resistance that stymied Nazi occupiers
5 and bought enough time for Allied forces to shift
6 the balance of war along the Eastern Front during
7 World War II, the soaring heights of success that
8 Greeks in the diaspora have achieved throughout
9 the world today -- these are all reasons why
10 Greeks and people of Greek heritage have such
11 enormous pride in who we are.

12 This year we're celebrating
13 205 years of Greece's independence. On March 25,
14 1821, revolutionary fighters gathered together
15 with Metropolitan Germanos in the Monastery of
16 Agia Lavra in the Village of Kalavryta, which is
17 where Senator Gianaris's family is from, and
18 declared independence against Ottoman occupation
19 and oppression.

20 The war was hard-fought, resulting
21 in countless acts of devastation and atrocities,
22 as war so often brings, including the Massacre of
23 Chíos, the island that my family is from, where
24 nearly 100,000 people were either killed or
25 forcibly expelled.

1 And much like our own Revolutionary
2 War here in America, seven years after declaring
3 independence, the people of Greece -- the
4 farmers, the sailors, the merchants, the
5 shepherds who lived in the towns and villages
6 across the Greek countryside -- won their war and
7 formed the Hellenic Republic.

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

15 But it should not be forgotten by us
16 that at one time our forefathers were not wanted
17 in this country. It was not uncommon to see
18 crosses burning on the lawns of Greek houses or
19 "No Greeks need apply" signs in store windows.

20 We cherish the personal stories of
21 our own families who came to this country to seek
22 their American dream and create a better life for
23 themselves. But it should not be forgotten by us
24 that there was a time in this country where we
25 would not accept more than 100 immigrants a year

1 from Greece. And yet still our forebears
2 smuggled themselves in by the thousands and tens
3 of thousands.

4 We applaud at the remembrance of
5 Archbishop Iakovos boldly standing beside
6 Dr. King at the funeral of Reverend James Reeb
7 and then crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Or
8 even our own Archbishop Elpidophoros, who's here
9 with us today, and who during the protests for
10 racial justice after the murder of George Floyd,
11 was marching in the streets, just as many of us
12 were, to support the movement for Black lives.

13 But it should not be forgotten that
14 there are many in our community who did not and
15 do not see value in the struggle for civil rights
16 and equality and condemned the actions of these
17 fearless leaders.

18 As I reflect on today's
19 commemoration of Greek heritage and think about
20 the moment in time we are living through, I find
21 wisdom and guidance in the totality of the
22 Greek-American experience. I draw inspiration
23 from the high points of our story as well as the
24 trials that our community has faced.

25 And as a fourth-generation

1 Greek-American, I remain ever hopeful that we as
2 a community will remember the struggles of our
3 ancestors and we open our hands and we open our
4 hearts to all those whose stories mirror our own
5 and embrace our fellow human beings as true
6 brothers and sisters.

7 So with that, Mr. President, and
8 with great pride, I say Happy Greek Independence
9 Day! Zhtw h Ellas!

10 Thank you.

11 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Skoufis.

14 SENATOR SKOUFIS: Thank you very
15 much, Mr. President.

16 And I'm delighted to round out the
17 Greek-American Caucus's remarks on this
18 resolution.

19 And to that end, I first want to
20 thank Senator Gounardes and his office, who put a
21 lot of work into organizing the events that took
22 place today, and of course Senator Gianaris for
23 introducing this resolution giving us this
24 opportunity to remark on our heritage, our
25 culture, and certainly his long-standing core

1 partnership to this small but mighty
2 Greek-American Caucus that we have in this
3 chamber.

4 And to that end, our ranks are
5 dropping by a full one-third at the end of this
6 year. We're taking applications. Senator
7 Scarcella-Spanton I think is 1 or 2 percent
8 Greek; she did a DNA test. And so please, come
9 one, come all.

10 (Laughter.)

11 SENATOR SKOUFIS: I also want to
12 share my gratitude to His Eminence for today's
13 invocation, for being here with us to celebrate
14 Greek Independence Day and, most importantly, his
15 religious and spiritual leadership for the
16 approximately 1.5 million Greek-Americans who are
17 Orthodox in this country.

18 Greek literature occupies itself
19 with a number of recurring themes, and one of the
20 most significant is that of returning home. It's
21 called nostos. Odysseus returns to Ithaca -- not
22 the one we're more familiar with here in upstate
23 New York -- Agamemnon to Argos; Pericles to
24 Thebes; even Oedipus and his decades-long exile,
25 to die in his ancestral home.

1 The stories told by the greatest
2 writers the world has ever known are that of
3 Greeks traveling far, facing great challenges,
4 and returning home. The tales of these
5 homecomings have been told for centuries,
6 highlighting how crucial the idea of returning
7 home was and remains in Greek storytelling.

8 Similarly, Greece is the home of my
9 ancestors, but New York is my home, our home. As
10 part of the diaspora, it's the home of my father,
11 my daughter, my family, my friends. While home
12 here in New York is where we now invest
13 ourselves, our energy, and our care, we do so
14 with the spirit and the DNA of the Greeks who
15 came before us.

16 More so, in many ways New York is
17 our nostos. While we return to our beloved
18 Greece, New York, our home, is also home to the
19 third largest population of Greeks in the world.
20 First, of course, Greece itself; then Melbourne,
21 Australia; then New York. In many ways our
22 ancestors brought their home with them here.

23 So in Greek literature every journey
24 is unique, but in one way those of us who sit in
25 this chamber are all the same, whether or not you

1 are fortunate enough to be Greek yourself, and
2 that is we are all fortunate enough to call
3 New York our home.

4 Thank you, Mr. President.

5 (Applause.)

6 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

7 Senator Rolison.

8 SENATOR ROLISON: Thank you,
9 Mr. President.

10 And I am not a member of the Greek
11 Caucus, but I would -- I'd like to be.

12 (Laughter.)

13 SENATOR ROLISON: And the reason --
14 and the reason I say that, Mr. President, and to
15 my colleagues, is because of how I have been
16 accepted, as a member of this body, to an
17 organization that is in the 39th District. It's
18 in Garrison.

19 Now, as a kid growing up,
20 Poughkeepsie had a large Greek community. It
21 still does. My first real experience within the
22 Greek community was at a friend's wedding, Tony
23 Colicci, and I can tell you it was one of the
24 longest weddings I was ever at at that particular
25 point in time in my life.

