NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

March 19, 2026

11:15 a.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Senate will come to order.

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

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Major Brittany Wooten, Chaplain of the United States Corps of Cadets Regimental, will deliver today's invocation.

Major?

CHAPLAIN MAJOR WOOTEN: What an honor and a joy it is to be here.

Would you please bow your heads and pray according to your faith tradition, as I pray according to mine.

God of all Creation, I'm in awe and humbled to stand before You in such a place as this, for we know that You have and continue to use this place to give voice to all Your creation.

We give You thanks and praise for the leaders gathered here today, and for those in days gone by and those that will come in the days

of the future.

On this 74th Annual West Point Day, we celebrate and stand together with great courage, for we know You are still working. May the actions taken here today, the conversations shared, and the cadets that are honored be surrounded by Your blessings.

And I end closing words with our West Point Cadet Prayer: Help us maintain the honor of the Corps untarnished, unsullied, and to show forth in our lives the ideals of West Point in doing our duty to Thee and to our country.

All of which we ask in the name of the great Friend and Master of all.

Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Wednesday, March 18, 2026, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Tuesday, March 17, 2026, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: 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 morning, Madam President.

There is a previously adopted resolution, 1749, at the desk. Please take that up -- it's by Senator Skoufis -- read its title, and call on Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins initially on that resolution, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1749, by Senator Skoufis, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 19, 2026, as West Point Day in New York State.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: Thank you

so much, Madam President.

And we are very, very excited. This is a day that we all look forward to.

I want to thank you, Major Wooten, for your prayer and for blessing us today and obviously reminding us not only of the cadets' prayer, but it is also appropriate for this space as well.

And I'm really happy to see all of you. I just met Commander Stuewe, we had an opportunity to meet. I know that also Colonel Christina Fanitzi is here. Hi, Christina. I understand she was essential in making sure one of my cadets got here, so thank you for that.

And SFC Raymond Barnett as well, hello. Thank you so much.

I also want to thank Senator Skoufis for always bringing this -- I know you represent West Point, and always bringing forward this resolution.

And I also want to thank our chair of Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs, Jessica Scarcella-Spanton who's such a strong advocate for veterans and their families.

It is such an honor for us to commemorate West Point Day, celebrating the United States Military Academy, an extraordinary institution that New York is proud to call its own.

You cadets won't know this, but this is the 74th year that we have celebrated West Point Day in this Senate. We come together, we recognize your excellence, your dedication, and the valor that you bring with you when you go to study in West Point.

I also want to recognize one of my constituents -- as I said, I'm very proud that I have Cadet Kade Riddle -- stand up, Cadet -- of Sleepy Hollow, New York.

Cadet Riddle is currently studying systems engineering at the United States Military Academy, an especially fitting path, as West Point is widely considered the birthplace of engineering education in our country.

Many of its early graduates went on to build critical infrastructure across our nation, including landmarks like the Washington Monument.

Cadet Riddle hopes to branch into

infantry, with aspirations of serving at Fort Drum -- which means you'll be back here again because we have Fort Drum Day --

(Laughter.)

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: -- and attending Ranger School in the future.

I'm incredibly proud to welcome you to the Senate floor today and hope to see you back in the district. Thank you so much for being here, Cadet Riddle.

You're not going to be alone; there's members who are going to ask their other cadets. So if you will get ready, he's the first one that I ask to stand. But you will all be standing when your Senators introduce you.

So thank you, Cadet Riddle.

The history of the United States Military Academy stretches back more than two centuries. Established in 1802 by President Thomas Jefferson, it was the first military academy in our nation.

Even before its opening, the West Point region played a role in our country's military history dating back all the way to 1779, when it served as the site of President George

Washington's strategic fortress and headquarters.

Over the years, more than 80,000 graduates have come through West Point's halls, many of whom went on to shape our nation's history: President Ulysses S. Grant, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Generals William Sherman, John Jay Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, Omar Bradley, Andrea Hollen, who was part of the first class of cadets to include women.

When I look at the cadets today, I see the same honor and integrity that's defined West Point graduates for generations. You are our nation's class of military leaders. The example you set will inspire other young people to answer the call to serve.

Growing up in a military family, I saw firsthand what sacrifice and service to our country truly means. My dad was a World War II veteran, my brother a Vietnam veteran. And I know what it takes to fight for our country.

No matter how difficult and daunting, it is something that you do with your heart and with your soul. And it's something that I and so many of us here, including the veterans here, do not take for granted.

I know that sense of duty is reflected in every one of you. And it's important for us to remember that behind every uniform is a person, someone just like you and me, who has taken a brave step towards a path of service in a way that many would not. Each cadet here today carries forward the legacy of those who made that choice before them.

We've all seen the headlines. We know that trying times are ahead for the whole country and that cadets here today will be among those called to meet that moment with courage. Please know that your commitment to protecting our nation will always be honored here in New York and in this chamber.

And I pledge that this Senate will continue to support and advocate for you and to assure that our gratitude is reflected not just in words, but in actions.

We know, again, that this call to service at this moment is different from any other moment. And I'm so happy that you have the foundation that West Point brings you to make the right decisions at the right time on behalf of all you command on behalf of our nation.

Our prayers go with you. Thank you so much for being our present and our future. Thank you for your integrity, your bravery, your courage, and your commitment to us.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Majority Leader.

Senator Skoufis on the resolution.

SENATOR SKOUFIS: Thank you very much, Madam President.

Before I go on the resolution, I'd like to first acknowledge the West Point leadership team and support personnel that are here, starting with Colonel Daniel Stuewe, the West Point garrison commander. Thank you very much for honoring us with your presence.

We heard from Major Brittany Wooten. Thank you for the beautiful invocation earlier.

We're also joined by Colonel Christina Fanitzi, regimental training officer; Sergeant First Class Raymond Barnett, tactical noncommissioned officer; Captain William Lutz, Corps of Cadets, Brigade Tactical Department; Master Sergeant Donald Seidle, USMA Operations; Cadet Jay Suryanarayan, who is the

First Captain, Corps of Cadets.

And then support personnel, we have Mr. Matthew Hintz, USMA Public Affairs, Community Engagement; Mr. Eric Bartelt, USMA Public Affairs, Command Information; and Ms. Jenna Cisneros, who's the Garrison Public Affairs Officer.

I also want to thank the Secretary's office, the floor team, and certainly my staff, who put in a lot of effort to make West Point Day possible today.

Now, on the resolution, Madam President.

First I want to extend my gratitude to the Majority Leader, not only for her remarks just a moment ago, but -- and not only for continuing West Point Day since taking over as Majority Leader eight years ago, but in embracing this very special day -- not just continuing it, but embracing this very special day. And we wouldn't be able to do any of this without that embracing. So thank you, Madam Leader.

