NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

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REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR JEREMY COONEY, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Reverend Dr. Darren M. Morton, of Macedonia Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, New York, will deliver today's invocation.

REVEREND DR. MORTON: Let us all pray.

Father God, we come, we thank You for this day. We thank You for everything that You have done and everything that You will do in our lives. We thank You, God, for the new mercies of each and every day.

God, we thank You for this here, this Senate. We ask now, God, that You will bless each and every one who transacts business on behalf of the New York State residents.

God, we ask that You bless not only the chambers, but You bless each individual and bless their constituents.

God, that we will always continue to do what is the responsibility of public servants, and that is to serve Your people to the best of our ability, that we may invoke all of the kindness and the love but most of all, God, that we may provide the proper service to those people whom You have put underneath the charge of these, your leaders.

This we ask in Thy precious name, amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Tuesday, March 17, 2026, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Monday, March 16, 2026, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

Messages from the Governor.

Reports of standing committees.

Reports of select committees.

Communications and reports from state officers.

Motions and resolutions.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

On behalf of Senator Kavanagh, I wish to call up Senate Print 1239E, recalled from the Assembly, which is now at the desk.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 213, Senate Print 1239E, by Senator Kavanagh, an act to amend the Agriculture and Markets Law.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Secretary will now call the roll on reconsideration.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is restored to its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I offer the

following amendments to make it an F print.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The amendments are received.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Please recognize Senator Webb for an introduction.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Webb for an introduction.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise as the chair of the Women's Issues Committee in the Senate, and I have the distinct honor and pleasure of recognizing our 2026 honorees for the New York State Legislative Women's Caucus, as part of our Women's History Month continued commemoration.

Women's History Month is more than a time to reflect on the past; it is a moment to recognize the living, breathing legacy of women whose leadership continues to shape our communities every single day across our great state.

In New York, that legacy runs very deep, from the early organizers of the suffrage movement who gathered in our state to demand a

voice in democracy, to trailblazers like Shirley Chisholm, Constance Baker Motley, Ida Sammis, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Our history is filled with women who refused to accept the limits that society tried to place on them.

They challenged the status quo, they broke barriers often that were glass and most certainly, in most cases, brick ceilings, they transformed institutions that once excluded them.

The story of women's history is not confined to textbooks or monuments, it is unfolding right now in classrooms, hospitals, courtrooms, small businesses, community organizations, and most certainly in chambers like this one.

Across New York, women are leading in many spaces, advocating for communities that quite often go unheard. The women we honor today represent that same spirit. They are educators, advocates, entrepreneurs, public servants, and community builders. They are unstoppable leaders whose dedication represents the best of us because they are committed to improving the lives of people across our state.

Their work reminds us that progress

is never inevitable. It is built step-by-step by people who choose to speak out and move their communities forward.

Honoring these great leaders that are here today, it is important to not only recognize them, but it is also an opportunity we have to ensure that the next generation sees what leadership looks like, for women and girls across New York understand that their voices belong in every room where decisions are made.

Here in the New York State Senate, we have worked to carry that responsibility forward by advancing policies that strengthen women's healthcare, promote economic opportunity, support families, and protect the fundamental right to live and work free from discrimination.

And so today as we celebrate and honor women who have already made an incredible impact, we want to thank all of our honorees for the example that you set, the differences that you make in our communities across this great state. Not just this month, but every month, we celebrate you.

And so I am pleased to be joined by my honoree, Ms. Phoebe Brown, who served eight

years as the Central New York coordinator for the Alliance of Families for Justice, supporting families impacted by incarceration and advocating for reform of our criminal justice system.

She has committed her life to public service, and she reflects not only her commitment to those who are most vulnerable, but she is someone that makes Senate District 52 proud.

And she is also joined by many other incredible women from across this great state that my colleagues have chosen as their respective honorees. And their names are: Elissa Montati, Candace Aguirre Holley, Mayor Sharon Owens, Nicola Armacost, Denise Olivo, Dr. May Edward Chin, Lorraine Stevens, Stacey Mrva, Randi Shibin Dresner, Stacy Pettigrew, Manna Jo Greene, Kim Smith, and Dr. April Aycock. And there are many other honorees as well.

These are lifelong advocates, educators, electeds whose contributions are truly what make us better. To all of our honorees, we want you to know that what you do every single day brings us great pride, and we thank you for all you have done and what you will continue to

do.

I also want to thank our Senate Majority Leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and of course our New York State Legislative Women's Caucus chair for not only elevating this year's honorees, but also once again commemorating this important month this year and for many more years to come.

I proudly vote aye and also ask for our great leader to acknowledge all of our honorees here in the chamber today and extend them the privileges of the house.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Webb.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Now please recognize Senator Helming for more remarks from the Minority.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Helming for an introduction and remarks.

SENATOR HELMING: Thank you, Mr. President.

As Senator Webb shared, earlier today many of us had the opportunity to take part

in a truly inspiring Legislative Women's Caucus Women's History Month celebration. One of the highlights of today was this afternoon's luncheon celebration where we heard about the remarkable stories from women from all across the State of New York.

These women, as Senator Webb said, were business owners, educators, healthcare providers, public servants, passionate advocates. They were mothers and grandmothers, women whose talents, dedication and leadership are making our communities, making our state and our entire nation so much stronger.

Each story we heard today was very unique, but I found that there was a common thread. That was resilience, determination, and a willingness to lead, to not let anything stand in your way.

First thing this morning we had the opportunity to meet with Governor Hochul, and she talked about New York State being at the center of the women's rights movement. Well, if New York State is the center, the heart is the Finger Lakes region, a region that I am so proud to represent, and it's widely known as the

birthplace of the women's rights movement.