1 And when I got elected to the Senate
2 in 2023, I met a woman in Cold Spring, and she
3 said, "You need to come to St. Basil Academy in
4 Garrison," which is in my district. So the great
5 story about that is my parents grew up in
6 New Jersey, and as a young kid we would go to
7 visit them every other weekend in Madison and
8 Morristown. And we would go by St. Basil Academy
9 on Route 9D to the Bear Mountain Bridge. I had
10 no idea what it was, but was always interested,
11 What are behind the gates? And I knew it was
12 overlooking the river.

13 So there came a point in time where
14 I was able to go down there. I will tell you, it
15 is a magical and wonderful and loving place.
16 They actually have a residential program there,
17 under the auspice of OCFS. And I went there
18 several times afterwards with the Boy Scouts that
19 were there on Swim Safety -- they have a pool.
20 The grounds overlook the river and West Point.

21 And then I had the opportunity to
22 meet His Eminence here last year. And then I was
23 back down at St. Basil -- which was founded in
24 1944, by the way. It was formally the
25 Jacob Ruppert Estate, from the Yankees.

1 And so I met the archbishop here,
2 and then I was invited to go to their
3 Christmas Pageant on December 13th. And I have
4 to say, you know, like many of us sometimes,
5 we're not sure if we can stay, we're going to rip
6 through or whatever. And I got there, and I
7 said, I'm not going anywhere. And I was with the
8 archbishop and the rest of the members of the
9 church that were there. I had the opportunity on
10 that day, again, I got to see Senator Gounardes's
11 dad, Dr. Steve.

12 And I just have to say that, you
13 know, how they have welcomed me -- and others,
14 not just me -- is really very something special.
15 And so I went to the pageant not knowing what to
16 expect, and it was down in this very large
17 building where they have a stage. It was
18 absolutely so important in the way that I stayed
19 there. Because when I left there that day, I had
20 the Christmas spirit that I did not have prior to
21 seeing these students, these children performing,
22 singing with their families.

23 And I'm going to end with this,
24 Mr. President. You know, you get a chance to do
25 some things very special as elected officials and

1 in this body. And I was able to present a Senate
2 commendation to His Eminence for becoming a
3 naturalized citizen that took place on
4 November 10, 2025.

5 Thank you, Your Eminence.
6 Appreciate you always. Thank you for what you do
7 for your community with the magic and the good
8 work you do for children and their families at
9 St. Basil.

10 Thank you, Mr. President.

11 (Applause.)

12 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

13 To His Eminence and our guests, I
14 welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend
15 to you the privileges and courtesies of the
16 house. Please rise and be recognized.

17 (Extended standing ovation.)

18 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris.

19 SENATOR GIANARIS: Okay,
20 Mr. President, let's move on to previously
21 adopted Resolution 1607, by Senator Rivera, read
22 its title, and call on Senator Rivera.

23 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
24 read.

25 THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1607, by

1 Senator Rivera, memorializing Governor Kathy
2 Hochul to proclaim March 2026 as American Red
3 Cross Month in the State of New York.

4 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Rivera on
5 the resolution.

6 SENATOR RIVERA: Thank you,
7 Mr. President.

8 So we all have experiences in our
9 own backyards when we have -- I know that I've
10 had some sad moments in my district where there
11 are floods or where there are fires. And we
12 certainly make our way there, as elected
13 officials, making sure that we can help our
14 constituents in any way that we can. Most times
15 when we do that, when we get there, not only are
16 the firefighters or other emergency personnel
17 there, but we find the Red Cross there.

18 Certainly it has been the case in my
19 district many times when folks have been stricken
20 by fires or other tragedies in their life, that
21 they find that the Red Cross is there to help
22 them immediately, finding places for them to
23 stay, connect them to services. And so I'm
24 incredibly thankful for the work that they do.

25 A couple of years ago I had the

1 opportunity to travel with one of the group of
2 folks, and I started to learn some things about
3 the Red Cross. One of the things that I did not
4 know was that about 90 percent of the folks who
5 are -- who you see out there working for the
6 Red Cross are volunteers.

7 Their staff is actually
8 relatively -- it's a very, very small staff, but
9 there are thousands upon thousands of volunteers
10 all across the country and certainly here in the
11 State of New York that every single day, out
12 of -- take their own time to say, I'm going to go
13 to somebody else's community, or maybe their own,
14 and make sure that I am there to help people in
15 what might be the darkest moment in their lives.

16 So I wanted to make sure that we
17 took some time to celebrate those folks. We are
18 joined by a whole host of folks here from the
19 Red Cross. And there's three in particular that
20 I want to recognize, Mr. President.

21 First of all, as far as the folks
22 who are -- since they have a few staffers -- not
23 many of them, but they do have a few staffers,
24 and some of them are incredibly dedicated. And
25 we certainly in my office have worked with them

1 plenty.

2 And I'd like to recognize both
3 Mr. John Waldman, who is the senior director of
4 government and community affairs for the
5 Greater New York Region -- please stand up so
6 people can see who you are. There you are -- and
7 Denise Bloise, who is the manager of government
8 and community affairs of the Greater New York
9 region. She is there too.

10 Thank you both. You do so much work
11 with our office.

12 But they would probably say, We
13 would rather not be recognized, we want to make
14 sure that the volunteers are recognized. And so
15 I'm going to take a moment to recognize three of
16 them. Unfortunately, none of them from my
17 district, Mr. President, but that is fine. They
18 serve people all over the state.

19 First, a volunteer who lives in
20 Senator Ryan's district, and that is Bobbie
21 Krukowski. Since 2012 -- and if Ms. Krukowski
22 could stand up for a second. Could you stand up,
23 ma'am? There you go.

24 So Ms. Krukowski, since 2012, has
25 served more than 4,000 hours as a disaster duty

1 officer, which is the first line of contact. She
2 has dedicated all of this time to support
3 families after fires, blizzards, floods,
4 ice storms. And again, probably the worst time,
5 the worst moment in that person's life when they
6 get to see this amazing lady helping them out.

