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NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

March 26, 2026

11:05 a.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR JAMAAL T. BAILEY, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

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

2 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
3 Senate will come to order.

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

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

8 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: In the
9 absence of clergy, let us bow our heads in a
10 moment of silent reflection or prayer.

11 (Whereupon, the assemblage respected
12 a moment of silence.)

13 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Reading
14 of the Journal.

15 THE SECRETARY: In Senate,
16 Wednesday, March 25, 2026, the Senate met
17 pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Tuesday,
18 March 24, 2026, was read and approved. On
19 motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

22 Presentation of petitions.

23 Messages from the Assembly.

24 Messages from the Governor.

25 Reports of standing committees.

1 Reports of select committees.

2 Communications and reports from
3 state officers.

4 Motions and resolutions.

5 Senator Gianaris.

6 SENATOR GIANARIS: Good morning,
7 Mr. President.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Good
9 morning.

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: We'll begin with
11 an immediate meeting of the Finance Committee in
12 Room 332.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: There
14 will be an immediate meeting of the
15 Finance Committee in Room 332.

16 SENATOR GIANARIS: The Senate will
17 stand at ease.

18 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
19 Senate will stand at ease.

20 (Whereupon, the Senate stood at ease
21 at 11:06 a.m.)

22 (Whereupon, the Senate reconvened at
23 11:15 a.m.)

24 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
25 Senate will return to order.

1 Senator Gianaris.

2 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
3 there's a report of the Finance Committee at the
4 desk. Let's take that up, please.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
6 Secretary will read.

7 THE SECRETARY: Senator Krueger,
8 from the Committee on Finance, reports the
9 following bill:

10 Senate Print 9002A, Budget Bill, an
11 act making appropriations for the legal
12 requirements of the state debt service.

13 SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to accept
14 the report of the Finance Committee.

15 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: All those
16 in favor of accepting the report of the
17 Finance Committee please signify by saying aye.

18 (Response of "Aye.")

19 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Opposed,
20 nay.

21 (No response.)

22 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
23 report of the Finance Committee is accepted.

24 Senator Gianaris.

25 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please take up

1 the supplemental calendar.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
3 Secretary will read.

4 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
5 657, Senate Print 9002A, Budget Bill, an act
6 making appropriations for the legal requirements
7 of the state debt service.

8 (Pause.)

9 SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

10 (Laughter.)

11 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Lay it
12 aside.

13 Senator Gianaris, that completes the
14 reading of the supplemental calendar.

15 SENATOR GIANARIS: Please go to the
16 reading of the controversial calendar.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
18 Secretary will ring the bell.

19 The Secretary will read.

20 THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number
21 657, Senate Print 9002A, Budget Bill --

22 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Some
23 order, please.

24 THE SECRETARY: -- an act making
25 appropriations for the legal requirements of the

1 state debt service.

2 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
3 O'Mara, why do you rise?

4 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
5 Mr. President.

6 We have the first of 10 budget bills
7 that we anticipate. The other nine are not
8 before us -- and not in final form, remotely, as
9 far as I understand where we are in the budget
10 negotiations.

11 And perhaps if Senator Krueger would
12 yield, we would -- I would have some questions
13 for her.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
15 Krueger, it is Opening Day. Do you yield?

16 SENATOR KRUEGER: It is
17 Opening Day. I yield for budget questions, not
18 baseball questions.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Well,
20 let's play ball, Senator O'Mara.

21 The Senator yields.

22 SENATOR O'MARA: All right.

23 Senator, this is the bill to -- a
24 very important bill to commit the state to paying
25 the outstanding debt that we have, ending our

1 fiscal year and going in to cover our debt
2 service payments for the next fiscal year.

3 What is the amount of debt, the
4 total being authorized that could be appropriated
5 as a result of this bill?

6 SENATOR KRUEGER: The debt service
7 appropriations are 10.6 billion, 3.7 billion of
8 which is cash.

9 SENATOR O'MARA: I'm sorry, the
10 last part?

11 SENATOR KRUEGER: Three point seven
12 billion of which is cash.

13 SENATOR O'MARA: Is -- is --

14 SENATOR KRUEGER: Cash.

15 SENATOR O'MARA: Oh, cash, I'm
16 sorry. I couldn't hear you. Thank you.

17 Thank you, Mr. President. If
18 Senator Krueger will continue to yield.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the
20 Senator yield?