And it is truly my honor to rise today as Senator from the 42nd District, home to the United States Military Academy at West Point,

on this 74th anniversary, as was mentioned a moment ago, of West Point Day, a cherished tradition in the halls of our Capitol. It's a morning of great pride to myself and my colleagues, as well as Senators past, including my predecessor, Colonel Bill Larkin.

This year we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our country, so this West Point Day is particularly meaningful, as the garrison was so crucial in our country's successful campaign for freedom two-and-a-half centuries ago.

The Hudson River was a military highway, transporting troops, artillery, food and information for the colonists. The British knew if they could seize the river, they could sever New England from the rest of the rebellious colonies and end the war for good.

But in spite of the concerted efforts by the well-trained and well-armed British troops, West Point was never captured, standing as a symbol of American courage and fidelity.

That was West Point and our country's past. The future sits before us in the

front of this chamber. These cadets prepared for years to attend West Point, the best of the best. They have chosen to dedicate their lives upon graduation to serve this country, and for that we are all truly grateful.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a ragtag band of colonists, exhausted but victorious, began a great experiment, a genuinely revolutionary process that produced the first successful modern democratic republic. They would be proud to see these young women and men before us all these years later, ready to defend what they fought so hard to build.

To our cadets, thank you for joining us today and for your dedication. We are humbled by your steadfast allegiance to our country during this unsteady moment in our history.

And thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to speak on the resolution again.

And lastly, no matter the circumstance, there is one thing I can say with absolute confidence each year: Go Army, Beat Navy!

Thank you.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Skoufis.

Minority Leader Ortt on the resolution.

SENATOR ORTT: Thank you, Madam Speaker -- Madam President. I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words.

I want to welcome the cadets to the New York State Senate chamber. It is great to see you. It is great to be here every year on this day.

I certainly want to thank my colleague Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, as well as Senator Skoufis, for their words and for their support of not only this resolution but of this day.

You heard Senator Skoufis talk about really a continuation of a very long tradition. I remember when I first was elected, former State Senator -- God rest his soul -- Colonel Bill Larkin, this was his, by far -- this was Christmas, New Year's and Thanksgiving all wrapped into one for him. This was -- this was his day.

And I know Senator Skoufis, as

someone who represents West Point, probably feels the same way -- an immense sense of pride that we all should feel, and I think all feel, to have the oldest service academy, at the very founding of the country, here in the State of New York.

And to look upon young Americans, young New Yorkers, who have all kinds of options before them. Because you do. You could have gone to any school, and you chose West Point. You chose service to this country.

And I would say -- and there's people in this room who have done the same -- maybe not through West Point, but have certainly worn the uniform that you aspire to wear.

I do want to recognize veterans in the Republican Conference.

I know we have Senator Ashby, our ranker on Veterans and Military Affairs, who you will hear from, Army veteran.

We have Senator Mark Walczyk, who still serves in the Army Reserves.

Senator Dan Stec -- now, he was in another branch, so I don't want to belabor that.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR ORTT: But you'll hear from

him, because he has a cadet. So, you know, we all have to endure it.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR ORTT: And then you'll also -- we have Senator Steve Chan, who was a Marine.

And I know Senator Sanders also served in the Marine Corps, in the Democratic Conference.

But all of you I think certainly understand why West Point. Right? It was actually founded, of course, by President Thomas Jefferson, as you heard, as you all no doubt know. Which was ironic, because for much of his political career he was very much opposed to a standing army.

And yet he, under his presidency, created the Military Academy at West Point. Why? Because in practicality, he recognized that a republic, and all that it represented, had to be defended by somebody. And it had to have a professional officer corps.

Now, I don't know what all of you are going to go do. Maybe you'll do four years and out. You'll be leaders in business, or

you'll be leaders in politics, you'll be leaders in not-for-profit or tech.

But maybe somewhere amongst you or amongst your classmates is the next Joint Chiefs of Staff, chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Or maybe it's the next three-star general. Someone who's going to be making major strategic decisions advising the leaders of this country on issues of the highest order -- life and death, war and peace, national security.

That is why West Point exists, at its core. If you want to join the military, you can do that without having to go through West Point. You've chosen a different path, a much more challenging path, a path that speaks to your character, to how you view duty, honor and country.

And I would also remind everyone, including the cadets, every generation has challenges. Every generation, if you look back. And I wish it wasn't the case. But I think it was Plato who said only the dead have seen the end of war.

Every generation has been called to produce members to defend this country and to

potentially put their lives and command the lives of others in dangerous times.

I think sometimes as Americans we think, here, the rest of the world is like this, and it's not. It's a dangerous place. And thank God we have you, young people who continue to raise their hand. We continue to produce young, bright Americans, New Yorkers, who are willing to put their lives on the line and lay aside all the promise and all the opportunities and all the hopes that you have, to defend this country and to lead others.

Because you will all be leaders of other men and women in uniform, and that is a sacred duty. To conduct a mission, to complete the mission successfully and, if possible, get those people back home safely to their families. I can't think of anything higher or more important at this time or any other time.

And when you graduate, when you wear that -- the different uniform and you have that flag on your shoulder, I want you to know that we are as proud of you as you are of that flag and of wearing that uniform.

So thank you very much for your

service. Thank you very much for being here today.

Again, to all my colleagues, thank you very much for your support of this resolution.

God bless America. And absolutely, Go Army, Beat Navy!

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Ortt.

It is now my honor to introduce Colonel Daniel R. Stuewe, commander of the United States Army Garrison at West Point.

COMMANDER STUEWE: Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Minority Leader Ortt, members of this distinguished Senate, good morning and thank you for welcoming us here today.

On behalf of Lieutenant General Gilland and Sergeant Major Barretto, the soldiers, the cadets, the civilians and families of the United States Military Academy and U.S. Army Garrison West Point, thank you for this recognition and for your continued partnership.

Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, ma'am, thank you for the opportunity to address

this chamber today.

Senator Skoufis, sir, thank you for hosting us today and for your steadfast support to the West Point community.

And Senator Scarcella-Spanton, ma'am, thank you for your leadership and all you do on behalf of New York's veterans and servicemembers.

Ladies and gentlemen, since 1952 the State of New York has formally recognized West Point's contributions to our state and to our nation. That enduring tradition speaks to something deeper than ceremony. It reflects a bond, one rooted in shared history, shared responsibility, and shared commitment to service.

This year that history carries even greater weight. The Army recently celebrated its 250th birthday, a milestone few institutions in the world can claim. It was in June of 1775 that the Continental Congress established the American Army. Just three years later, in the winter of 1778, West Point became the strategic anchor of that army.