7 And she's also built a comprehensive
8 monitoring model for disaster duty officers.
9 Just so you know, today 85 percent of all duty
10 officer shifts in Eastern New York are covered by
11 volunteers that she personally trained. Right?

12 And during Thanksgiving week, when
13 66 residents were displaced by an apartment fire,
14 just so that you can understand what she does
15 every day, she ensured that every family received
16 the care that they needed.

17 So we're very thankful to have you
18 with us, Ms. Krukowski.

19 We're also john -- joined by John,
20 joined by John Hatch. This is -- come on. I
21 speak for a living. This should be easier.

22 (Laughter.)

23 SENATOR RIVERA: We are joined,
24 Mr. President, by John Hatch, who is
25 Senator Cooney's constituent.

1 Now, in 2019 Mr. Hatch became a
2 volunteer for the American Red Cross, and he has
3 served on nearly 20 disaster relief operations.
4 He holds multiple logistics positions, including
5 disaster service technology, for which he serves
6 on the national team as well, Mr. President. And
7 he is dedicated to mobilizing the power of
8 volunteers by recruiting and monitoring new,
9 highly skilled volunteers, creating
10 cross-functional collaboration across his
11 department.

12 So one of the folks that makes sure
13 that things are connected. And it can be really
14 messy out there, Mr. President, if it wasn't for
15 folks like Mr. Hatch, we would not be able to get
16 these folks the help that they need.

17 Thank you so much for joining us
18 today, Mr. Hatch.

19 And last but certainly not least,
20 from Senator Mayer's district, is Mary Davis.
21 And Ms. Davis is -- has been helping -- has been
22 part of the Red Cross family for about 15 years.
23 And she has been -- her contributions have been
24 outstanding, monitoring new volunteers,
25 strengthening community preparedness, and she has

1 been instrumental in integrating mental health
2 support in every disaster response that she has
3 been a part of.

4 Thank you so much for joining us
5 today, Ms. Davis.

6 Bottom line, Mr. President, every
7 single one of these folks would probably tell you
8 that they should themselves not be recognized,
9 and instead probably the teams that they help
10 every single day to connect folks to services and
11 to assistance.

12 So I thank all of you for being here
13 today. But more importantly, I thank you for the
14 work that you do out there every day for
15 New Yorkers. You certainly have helped many of
16 my constituents, many of our constituents. We
17 thank you for your continued support.

18 Mr. President, if you could
19 recognize them and give them the benefits of
20 the -- what do we call it, the benefits of the
21 house? The privileges of -- you'll get there --

22 (Laughter.)

23 SENATOR RIVERA: But thank you so
24 much, Mr. President.

25 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

1 Senator Mayer.

2 (Appause.)

3 THE PRESIDENT: We will get there.

4 SENATOR MAYER: Thank you,
5 Mr. President.

6 And I too rise to support this
7 resolution. And I want to particularly, of
8 course, give credit to Mary Davis of Larchmont,
9 in my district, for her volunteer -- persistent
10 and ongoing volunteer efforts, and to all the
11 volunteers.

12 I think that people do not realize,
13 but every time there is a fire or a very serious
14 incident in any of our communities, we actually
15 get an email immediately from the American Red
16 Cross, from John and Denise, saying this
17 happened, three people, five people were
18 displaced, do not have a home.

19 Recently there was a serious fire in
20 Mamaroneck where five children were displaced, as
21 well as their parents. We get this email so that
22 we know we can reach out immediately: How can we
23 help? Their job is to be at the front end. Our
24 job is to make sure that we do everything as
25 government officials to support the American

1 Red Cross.

2 And lastly, I want to point out that
3 during Ida, one of the most serious storms that
4 ever occurred in my district in Westchester,
5 volunteers from all over the United States came
6 and sat in front of the Mamaroneck Town Hall
7 helping hundreds and hundreds of residents figure
8 out what they were going to do when they lost
9 their homes, their businesses, their items, and
10 everything else that was of importance to them.

11 We could not have gotten through
12 that without the American Red Cross. So a salute
13 to you, all of you, for your work. Thank you for
14 cooperating and working so closely with us as
15 elected officials. It is our honor to be your
16 partners as we help people struggle through some
17 of the most difficult days of their lives.

18 Thank you, and I vote aye.

19 (Applause.)

20 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

21 Senator Murray on the resolution.

22 SENATOR MURRAY: Thank you,

23 Mr. President.

24 I'll echo much of what was said, but
25 also I want to start by appreciating their great

1 taste and wisdom as they are here today to also
2 honor a couple of our colleagues. A couple of
3 our colleagues were named Legislators of the Year
4 by the Red Cross today, and that is
5 Senator Pamela Helming and Senator April Baskin.

6 So congratulations to them.

7 But it goes to show, they're
8 always -- it's always someone else. We've got a
9 group of volunteers that do so much. And when
10 you think of the American Red Cross, you do think
11 of some of the local things they do.

12 But I Googled their mission
13 statement. I wondered what would it say in
14 writing. So it says "prevents and alleviates
15 human suffering in the face of emergencies by
16 mobilizing the power of volunteers and the
17 generosity of donors." And that is exactly what
18 they do. Whether it's a major catastrophe in
19 some area -- in fact, it says Disaster Response,
20 they respond to around 65,000 disasters annually.

21 Military support. They provide
22 support and services, over a half a million
23 services to veterans, service members and their
24 families each year.

25 Blood donations. They do blood

1 drives and collect blood, almost 4.5 million
2 blood donations and over 1 million platelet
3 donations annually.

4 And then they also -- this group of
5 volunteers take their time to train others on how
6 to help as well. They train more than 5 million
7 people annually in first aid, water safety, and
8 other lifesaving skills.

9 And to Senator Mayer's point, many
10 times I've come into the office, received an
11 email that overnight, before I even heard that it
12 occurred, yes, a family of five was displaced by
13 a fire. But we know, right then and there, the
14 American Red Cross was there to help. And they
15 took care of that family. And we know who to
16 contact to see if they need other help.

17 So these are the folks who don't ask
18 for the recognition and the honor or,
19 Senator Rivera, the cordialities of the house.
20 That's what we were looking for, right? Right.

21 But, no, they don't look for it, but
22 they deserve it. And so I'm proud that we're
23 honoring them and recognizing them for all the
24 wonderful work that they do.