21 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
23 Krueger yields.

24 SENATOR O'MARA: Senator, how does
25 that amount of debt compare to the end of the

1 fiscal year last year that we -- that actually --
2 the number we had in the debt service bill last
3 year?

4 SENATOR KRUEGER: It's
5 approximately the same thing. Cash increase of
6 1.3 billion, or 57 percent, from last year.

7 SENATOR O'MARA: Through you,
8 Mr. President, if the Senator will continue to
9 yield.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the
11 sponsor yield?

12 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
14 Senator yields.

15 SENATOR O'MARA: How much above the
16 total outstanding state-related debt are we
17 approving here that has not already been
18 appropriated?

19 SENATOR KRUEGER: So
20 state-supported debt outstanding is 61.6 billion
21 from last year. And 71.8 billion is estimated
22 for fiscal year '27.

23 But again, as we had a brief
24 discussion about in the Finance Committee
25 meeting, this bill is designed to complete our

1 obligations for debt service for the coming year
2 on money we've already borrowed and even spent,
3 but also assumes a certain level of increased
4 spending from additional debt taken on in the
5 coming year.

6 But we of course haven't passed
7 those bills, so we don't actually know whether we
8 would need to borrow that much money.

9 And even though we are recognizing
10 if we borrow that much money, based on our
11 estimates of where we will be in our final
12 capital budget, then it will allow us to go
13 forward and borrow based on what we put in our
14 final budget.

15 But if we make a -- if we have a
16 smaller final capital budget than we are
17 projecting, we won't be borrowing that money.
18 Hence, we won't be taking on that much additional
19 debt, and hence the money we need to borrow would
20 be lower.

21 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
22 Senator.

23 Through you, Mr. President, if the
24 Senator will continue to yield.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Does the

1 sponsor yield?

2 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

3 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
4 sponsor yields.

5 SENATOR O'MARA: It just seems to
6 me, Senator -- I understand what you're saying,
7 and I certainly understand the importance of
8 paying our outstanding obligations.

9 But an extra \$10 billion in here
10 that, as you said, we don't know what it's for --
11 maybe it's going to come through another budget
12 bill; maybe it isn't.

13 In my opinion, it would be more
14 prudent to pass a bill today on what our
15 outstanding debt obligations are, and then come
16 back and revise this, amend it -- which we amend
17 bills all the time here -- after we have a
18 finalized capital projects budget.

19 SENATOR KRUEGER: Through you,
20 Mr. President. I agree there are different ways
21 to think about how we do things.

22 But to some degree this bill, the
23 way it is written, is making an assumption --
24 like if you go out to buy a house and you get
25 pre-permission on the mortgage amount from your

1 bank before you've even found the house you might
2 be buying. It gives you the ability to nimbly
3 make an offer and go forward with buying your
4 house because you don't have to start the process
5 then.

6 And I think we all know how long
7 some things take to get done here. Sometimes
8 things that you think are pretty easy and obvious
9 are not so easy and obvious, particularly when
10 you're dealing with two houses and a Governor.

11 So we actually think it is more
12 responsible and prudent to, to some degree, get
13 the mortgage arrangements set up in advance, even
14 if we might not take out that mortgage.

15 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
16 Senator.

17 Mr. President, if the Senator will
18 continue to yield.

19 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the
20 sponsor yield?

21 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

22 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
23 sponsor yields.

24 SENATOR O'MARA: Senator, could you
25 give us a basic outline of where we stand in the

1 budget negotiations relative to the other nine
2 budget bills, and what your anticipated schedule
3 is to complete the budget process?

4 SENATOR KRUEGER: If I had a
5 crystal ball.

6 I can assure everyone here we will
7 not have budget bills completed before the
8 April 1st deadline.

9 We are scheduled to be here Monday
10 and Tuesday. There will not be budget bills. We
11 are scheduled to be here the beginning of
12 Wednesday; there will not be budget bills. And
13 in fact because it is, quote, unquote, the
14 beginning of a major Jewish holiday that night --
15 April 1st is Passover, the first night of
16 Passover -- I don't believe we will be asked to
17 spend an exceptional amount of time here that day
18 because for many of us, including myself, it will
19 mean not getting home for our first seder.