And my honoree is from the Finger Lakes region and the birthplace of the women's rights movement. She's here today, Stacey Mrva. Her husband Tom is also here with her. I'm so proud to be able to honor Stacey in this way. Stacey is a welder, a metal sculptor and small businesses owner. She owns Ironwood Studios in Livingston County.

She has built an incredibly successful career in a field that's long been dominated by men. She's not only breaking barriers, but she's helping so many others to do the same.

Stacey's metalwork is on display throughout the Finger Lakes region. I had the opportunity to be at one of her unveilings of sculptures in the Village of Churchville. I was particularly moved by a piece that paid tribute to suffragette Frances Willard. Frances believed that when women gain independence and opportunity, our communities grow stronger.

That message still resonates very strongly today, and it's one of the reasons why I selected Stacey. Through her welding workshops,

Stacey teaches women of all ages, military veterans, and individuals rebuilding their lives to find the spark within themselves, to discover strength, confidence, and new possibilities. Stacey is not just shaping metal, she is helping shape the future of so many.

I just want to take a moment too to recognize Heather Ferrero. She's the deputy director of planning for Livingston County. She was nominated by Assemblywoman Andrea Bailey.

I appreciate the tremendous work that Heather is doing to protect and preserve the Finger Lakes region.

Each of the women recognized today represents the very best of our state. And today, to all of our honorees and to the women across our state who every day lead, serve, and lift up others, you have our deepest respect and our sincere appreciation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Helming.

To our women honorees, we welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of the house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Please recognize Mason Kevin Parker for an introduction, please.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Mason and Senator Parker for an introduction.

SENATOR PARKER: Thank you, Mr. President.

Many of you know me as State Senator Kevin Parker who represents the 21st District in Brooklyn, the chair of the Energy and Telecommunications Committee and the Senior Assistant Majority Leader of the New York State Senate.

But in my life outside of here, in The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the State of New York, I hold several other titles. And today is Prince Hall Day.

And so I'm also known as Past Master of Sons of Kings Lodge Number 123, current Worthy Patron of Sunshine Chapter Number 34. I am the Illustrious Potentate of Abu Bekr Temple

Number 91, as well as the Captain of the Guard in Mystic Tie Council Number 8 of Royal and Select Masters, as well as the King in the Holy Royal Arch Masons of the State of New York, Mount Moriah Chapter Number 3, as well as being a member of Deborah Chapter in the Heroines of Jericho and Mystic Tie Chapter Number 3 in the Ladies of the Circle of Perfection.

And so in that world, I have been elevated to have an opportunity to work with a group of people who are really amazing and oftentimes unsung. There is a mythology about Masonry generally, about it being a secret society. And it's not really a secret society. Right? Like we don't -- we have shirts and hats that says we're Masons. Right? But it is a society of secrets.

And when you want to understand what Masonry is, what we say it is is a beautiful system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. But at base, it's a fraternity and sorority and a charity. It is a group of people who have gotten together in the cause of mutual aid to support one another in their daily trials and tribulations.

And they lift as they climb by doing all sorts of charity work. Probably the biggest thing that you've seen Masonic communities do is probably the Shriners Hospital, right? Everybody's familiar with it, right? So even though that's on the Shriners side, it is -- all those folks are Masons as well.

But I'm a member of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the State of New York, where I'm also the chair of the Civic Action Committee. And today we're having Prince Hall Day, and so we have members of the Prince Hall Society here.

And before I introduce them, I quickly want to tell you who Prince Hall was. Prince Hall was a man who was born in enslavement in Boston and got his freedom and became an abolitionist. And he was trying to work to free other people of African descent in Boston. You know, in the mid-1700s, right, before the American Revolution.

And what he found was that a lot of the people who were in charge at that time were Masons, so he sought to be a Mason to come into common cause and to get into connection with

those important people. And at that time they were not -- they would not make somebody of African descent a Mason.

And so he finally found an Irish military lodge that on -- I'm sure you'll like this date -- on March 6, 1775, which is actually my and Senator Shelley Mayer's birthday -- well, not 1775. We're a little bit after that.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR PARKER: But on March 6th, he and 14 others that we now lovingly refer to as the Immortal 15 were initiated, passed and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. And after a confluence of issues of things that kind of went on, they became African Lodge Number 1, and then later on became African Lodge Number 459.

And Prince Hall becomes the patron saint of that sector of Masons. And now you find Masonic -- Prince Hall Masonic Lodges all over the world. And here in New York State, we have a very prominent group of people.

And I'd like to ask all of the Prince Hall Masons and the members of the Eastern Stars to please rise and be recognized.

And here with us today is the

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Dr. Darren M. Morton, who is the conservator of Prince Hall Masonry. We have the Deputy Grand Master, Brother Jean Apollon; Brother Sandino Sanchez, who is the Junior Grand Warden. We have Brother Grant Valentine, who is the Grand Worthy Patron. And last but certainly not least, our Grand Worthy Matron, Sister Marsha Mack.

And I want to thank them for being here. I want to thank them for taking the time and, not seeing a robbery, to being engaged, again, in the communities around this state. There are probably very few districts represented in this room that do not have a Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, and if not a Prince Hall, a Grand Lodge of the State of New York Lodge.

We have a number of people in this chamber who are members of Prince Hall, including Senator Leroy Comrie. And -- well, Senator Fernandez, Nathalia Fernandez was looking for who's been with us today.

And I really am thankful for this body and for the openness as we've done this, to take meetings, have conversations with their constituents about some of these issues. The

things that the members of the Order of the Eastern Star and the members of the craft are talking about are the same day-to-day bread-and-butter issues that we're concerned about. Right? Affordability. We have a number of vets in this organization, and providing services for them, making sure that their civil rights are held up, making sure that we have affordable housing and accessible healthcare.

And so, you know, we work in common cause, and this work must continue as another important group that does this work today.