25 And I proudly vote aye,

1 Mr. President.

2 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

3 Senator Ryan.

4 SENATOR RYAN: Thank you,

5 Mr. President.

6 I rise today, I want to support the
7 resolution. I certainly want to thank the
8 American Red Cross for all the work that you do
9 across the great State of New York and this great
10 country.

11 All of our Red Cross volunteers here
12 today have selflessly committed themselves to
13 helping neighbors, their communities, and people
14 in need for countless, countless hours. Your
15 compassion and hard work is nothing short of
16 extraordinary. And you certainly deserve all the
17 credit that you get each and every day.

18 I too, as Senator Rivera had pointed
19 out, I too would like to recognize my great
20 constituent who I have the great privilege of
21 serving, Roberta "Bobbie" Krukowski. I won't go
22 through those again, because we've mentioned it,
23 but I just want to say thank you for all that you
24 do. Four thousand countless hours. You don't
25 just volunteer and serve, you certainly have

1 built a capacity for volunteers for years to
2 come, and I can't thank you enough.

3 So -- and Bobbie is more than just a
4 volunteer, she is a mentor, she is a builder of
5 teams and a compassionate leader.

6 So thank you, Senator Rivera, for
7 bringing this resolution. I am proud to
8 recognize Bobbie Krukowski's extraordinary
9 service and the service of every single
10 American Red Cross volunteer across the State of
11 New York.

12 Thank you very much for your
13 service.

14 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.
15 Senator Cooney.

16 SENATOR COONEY: Thank you,
17 Mr. President. I appreciate you giving me the
18 opportunity to rise and support this resolution.

19 I want to thank Senator Rivera for
20 his leadership in bringing the resolution and for
21 recognizing John Hatch, one of our wonderful
22 Greater Rochester residents, and of course an
23 outstanding volunteer for the American Red Cross.

24 I won't repeat what's already been
25 said, but of course it should be said and noted

1 that since 2019, Mr. Hatch has served on nearly
2 20 disaster relief operations. And of course he
3 goes and does so much more.

4 But one of the things I wanted to
5 highlight for this body is his collaboration with
6 other facets of disaster relief, making sure that
7 we're supporting our development and
8 communications staff in their fundraising
9 efforts, most notably the telethons when
10 disasters are held in other parts of our country.

11 Thanks to John's efforts in the fall
12 of 2024, a telethon to support the relief efforts
13 of Hurricanes Helene and Milton was one of the
14 most successful in recent memory for the
15 Western New York region -- again, thanks to
16 John Hatch.

17 He is a dedicated volunteer,
18 mobilizing the powers of many other volunteers to
19 support the cornerstone of the Red Cross's
20 mission. By recruiting and mentoring highly
21 skilled volunteers, John has created an inclusive
22 and supportive environment across Western
23 New York.

24 He is the backbone to our Western
25 New York operation, and we are grateful and

1 thankful for his commitment to New York State.

2 Mr. President, I vote aye.

3 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

4 Senator Ramos on the resolution.

5 SENATOR RAMOS: Thank you,

6 Mr. President.

7 I too rise in deep gratitude to the
8 American Red Cross. I mean, we have had fires in
9 the district where families are displaced.
10 During Hurricane Ida, they arrived very quickly
11 to help us cope with the aftermath.

12 And so for those at home who may be
13 watching and may not know, people can actually
14 call the Red Cross or even our offices -- and I
15 just learned this, because I volunteered with
16 them to do it in my district -- in order to have
17 smoke alarms tested, installed. And we really
18 want to ensure that everyone in our district is
19 safe in that way.

20 I also want to use this moment to
21 advocate for a very important budget item. In
22 general, the American Red Cross could use the
23 help, and we're hoping that the second floor
24 helps us in that endeavor.

25 I have to say that right now the

1 American Red Cross is only able to provide
2 victims of catastrophe with just three nights of
3 stay in a hotel. And that's rarely enough for a
4 family, especially a working-class family, to get
5 back on their feet.

6 So if there is any way, shape or
7 form that we can help the Red Cross help more
8 people for a greater -- a longer period of time,
9 that's going to go a long way, and that's
10 probably the best possible way, to show gratitude
11 to the volunteers and the staff of the American
12 Red Cross.

13 Thank you.

14 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

15 Senator Scarcella-Spanton.

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

18 And thank you to the Red Cross for
19 all that you do.

20 Each March as we celebrate the
21 Red Cross we must acknowledge that the
22 celebration honors the compassion and
23 humanitarian efforts of volunteers, donors and
24 supporters who provide disaster relief daily.

25 A very proud moment for me, and I

1 have to recognize my constituent, John Waldman,
2 who has taken me around the district to install
3 alarms so that our homes on Staten Island and in
4 Southern Brooklyn remain safe. And that was such
5 a fun experience. I didn't know I was so handy
6 with a hammer. I learned that that day, so thank
7 you.

8 But I do know the Red Cross is
9 helping to build a safer and more resilient
10 future for all families. And I'm proud to be an
11 advocate of the magnificent work that you all do
12 every single day.

13 The Red Cross is special in my
14 office each and every day because we also have
15 one of the volunteers, Paul Matrecano, who's on
16 my staff. And he actually deploys with the
17 Red Cross missions.

18 So you have been there for fires and
19 floods, prevention measures and everything in
20 between, and we truly, truly appreciate the work
21 that you do. So thank you. Thank you for being
22 here. Thank you to all the volunteers.

23 And I proudly vote aye.

24 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

25 Senator Bailey.

1 SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,
2 Mr. President.

3 Thank you, Senator Rivera, for this
4 resolution.

5 It has become abundantly clear in my
6 43 years on this planet that angels are real and
7 they often walk amongst us. And Red Cross, you
8 are angels in physical form.

9 When there are calamities and
10 disasters and tragedies happening in our
11 districts -- like on January 24th, a fire
12 happened in the Boston Secor Houses which
13 displaced hundreds of residents. Before myself,
14 the Speaker, and Councilmember Riley were able to
15 get there, the Red Cross was there and you were
16 there with a smile.

17 Think about that. You usually don't
18 put disasters and smiles together, but the folks
19 from the Red Cross are always smiling, always
20 bringing out positivity. Because when they're
21 deployed in these volunteer capacities, they're
22 not being deployed -- most of the times.
23 Sometimes John gets them to the candy store.