20 Then Thursday, the next day, is
21 Holy Thursday. Friday is Good Friday. Sunday is
22 Easter.

23 Is there a holiday Saturday?

24 SENATOR O'MARA: No. No.

25 SENATOR KRUEGER: I guess we could

1 come back for Saturday. Oh, wait, it's Greek --
2 we have Greek Holy Week.

3 So I'm predicting we're not likely
4 to be here on anybody's major holidays, starting
5 April 1st for multiple days. Then we can come
6 back the next week, if called back by the
7 Governor, and continue budget bills.

8 Obviously staff, as much as they
9 would not like to hear this, can be encouraged to
10 be here working even on the religious holidays.
11 And I certainly hope we are not going to make
12 anyone work their religious holidays.

13 So that's the best I can offer us
14 right now, all the days we won't be passing the
15 budget. But we will still have it to do.

16 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you. Thank
17 you, Senator.

18 Mr. President, if the Senator will
19 continue to yield.

20 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the
21 sponsor yield?

22 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
24 sponsor yields.

25 SENATOR O'MARA: Just so maybe I

1 understand what you described, do you then
2 anticipate us the Monday after Easter being here
3 voting on budget bills, or being in session?

4 SENATOR KRUEGER: I don't know that
5 I can answer whether I anticipate or not, because
6 it's really then up to the Governor to decide
7 what kind of schedule she's putting for
8 extenders.

9 We know certain things from past
10 years' experience. If you don't get the budget
11 done by April 1st, you need to set up a schedule
12 of when you're going to have extender bills ready
13 in both houses to pass so that we, the State of
14 New York, are not failing in our obligations to
15 make sure that our workers get paid or that other
16 bills that must be paid are paid on time.
17 Because the Comptroller of the State of New York
18 won't pay the workers of New York unless in fact
19 there's an extender saying to do so.

20 Certain bills that come in on a
21 regular basis may not be able to be paid unless
22 there's an extender that includes paying bills
23 for operating costs. Even though, again, this
24 would address capital costs.

25 So I think there's a pretty good

1 chance we would be here at least some day during
2 that week.

3 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
4 Senator.

5 Mr. President, if the Senator will
6 continue to yield.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the
8 sponsor yield?

9 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

10 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
11 sponsor yields.

12 SENATOR O'MARA: As the fiscal year
13 ends next Wednesday, and that's the -- that
14 evening is the start of Passover, and we're going
15 to be off till some point the next week, we'll
16 need an extender.

17 When do you anticipate or have there
18 been discussions with the Governor of when that
19 extender will come and what period of time that
20 extender will cover?

21 SENATOR KRUEGER: So it is correct
22 that we will be here Monday, Tuesday and part of
23 Wednesday next week, and the Governor can hand us
24 an extender to pass for whatever amount of time
25 she chooses, that I assume we probably would

1 pass.

2 We don't get to drive that action.
3 That has to be a Governor handing us an extender
4 to pass.

5 SENATOR O'MARA: Through you,
6 Mr. President, if the Senator will continue to
7 yield.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Will the
9 sponsor yield?

10 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The
12 sponsor yields.

13 SENATOR O'MARA: Senator, how would
14 you characterize the working together of the
15 two houses and the Governor at this point on the
16 outstanding issues? And what are the major
17 outstanding issues that are being dealt with?

18 SENATOR KRUEGER: There are many,
19 Mr. President. And sometimes I feel like new
20 ones pop up each day. So I'm not totally sure
21 how many are left to be dealt with.

22 Certainly discussions that we see in
23 the media all the time are concerns about changes
24 to CLCPA, environmental law; fraud issues and
25 insurance company issues. Tier 6 issues. I'm

1 trying to think what else.

2 SENATOR O'MARA: Tax issues.

3 SENATOR KRUEGER: Oh, taxes, thank
4 you. Tax issues.

5 Local locality issues. If you walk
6 through the halls you'll see quite a few of our
7 friends from local government who are up here
8 urging us to take certain actions and not
9 actions.

10 Healthcare financing issues.

11 It's a lot of issues, I have to say.
12 It's a big-deal budget.

13 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
14 Senator.

15 Mr. President, on the bill.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
17 O'Mara on the bill.

18 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
19 Senator Krueger, for those. And it's clear and
20 it's not unusual at this stage of the budget that
21 there are a lot of unresolved issues.

22 Certainly we would prefer to have
23 them worked out by the end of the fiscal year,
24 and that would be more prudent fiscal practice.