General George Washington understood the significance of the Hudson River

Valley. He called West Point the most important post in America. From those rocky heights above the river, soldiers built fortifications and placed artillery and stretched a massive iron chain across the Hudson to prevent British warships from dividing the colonies.

West Point was not simply a garrison, it was a decisive stand for the survival of a young republic. And for 250 years the United States Army has stood in defense of this nation, and West Point has remained central to that story.

Today, as the garrison commander, I have the privilege of leading the installation that supports the United States Military Academy, ensuring that this historic post remains secure, resilient, and ready to accomplish its mission.

That mission is clear: It's to educate, train, and inspire the leaders of character for our Army and our nation. The cadets with us here today -- who call the Empire State home -- represent the next generation of Army officers. They're part of a corps of more than 4,000 young men and women who have chosen a path of service over self. They'll

commission as second lieutenants and lead America's sons and daughters in an increasingly complex world, and will do so in the same place our Revolutionary War soldiers once stood watch over the Hudson.

That continuity truly matters. New Yorkers have always been part of the story, from the regiments of the New York line during the American Revolution, from the soldiers of the 69th Infantry Regiment, to the citizen soldiers of the New York National Guard and Army Reserve.

And to the thousands of West Point graduates who claim this state as home, New York has been woven into the fabric of the United States Army.

Today that partnership remains essential. As a garrison, we're not only a military installation, we live in a community -- we are a community. We're families raising children in the Hudson Valley, we're civilians who live and work alongside neighbors, and we're stewards of this historic land, infrastructure, and resources entrusted to us by the American people.

We understand that our success

depends on strong relationships, especially the leaders here today. You support policies that impact our soldiers and families, you advocate for veterans, you strengthen education, infrastructure, and economic opportunity across this great state.

That partnership reinforces readiness, and readiness is what the nation expects from its Army. We're equally committed to being good neighbors, to working collaboratively with local and state leadership, to preserving the history entrusted to us and ensuring that West Point remains not only a symbol of military excellence but a source of pride for the Empire State.

A strong civil-military relationship is not automatic. It requires engagement, it requires trust, and it requires moments like today.

So on behalf of the entire West Point team, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your service to the people of New York, for your continued support to our soldiers and cadets, and for honoring West Point. It's truly a privilege to stand in this chamber in the state

that has been home to West Point for nearly 250 years.

Thank you so very much.

And Go Army, Beat Navy!

(Laughter; standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Colonel Stuewe.

Now, Senator Scarcella-Spanton on the resolution.

SENATOR SCARCELLA-SPANTON: Thank you, Madam President.

And thank you, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and of course Senator Skoufis, for making sure that this happens every single year.

And to the cadets and the senior leadership, thank you so much for your service. And Colonel Stuewe, thank you for your beautiful and impactful words that I think are heard throughout here.

As chair of the Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee, I'm proud to join my colleagues in honoring West Point Day here on the Senate floor.

West Point represents some of the

most talented and dedicated individuals our nation has to offer, as you can see here in this room now. They come from all corners of the country to New York State, united by a shared commitment to serving their country and protecting our freedoms.

And yes, you made the choice to partake in some of the most competitive and grueling processes that you can go through just to serve our nation. So it's very, very much appreciated, and we should all look to you as an inspiration.

Although we don't have any cadets here from my district visiting us here today, two years ago we were joined by Cadet Olivia Raykhman from Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn, who I still keep in touch with. Thank you, Senator Skoufis, who does a great job of making sure all of you actually meet your Senators, which is an amazing thing. Olivia and her fellow cadets represent the best and the brightest in our country.

And as we recognize West Point Day we must also recognize the sacrifices that cadets make to attend this prestigious university. Each cadet has answered a call to serve to defend our

liberties. And I look at you all now, and you're young and you're getting ready to serve our country, and I can't wait to see, just like Olivia, what comes next for all of you.

So thank you to the cadets of West Point for preparing to serve, and to all of the senior leadership here today who are serving. Your dedication to duty, honor and country are an inspiration to us all.

And yes: Go Army, Beat Navy!

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Scarcella-Spanton.

Senator Ashby on the resolution.

SENATOR ASHBY: Thank you, Madam President. I want to thank the command team for being here; Colonel Stuewe.

I want to thank the Majority Leader for bringing this resolution to the floor, Senator Skoufis, and our own chairwoman for doing an incredible job.

It's great to see the cadets here, along with the command team, some of which -- some of who I actually served with in Iraq nearly 20 years ago, and another in Afghanistan.

So it's not quite a homecoming, but

it's reassuring to see their faces and to see the future leaders that will be coming up next.

And each year I try and remember a certain type of cadet that comes through. Normally, I think we're all aware of the congressional appointments that take place, but there are other ways to come through West Point. You can enlist, and then come through.

So these individuals enlist in the Army and then enter West Point. And they have an experience a little separate, a little different from some cadets. And I would hope that those cadets that don't have that enlisted experience lean on those enlisted soldiers, those prior enlisted soldiers.

I say this out of experience as a junior -- as a former junior officer. Learning to lean on your NCOs, learning to lean on those enlisted soldiers that have that experience, will serve you well as leaders. And those commitments that you have made today will bear out future sacrifices later.

And at some point you may ask yourself -- you may find yourself in hard times, as I'm sure you have already been faced with, but

they will be magnified later on in your life. And it's these individuals, these people that have helped you get here during your time of service that will help you get through those times and help you find the solutions and that path forward.

So I implore you to do that. I am continuously amazed and inspired by the work that you do. And I look forward to hearing about all of your future success.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Ashby.

Senator Harckham on the resolution.

SENATOR HARCKHAM: Thank you very much, Madam President.

I want to thank you, Madam Leader, for bringing this resolution to the floor every year, and Senator Skoufis for sponsoring this and for the great work that you and your team do, and for all our colleagues who have spoken.

I grew up in the shadows of West Point, spent a lot of time there. My father had a fondness -- he was a combat veteran of World War II, and the one thing that he always

said to me was, of all the different officers he served with in France and Germany, he said there was a difference between officers from West Point and other officers. He says there was a competency, there was a confidence, and also a care.

And you heard Senator Ortt allude to that, that you have a responsibility for the lives of the folks under your command. And he said when they move forward under the leadership of an officer from West Point, he always knew that was taken into consideration.

And so we hope you remember that moving forward. Please know how proud we are of you, and thankful of your service.

And at this time it's my pleasure to introduce, from my district, from Carmel, New York, Cadet James Ardisana. If you would join us, please.