24 But they're not going to the candy
25 store. They're not going to the county fair.

1 They're not going to happy events. They're going
2 to life-changing incidents, and they do so with
3 deference, respect, and love.

4 So I just want to say thank you to
5 the Red Cross. And John and I, we've also
6 changed a few alarms in our day. And I really
7 appreciate the preparedness aspect that goes into
8 what the Red Cross does.

9 Yes, they help out on-site. But
10 they do their best to make sure they provide
11 information to us as elected officials, our
12 staffs, and our constituents about the ways that
13 you should prepare yourself in the event of an
14 emergency or a tragedy.

15 So, Red Cross, thank you for all
16 that you do and all the people that you help.
17 Continue to be a blessing upon us. And I proudly
18 vote aye on the resolution.

19 Thank you, Mr. President.

20 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

21 Senator Rolison.

22 SENATOR ROLISON: Thank you,
23 Mr. President.

24 Thank you, Senator Rivera, for this
25 resolution honoring and highlighting the great

1 work of the Red Cross.

2 And I've spoken on this before. I
3 had, you know, the good fortune of being a
4 volunteer firefighter for 14 years, a cop for 26.
5 So, so many times in my career, whether it was a
6 fire scene or other types of issues that the
7 Red Cross needed to be deployed, we would be
8 saying "Has somebody called at Red Cross?" And
9 "Is the Red Cross coming?"

10 Because as a fireman or a cop, you
11 know, once that scene is either secured or the
12 fire has been extinguished, there's not a whole
13 heck of a lot you can do other than wait. And
14 you're waiting with families and individuals who
15 have suffered great losses.

16 And there is this overwhelming sense
17 of relief when that red-and-white ERV, emergency
18 response vehicle, shows up on the scene and
19 individuals with red vests or jackets get out
20 with clipboards, and they're going to find the
21 individuals who have been affected to offer some
22 comfort and then assistance.

23 And in 2008, when I retired from the
24 PD -- I was a board member prior to that. Early
25 on in the early 2000s, I was a board member for

1 the local Dutchess County Red Cross chapter. And
2 then I had an opportunity to actually become a
3 member of the staff.

4 And I know I've said this before,
5 but there's always this great story I want to
6 tell to conclude my remarks about the Red Cross,
7 was that I became the development director, which
8 was to help raise money and do press and things
9 like that, but also was to follow-up with
10 individuals who had been helped by our local
11 Red Cross chapter.

12 And there was a fire in the Town of
13 Beekman, an early-morning fire. It was a spring
14 day. The family, their dog got out, off the back
15 porch, and the house essentially was destroyed
16 right before their eyes.

17 And in about a week we were
18 following up just to make sure that, you know,
19 they were now in a rental house, and I think
20 insurance had kicked in for them. And to
21 Senator Ramos's, three days is sometimes not
22 enough because there are a lot of folks who don't
23 even have insurance. So they're in a motel or
24 temporary housing, and they're going to run out
25 of that assistance. And that's not on the

1 Red Cross, that's just on funding in general.

2 So we had the opportunity to go meet
3 with the family. And not that we wanted to
4 relieve the story, but they wanted to tell us. I
5 was not at that fire that morning. And this is
6 that they said. As they were out on the front
7 lawn in their nightclothes watching their house
8 consumed by fire, many local fire departments
9 were there trying to save that house, which could
10 not be done.

11 And it was the mom and the wife that
12 said: "And I'm standing there, and then someone
13 came up behind me and put their hand on my
14 shoulder. I turned around, and it was a member
15 of the Dutchess County chapter of the American
16 Red Cross, who said, 'We're with the Red Cross,
17 and we're here to help.'"

18 And she said at that point in time,
19 with all that was going on and seeing their house
20 destroyed, their lives essentially going up in
21 smoke, a term that we use sometimes, she said:
22 "I felt, even for a brief five minutes, that I
23 knew everything was going to be okay because we
24 were okay, and that the Red Cross was there."

25 So to the Red Cross and everyone

1 that helps fund the Red Cross, continue to do
2 that.

3 And Mr. President, I proudly vote
4 aye. Thank you.

5 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.
6 Senator Comrie.

7 SENATOR COMRIE: Thank you,
8 Mr. President.

9 I rise today to support the
10 resolution. I want to thank Senator Rivera for
11 consistently bringing this resolution before us.
12 I want to thank the Red Cross and all of the
13 volunteers that consistently help.

14 In my district in Southeast Queens,
15 unfortunately we have one of the highest needs
16 because we have a lot of homeowners that have
17 older houses. And with all of the gadgets
18 nowadays, a lot of people are overwired and wind
19 up with electrical fires in my district.

20 So I want to thank the Red Cross for
21 what they're doing, for their continuing to make
22 sure that they're installing smoke detectors, the
23 programs that they're doing to have volunteers.

24 I would encourage anyone that's
25 interested in doing volunteer work to volunteer

1 with the Red Cross. It's deeply satisfying, and
2 it's a great opportunity to give back to your
3 community in a direct way.

4 It is a time of year where the
5 Red Cross is not only here to be celebrated, but
6 also should be given an opportunity to get all of
7 the resources they need so that they can move
8 from three days. Because three days is not
9 enough time for a family to get resettled after a
10 tragedy.

11 So I would hope that we can consider
12 that as we finalize the budget this year, to give
13 the Red Cross a little bit more. Everybody comes
14 to us in a budget year and says that they want a
15 little bit more, but the Red Cross has earned a
16 little bit more for their efforts.

17 Thank you, Mr. President.

18 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

19 Senator Martins.

20 SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you,
21 Mr. President.

22 I also rise to support this
23 resolution. I want to thank the sponsor for
24 bringing it.

25 And I also want to echo the efforts

1 of this great organization in our communities on
2 Long Island, the president, Jose Dominguez, and
3 the great work that they do. And we've heard
4 examples throughout the state of the Red Cross
5 appearing with our emergency responders at the
6 time when our communities need the most.

7 And so yes, to the extent that we
8 can get together and support them and provide
9 them with more resources. It is rare in this
10 body that we're able to celebrate an organization
11 universally and everyone agree that it's an
12 organization that not only deserves to be
13 recognized here on the floor, but actually
14 deserves our support and the support of this
15 great state.