25 And it's critically important that

1 we obligate ourselves to pay the debt services
2 that are coming up after the end of this fiscal
3 year that ends next Wednesday. And I fully
4 support our committing ourselves to that debt
5 service.

6 What I do not support is padding
7 this by an extra \$10 billion for projects that we
8 don't even know what they are yet, when we could
9 easily be coming back throughout the rest of the
10 budget process and amending this from just
11 covering what needs to be covered, and then amend
12 it to add what then has to be covered out of the
13 new budget.

14 And I think that would be the better
15 way to go.

16 Thank you, Mr. President.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank
18 you, Senator O'Mara.

19 Senator Tedisco on the bill.

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

22 It's good that we have one part of
23 the budget that we've started today, the debt
24 service. That's kind of probably the easiest
25 part of the budget. And I think most of my

1 constituents by this time know, because over the
2 years we've had a lot of late budgets going on.

3 This is a constitutional mandate.
4 Probably the most important thing we do is here
5 is put a good, balanced, on-time budget for our
6 constituents which keeps them here and
7 incentivizes people to come to New York State.
8 And April 1st is the deadline.

9 I have to tell you, nobody in my
10 district -- I think you'd say this too, to a
11 great extent -- goes to work, sits there, has
12 their bosses give them a deadline to complete a
13 project, and says to them, I'm definitely not
14 going to complete that project by the deadline
15 you've given me, and expects to come back and get
16 paid the next day -- or actually show up because
17 they still have a job.

18 Now, over the years -- and I think
19 I've been here a while. In fact, longer than
20 anybody's been in this room -- historically the
21 media and all our constituents have been trying
22 to figure out who's in charge of delaying and
23 making us have late budgets. Sometimes school
24 districts say, We have to go out and borrow
25 because we have school budgets coming up and

1 everything. Who's responsible for the most
2 important constitutional duty we have to put
3 forth, a good balanced budget in a timely fashion
4 which protects our constituency?

5 And over the years Democrats have
6 blamed Republicans, Republicans have blamed
7 Democrats. I can tell you this. Our side of the
8 aisle, in our conference -- we happen to be
9 Republicans -- never controlled all levers of
10 power for the number of years I have been here or
11 you have been here. Never.

12 Now, you can say we controlled a
13 Republican Senate. But at that time you've
14 either got a totally Democratic Assembly -- and
15 we had George Pataki here one day. But we never
16 had all levers of power.

17 Who is responsible for this budget
18 heading towards -- and as defined by our leader
19 in Finance, we're going to be late. Wait a
20 second. It's not April 1st yet.

21 When my people are working, they say
22 to the boss, I'm going to be late. When do you
23 tell them you're going to be late? You've got
24 time left to go.

25 You control all levers of power.

1 You control the Senate, one vote shy of a
2 supermajority. Supermajority in the Assembly.
3 The Governor's your affiliation. You couldn't do
4 a balanced on-time good budget for your
5 constituents in a timely fashion? You had a
6 whole year.

7 Don't be pointing towards this side
8 of the aisle because you're late with the most
9 important job you're expected to do
10 constitutionally.

11 You know what my dad said to me, the
12 most important lesson? He worked in the foundry
13 for 30 years. Most important lesson he gave to
14 me is 90 percent of success is just showing up
15 and getting the job done when you do.

16 You can't cut and run. You've got
17 to show up and do the job your constituents
18 elected you to do.

19 There's only one finger being
20 pointed towards this lateness. You couldn't get
21 the job done. The media knows it now. Your
22 constituents know it now. We know who are in
23 charge of late budgets. The leader has said it
24 now, of Finance. It's going to be late. We're
25 shocked, it's going to be late.

1 Well, there's nobody to point
2 towards for not doing your job. How about those
3 conference committees, aren't they great? I had
4 one. We got a great leader. I love my leader in
5 conference committee. She's on your side of the
6 aisle. Love working with her. I was a teacher
7 at one time, I say that a lot. Senator Liu likes
8 to hear me say that.

9 Thirty-nine billion dollars, one of
10 the largest parts of the budget. One meeting.
11 They said, Hurry up, don't say too much in this
12 one -- the purpose of conference committees was
13 to engage elected officials, Senators and
14 Assemblypeople, to help the Governor move
15 forward, whoever was in place, with a balanced
16 budget.

17 Your constituents don't deserve us
18 standing up here a week before the deadline and
19 saying we can't do it. You're in charge of
20 everything, but you can't do it.