He's from Company 81, and he's majoring in civil engineering. Raised in Carmel, he comes from a family of service. His father wore the uniform of the FDNY, his mother a school counselor, as we know every day how important that profession has become.

And he hopes to be an aviation officer and attend several Army schools such as Sapper, Air Assault, or Airborne. So you've got a lot of ambition.

We need folks like you, to all of you. I know all my colleagues have ended with "Go Army, Beat Navy!" I will not exhaust that and just say I hope they give you a little time to party; you're only young once.

Thank you so much, Madam President.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Harckham.

Senator Martins on the resolution.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Madam President.

You know, when so many speak gratuitously of rights without corresponding obligations, it is reassuring that we have with us these cadets who are committed to defending those rights and have chosen a path of service.

You know, they say that there's a difference between reputation and character. That reputation is what you're associated with, how other people perceive you. And certainly as

cadets at West Point, you share in that reputation of excellence that is associated with West Point.

But character is who you are, and defines who you are. So, Madam President, let me tell you a little bit about Cadet Ryan Zhang from the 7th Senate District and the character that the cadet has exhibited in his life to date.

So Cadet Zhang, if you would join us. Thank you.

So the cadet is from Great Neck. Great Neck is one of the lighthouse school districts frankly in the entire world -- always nationally ranked. But Cadet Zhang excelled at Great Neck, and we could tell that there were great things in his future.

I had the opportunity in 2023 to be present when the cadet had his Eagle Scout Court of Honor. I was able to be there to recognize his efforts. And as an Eagle Scout, as we know, once an Eagle, always an Eagle.

But that also goes to character. And as a young man in Great Neck, in his community, he also served as a volunteer firefighter. So this idea of service is not just

time at West Point, but it's something that is part of who he is and part of his character.

Cadet Zhang is the son of two immigrants who came here to study and stayed, in pursuing the American dream. So he's pursuing it as well, through service. Which is not only rare these days, but I think something that we should also highlight when we see it, and certainly see it in someone so young.

So volunteer firefighter, Eagle Scout, now service at West Point. Obviously done very well academically. But he's studying finance, he is in the Fencing Club, Chinese Language Club. And Madam President, when he graduates, he wants to go on and further serve the country by attending the Airborne School and attending the U.S. Army Military Freefall School.

Now, for those of you aren't aware, the Military Freefall School is the Special Forces where people fly as high as 25,000 feet to jump out of an airplane using assistive oxygen, in order to deploy, which is incredible. Because I don't know how many of you or us have actually jumped out of a perfectly working airplane. But the idea of climbing to 25,000 feet, and to do so

under those circumstances, and to want to do so because it's part of your service, is extraordinary.

And so, Madam President, allow me the opportunity to recognize Cadet Zhang, to thank him for his service, to thank him for his continued service. And I would just say I know as I stand here today just how proud your parents are of you, the community is of you, and we expect great things.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Martins.

Senator Mattera on the resolution.

SENATOR MATTERA: Thank you, Madam President.

This is such a very, very special day for all of us here today. Today is a very special day in the New York State Senate and one that I am honored to take part in, West Point Day.

I first want to commend our Leader Stewart-Cousins, and to Senator Skoufis, for making sure that we continue this wonderful tradition of celebrating the cadets and leaders

of the United States Military Academy at West Point this 74th anniversary.

I also thank the 11 very special cadets that I got to meet who joined us here today in the Senate chamber. You are all the elite of the elite. You are the future defense of our great nation, and we are so appreciative of your service to our country.

I thank West Point senior mission leader Colonel Daniel R. Stuewe and his fellow leaders for joining us in Albany for this special day, and for all you do for our country.

Thank you so, so much.

While I'm proud of each of our cadets, it is special to me to welcome one cadet from my district who grew up in the 2nd Senate District, on Long Island, Cadet Caroline Carvajal. Can you please -- can you please rise, please stand up for us? Thank you so much, Caroline.

Cadet Carvajal is from East Northport, and she is a truly exceptional individual. Currently she is a physics major at West Point.

And you know, everyone in the

2nd Senate District, especially those in your hometown and in Northport High School, we are so extremely proud of you. We all wish you the best as you strive to attend Air Assault School this summer to earn your wings and eventually get a commission as a field artillery officer.

Also, she plays in the band also. She plays the saxophone. I used to play the trumpet, by the way, so we've got to get together, okay, please?

(Laughter.)

SENATOR MATTERA: You bring immense pride to our community and to our state and our country. I thank you for your service, sacrifice, and dedication. You are an outstanding young woman with a bright future. It is truly an honor to welcome you and your fellow cadets to the Senate, and to thank you for making the choice to serve our nation in the United States Army after graduation.

So I just want to say God bless you and all your fellow cadets that are here with us today. God bless the United States Army and all those who serve in the nation's military. And especially, God bless the United States of

America.

And thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Mattera.

Senator Palumbo on the resolution.

SENATOR PALUMBO: Thank you, Madam President.

It's my honor and I have great pride to introduce Cadet Jess Joe Augustine, who hails from the 1st Senate District.

Cadet Augustine, maybe move over a little bit so I can see you, if you don't mind. He's over in the -- front and center, Cadet. Where are you? There he is, there he is. Very good. Very good, thank you. Thank you, Cadet. See, there you go, bold.

As I hear the comments from my colleagues here -- you know, and we all have great pride to recognize all of you, our current leadership, our future leaders. We think about the comments Leader Ortt and others made about General George Washington, how he was really not thrilled about having a standing army.

But many of us know there's a tremendous interrelationship between what you

folks do and what we do right here in government on the floor. We can say virtually, within reason, whatever we want because of the freedoms that we enjoy, thanks to folks like you and those folks to my left.

And General George Washington specifically said the most effective way to preserve peace is to be prepared for war, and that's why he made the very serious decision to ultimately establish the academy and to have a standing army. And so I thank you for your commitment and dedication to this country and this state.

I'm going to tell everyone a little bit about you. Cadet Augustine's in Company H3. His intended branch is cyber. He's majoring in environmental engineering. And in high school he was a cross country, track and field star. He won two state titles in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. And for those of you who aren't very good at math, that's about two miles. And he won two state titles.

And that dedication, of course, translated directly to his life as a cadet. His plans for the future are to graduate as a cyber

officer, attend rigorous Army schools such as Ranger and Sapper School, and eventually to return to West Point as a professor, as an instructor.

So to our future professor, thank you. To all the cadets, and our friends here in leadership and their commitment to this country, I thank you all. God bless all of you. And God bless the United States of America.

Congratulations.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Palumbo. Thank you.

Senator Rolison on the resolution.

SENATOR ROLISON: Thank you, Madam President.