And so thank you for the recognition, and thank you for us for this opportunity to be recognized by the New York State Senate.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Parker.

To our guests, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of the house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, please take up previously adopted Resolution 1734, by Senator Hinchey, have its title read, and call on Senator Hinchey.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1734, by Senator Hinchey, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 15 through 21, 2026, as Agriculture Week in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Hinchey on the resolution.

SENATOR HINCHEY: No farms, no food, Mr. President.

When folks think about agriculture, they often picture tractors and rural areas. But what agriculture is, is our food supply. That makes New York agriculture one of the most important things that we have a responsibility to protect and support.

We have over 30,000 family farms that generate nearly $90 billion in economic impact. Our farms grow and produce what's called the "full plate" -- fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, and dairy. And we lead the entire

Northeast in production for many products. For instance, we are number one in yogurt, sour cream and cottage cheese. We are number two in maple syrup, apples and cabbage. And we're number three in grapes, snap beans and squash, up from fourth just last year.

And thanks to state funding in ag research and technology, New York's dairy cows outproduce those in Pennsylvania and Vermont by more than 500 gallons of milk per year. That's attracted major economic investment into our state from global dairy brands, including Chobani, Fairlife, and others.

To quote our commissioner of Ag & Markets, "I'm incredibly excited about the future of New York agriculture."

These are remarkable accomplishments, but they again don't come close to capturing what agriculture actually is. It's one of humanity's most enduring and personally traditions, the act of tending to the earth to feed your family and your neighbors, which is not something you can measure in market share. It's something that you feel in the weight of growing something from nothing and the pride of passing

that craft to the next generation, to those who will pick up the mantle.

This legislative body understands that. And I'm incredibly proud of the work that we're doing to fight for our farmers, to expand access to food across New York State.

For instance, we are working to expand Farm-to-School, so that students can eat fresh, healthy food while expanding a critical market for our farmers.

We're working to create the first-ever farm weather resiliency grants, so that farmers can have a lifeline to recover losses from severe weather.

We're pushing for clearer "use by" food labeling dates, so that more food reaches people's plates and less food ends up in the landfills.

And we're working to increase support for vital programs like Nourish New York and Double Up Food Bucks, which have supported our farmers and have made sure that people across our state, regardless of where they live or that their means may be, can eat Locally sourced healthy food.

And we've partnered with the SUNY chancellor, John King, to launch the first SUNY Agritech Center to spark interest in ag careers for students all over the state and to expand access to cutting-edge training that will keep New York agriculture strong for generations to come.

In New York we know that if we do right by our farmers, we protect a stable, local food supply as well as businesses that care about the communities in which they operate.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for joining me in standing up for New York agriculture, which supports all of our communities.

Thank you, Mr. President, and Happy Agriculture Week.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Hinchey.

The resolution was adopted on March 17th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Next up, Mr. President, is previously adopted Resolution 1725, by Senator Liu. Please read

that resolution's title and recognize Senator Liu.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1725, by Senator Liu, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 23, 2026, as Pakistan-American Heritage Day in the State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Liu on the resolution.

SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm so delighted and honored to stand today to talk about a community that has made New York State the greatest state in the universe.

We often talk about how our diversity makes us strong, and part of that diversity is a community -- a very proud and successful community, a hardworking community with ethics and professionalism, and that is the Pakistani-American community. Which for -- not necessarily a new immigrant community, but now for generations. In fact, it's been said that on average, we are in the second generation of

Pakistani-Americans who first emigrated here several decades ago and have made America and indeed our State of New York their home, setting up small businesses and now large businesses as well, professional practices, excelling in our public schools, creating places of worship and cultural celebrations.

The Pakistani-American community has contributed so much to the State of New York. And we honor the community on March 23rd, designating it Pakistani-American Day in the State of New York.

I'm so proud to present this resolution for all of my colleagues to consider, and especially proud that we are joined today by the very -- very prolific organization that advocates for the community, the American Pakistani Advocacy Group. They are in the gallery. Welcome.

Don't stand yet, because the president is going to ask you to stand.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR LIU: They are led by our brother, our friend, Ali Rashid, who is here on the floor with us. And he is joined by

His Excellency, none other than Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, the Pakistani ambassador to the United States, as well as Aamer Ahmed Atozai, the Consul General of Pakistan here in New York.

It is with great pride that I present all these individuals and recognize the illustrious Pakistani-American community, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Liu.

Senator Stavisky on the resolution.

SENATOR STAVISKY: Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

And I too am honored to represent so many people from the South Asian community and especially from Pakistan. We are celebrating with you on March 23rd.

Welcome to the ambassador, and to Rashid Ali and the people, the folks, our friends and neighbors from the advocacy group.

I was intrigued by your mission statement: The three Es, engage, empower and elevate. And that is a message not just for the Pakistani-American community but for everybody: To engage in the community, to participate, to

the leaders in all of the fields that Senator Liu has mentioned, the STEM, the teaching, education, et cetera.

We are proud to have you here.

And Mr. President, I know you will extend the welcome that they so richly deserve.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Comrie on the resolution.

SENATOR COMRIE: Thank you, Mr. President.

Today I rise to recognize and celebrate Pakistan Day, a day that marks the historic Lahore resolution which laid the foundation for the creation of Pakistan.

Pakistan Day commemorates the enduring aspirations of people for self-determination, democratic governance, and national identity. It is a moment not only of historical reflection but of pride in the resilience, culture and contributions of Pakistani people around the globe.

Here in New York, particularly in Southeast Queens and throughout the state, we are

proud to be home to a vibrant and growing Pakistani-American community. The contributions of the community enrich our neighbors in countless ways, through small businesses that power our local economy, through active civic engagement that strengthens our democracy, and through cultural traditions that add to the rich tapestry of our state.