21 Well, now the media knows who can't
22 do it. You control it all. Nobody on this side
23 of the aisle stopped this budget from being
24 on-time. Nobody on this side said we're only
25 going to have one conference committee. I don't

1 know what the other committees -- maybe you had
2 two, three?

3 If you really want to engage
4 yourself, you wouldn't have one meeting. You
5 wouldn't stifle discussion at that one meeting.
6 You would work earlier, on-time, because you
7 control it and can do it.

8 I'll be honest, we can't do it. We
9 got a lot of good ideas to keep people in
10 New York -- maybe this is the reason why we're
11 number-one in outmigration. And I talk about
12 that a lot.

13 If there was ever an indictment on
14 the failure of policies and agendas and late
15 budgets, it's people walking out of the state and
16 voting with their feet.

17 Now, I want the viewers to know.
18 This body, the Assembly, one party, one
19 affiliation. We were in the majority at one time
20 here, but we weren't in control of all levers of
21 power. And there was a difference of agendas and
22 policies. There's probably a difference with
23 you, but you've got to settle it because you
24 control all levers. And they deserved it when
25 you told them, Won't be any more late budgets

1 when we're in charge in all three houses because
2 that darn majority in the Senate, those
3 Republicans, are holding up this thing.

4 Well, that darn majority isn't here
5 anymore. And you didn't get the most important
6 thing you were elected to do done in a timely
7 fashion, according to what has been said.

8 So I suggest this. You don't want
9 the staff to go home? We shouldn't go home. You
10 should stay here in Albany. Stay here in Albany.
11 Because a lot of my constituents work overtime.

12 You know, I remember my dad, 2:00,
13 3 o'clock in the morning he'd come in, or they'd
14 call him, 4:00, 5:00, 3 o'clock in the morning:
15 "Go into GE, there was an explosion." Working in
16 one of the most difficult conditions you can ever
17 think of.

18 He succumbed to stomach cancer. You
19 know why? Because he sucked up red-hot molten
20 steel, asbestos. No OSHA regulations. Died of
21 stomach cancer. And you talked about that the
22 other day. And that was a good bill. I
23 supported that bill. Even now, we don't have
24 enough regulations in that.

25 I don't know what the regulations

1 are here. It's not red hot, molten steel and
2 asbestos in here. It's sunlight. You've had
3 sunlight for over a year to get yourself in place
4 to pass a good, on-time, balanced budget. Which
5 your constituents deserve.

6 So the media knows now. The
7 constituents know now. You control it all, baby,
8 control it all. So don't cut and run. Stay here
9 and get the job done.

10 Thank you, Mr. President.

11 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank
12 you, Senator Tedisco.

13 Senator Walczyk on the bill.

14 SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you,
15 Mr. President. On the bill.

16 The budget's due in six days, and
17 you're bringing us the debt service bill today.
18 This will allow us to pay what we owe and
19 apparently borrow for what we don't know that we
20 owe yet.

21 I want to read something,
22 Mr. President.

23 "State debt levels and processes
24 have been debated in New York for many years.
25 New York's high and growing debt burden and its

1 impact on taxpayers have been points of concern
2 for the state's budget practices. Excessive debt
3 also constrains efforts to improve the state's
4 credit rating.

5 "In its recent review, Standard &
6 Poor's stated that New York's 'moderately high
7 and growing debt levels' were a factor that would
8 'preclude a higher credit rating.' Moody's ranks
9 New York as having the second largest total debt
10 burden of all states, following California. The
11 major credit rating agencies have also commented
12 on New York's past history of inappropriately
13 using debt to finance operating expenses, often
14 in response to economic disruptions.

15 "Efforts to reform state debt
16 practices and limit debt can be traced all the
17 way back to the 1800s, when a constitutional
18 change was made to require voter approval for
19 issuing State General Obligation debt. The
20 state's infrastructure needs have evolved in
21 tandem with the modern economy and are now vastly
22 broader in scope, complexity and magnitude than
23 in the 19th century, requiring an expansive
24 capital plan. The state borrows to finance such
25 spending needs, with public authorities

1 increasingly being utilized to circumvent the
2 constitutional requirement for voter approval of
3 State debt. 'Backdoor borrowing' by public
4 authorities bypasses the public's vested interest
5 in limiting state debt levels, which, in turn,
6 has led to a high debt burden.