16 Because every dollar that you put
17 into this organization, Mr. President, is
18 returned a thousandfold in terms of the relief
19 and help that it provides each and every one of
20 our communities.

21 So not only are we talking about
22 emergency preparedness, blood drives, and of
23 course disaster relief, but great volunteers and
24 examples of civic pride or civic relief in our
25 communities.

1 And frankly, I want to again thank
2 the sponsor for the opportunity to recognize this
3 great organization statewide, but also a special
4 mention to our great volunteers on Long Island as
5 well.

6 Thank you.

7 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

8 Senator Krueger.

9 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you very
10 much, Mr. President.

11 Thank you for the resolution.

12 And many people have said a lot of
13 things about the Red Cross, so I'm going to shift
14 a little bit. I see many high school students
15 here today with us. And a lot of us talk about
16 the importance of civic education, and a lot of
17 us are getting involved more in the importance of
18 civic education. And frankly, we're all in
19 politics, so we probably start with discussions
20 of what does it mean to vote, what does it mean
21 to be a member of our society when we hit 18 and
22 up.

23 But I think, looking at the
24 Red Cross and what they do, it helps really
25 illustrate what I think is probably even the more

1 important modeling for civics education.
2 Somebody said -- I found this quote -- "Civics is
3 the operator's manual for our democracy." And
4 volunteerism. And understanding the role we each
5 play in making sure that our society works, that
6 our democracy works, is for young people to
7 understand it doesn't work on its own. It
8 doesn't work just because we have a government.

9 That volunteerism in your own
10 community, in all kinds of different ways, is
11 critical, both in the kinds of responses you've
12 just heard about the Red Cross playing in each of
13 our communities. The obvious thing a lot of
14 people know about the Red Cross, they collect
15 blood. And what I think is really important in
16 talking about that is not enough people are
17 volunteering to donate blood.

18 And that's because I think we don't
19 do a good enough job of explaining how important
20 it is for us as a society, as a democracy, in
21 every neighborhood, in every community, if we
22 fail to get the blood donations we need or when
23 we are successful at it.

24 And so I think one of the great
25 values of having this discussion specific to the

1 Red Cross today -- and yes, obviously, it's
2 budget time. We get it -- is that it's the
3 importance of teaching the next generation and
4 the next generation what it means to volunteer in
5 their communities, to understand how none of us
6 are independent of each other, we are all reliant
7 on each other, and to understand that's what
8 holds together our democracy in the long term.

9 So thank you for being educators of
10 civics as well as all the other work you're
11 doing. Thank you very much.

12 Thank you, Mr. President.

13 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

14 Senator Baskin.

15 SENATOR BASKIN: Thank you,
16 Mr. President.

17 And thank you to my colleague
18 Senator Rivera for bringing this piece of
19 legislation -- or this resolution, pardon me --
20 forward today.

21 I have sat here and listened to so
22 many of my colleagues speak so eloquently about
23 the wonderful community work that the
24 American Red Cross has done in the great State of
25 New York, but I'd like to share my sentiments

1 about being a beneficiary of their service and my
2 gratitude to them.

3 In May of 2022, in my district, a
4 domestic terrorist devised a plan to drive to
5 Buffalo, New York, with one goal in mind: To
6 kill as many Black people as possible.

7 And he was successful with robbing
8 my district of 10 innocent lives of 10
9 individuals who were merely grocery shopping on a
10 a Saturday afternoon.

11 We looked up in that tragedy, and
12 there was our local Red Cross, who's led by
13 Nick Bond in Western New York, to help our
14 community heal.

15 Six months after that, Buffalo faced
16 its deadly Christmas Blizzard of 2022, which
17 again robbed our community of 50 lives. People
18 froze to death. People in their cars thinking
19 that they were heating themselves to get warmth,
20 but they actually were going to -- and it ended
21 in their demise. A tragic situation.

22 I remember myself, my power went out
23 during that Christmas blizzard. I was at home
24 with my baby boy, who was two years old at the
25 time. We were preparing to watch "The Grinch Who

1 Stole Christmas." I had popped some popcorn.
2 The lights went out.

3 And that's typical in upstate
4 New York, for us to have snow blizzards, but this
5 one continued. And after a few hours we got
6 very, very cold. I got some sleeping bags and
7 some pillows and made a bed for us in the
8 bathroom so that we could warm ourselves until
9 help would come. And it continued to get colder.

10 I would take my baby out of the tub
11 every 30 minutes and run the hot shower so that
12 the steam would heat us, and then let the water
13 drain out, wipe out the tub, and get back in.

14 And this continued for a day before
15 a neighbor came to our rescue and allowed me and
16 my son to spend the next day in a closet in their
17 home, which had heat.

18 A couple of months after that, the
19 following Christmas I, being a single mom, had
20 managed to save enough money to buy my first home
21 for me and my children. And a couple of days
22 after we bought the house, the house caught fire.
23 And I remember waking up, working with law
24 enforcement, working with the first responders to
25 figure out the cause of the fire. And then

1 again, just like after the mass shooting, just
2 like during the Christmas blizzard, just like
3 they had done time and time again, there was a
4 member of the American Red Cross there to hand me
5 a debit card for me and my children to be able to
6 get a hotel to stay for the night.

7 I am a chief advocate of this
8 organization because of the good work that they
9 do, and because they create a space for neighbors
10 across the State of New York to have a place to
11 give and to help each other. And right now I
12 believe, Mr. President, at this time in our
13 country, the greatest act that any legislator
14 could do is to just be a neighbor and be kind to
15 one another. That is more superior than any
16 piece of legislation that we could ever pass in
17 this honorable body.

18 And the Red Cross is teaching us
19 right now how to do that. I'm not just an
20 advocate or somebody that's going to fight in the
21 state budget for this organization to continue to
22 receive the funding that the need, but I'm also a
23 beneficiary who, time and time again over the
24 past recent years, has looked up and saw the
25 Red Cross there at my rescue, to give me refuge,

1 to give me support, to give me and my babies a
2 safe space.