To the leader, thank you. Senator Skoufis, again, thank you.

I have the honor today to stand and recognize, acknowledge and thank Cadet Joshua Brancamp. Would you please stand?

Before I have the opportunity to talk about this fine young man and his service to this country, you know, it's been said many times that individuals who stand up and step up to do the type of work, putting your lives on the line

like you will be asked to do, really starts when you want to aspire to do that. That takes courage. That takes bravery. And of course it takes dedication.

It's often been said, too, that every single thing that you will do after you make that decision is in the line of duty. So we look at all of you here today and say, thank you for that. Your bravery, your courage, your dedication really started long ago when you wanted to go to West Point.

And this fine young man, this cadet, is from Hopewell Junction, Madam President, in the Town of East Fishkill in the 39th District.

And he's a Company H3. Intended branch, engineer. Major in civil engineering. Club/sport, most important, Scoutmaster Council. Even there, you're giving others the opportunity to do what you have chosen to do yourself.

And military training, Air Assault. You wanted to go to West Point, you've wanted to serve because your dad was an officer and continues to be an officer in the Army Reserve.

I know what it's like to see your father and maybe want to do the same thing

someday. So thank you for that as well.

In your future, Cadet Brancamp, you want to graduate as an engineer officer and you want to post to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. And as an officer you hope to attend schools like Sapper and Ranger School.

And to all of you here today, but especially to Cadet Brancamp, you know, we had the opportunity to talk briefly. And when I shook your hand and I heard your voice, I knew that handshake and that voice stood for bravery, courage, and dedication. I could feel it and I could hear it. So thank you.

God bless all of you for serving. God bless all of you for what you're going to do for this great country. God bless West Point. To the executive staff, thank you for leading these fine young men and women.

And God bless the United States of America.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Rolison.

Senator Stavisky on the resolution.

SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you,

Madam President.

And thank you to the Majority Leader, Senator Stewart-Cousins, for bringing this resolution to the floor, and Senator Skoufis for sponsoring it.

And Senator Skoufis, you have continued the same kind of tradition, in speaking on West Point Day, that Colonel Larkin did when he served in this chamber. It meant so much to him, and I know this means a great deal to you.

I am fortunate to have two cadets here. And in fact, we know that there's another cadet back at West Point because the first cadet I will mention is Tricia Chen, a cadet from College Point.

Cadet, thank you for coming.

And Cadet Chen's sister, her twin sister Tracy, was here two years ago. And I said it then,and I want to repeat what I said then today.

That is an incredible family. Their three children served in the military. Both Cadets Chen served in the Army and received an appointment through their service in the Army to the Academy.

But that family has raised their children in an environment of service, of commitment, of dedication. And that really is a reflection not only upon them, but upon the environment in which they grew up.

So thank you, Cadet Chen, who is hoping to go to Flight School, from what I understand. So good luck in your future assignments.

And I also am proud to introduce Cadet Joel Shin, if Cadet Shin would stand. Cadet Shin is a computer science major, hopes to continue in graduate school. And he too is a resident of my district, but they live in College Point, which I am proud to represent in the Senate.

Cadet Shin is interested in a variety of areas, including athletics, but especially computer science and hopes to attend graduate school, I believe in the fall.

And Cadet Shin again represents the best that the community has to offer -- an idea of service, of commitment, of traditional values that are important, particularly for young people.

I chair the Committee on Higher Education, so I feel even though West Point doesn't come under our jurisdiction, we are doing the right thing in terms of educating young people for a career of service.

And we thank you for your commitment, and let us continue this tradition for another 74 years.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Stavisky.

Senator Stec on the resolution.

SENATOR STEC: Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Senator Skoufis, for supporting and bringing this forward today.

It's a pleasure. This is my first opportunity to -- and probably the first time that I've been entrusted with the responsibility of welcoming a cadet to this chamber.

The 45th Senate District is home to many fabulous and wonderful things, two of them being the birthplace of the United States Navy -- Whitehall, New York -- and the second being the

home of Cadet Richard McGrath. If Cadet McGrath would stand, please.

Cadet McGrath is from Champlain, New York. That is the northeasternmost town in our state. It's on the shores of Lake Champlain, and it's also on the Canadian border.

Senator Ashby mentioned previously the importance and the value of prior enlisted service in the Officer Corps, and Cadet McGrath is one of those cadets. Shortly after he graduated from Northeastern Clinton Central School District, he enlisted as a cavalry scout, completing one station unit training out of Fort Benning, Georgia. And following graduation he was stationed in Fort Riley, Kansas, and later attended the United States Military Academy Prep School before going to West Point.

I note that he wants to be in the Military Police, so there's a few of us here that I sit amongst that you probably would have crossed paths with had their service overlapped. But fortunately for them, it will not.

But his major is environmental science. And his love of the Adirondacks, he stated that it's his aspiration that when he's

finished with the Army, he'd like to work for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as an Environmental Conservation Officer.

My own father, who is an artillery Vietnam Marine Corps veteran, he did a career as a Forest Ranger in DEC. So I'm very familiar with DEC and the work that the ECOs and the Forest Rangers do.

New York State would be fortunate to have you, Cadet, if that's the path that you choose. And certainly if you do choose that path, I think I might be able to help you with a letter of recommendation.

But, Madam President, to the leadership staff that's here, to all the cadets that made the trip today, thank you for your service, thank you for your sacrifice. I won't take the bait and say the line because I'll say it the opposite way, and we were doing so well.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR STEC: But I'll just say thank you all, from all of our veterans. And I'm privileged and honored to be among six in this chamber that served the country. And I respect

and I admire your service and your future service.

So thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Stec.

Senator Tedisco on the resolution.

SENATOR TEDISCO: Thank you, Madam President.

And I too want to thank all of my colleagues for making this important day possible. And I especially want to thank my colleagues here who have served in the military and now have come here to serve in the Senate in New York State. And, by extension, you serve the nation when you serve our state.

I think all of us realize when we introduce and welcome and thank our own cadet from our Senate district, we're thanking all of you, as our cadets, for your service and for your accomplishments.

And by extension, today also we think about and we show our respects and thanks to the men and women, past, the present, future -- best described as the best, most courageous and compassionate force for good in

the United States of America, the men and women of our military, the armed forces.

We appreciate you. We appreciate them protecting this great nation and protecting our freedom and our liberty.

I'd like to say a few words, if I could, about my cadet, Thomas Villano III, if he would stand up.

He's from the great town of Galway, in Saratoga County, 44th Senatorial District. His company is C4. His branch is intended as field artillery. His major is applied psychology. Club/sports: Rabble Rousers manager and company athletics. Military training: Air Assault.