7 "High debt levels in the modern era
8 eventually led to the Debt Reform Act of 2000,
9 which imposed caps on state debt outstanding and
10 debt service spending. However, loopholes in the
11 act were exploited over time to circumvent the
12 limits ...

13 "Increased projections of state debt
14 levels, coupled with persistent concerns
15 regarding the state's capital planning process
16 and its shortcomings for effectively prioritizing
17 projects, give taxpayers good cause to be
18 concerned."

19 And in the conclusion: "A complete
20 state debt reform effort must adhere to a roadmap
21 of principles encompassing these four overarching
22 goals: It must be comprehensive and binding; it
23 must be accountable to state taxpayers and
24 voters; it must impose responsible and
25 sustainable affordability limits and practices;

1 and it must allow flexibility for the potential
2 emergencies of modern times.

3 "Achieving this reform will confer
4 an enduring benefit on the people of New York
5 through a sustainable and affordable debt limit,
6 and help to ensure the prudent use of limited
7 public resources."

8 That wasn't me who wrote it,
9 Mr. President. That was Democrat Tom DiNapoli,
10 the New York State Comptroller.

11 So when the budget is due six days
12 from now, New Yorkers don't know what's in it.
13 As was already pointed out, we haven't even
14 convened open conference committees to discuss
15 many of the issues that have been brought forward
16 since the Governor first introduced her budget.

17 But here today, you're asking to
18 borrow an additional \$10 billion for a budget
19 that we haven't seen.

20 You control the Senate. You control
21 the Assembly. You control the Governor's office.
22 You should have listened to the Comptroller
23 two years ago when he wrote that.

24 You're spending more than we can
25 possibly afford, and you're planning to spend

1 more than our future can afford. You're
2 borrowing on the backs of New Yorkers' futures,
3 and you're ignoring the advice of the Comptroller
4 who watches over the books.

5 You cannot make New York more
6 affordable by spending, by taxing, and by
7 borrowing more and more each year. If you could,
8 then New York State would be the second most
9 affordable state in the nation. But you all know
10 that we're not.

11 So on this unaffordable debt,
12 Mr. President, I vote no and encourage my
13 colleagues to do the same.

14 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank
15 you, Senator Walczyk.

16 Senator Stec on the bill.

17 SENATOR STEC: Thank you,
18 Mr. President. On the bill.

19 Late again. Last year, this budget
20 was six weeks late. It's proposed -- your
21 proposal is \$270 billion, with a B, dollars.
22 That is more than Texas and Florida combined.
23 That is one and a half times per capita the state
24 of California.

25 Just a couple of weeks ago Siena had

1 a poll out -- a respected poll, a trusted poll,
2 established poll. And I hope everyone knows what
3 I'm about to say, but in case you don't, I'm
4 going to say it again, because it should be
5 setting off alarm bells in your conference room
6 and the conference room down the hall and down on
7 the second floor.

8 One in three New Yorkers polled in
9 that Siena poll said they intend to leave this
10 state in the next five years. For those of you
11 that are slow on the math, that's 6 million
12 people that the Siena poll projects will leave in
13 the next five years.

14 They are not leaving because of cold
15 weather, they are leaving because this state is
16 contributing to a failure of our economy. They
17 can't afford to live here.

18 And I'm going to spend time now,
19 here at the end of March, because you've got
20 six days until this budget is late to do some
21 honest reflection. Why are New Yorkers saying
22 they're going to leave? They are fleeing. One
23 in three say they're going to leave in the next
24 five years.

25 A budget more than Texas and

1 Florida's combined, one and a half times more,
2 per capita, than California's budget, that
3 ignores the state's own experts on what the
4 energy crisis is doing in New York, that the
5 CLCPA is going to jack people's costs up \$4,000 a
6 year in a couple of years, and give us
7 \$5-a-gallon gas.

8 And you're content to stay the
9 status quo there. Please, for the love of God,
10 and for our constituents, one in three
11 New Yorkers are saying they want to leave because
12 they don't want to put up with it.

13 I'll be voting no on this bill and
14 the rest of them unless I see significant
15 changes.

16 Thank you, Mr. President.

17 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Thank
18 you, Senator Stec.