In Senate District 14, I've had the privilege of working alongside many leaders, including Rashid Ali, who is here today, and other members of the Pakistani community to develop a strong community. Whether in education, healthcare, public service, or the arts, their impact is both meaningful and lasting.

As the Pakistani community continues to grow in my district, we want to make sure that whatever they're doing and however they want to contribute, we give them that opportunity for respect, for recognition, and for an enduring presence in our community.

I want to thank the ambassador for coming today as well, to celebrate with Pakistanis throughout the state.

And I want to remind all of our colleagues that we need to make sure that as we recognize, in the Pakistani community, their traditions, their opportunities, and their desires, that we can continue to do that for all of the residents of New York State, that we can continue to allow this state to be what it was meant to be originally -- a state that has diversity, acceptance, and an opportunity for all people to become great residents of New York State.

Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to celebrate Pakistan. Thank you, Senator Liu, for the opportunity to bring this resolution and this annual day forward.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Ramos on the resolution.

SENATOR RAMOS: Thank you, Mr. President.

What kind of Queens State Senator would I be if I too did not rise to celebrate my Pakistani neighbors in Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, Elmhurst and Corona? I mean, the

contributions from our Pakistani neighbors have been endless, countless, for decades. And I am very thankful for all of their support in making our community vibrant.

We have delicious Pakistani restaurants that everyone should enjoy, whether it's Dera Restaurant, Kabab King -- and I could stand here all day.

But most of all, we know that as Ramadan is coming to a close, we want to also recognize all of the efforts of our immigrant generation of Pakistanis, and of course their children and grandchildren, who are quickly becoming professionals, outstanding citizens, who just add to the vibrancy of our community every day.

So even though Independence Day is in August, today we want to recognize our Pakistani neighbors and wish them the very best as they continue to make New York a better place.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Martins on the resolution.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you,

Mr. President. I too rise to support the resolution.

New York is a better place because of the Pakistani community in our state. As I can attest, in the 7th Senate District -- vibrant community, hardworking, civically engaged. And certainly when it comes to the three Es, as Senator Stavisky said, to engage, to elevate and to empower, they are reflective of the efforts of the community and we see it each and every day.

So thank you, Senator Liu, for sponsoring the resolution.

And to our Pakistani friends here and across New York State, thank you for all you do to make this state all that it is.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator.

To our guests, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of the house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The resolution was adopted on March 17th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, please call on Senator Rhoads for an introduction.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Rhoads for an introduction.

SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you, Senator Gianaris, and thank you, Mr. President.

So my first visit to our lovely State Capitol was actually 44 years ago, when as a 7th grader in junior high school, I came up to lobby, for additional state aid to education, our then State Assemblyman Fred Parola and our then State Senator Norman Levy, whose seat I am now honored to hold.

And it is a -- it's always a special treat when we have students, young, bright minds coming up from Long Island to come visit us. And I want to recognize one such group today. We are proud to welcome to the Senate chamber some of New York's shining stars visiting us today from the Mercaz Academy.

Opening its doors in the Plainview-Old Bethpage community, which I am proud to represent with Senator Jack Martins, the

Mercaz Academy provides preschool through 6th-grade students a foundation in Judaic and secular studies, emphasizing personal growth in an intimate and innovative environment, cultivating tomorrow's leaders through building character and reinforcing values in an inclusive, warm and supportive atmosphere.

Now, back in November I had the chance to visit with their principal, Rabbi Kalman Fogel, who is with us today, and President Jeffrey Lichtman, as well as a group of about 50 third-through-sixth-grade students talking about public service, the role of state government in the lives of New York families, and our efforts to confront and combat growing antisemitism across our state.

And this was followed by a question-and-answer session where I was grilled by some of the most thoughtful and intuitive questions that I've ever had, certainly maybe than any endorsement of you, I can you tell you that. They were great.

And since the timing of my visit coincided with Election Day, I met with their student council candidates, discussed campaigns,

messaging and strategy. And I am pleased to report that in spite of my insights, some of those candidates actually won their races and have joined us in the gallery today, along with the group from Mercaz Academy.

And so I want to introduce their student council president, Rami Kirschenbaum; vice president, Jason Glasser; treasurer, Yair Weissman; their secretary, Meira Blackman; as well as Saira Baradarian, Elianna Biniamin, Noa Blackman, Talia Blackman, Evan Dahan, Sarah Eshaghian, Raphael Hakim, Eliana Kersch, Aaron Nejatheim, Evelyn Shamalov, and Liora Sternbach.

And their chaperones for today, in addition to Rabbi Fogel: Jenny DeMeo, Chavi Kersch, Shmuela Sternbach, and Ira Glasser, who are with us in the gallery.

Mr. President, I would ask that you welcome them to the chamber -- Madam President. I see we've had a change. Madam President, I would ask that you welcome them to the chamber on behalf of the Senate and please extend to them all of the privileges and courtesies of the house.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

To our guests, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of this house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, let's take up previously adopted Resolution 1702, by Senator Cooney. Please read its title and recognize Senator Cooney.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1702, by Senator Cooney, commemorating the 175th Anniversary of Albany Law School.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Cooney on the resolution.

SENATOR COONEY: Thank you, Madam President.

It is truly my honor and privilege today to recognize the 175th anniversary of Albany Law School, a nationally renowned

institution that I am so very proud to call my alma mater.

Today we are joined in the chamber by President and Dean Cinnamon Carlarne; Pat Wildes, the director of the Government Law Center; and Andrew Jensen, a second-year law student.

Since 1851, Albany Law School has trained the leaders of tomorrow in the shadow of our great State Capitol, giving law students the opportunity to learn and grow in the heart of our state's political center. And when I was a first-year law student, I worked in the Governor's counsel's office -- interestingly enough, on transportation policy.