3 And for that, I'm forever grateful
4 and vote in favor of this resolution.

5 Thank you, Mr. President.

6 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

7 To our guests -- John Walton,
8 Denise Bloise, Roberta Krukowski, John Hatch,
9 Mary Davis, and all of the volunteers -- I
10 welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend
11 to you the privileges and courtesies of this
12 house.

13 Please rise and be recognized.

14 (Enthusiastic standing ovation.)

15 THE PRESIDENT: The resolution was
16 adopted on February 25th.

17 Senator Gianaris.

18 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
19 the sponsors of today's resolutions would like to
20 open them for cosponsorship.

21 THE PRESIDENT: The resolutions are
22 open for cosponsorship. Should you choose not to
23 be a cosponsor, please notify the desk.

24 Senator Gianaris.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please recognize

1 Senator Sutton for an introduction.

2 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Sutton.

3 SENATOR SUTTON: Thank you,
4 Mr. President.

5 Esteemed colleagues, today I stand
6 with profound pride to recognize a remarkable
7 group of young people visiting us from my home
8 community of Brooklyn, students whose presence in
9 this chamber represents not only personal
10 achievement but the living promise of New York's
11 future.

12 These students -- who actually come
13 from my own elementary school, Magen David
14 Yeshiva; my own high school, Yeshiva of Flatbush;
15 and the school where three of my grandchildren
16 attend, Barkai Yeshiva -- have shaped me, guided
17 me, and instilled in me the values that led me to
18 stand here in this hallowed chamber.

19 To see them seated in the gallery is
20 deeply personal. It is a reminder that
21 leadership does not happen in marble halls.
22 That's not where it's born. It is nurtured in
23 classrooms, in homes, and in communities that
24 believe every child can make a difference.

25 For me, this moment carries

1 additional meaning. As the first Sephardic
2 Jewish Senator from New York City to serve this
3 body, I stand on the shoulders of generations who
4 came before me seeking freedom, opportunity and
5 dignity.

6 My grandfather, also named Sam A.
7 Sutton, who passed through Greece coming to
8 New York City in December of 1909, came with
9 little more than faith, family, and an unshakable
10 belief in America -- America, where they could
11 give you a better tomorrow.

12 To the students: You are the heirs
13 of that journey. Your families' stories, your
14 traditions, your resilience, and your dreams are
15 not separate from the story of this great state.
16 They are part of what makes New York strong.

17 Our diversity is not a challenge to
18 overcome. It is the strength to embrace. It is
19 how innovation happens, how compassion grows, and
20 how democracy renews itself generation after
21 generation.

22 You are growing up in a very
23 complicated world, one that will test your
24 courage, your character, and your commitment to
25 one another. But if you carry forward the values

1 that you've been taught -- respect for learning,
2 responsibility for community, kindness to
3 strangers, and faith in something larger than
4 yourself -- there is no limit to what you can
5 accomplish.

6 Some of you will become doctors,
7 some teachers, artists, lawyers, entrepreneurs,
8 and public servants. Maybe one of you will be
9 standing in this very spot that I'm standing in
10 now.

11 And when that day comes, I hope you
12 will remember one thing about leadership. It is
13 not about power. It is about serving the
14 community. It is about lifting others as you
15 climb. It's about leaving this world -- and
16 listen to this -- leave this world as a more
17 just, more compassionate, and more hopeful place
18 than the one you find.

19 Today we do more than recognize your
20 achievements. We affirm our belief in you. We
21 place our confidence in your generation to carry
22 forward the ideals of this great state.

23 On behalf of the New York State
24 Senate, I welcome you, I congratulate you, and I
25 thank you, because your presence here reminds all

1 of us why this institution exists: To build a
2 future worthy of the next great generation.

3 Thank you, Mr. President.

4 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 THE PRESIDENT: To our students, I
7 welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend
8 to you the privileges and courtesies of the
9 house.

10 Please rise and be recognized much.

11 (Standing ovation.)

12 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Gianaris.

13 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up
14 the reading of the calendar.

15 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
16 read.

17 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
18 211, Senate Print 5105, by Senator Harckham, an
19 act to amend the Mental Hygiene Law.

20 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
21 section.

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

25 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

1 (The Secretary called the roll.)

2 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
3 results.

4 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

5 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

6 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
7 230, Senate Print 8741, by Senator Cleare, an act
8 to amend the Elder Law.

9 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
10 section.

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

13 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

14 (The Secretary called the roll.)

15 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
16 results.

17 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

18 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

19 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
20 278, Senate Print 7202A, by Senator Hinchey, an
21 act to amend the Penal Law.

22 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
23 section.

24 THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This
25 act shall take effect on the 60th day after it

1 shall have become a law.

2 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

3 (The Secretary called the roll.)

4 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
5 results.

6 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

7 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

8 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
9 358, Senate Print 1148, by Senator Gounardes, an
10 act to amend the Public Authorities Law.

11 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
12 section.

13 THE SECRETARY: Section 10. This
14 act shall take effect immediately.

15 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

16 (The Secretary called the roll.)

17 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
18 results.

19 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
20 Calendar 358, voting in the negative are
21 Senators Ashby, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan,
22 Griffo, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Oberacker,
23 Rhoads, Stec, Walczyk and Weik.

24 Ayes, 50. Nays, 12.

25 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

1 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
2 374, Senate Print 4925, by Senator Ramos, an act
3 to amend the Labor Law.

4 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
5 section.

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

9 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
10 (The Secretary called the roll.)

11 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Ramos to
12 explain her vote.

13 SENATOR RAMOS: Thank you,
14 Mr. President.

15 This bill is grounded on a simple
16 idea. No one should have to endure bullying,
17 intimidation or humiliation simply to do their
18 job. Workplaces are places where people should
19 be able to debate ideas, challenge one another,
20 and advocate strongly for the issues they believe
21 in. That is part of healthy institutions.

22 But disagreement should never turn
23 into personal attacks, intimidation, or efforts
24 to undermine someone's dignity. Many of us have
25 experienced moments when someone suggests we are

1 not the right person to lead on an issue, not
2 because of our work but because of assumptions
3 about who we are or what we look like.

4 Those moments may seem small to the
5 person saying them, but they send a clear signal
6 about who is expected to lead and who is expected
7 to step aside.

8 Others have seen how advocacy itself
9 can become a reason to become targeted. Rumors
10 spread, motives are questioned, accusations are
11 made, or calls for investigations, based on
12 little more than disagreement.