19 Are there any other Senators wishing
20 to be heard?

21 Seeing and hearing none, debate is
22 closed.

23 The Secretary will ring the bell.

24 Read the last section.

25 Senator Gianaris.

1 SENATOR GIANARIS: Mr. President,
2 we've agreed to restore this bill to the
3 noncontroversial calendar.

4 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Upon
5 consent, the bill is restored to the
6 noncontroversial calendar.

7 Read the last section.

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

10 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Call the
11 roll.

12 (The Secretary called the roll.)

13 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
14 Krueger to explain her vote.

15 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you,
16 Mr. President. And thank you, colleagues.

17 So I would wish we had an on-time
18 budget. I've lived through endless years, under
19 both Democrats and Republicans, where we didn't
20 have on-time budgets.

21 But I know, unlike Washington,
22 D.C. -- also controlled totally by one party, the
23 Republican Party -- they're not paying federal
24 workers and expecting them to show up for work,
25 or paying them half the costs. That's

1 outrageous.

2 We in New York have mastered a
3 system where we pay our bills even when we're
4 still debating pieces of the budget. We pay our
5 workers. We don't leave anybody hanging. We can
6 explain everything to people.

7 And frankly, when I was in the
8 minority for 17 years, I wasn't saying Democrats
9 will get everything done on time. I said
10 Democrats will get better budgets that matter to
11 people. And I believe that New Yorkers want
12 better budgets that matter to people, not what
13 date is on the bill.

14 So yes, I would prefer that with a
15 Governor and two houses all of the same party, we
16 might be able to get things done faster. But
17 I'll still stand by getting better results is
18 much more important than getting it on time.

19 Frankly, when we don't get the
20 budget done on time, we don't get paid.
21 Everybody else does. I think everybody here
22 knows that.

23 Finally, quickly, despite the
24 argument we just heard that people are not happy
25 with how we spend money or that we borrow money,

1 in fact, Wall Street, which lends us the money,
2 actually continues to increase our credit
3 ratings.

4 Yes, they went down during COVID,
5 for real reasons related to COVID. But since
6 2020, when they did downgrade the state's rating,
7 Moody's upgraded New York State last in August
8 '24. We have excellent credit ratings from
9 Fitch, Kroll, Moody's and S&P. We get AA+, AA+,
10 Aa1 and A/AA+ from each of those agencies.

11 In fact, Moody's reiterated just a
12 few weeks ago that, citing a stable outlook based
13 on the state's strong reserves, budget
14 flexibility, and sound management tools, we are
15 fully confident with the state's ability to be
16 borrowing the amount of money they have been
17 borrowing, and for paying and improving our
18 infrastructure.

19 And the drop in 2020 was
20 specifically related to COVID, which has all been
21 readdressed.

22 We are far more worried about
23 federal reserves and the ability of the federal
24 government to make good on their payment
25 schedules, and that is where the concerns should

1 lie. I'm concerned about the federal changes and
2 very concerned that with the loss of federal
3 money already, and the potential for even greater
4 amounts of loss of money.

5 I understand that the
6 responsibilities for this Legislature and this
7 government will continue to put more demand on
8 us, and more drain.

9 So several of my colleagues have
10 already said they won't be voting for the other
11 budget bills when they come, and that is their
12 right. But I hope that they are consistent that
13 they will also vote no on the capital bill,
14 because I think most of us like to go home and
15 talk about how much good we did when we passed
16 more money for our school districts and our
17 construction projects at home.

18 But I hope that people are
19 consistent. If they're saying no on everything
20 else, they'd better not just pass the bills that
21 they think get them credit at home.

22 I'm a yes, Mr. President, thank you.

23 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
24 Krueger to be recorded in the affirmative.

25 Senator Borrello to explain his

1 vote.

2 SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you.

3 First of all, I want to thank
4 Senator Krueger for her honesty. Because the
5 Governor was in Syracuse yesterday saying we're
6 going to have an on-time budget. So I'm not sure
7 where she got that information. Clearly not from
8 Senator Krueger.

9 So that being said, today's debt
10 bill, I realize the narrative is you need to vote
11 for this because this is debt we're already
12 obligated to. Well, we're authorizing \$9 billion
13 in new debt and retiring \$3 billion in debt.

14 You know, I get notices from credit
15 cards all the time saying "We've increased your
16 credit limit, congratulations!" That doesn't
17 mean you go out and charge the credit card up to
18 full because they increased the credit limit. So
19 that's kind of what we're doing today.