It's no surprise that Albany Law was recently named the best law school in the nation for public service by PreLaw magazine, an honor that is a testament to the strong tradition of excellence that Albany Law promotes.

Over half of Albany Law School's graduates go into public service. Many of our great lawyers and leaders in state government reflect this recognition. The law school has always led with a dedication toward legal

scholarship, strong New York practice, and a commitment to justice.

Many of our staff members are graduates, including our talented counsel staff who is here on the floor with me; Alejandra Paulino, the Secretary of the Senate, and her counsel, Jellisa Joseph.

As we reflect on our past, it's important to also look to the future and the commitment of Albany Law School to preparing the next generation of leaders, advocates and change-makers. So to every alum, current and future student, and to the faculty and staff, I say congratulations.

Madam President, I vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Senator Fahy on the resolution.

SENATOR FAHY: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to join Senator Cooney. While he is a graduate, I am not. I am a proud representative of the college and want to join in all of the accolades. So many of my constituents, so many friends -- our former or

recent mayor, former Mayor Kathy Sheehan, and so many others have been wonderful advocates -- sorry, wonderful graduates from the law school.

And it is quite extraordinary to think that they've reached 175 years as the oldest independent law school in the nation, and to think it's right here in Albany.

So I just want to share my enthusiasm and support. And thank you, Senator, for bringing this and bringing our dean and student here. It is really important, at a time when we are turning to our courts more and more, especially in the last plus year where so much is being litigated right now, it is something we value more than ever.

And again, a true welcome to those who will carry Albany Law into the next hundred years. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

To our guests, I welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of this house. Congratulations on 175 years.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The resolution was adopted on March 10th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: The sponsors of today's resolutions would like to open them for cosponsorship.

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

Senator Gianaris.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 159, Senate Print 119, by Senator Cleare, an act to amend the Emergency Tenant Protection Act.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill will be laid aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 218, Senate Print 3820B, by Senator Rivera, an act to amend the Insurance Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 402, Senate Print 2289, by Senator Bailey, an act to amend the Private Housing Finance Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 407, Senate Print 7048, by Senator Webb, an act to amend the Public Health Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Webb to explain her vote.

SENATOR WEBB: Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm very proud of the work we've been doing in the Women's Issues Committee, and this bill is a continuation of those efforts, especially when we talk about the very real challenges around maternal health and the crisis that maternal health is in in our state.

One of our many goals is to reduce the number of healthcare deserts impacting families across our state, especially in rural

districts like mine. Access to quality maternity care is essential if we want to reduce bad outcomes related to pregnancy and eliminate health disparities that disproportionately impact communities of color and rural communities.

Mr. President, since 2008, 28 hospitals across the state have closed or reduced OB-GYN care. And as of 2022, more than 4 percent of women in New York did not have a birthing hospital within 30 minutes of their homes.

And in rural districts such as mine, the data reveals an even more dangerous picture, with 47 percent of women living more than 30 minutes away from a birthing center.

These are very troubling statistics for women in labor or dealing with dangerous complications like preeclampsia or living in a maternal health desert.

What this legislation provides is that it requires an increase in transparency around the availability of maternal healthcare.

Under the current law, there is no requirement that major changes to maternity care undergo a full review before the Public Health

and Health Planning Council, meaning that significant changes in availability of labor and delivery services in the community can move forward without community input or oversight and agreement.

The legislation requires the Public Health and Health Planning Council, also known as PHHPC, to regulate any changes in perinatal services offered by general hospitals in our state.

Mr. President, if we are truly to address the maternal health crisis in New York, we must safeguard access to healthcare and maternity services. I proudly vote aye and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Webb to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 472, Senate Print 4956, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend the Mental Hygiene Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 477, Senate Print 947, by Senator Jackson, an act to amend the Real Property Law.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill will be laid aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 478, Senate Print 1142, by Senator Gounardes, an act to amend the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 478, voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Helming, Lanza, Martins, O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads, Walczyk and Weik.

Ayes, 50. Nays, 11.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 481, Senate Print 5089, by Senator Sepúlveda, an act to amend the Real Property Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce

the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 489, Senate Print 903, by Senator Sanders, an act to amend the Elder Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 505, Senate Print 8941, by Senator Martinez, an act authorizing the Farmingdale First Baptist Church, Inc., to receive retroactive real property tax exempt status.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the

last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 505, voting in the negative are Senators O'Mara and Skoufis.

Ayes, 59. Nays, 2.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 510, Senate Print 7858, by Senator Salazar, an act to amend the Public Authorities Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce

the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 533, Senate Print 1610, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 533, voting in the negative:

Senator Walczyk.

Ayes, 60. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 534, Senate Print 2411, by Senator Parker, an act

to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill will be laid aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 536, Senate Print 6831A, by Senator Hinchey, an act to amend the Navigation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the 120th day after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 536, voting in the negative are Senators Griffo, Martins, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads, Stec, Walczyk and Weik.

Ayes, 52. Nays, 9.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

Senator Gianaris, that completes the

reading of today's calendar.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Let's move on to the controversial calendar, beginning with Calendar 534.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Secretary will ring the bell.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 534, Senate Print 2411, by Senator Parker, an act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Lanza, why do you rise?

SENATOR LANZA: Thank you, Senator Gianaris.

And, Mr. President, I believe there's an amendment at the desk. I waive the reading of that amendment and ask that you recognize Senator Ashby.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Lanza.

Upon review of the amendment, in accordance with Rule 6, Section 4B, I rule it nongermane and out of order.

SENATOR LANZA: Accordingly,

Mr. President, I appeal the ruling of the chair and ask that Senator Ashby be heard on the appeal.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The appeal has been made and recognized, and Senator Ashby may be heard.

SENATOR ASHBY: Thank you, Mr. President, on the amendment.