Born and raised in the Capital Region, just 30 minutes from Saratoga Springs, played basketball -- I can relate to that a little bit, I did when I was tall --

(Laughter.)

SENATOR TEDISCO: -- and he was a thrower in track and field, went to state qualifiers for track. And he comes from a non-military background. So maybe we can change that trend now, Thomas, possibly.

He went to state qualifiers for track, as I mentioned. Currently serving as an ACT representative for the battalion. And his future plans relate to the branch of field artillery. And he intends school and going into the medical field in some fashion from grad school. Also hopes to attend other broadening schools while in the Army.

We appreciate your service, and we thank you so much for being involved in this great organization. And I know you're going to go on to fantastic achievements.

Thank you, Thomas, for being here, and thank all of our cadets.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Tedisco.

Senator Weik on the resolution.

SENATOR WEIK: Thank you, Madam President.

First I'd like to say welcome and thank you for your service to our great leadership from West Point. And welcome to all the cadets who are here today.

I feel like my district churns out great Americans, because once again I'm so very

proud to have yet another cadet that I get to honor here in this chamber.

You've chosen such a brave, honorable path, and I thank you very much for choosing that path.

Today I have the great honor of being able to recognize Christopher Sanchez. Would you rise and let us recognize you? Thank you.

Cadet Sanchez comes from the beautiful hamlet of Bay Shore, New York. He serves in the -- his intended military branch is Military Intelligence, BD infantry. His major is applied psychology, and his military training includes Air Assault School.

He comes from a dual military family and has been part of the Army culture, which means he had a very strict household when he grew up.

He performed the role of battalion command sergeant major, overseeing 365 cadets, and has graduated from Air Assault School, and presently aspires in his future to attend the Interservice Physician Assistant Program, or the USU School of Medicine, in the pursuit of

practicing medicine both during and after his time in service.

Which is a tremendous undertaking, and I thank you so much for making yourself such an incredible, valuable part of not just our community but our nation.

Thank you so much for your bravery and your commitment to our nation. God bless all of you. Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: Thank you, Senator Weik.

To our guests, our distinguished cadets, our wonderful leadership at West Point, and all the administrative staff that made this happen, we as a body are truly privileged to welcome you on behalf of the Senate. We extend to you the privileges and courtesies of our house.

Please rise and be recognized.

(Extended standing ovation.)

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

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, Senator Skoufis would like to open this

resolution for cosponsorship.

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

Senator Gianaris.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT MAYER: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 392, Senate Print 3207A, by Senator Kavanagh, an act to amend the Public Health Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 392, voting in the negative:

Senator Borrello.

Ayes, 58. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 430, Senate Print 936A, by Senator Gonzalez, an act directing a state agency telework report.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 430, voting in the negative are Senators Griffo, O'Mara, Ortt and Walczyk.

Ayes, 55. Nays, 4.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 441, Senate Print 2437A, by Senator Krueger, an act to amend the Election Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 441, voting in the negative: Senators Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick and Weik.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 2.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 457, Senate Print 919A, by Senator May, an act to amend the Executive Law.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Lay it aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 461, Senate Print 2587, by Senator Mayer, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Mayer to explain her vote.

SENATOR MAYER: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to vote aye on this legislation.

By establishing January 30th as "Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution," we are affirming New York's commitment to learning and teaching about the difficult history of the United States' shameful treatment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during World War II and their forced relocation to internment camps.

We recognize Fred Korematsu's contributions to helping us reckon with our history and recommit to the ongoing fight for civil and constitutional rights for all.

Mr. Korematsu, a 22-year-old

shipyard welder and American citizen, was fired from his job due to his Japanese ancestry, but he refused to go when his family was ordered to relocate to an internment camp. He was arrested, convicted in federal court, and sent to an internment camp.

He appealed his conviction, but the United States Supreme Court ultimately affirmed it.

Much later, the Supreme Court recognized that the prior decision was wrong, and Chief Justice John Roberts said: "Korematsu was gravely wrong the day it was decided, has been overruled in the court of history, and -- to be clear -- 'has no place in law under the Constitution.'"

He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom: Fred Korematsu, who wanted nothing more than to live an ordinary life but was instead forcibly detained due to his ancestry.

There are some today being ripped from their families as ordinary people living ordinary lives and contributing to their communities. Let us not fall again so readily

into the trap of seeing the other as the enemy.

Today we reaffirm the principles that Fred Korematsu stood for, and we stand together to make this day a day of reckoning on behalf of Fred Korematsu and others like him.

I vote aye.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 462, Senate Print 3204, by Senator Krueger, an act to amend the Penal Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 5. This act shall take effect on the first of November.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 490, Senate Print 3180, by Senator Sanders, an act to amend the Elder Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: 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 BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 491, Senate Print 4805, by Senator Ryan, an act to amend the Real Property Tax Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Ryan to explain his vote.

SENATOR RYAN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Today I want to rise and support this piece of legislation because it's going to be a real tangible difference in the lives of our senior citizens across New York State. For too long, older -- senior New Yorkers who qualify for the citizen property tax exemption have been forced to navigate a burdensome and often confusing application process.

In order to receive the benefit they are entitled to, they must gather financial documents, make in-person visits to a local assessor's office, sometimes year and year. And for me, quite simply, that doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

So what this bill will do, it streamlines the process by allowing the state to take on the responsibility of verifying income eligibility, just as we already do with the

enhanced STAR program. So instead of placing the burden on seniors, we are leveraging the tools and data already available at the state level to make government work more efficiently for our senior citizens, many of which have mobility challenges and limited transportation.

So I hope you'll support me.

And I'll say this. Sometimes on the floor we use the word "unfunded mandate," sometimes we hear that. But this is -- I'm bringing a new word up, saying it's a refunded mandate, because the state's going to help our local towns, which we should be doing.

So I vote aye.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 499, Senate Print 2084, by Senator Kavanagh, an act to amend the General Municipal Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Helming to explain her vote.

SENATOR HELMING: Thank you, Mr. President.

I think it's a great practice for municipalities, for local governments to create and periodically update a comprehensive plan, and to make sure that it addresses issues such as housing. That's a practice that I followed as a town supervisor.

However, the bill before us is a requirement. It's a mandate, an unfunded mandate on our local governments. And all too often that translates into increased property taxes for people.

And the other issue I have with this bill at this time is that it's forcing municipalities of every single size to address a problem they can't fix.

Residential construction, as I've

said on this floor time and time again, in our Housing Committee meetings and in every meeting I have an opportunity to talk about it, has been delayed or has come to an ultimate stop because of the All-Electric Building mandates. And it's impossible to build when the electric capacity doesn't exist.