20 Meanwhile, we know that while we're
21 borrowing more money, the Hochul administration
22 continues to not address fraud, waste and abuse.
23 Two billion dollars in Medicaid payments to
24 people that don't even live in New York State.

25 So we're borrowing money to

1 subsidize fraud, in my opinion. So I'll be
2 voting no.

3 Thank you, Mr. President.

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

6 Senator Skoufis to explain his vote.

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

9 First, I want to, for the record and
10 for the aforementioned many countless viewers who
11 are tuning into these proceedings, correct the
12 record on one point.

13 I'm surprised that for a colleague
14 across the aisle who's been in the Legislature
15 for 43 years, 43 years, he does not know that we
16 did not have the full year to negotiate a budget
17 and be done by April 1st.

18 Article 7, Section 2 of the
19 State Constitution makes it very clear that an
20 Executive Budget proposal comes to us by the
21 third Thursday -- or Tuesday, rather, in January.
22 If it's a new governor, they have till
23 February 1st.

24 We've had two months, not a full
25 year. So just to correct that one point.

1 But the more important issue is
2 that, yes, we may well be past April 1st by the
3 time we're done. Yes, Democrats are in the
4 majority in both houses and a Democrat is in the
5 Governor's mansion. But the reason we may wind
6 up past April 1st is because we are not a rubber
7 stamp, despite the fact that one party is in
8 control of the Legislature and the governorship.

9 And the other side should be
10 grateful that we are not a rubber stamp. We
11 actually have disagreements. There are points of
12 contention that we do not just give in to. And
13 that stands in stark contrast to our federal
14 government, where when the executive says "Jump,"
15 the legislature just responds: "How high?"

16 We should all be grateful we do not
17 operate that way. And yes, it might yield a
18 budget that is a little past April 1st, but it
19 yields a better budget as a result.

20 I vote yes.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
22 Skoufis to be recorded in the affirmative.

23 Senator Gianaris to close.

24 SENATOR GIANARIS: Who's going to
25 be the chamber historian when I'm gone?

1 Let's talk facts. When two of the
2 three players in the budget process were
3 Republicans, George Pataki and Joe Bruno, the
4 budget was routinely late -- not by days, not by
5 weeks, by months. August. August. Senator
6 Tedisco, you were around in those days. You
7 remember.

8 SENATOR TEDISCO: Forty-four years.
9 (Laughter.)

10 SENATOR GIANARIS: Yes.

11 August. Four times the budget went
12 to August under a Republican-dominated budget
13 process.

14 You want to say, Well, it wasn't all
15 one party. Okay, let's look at what all-party
16 control is responsibly and irresponsibly.

17 Here, we haven't had government
18 shutdowns. The budget's late a few days, a
19 couple of weeks, maybe. But we end up with a
20 budget, the state continues to function.

21 You want to see what irresponsible
22 all-party control looks like? Try waiting in
23 line to get on a plane these days.

24 Republican control of the federal
25 government is complete. They have shutdowns

1 every couple of months. People's lives are
2 affected. People are not getting paid. And if
3 you want to take a trip, good luck to you.

4 We're going to do this the way we've
5 always done it, which is in the best interests of
6 the people. As Senator Skoufis mentioned, we're
7 going to stand up for the people we represent and
8 believe in. We're going to end up with a good
9 product. And if it's not done on April 1st, it
10 will be done shortly thereafter, and the state
11 will just keep on functioning just fine.

12 I vote yes, Mr. President.

13 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Senator
14 Gianaris to be recorded in the affirmative.

15 Announce the results.

16 THE SECRETARY: In relation to
17 Calendar 657, voting in the negative are
18 Senators Borrello, Chan, Helming, Lanza, O'Mara,
19 Ortt, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk and Weik.

20 Ayes, 47. Nays, 10.

21 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: The bill
22 is passed.

23 Senator Gianaris, that completes the
24 reading of today's supplemental -- excuse me,
25 controversial calendar.

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

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

5 SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to
6 adjourn until Monday, March 30th, 3:00 p.m., with
7 intervening days being legislative days.

8 And Mr. President: Let's go, Mets!

9 ACTING PRESIDENT BAILEY: Yes.

10 On motion, the Senate stands
11 adjourned until Monday, March 30th, at 3:00 p.m.,
12 with the intervening days being legislative.

13 It is the real Opening Day. Let's
14 go, Mets!

15 (Whereupon, at 11:53 a.m., the Senate
16 adjourned.)

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