Some important context on the CLCPA that gets lost. This isn't new. This has been the law for almost seven years. We've spent billions of taxpayer dollars trying this. Here's what we have to show for it: 2,000 net megawatts of reliable power has been decommissioned from our grid. Utility bills have skyrocketed over 54 percent. And the Governor's own administration recently admitted the pain our constituents are feeling now is just the beginning.

NYSERDA says when the law is fully enforced and fully implemented, upstate energy bills will spike an additional $340 a month. These mandates were passed before we built out an electric grid that could even possibly handle them.

These mandates made a massive bet on solar and wind in a state that for much of the year is neither sunny nor windy. These mandates are impossible to enforce, and the Governor has argued as much in court. The state's new official energy plan involves using natural gas as a bridge to our clean energy future.

Sounds good to me, probably sounds good to you too. Too bad that's outlawed by the CLCPA.

Every single reasonable person would agree that working toward a cleaner, more sustainable energy future is important. However, no reasonable person would argue that this is going well or that the CLCPA represents a balanced, workable approach.

My constituents need help. I have seniors on fixed incomes who are choosing between paying out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs or keeping the heat on. They need our help today. We can do something about it right now by supporting this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator.

I want to remind the house that the vote is on the procedures of the house and the ruling of the chair.

Those in favor of overruling the chair, signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

SENATOR LANZA: Show of hands, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: A show of hands has been requested and so ordered.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 22.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The ruling of the chair stands, and the bill-in-chief is before the house.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, we'll be restoring this to the noncontroversial calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank

you, Senator Gianaris.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 61.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, let's move to Calendar 159, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 159, Senate Print 119, by Senator Cleare, an act to amend the Emergency Tenant Protection Act.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Martins, why do you rise?

SENATOR MARTINS: On the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Martins on the bill.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you,

Mr. President.

The issue outlined by the sponsor in the memo is to try to address the issue of warehousing of units. That is, Mr. President, there are vacant units in New York City that remain vacant, that are identified as part of the DHCR's annual survey, and somehow this bill is meant to address the underlying issue of these vacant units.

The DHCR recently, back in December of 2025, updated their dashboard to include a lot of additional information which does make it easier to identify vacant units. But again, the real problem is that they aren't collecting the information about the why of the vacancy.

That is, Mr. President, even though they ask whether the unit is vacant, at no point do they ask the landlord why it's vacant.

And so if we're going to address the issue of warehousing of units and we're going to address the issue of vacant units that I think people understand exist, I think it's important that we understand the why.

And frankly, I'm not sure that this bill goes to that question by merely asking for

LLCs to provide information with regard to ownership structure.

So through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would yield to a few questions.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Would the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Senator.

So would you agree that DHCR should, in addition to tracking vacant units, also request that the business owner provide the reason for why the units are vacant?

SENATOR CLEARE: I'm not speaking to that.

The reason we're here today is because I feel as if DHCR should track the owners for the purpose of identifying owners when we are seeking repairs in these units.

That's the spirit of this bill, so that we can know trends and we can know patterns and we are able to identify those persons and they don't hide behind different LLCs, and we

have these consistent and persistent problems that exist in some of our properties.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Senator.

Thank you, Mr. President. Through you, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: So to be clear, notwithstanding the memo that accompanied the bill, the purpose of the bill, to you as the sponsor, is not for identifying vacant units, but rather to identify persons responsible for those units so that if units need to be repaired, there's a person to contact?

SENATOR CLEARE: Yes. And especially in cases where -- and I have seen in my district and in other places there's a persistent pattern that exists with certain owners. But it is difficult to -- it's difficult to know who they are when you're just dealing with an LLC.

This information should be available to HCR so that they can see if there's someone who is constantly having this problem and not addressing it. Through you, Mr. President.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you.

Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you, Mr. President, yes, I do.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: So for purposes of identifying a responsible person, would it be easier, do you think, for DHCR to require the owner to identify an individual to whom that outreach can take place, short of providing information with regard to beneficial ownership with regard to the LLC?

SENATOR CLEARE: Sometimes. But, you know, oftentimes decisions that have to be made, especially in emergency cases, cannot be made by these designated persons.

Sometimes we really have to reach

those persons who are responsible for the property. And especially, you know, we've had a brutal winter, we've had buildings where there is a persistent lack of heat, lack of hot water. And that's not something that we can play with.

We need to be able to identify these people, and especially if they continuously do this and exhibit this kind of behavior.

SENATOR MARTINS: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: So given that one of the worst landlords in New York City by far happens to be the City of New York itself, through the NYCHA program and the catastrophe that that has been with regard to access to heat and hot water, living conditions, the responsible person for that, I'm assuming, would also be the mayor of the City of New York, right?

Would that the beneficial owner, the

person to contact in the event of all of those terrible things that are going on in NYCHA facilities and holding somebody responsible?

SENATOR CLEARE: This bill deals with rent-stabilized housing, not public housing.

SENATOR MARTINS: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you, Mr. President, yes, I do.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: But we're dealing with a condition with regard to living conditions. Would you consider amending the bill to include the plight of people living in public housing, in NYCHA facilities, and the very real concerns that we should all have with regard to the conditions they're living under?

SENATOR CLEARE: Again, I just have to say this bill specifically relates to rent-stabilized housing and our ability to have access to know who is ultimately responsible for

addressing and remediating heat and hot water, power outages, habitability issues, displacement issues, buyouts and forced vacancies, and also tenant and resident harassment.

These are things that we want to identify, and it has been difficult to do that in many of these properties that are owned by LLCs.

SENATOR MARTINS: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you, Mr. President, I do.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: I notice that the bill does not include any other forms of ownership like corporations.

Certainly if a corporation was to own housing units and multiple housing units, I would think that the same concerns that you're voicing with regard to LLCs should occur with regard to multiple types or different types of ownership structures.