So for those reasons, Mr. President, I am a no on this bill. I hope we address the All-Electric mandates that are stopping residential building from occurring within our districts.

Thank you.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 499, voting in the negative are Senators Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Griffo, Helming, O'Mara, Ortt, Rhoads, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 51. Nays, 9.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 507, Senate Print 2556, by Senator Comrie, an act

to amend the Public Authorities Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 60.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's go, Mr. President! It's March Madness in the Senate chamber today: The Walczyk-May rematch we've been waiting for.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR GIANARIS: Let's take up the controversial calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will ring the bell.

And may the brackets begin.

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 457, Senate Print 919A, by Senator May, an act to amend the Executive Law.

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

SENATOR WALCZYK: Well, I grew up watching 'Cuse hoops. I don't think I'll be representing that team or that area today, Mr. President. I hope the sponsor will yield for some questions.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: A representative of Syracuse, a proud representative of Syracuse, Senator May, do you yield? You've got your Syracuse orange on today.

SENATOR MAY: Right, I am dressed for the part.

Yes, I yield, Mr. President.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The Senator yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you. Through you, Mr. President.

So the Community Development Block

Grants provide annual federal grants for low- and moderate-income areas. The goal is to combat blight and improve quality of life in low-income areas.

Your bill would cut CDBG funds by 50 percent for communities who don't comply with the new law that you're proposing here today.

How does that 50 percent cut to poor areas help them improve low- and moderate-income areas in the state?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President.

First of all, thank you for the question. Thank you for paying attention to this bill.

And this bill exists -- the purpose of this bill is to make sure that communities are collecting and reporting basic information about housing stock and housing plans, housing construction in their communities. Which is critical information that will guide how the state spends billions of dollars in promoting housing construction, housing renovation, and helping people, renters and homeowners, stay in their homes.

So the idea here is there is a penalty attached to not doing this. And the idea of that penalty is that it will focus the minds of the communities on actually doing this.

It's not a huge thing we're asking them to do. Most communities already collect much of this information. Some of it already has to be reported to the Secretary of State, but not all of it. And a lot of it is not transparent.

And so this is just to -- our hope is that nobody will incur the penalty, but that the -- it will help incentivize them to do this job.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President, would the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Your memo says fiscal-impact implications are none, so I assume that any fiscal impact in meeting the compliance here would be borne by the local municipalities.

Would we consider this an unfunded mandate, or are there funds somewhere else the state has set aside to help them comply with the new reporting requirements you're proposing here today?

SENATOR MAY: So there would be none in the first year.

But my expectation is that if there was a need, because there is a pretty long on-ramp for -- I'm sorry, through you, Mr. President -- for implementing this. If municipalities did need that funding, we could get that in the budget the relevant year.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Would the sponsor continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President. So this bill requires towns, villages, cities to submit a zoning map annually to the Department of Homes and Community Renewal. It also requires towns, villages and cities to

submit to HCR an annual report on new construction, alteration, demolition and consolidation of housing. I think you'd outlined some of those things in your remarks.

What is the definition of "alteration," for purposes of this legislation?

(Pause.)

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. That is one of the pieces of this that would be determined by HCR generally, with public comment, along with a number of other aspects of how the reporting would be done, for example.

We want to make sure that it's easy for municipalities to report their information so that they could use pathways they've already been using to report other information.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Would the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I do.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you,

Mr. President. So are you trying to capture every permit that is pulled at a town, village, and city? Would that -- any permit at all that is pulled from the codes department or however they do their works for any alterations or demolition on a property, those would all get sent up to the state? Is that how I understand this?

(Pause.)

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. What we're targeting is anything that is relevant to the increase or decrease of the housing stock in that community.

And I also want to make sure to point out that in the A print, we have exempted communities of less than 5,000. That was a request that we received. And streamlines this process. We're talking about communities of a substantial size.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Would the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The

sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: So just so I understand properly on alterations, so the -- when you reference alterations in this legislation, because it wasn't spelled out, you're only talking about alterations to a building that would increase the housing capacity of that building?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President, we are talking -- either increase or decrease the amount of housing stock in that area.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And would the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President. So as you just pointed out, you've exempted towns with a population of less than 5,000. The line -- specifically, Line 21 of your bill says "shall not apply to any local board of a town with a population of less than

5,000 people."

What about a city with a population of less than 5,000? I represent the City of Little Falls; it has a population of 4,600. Would they have to comply?

(Pause.)

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. If the city is the permitting authority, then it would apply to the city.

We're aware that there are different levels of government that handle those kinds of permitting issues.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Would the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President. So what about villages with a population of less than 5,000? I represent 45 villages.

SENATOR MAY: Mr. President, my understanding is if they are coterminous with a

town, then it would apply to them. If they are not, then that would be a different matter.

But this is also something that would be open -- if my colleague wants to recommend a different wording for that, I am certainly open to making amendments here.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Would the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I would.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: And through you, Mr. President. So villages like the Village of Cato that is located both in Ira and in the Town of Cato, they would have to comply, even though they have a population of a little over 500 people?

(Pause.)

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. The answer is yes, if they are the permitting authority. Frequently villages are not.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Would the sponsor

continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: We have a Rural Resources Commission here in the New York State Senate. We also have the ability to reach out to multiple different associations that represent towns, villages and cities across the State of New York.

Have you heard back from the Association of Towns? Do they support the legislation you're proposing here?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. We have not received opposition from those organizations to this legislation.

And I would just say one of the things that prompted this legislation was the Fair Housing organization in Onondaga County tried to assemble information about zoning regulations in all the different municipalities within the county, and it took years to get that information. Some of the information was just

jotted in pencil on a piece of paper that they found in a file folder somewhere.

But these are decisions that have a real impact on homeowners, on developers, on the shapes of these communities. And so this is information that no matter how small your community is, I think the residents of the community deserve to have that information.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Will the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I will.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: If you haven't received -- through you, Mr. President, if you haven't received support from the Association of Towns, how about the New York Conference of Mayors or NYCOM?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. We haven't received opposition or support from any of those local organizations.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Would the sponsor continue to yield?

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the sponsor yield?

SENATOR MAY: I do.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The sponsor yields.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Through you, Mr. President. This bill also requires municipalities' information sent to Homes and Community Renewal be posted publicly by the Department of State.

Why should a homeowner's demolition, expansion, or alteration of their property be posted publicly for everyone in New York State to see, including their address and whatever permit that they pulled at their local municipal office in order to do that demolition or that alteration of their property?

SENATOR MAY: Through you, Mr. President. We believe there is a compelling public value, given the amount of money that the taxpayers of New York State are investing in building housing, in renovating housing, in expanding the housing stock, in keeping renters and homeowners in their homes, we believe there's a compelling public value to having this kind of

information be public so that decisions both at the local and at the state level can be made wisely.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you.