13 Over time, those kinds of behaviors
14 do not just harm individuals, they discourage
15 participation, silence voices, and weaken the
16 institutions we are all here to serve.

17 This bill affirms something very
18 basic. Professional workplaces require
19 professional conduct. Disagreement is part of
20 the job. But dignity must remain the standard.
21 When people are treated with respect, they can do
22 their best work. That's what this bill is about.

23 Thank you to the Public Employees
24 Federation and, of course, our Majority Leader,
25 Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

1 I vote aye.

2 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Ramos will
3 be recorded in the affirmative.

4 Announce the results.

5 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
6 Calendar 374, voting in the negative are
7 Senators Borrello, Chan, Murray, Oberacker and
8 O'Mara. Also Senator Walczyk.

9 Ayes, 56. Nays, 6.

10 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

11 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
12 396, Senate Print 1535, by Senator Parker, an act
13 to amend the Public Service Law.

14 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
15 section.

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

18 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
19 (The Secretary called the roll.)

20 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
21 results.

22 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
23 Calendar 396, voting in the negative are
24 Senators Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick,
25 Helming, Martins, Mattera, Oberacker, O'Mara,

1 Rhoads, Stec, Walczyk and Weik.

2 Ayes, 51. Nays, 11.

3 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

4 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
5 421, Senate Print 1050, by Senator Salazar, an
6 act to amend the Correction Law.

7 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
8 section.

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

12 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
13 (The Secretary called the roll.)

14 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
15 results.

16 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
17 Calendar 421, voting in the negative are
18 Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick,
19 Chan, Gallivan, Griffio, Helming, Lanza, Martins,
20 Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt,
21 Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk,
22 Weber and Weik.

23 Ayes, 40. Nays, 22.

24 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

25 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number

1 436, Senate Print 6318A, by Senator May, an act
2 to amend the Education Law.

3 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
4 section.

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

7 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
8 (The Secretary called the roll.)

9 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
10 results.

11 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
12 Calendar 436, voting in the negative:
13 Senator Walczyk.

14 Ayes, 61. Nays, 1.

15 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

16 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
17 439, Senate Print 417, by Senator Gianaris, an
18 act to amend the Election Law.

19 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
20 section.

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

23 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
24 (The Secretary called the roll.)

25 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the

1 results.

2 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
3 Calendar 439, voting in the negative:
4 Senators Gallivan and Ortt.

5 Ayes, 60. Nays, 2.

6 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

7 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
8 440, Senate Print 569, by Senator May, an act to
9 amend the Election Law.

10 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
11 section.

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

14 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.

15 (The Secretary called the roll.)

16 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
17 results.

18 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
19 Calendar 440, voting in the negative are
20 Senators Ashby, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan,
21 Gallivan, Griffio, Lanza, Martins, Mattera,
22 Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads, Stec,
23 Tedisco, Walczyk and Weik.

24 Ayes, 45. Nays, 17.

25 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

1 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
2 444, Senate Print 7962, by Senator Gonzalez, an
3 act to amend the Election Law.

4 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
5 section.

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

8 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
9 (The Secretary called the roll.)

10 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
11 results.

12 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

13 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

14 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
15 447, Senate Print 2051, by Senator Webb, an act
16 to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law.

17 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
18 section.

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

21 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
22 (The Secretary called the roll.)

23 THE PRESIDENT: Announce the
24 results.

25 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

1 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

2 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
3 448, Senate Print 7332, by Senator Ryan, an act
4 to amend the State Administrative Procedure Act.

5 THE PRESIDENT: Read the last
6 section.

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

9 THE PRESIDENT: Call the roll.
10 (The Secretary called the roll.)

11 THE PRESIDENT: Senator Ryan to
12 explain his vote.

13 SENATOR RYAN: Thank you,
14 Mr. President. I appreciate it.

15 So if you're like me, when you're
16 out in your district, your home district, you
17 talk to a lot of small businesses. And when you
18 do, you hear a consistent message. It's not just
19 always about regulations, but it's about trying
20 to figure out the information and how to obtain
21 it. What rules may apply, and who to call when
22 they need help or if they incur some barriers.

23 Right now sometimes the process can
24 be unnecessarily complicated. A small business
25 owner may spend countless hours navigating

1 different agencies' websites trying to locate
2 guidance documents, compliance requirements,
3 updates to regulations.

4 For large corporations with
5 expansive legal teams or compliance teams, that
6 may be manageable. But for small business
7 owners, it sometimes is not. Small business
8 owners are managing employees, they're advocating
9 for new customers, serving their customers, doing
10 payroll and every other thing that comes with
11 running a small business. And those are
12 barriers.

13 What this bill is about is cutting
14 through that confusion by requiring state
15 agencies that regulate small business to create a
16 clearly identified section of their website, a
17 small business regulatory nexus where business
18 owners can easily find all of the rules that
19 apply to them, clearly.

20 If we want businesses to succeed in
21 the great State of New York, to grow, to hire
22 workers and invest in their communities,
23 government should be easy to navigate,
24 especially when it comes to small business.

25 This bill is a practical,

1 commonsense step in that direction, and I urge
2 you to vote yes.

3 Thank you.

4 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

5 Announce the results.

6 THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 62.

7 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is passed.

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

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
11 returning to motions for a second.

12 On behalf of Senator Skoufis, I wish
13 to call up Senate Print 5939B, recalled from the
14 Assembly, which is now at the desk.

15 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
16 read.

17 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
18 305, Senate Print 5939B, by Senator Skoufis, an
19 act to amend the Public Health Law.

20 SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to
21 reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed.

22 THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary will
23 call the roll on reconsideration.

24 (The Secretary called the roll.)

25 THE PRESIDENT: The bill is

1 restored to its place on Third Reading Calendar.

2 SENATOR GIANARIS: I offer the
3 following amendments.

4 THE PRESIDENT: The amendments are
5 received.

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

8 THE PRESIDENT: There is no further
9 business at the desk.

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

13 THE PRESIDENT: On motion, the
14 Senate stands adjourned until Thursday,
15 March 12th, at 11:00 a.m.

16 (Whereupon, at 4:19 p.m., the Senate
17 adjourned.)

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25