Can you tell us why this bill only deals with LLCs and not any other structure?

SENATOR CLEARE: Well, that might be an idea for another bill. But right now it deals with the LLCs, and those are the ones that seem to pop up under different names from time to time, but it's the same people behind these LLCs.

SENATOR MARTINS: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you, Mr. President, I yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Senator.

With regard then to the group that would have to be identified, I think there is the term "beneficial owner" in the bill, and then the bill goes on to speak to what is meant by beneficial owners. And I want to be clear as to the scope of the bill.

You know, we've talked now, just

anecdotally, about ownership, people who own and are members of the LLC. Is it your understanding that this bill includes those owners and only those people who own the LLC?

SENATOR CLEARE: Okay, I'm told that the definition is in the bill of the owner. It is in the bill, who we're talking about.

SENATOR MARTINS: I understand. And that's why -- through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: I understand it's within the bill. I read it, and so I understand what it says.

And so given the broad scope of the language -- and Mr. President, through you, I will read it. Since, you know, that's what I was directed to do, let's all understand what we're talking about.

It says that a beneficial owner (reading) shall mean an individual who directly

or indirectly, through any contract, arrangement, understanding, relationship, or otherwise -- or otherwise -- owns any equity interest of an entity and/or has a level of control over the funds or assets of the entity that, as a practical matter, enables the individual directly or indirectly to control, manage or direct the entity and the use of its funds and assets or any part thereof.

So I -- having read that definition, my concern is just how broad it is and whether or not that definition, being as broad as it is, can fairly be replied to, because if it were just the membership, ownership of the LLC, we can check that box. But this doesn't say that.

So I'd love to have your sense of what it does or does not include so that we can give clarity to those people who are going to be expected to actually comply with this bill.

SENATOR CLEARE: The language matches the LLC Transparency Act definition, the bill that we passed in 2023. It's the same language.

SENATOR MARTINS: Mr. President --

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you,

Mr. President. Sorry.

SENATOR MARTINS: -- if the sponsor would continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you, Mr. President, I do.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: So the LLC Transparency Act and the requirements, from what I recall, was actually vetoed because of concerns about just this kind of language and, you know, where it would place New York State LLCs as opposed to other LLCs throughout the country, and perhaps put the state at a disadvantage.

Are you aware of that?

SENATOR CLEARE: So it's my understanding that this part -- this was passed in 2023. And the part that you're talking about, that part was vetoed on a federal level. Okay. But what we passed in 2023 is this definition.

SENATOR MARTINS: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: So if someone fails to provide that information, what is the penalty assessed to that building owner for failure to provide the information required by the bill?

(Pause.)

SENATOR CLEARE: So that would be considered an incomplete filing with the registration. Sometimes people do, and that -- you know, HCR has their methods for dealing with that. But the bill does not state any penalty.

SENATOR MARTINS: Through you, Mr. President, if the sponsor would continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR CLEARE: Through you, Mr. President, I do.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The

sponsor yields.

SENATOR MARTINS: So through you, Mr. President. Are you familiar with the requirement that if there is an incomplete filing, that the penalty that is assessed by DHCR is actually $500 per day per unit until the filing is completed or corrected? Are you familiar with that?

SENATOR CLEARE: No. But -- through you, Mr. President, I don't know the exact dollar amount. I don't know the penalty, no.

SENATOR MARTINS: Mr. President, on the bill.

Senator, thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Martins on the bill.

SENATOR MARTINS: So here we are, we're being asked to vote on a bill where the language encompassing who may or may not be required to report is ambiguous, is broad. Frankly, it can include anyone from the owner to anyone who has the authority to sign checks or anyone who's managing the property.

It is overly broad in the context of

a group that is managing multifamily housing in New York City. And yet the penalty for getting it wrong that will be absorbed by the ownership could be up to $500 per day per unit for every day that they got it wrong. And they're forced to guess as to what it is or who they can or have to actually submit.

Now, I certainly share the sponsor's concerns with regard to conditions and conditions in housing, because no one should be in a position of not having heat in the winter, clean water, access to utilities, and to live in a safe environment. I agree with the sponsor a thousand percent. And I thank her, because I understand that the bill comes from a good place. I do.

My concern is that oftentimes what we do is we pass bills in this chamber hoping to reach a certain result, but we come up short. And so there are other ways by which we can make sure that people comply with those requirements.

And maybe we need to be more aggressive in how we do that and not exclude public housing and not exclude corporations. And maybe we need to be more aggressive to make sure that people are living in safe housing

conditions.

But the idea, Mr. President, that we are going to somehow solve this issue by creating a requirement that isn't clear, but that comes with significant consequences and penalties, is something that we should avoid, frankly, as a body.

And so to the extent that there is an opportunity for us to work together to come up with an alternative that requires these things and holds people accountable, count me in.

But we're not going to exclude NYCHA in the City of New York, and we shouldn't exclude any housing units in New York City or anywhere else in the state.

And certainly if we're going to impose penalties and we're going to try and get there, let's make sure we get there in a way that is fair so that people understand what they have to do in order to comply, and it's not subject to interpretation.

And so I share the sponsor's mission. I look forward to hopefully working with her on other initiatives as we move forward. But unfortunately, Mr. President, I will not be

able to support this bill at this time for the reasons that I just explained.

And again, I want to thank the sponsor.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Martins, on the bill.

Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

Seeing and hearing none, debate is now closed.

The Secretary will ring the bell.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President, let's return this to the noncontroversial calendar as well.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: We'll return it to the noncontroversial calendar.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator

Cleare to explain her vote.

SENATOR CLEARE: Thank you, Mr. President.

This bill is about three things. This bill serves multiple purposes. One, it builds on the Senate Majority's efforts to provide disclosure and transparency with respect to LLCs.