Mr. President, on the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Walczyk on the bill.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Requiring our poorest communities to do more reporting even if they are a tiny village -- and as the sponsor pointed out, you know, may have a few hundred residents and may be handling things on paper in a filing cabinet? That may sound funny here in Albany, but it is the reality on the ground for a number of municipalities that often share code enforcement across a number of different municipalities.

They have a hard time even filling a zoning board because of the number of residents that they have.

But that doesn't mean they don't get the job done to preserve the community that they want. And bringing another unfunded mandate on top of them, requiring them to send all of those permits up to Albany, is just going to be another

unfunded mandate.

But eventually they get funded, right? By who? By the local taxpayers, is who gets to pay for this.

And threatening to cut federal funding from CDBG funds that are designed to go to those poorest areas of New York State -- that really need some additional assistance -- is not a helpful incentive for those that are doing their best out there right now.

If you want to make housing more inexpensive, you could use the national standard for the Building Code. You could repeal the All-Electric Buildings Act. You could implement incentives for first-time homebuyers. You could invest in infrastructure. You could reduce costs of construction materials here in the State of New York.

But instead, this bill says we're going to penalize local municipalities if they don't do two different annual reports on their zoning and everybody that is pulling permits to improve their homes now.

The problem in New York is not that local governments aren't reporting enough. Talk

to the New York Conference of Mayors. Talk to the Association of Towns. They'll tell you, We report plenty to the State of New York.

This bill will only bring new problems and no solutions to lower the cost of housing in New York State. I'll be voting no and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Walczyk.

Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

Senator Martins, why do you rise?

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Mr. President. On the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator Martins on the bill.

SENATOR MARTINS: I have two towns and 43 villages in my district. I guarantee you, Mr. President, that the residents of each one of those villages is acutely aware of any buildings that are going up in the village. It's where they live. There's a new construction going on? They're aware of it.

The idea that anyone's going to

suggest that this is an open government bill, this is somehow a means for local residents and taxpayers to somehow be availed of certain information that they otherwise would not have, is nonsense. Absolute nonsense.

Those local communities know full well, as does everyone in this room who has any villages in their communities, the idea that they have to send that information and assemble that information and send it to Albany as a way of opening up access to their local communities so that they know what's being built in their community, is just not true. And frankly, it doesn't make sense.

Here's what happened. A local housing group in Onondaga County decided that they couldn't get information fast enough from their communities because they're FOILing it. And you know what, Mr. President? When you have a FOIL, when these communities get FOILs, they're able to hand over papers that they assemble. But what they're asking for, I guarantee you, this housing group, was for the community to assemble the information for them. And when they didn't move fast enough, we get this bill.

And all this bill does is put obligations on our local communities. So instead of attending to their local community, to the property owners, maybe to fixing roads in the local community, we're going to siphon resources so that some special-interest group in Onondaga County that didn't get information fast enough is going to force villages in the 7th Senate District and in Nassau County to spend time, effort, and money, resources, with their personnel, assembling information.

To what end? Section, block, and lot. The kind of alteration. Information specific to that community that has no bearing on housing on a statewide level. And yet we're supposed to pass a law because someone wants to check a box and say "I'm doing something for housing." This does absolutely nothing for housing other than to increase costs for our communities, put additional burdens on our villages, towns.

And frankly, Mr. President, I'll have no part of it. I'll be voting no.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank you, Senator Martins.

Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

Seeing and hearing none, debate is now closed.

Senator Serrano.

SENATOR SERRANO: Upon consent, we've agreed to restore this bill to the noncontroversial calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: On consent, the bill has been restored.

Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect on the first of January.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator May to explain her vote.

SENATOR MAY: Thank you, Mr. President.

And I will point out that the CDBG funds are under threat by the president of the United States and may be gone by the time this bill takes effect, so there might need to be a different kind of incentive put in place.

But I do want to come back to Onondaga County, where we have a situation where the county wants to see considerably more housing built -- we're seeing this all over the state, that people's children can't move back into their communities because there are no affordable houses to be bought or apartments to find. People, seniors who want to downsize but stay in the communities they've lived in for decades don't have places to go because we aren't building enough housing.

And so there is a very strong interest in figuring out how we solve that problem. And especially in Onondaga County, where we're expecting a lot of new people to move in because of Micron, this is a very urgent issue.

So CNY Fair Housing decided to just compile a map, essentially, that showed where it was possible to build more housing. And after laborious efforts and really kind of shocking discoveries about how little information local communities kept or made public about their zoning laws, what they found is that outside of the City of Syracuse, only 1 percent of the

buildable land was zoned for multifamily housing, so that it was going to require a huge effort not just of filing zoning variances and that kind of thing, but of local governments really rethinking how they do land use, before the county could even imagine having enough housing to address the problems we're facing right now, let alone the problems we expect to face five, 10, 15 years into the future.

So it isn't just a shortage of housing that we have, but a shortage of information about where it's possible to build housing, what kinds of housing projects are being allowed and welcomed in communities and what are not, and what kinds of policy changes might be needed either at the local level or at the state level to try to address that.

And so I believe that before we spend billions of dollars on some of these efforts, we should know the landscape that we're dealing with. And this is about having the data, having the information, making sure that everybody understands where we are and where we can go and where we need to go in this housing crisis.

I vote aye.

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

Senator Martins to explain his vote.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Before coming to the Senate I had the privilege of serving as mayor of the Village of Mineola where we redid our master plan to allow for housing in our downtown.

And I'm happy to say, Mr. President, I probably have done more to build housing in downtown communities than anyone else perhaps probably in this chamber, as mayor of Mineola in those changes. The Village of Mineola has built or approved over 2,000 housing units in the last 10 years alone.

So I understand perfectly well not only how you do it, Mr. President, but how you get to the result and actually get a shovel in the ground and get things built.

What you don't do is undermine local communities and their ability to make those decisions for yourself. And what you do do is you actually put money in the hands of those

local communities to pay for the resources that they need to commit to building housing.

So this bill interferes with local communities and provides absolutely no support. That's why I'm voting no.

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 457, voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Helming, Lanza, Martins, Mattera, Murray, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Rolison, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik. Also Senator Ryan.

Ayes, 37. Nays, 23.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill is passed.

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

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

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

SENATOR SERRANO: I move to adjourn

until Monday, March 23rd, at 3:00 p.m., with intervening days being legislative days.

ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Monday, March 23rd, at 3:00 p.m., intervening days being legislative.

(Whereupon, at 12:43 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)