Secondly, by providing more disclosure of ownership interests in housing LLCs, we can get a greater picture of trends that are occurring, including buyouts, forced vacancies, harassment and so on.

Third, in cases where it may be appropriate to raise issues to owners, we can deal with real names and human beings, not LLCs with mailboxes.

In my role as State Senator, I'm often tasked with getting to the bottom of things. The mailing addresses of LLCs and even publicly available information about management companies is not always sufficient to resolve issues.

If you want to own housing, especially rent-regulated housing in this state,

we should know exactly who you are and how to reach you. LLCs fail miserably often in this regard, and that is why disclosure is needed.

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

Thank you.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 159, voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Cooney, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 40. Nays, 21.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 477, Senate Print 947, by Senator Jackson, an act to amend the Real Property Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Walczyk, why do you rise?

SENATOR WALCZYK: Mr. President, I

hope the sponsor would yield for some questions.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR JACKSON: So, how you doing, brother?

(Laughter.)

SENATOR WALCZYK: Good. How are you, neighbor?

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor is definitely yielding.

SENATOR WALCZYK: So current law -- through you, Mr. President, current law states that electronic billing and/or payment for rent, a landlord shall not require a lessee or tenant to use electronic billing and/or a payment system as the only method for the payment of rent, and a landlord shall not assess any fee or other charge for the lessee or tenant that chooses not to use electronic billing and/or payment system. So that's the current law.

What changes to current law does this bill propose?

SENATOR JACKSON: I don't know. I didn't -- I'm not concerned with that.

I'm concerned with when the landlord

has sent out notice to everyone in the building that they have an option of paying rent through one of these organizations, an automated clearinghouse. So the tenants can say yes, I would like to do that, what is it going to cost? Or it's going to cost nothing or, you know, no, I'm not interested.

So basically that's what happened, but overall, when someone agrees that they want to use a clearinghouse. So for me, I looked at the situation, okay, now I would have to write a check, pay for the stamp, and then mail it. That's the process that was happening before. Okay?

And now there's an automatic clearinghouse where the landlord has suggested that this is -- would make it easier for everyone.

And so I, as a tenant for 48 years, with my wife and family, took advantage of that because it was okay by me.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

SENATOR JACKSON: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: So if this bill that you're proposing prohibits the landlord from assessing that fee through those processes for a payment of rent, how will that fee get paid for? How will that get assessed?

SENATOR JACKSON: I don't think that the landlord is -- I think that what happens is that the fee that the automatic clearinghouse pays by the tenant who wants to have the easier way in order to process their rent, it meets their recommendations. So they do it.

But other than that, there's no necessity for them to act if they don't want to act. And so this is not where you're being forced to do it. If you want to do it, you have a right to do it.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR JACKSON: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Yeah, I understand that they wouldn't be forced to do it. But those systems do have a cost to run. I'm sure that landlords subscribe to these systems and they have some overhead that currently -- similar to when you're using your credit card, a certain percentage or a certain payment of your credit card goes to the actual vendor for the credit card machines and how they get processed, so that that ultimately gets charged to your bank.

I'm curious about who will ultimately pay those fees when landlords subscribe to use one of these convenience things for their tenant, like you've taken advantage of.

SENATOR JACKSON: I am not in response to that. As long as I've agreed to the system where I won't do anything but the automatic clearinghouse, basically, when it's time to pay my rent, the rent is being paid. And that's coming out of my checking account, and that's it. I'm not looking for a second job, monitoring what everybody else is paying.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR JACKSON: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: So the Governor signed a law a few years ago explicitly allowing for these payments for the automated clearinghouses to be passed through to consumers. And we specifically enumerated -- but not if the tenant is paying by cash or check, because we didn't want to hem up rent increases into additional fees.

But how does this square up with that? Aren't you are concerned that that convenience will come away if there's no way for a landlord to pay for it?

SENATOR JACKSON: I'm not concerned. I'm not concerned because it's a process that's worked. It's working for me.

And if you are living there with your family, and if there's a fee, let's say of

$2 or something like that, you have to decide whether or not you want to accept that and make it easier for you, rather than you or your spouse writing a check, putting it in the envelope and stamped and then mailing it and making sure that it gets received by the owner of the building.

So it makes life easier for everyone overall if you can afford a dollar or two dollars, whatever it costs.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR JACKSON: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: I see. So you're really just looking to provide transparency for what that fee will be for the convenience of the automatic -- automated clearinghouse. Am I understanding you correctly?

SENATOR JACKSON: If they told me the fee was $2, I have to decide whether or not I wanted -- if they said 10, 15 dollars, I have to

decide.

But I say this to you. If it was 10, 15 dollars, I'm not using it. I mean, you have to evaluate what's best for you and your family.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Thank you, Senator Walczyk.

Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

Seeing and hearing none, debate is now closed.

The Secretary will ring the bell.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Let us also restore this to the noncontroversial calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Per Senator Gianaris, the bill will be restored to the noncontroversial calendar.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Martins to explain his vote.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to thank the sponsor for this legislation.

I think, frankly, transparency in these situations are paramount. And certainly as long as the only thing the bill requires is that the landlord provide notice to the tenants and give them the option of doing that, then it makes sense.

And so it's up to the tenant to decide whether or not they're willing to pay that fee, and certainly they can arrange their own finances accordingly.

So to the extent that the bill just requires that the landlord provide that, I vote aye, and thank the sponsor.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: Senator Martins to be recorded in the affirmative.

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 477, voting in the negative are

Senators Borrello, Palumbo, Rhoads, Skoufis, Walczyk and Weik.

Ayes, 55. Nays, 6.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: The bill is passed.

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

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

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, March 19th, at 11:00 a.m.

ACTING PRESIDENT COONEY: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Thursday, March 19th, at 11:00 a.m.

(Whereupon, at 5:10 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)