NEW YORK STATE SENATE

THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

ALBANY, NEW YORK

May 4, 2026

11:22 a.m.

REGULAR SESSION

SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD, Acting President

ALEJANDRA N. PAULINO, ESQ., Secretary

P R O C E E D I N G S

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senate will come to order.

I ask everyone to please rise for the presentation of colors.

(The Color Guard entered the chamber and proceeded to the front, presenting colors.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: I ask everyone to remain standing to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Lieutenant Colonel Jason Hesseling, chaplain of Fort Drum, will deliver today's invocation.

Chaplain?

CHAPLAIN HESSELING: Please bow your heads and pray with me.

Divine Father, Creator of all, we ask Your blessing today upon this Senate chamber for wise deliberations and effective actions for the communities they represent.

We seek Your blessing as well upon the 10th Mountain Division and the soldiers and families who call her home. We honor her legacy.

Born in the snowy peaks of the Rockies, forged in a fire of the Italian Alps, she has found her home in the North Country.

We remember that our strength is not merely in ruck and rifle, but in our character, the same character reflected in the resilience and pioneering spirit of the Empire State.

We pray that the bonds of friendship and the strength of faith continue to meet the call of our great nation: For our communities and neighbors who open their hearts and homes to military families, for our soldiers who protect our borders, and for our civic leaders, who govern for all and secure the freedoms we defend.

We place all these diverse needs in Your unified hands. Help us to bridge divisiveness and the competing requirements with the same spirit of cooperation that exists between the 10th Mountain and the great State of New York.

May our work today be worthy of the legacy of those who have served before us, and endure long after those who follow. Keep us safe, keep us united, and may we always strive towards the highest ideals of justice and peace

in our climb to Glory.

We ask this and all great things in Your holy name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Color Guard, retire the colors.

(The Color Guard lowered the colors and exited the chamber.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Reading of the Journal.

THE SECRETARY: In Senate, Friday, May 1, 2026, the Senate met pursuant to adjournment. The Journal of Thursday, April 30, 2026, was read and approved. On motion, the Senate adjourned.

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

Presentation of petitions.

Messages from the Assembly.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Sanders moves to discharge, from the Committee on Environmental Conservation, Assembly Bill Number 1388A and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 3179B, Third Reading Calendar 101.

Senator Bailey moves to discharge, from the Committee on Codes, Assembly Bill Number 1422 and substitute it for the identical Senate Bill 4525, Third Reading Calendar 614.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: So ordered.

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.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Good morning.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Amendments are offered to the following Third Reading Calendar bills:

By Senator Baskin, page 11, Calendar 180, Senate Print 6009A;

Senator Myrie, page 17, Calendar 412, Senate Print 2539B;

Senator Martinez, page 28,

Calendar 668, Senate Print 9326;

Senator Kavanagh, page 34,

Calendar 763, Senate Print 8527A;

And Senator Rivera, page 23,

Calendar 556, Senate Print 1911A.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The amendments are received, and the bills will retain their place on the Third Reading Calendar.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I wish to call up the following bills, which were recalled from the Assembly and are now at the desk:

Senate Bill Numbers 7328A, 2280B, and 120A.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 147, Senate Print 7328A, by Senator Hinchey, an act to amend the Public Service Law.

Calendar Number 289, Senate Print 2280B, by Senator Webb, an act to amend the Executive Law.

Calendar Number 627, Senate Print 120A, by Senator Cleare, an act to amend the Public Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Move to

reconsider the votes by which these bills were passed.

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

(The Secretary called the roll.)

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bills are restored to their its place on the Third Reading Calendar.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I offer the following amendments.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The amendments are received.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, at this time I want to thank our leaders from Fort Drum for their indulgence, but we have a noon deadline for the budget extender, so they are going to watch us do our business for a few minutes, and then we'll hear the remarks we've been waiting for from Fort Drum leadership.

So to start, there will be an immediate meeting of the Rules Committee in Room 332.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: There will be an immediate meeting of the

Rules Committee in Room 332.

SENATOR GIANARIS: The Senate will stand at ease.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senate will stand at ease.

(Whereupon, the Senate stood at ease at 11:28 a.m.)

(Whereupon, the Senate reconvened at 11:32 a.m.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senate will return to order.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, there's a report of the Rules Committee at the desk. Please take that up.

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

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed, nay.

(Response of "Nay.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The report of the Rules Committee is accepted.

Senator Gianaris.

Oh, yes. The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Senator Stewart-Cousins, from the Committee on Rules, reports the following bills:

Senate Print 335, by Senator Gianaris, an act to amend the General Business Law;

Senate Print 10166, by Senator Serrano, an act making appropriations for the support of government;

Senate Print 10167, by Senator Serrano, an act providing for the administration of certain funds and accounts related to the 2026-2027 budget.

All bills reported direct to third reading.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Now I move to accept the report of the Rules Committee.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Now we ask: All those in favor of accepting the report of the Rules Committee, please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed, nay.

(Response of "Nay.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The report of the Rules Committee is accepted.

Senator Gianaris.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 880, Senate Print 10166, by Senator Serrano, an act making appropriations for the support of government.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Is there a message of necessity and appropriation at the desk?

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: There is a message of necessity and appropriation at the desk.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Move to accept the message.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: All those in favor of accepting the message please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed,

nay.

(Response of "Nay.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The message is accepted, and the bill is before the house.

SENATOR LANZA: Lay it aside.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Lay it aside.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 881, Senate Print 10167, by Senator Serrano, an act providing for the administration of certain funds and accounts related to the 2026-2027 budget.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Is there a message of necessity at the desk?

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: There is a message of necessity at the desk.

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to accept the message.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: All those in favor of accepting the message please signify by saying aye.

(Response of "Aye.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Opposed, nay.

(Response of "Nay.")

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The message is accepted, and the bill is before the house.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 59.

Excuse me. In relation to Calendar 881, voting in the negative: Senator Weik.

Ayes, 58. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: Please move to the reading of the controversial supplemental calendar.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The

Secretary will ring the bell.

The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 880, Senate Print 10166, by Senator Serrano, an act making appropriations for the support of government.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator O'Mara, why do you rise?

SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you, Madam President. Would Senator Serrano yield for some questions.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Will the Senator yield?

SENATOR SERRANO: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senator yields.

SENATOR O'MARA: Good morning, Senator. Thank you.

Here we are on Monday, well over a month past the budget due date now, enacting our ninth budget extender of this season.

My read of this extender says we're adding another 3.1, approximately, billion dollars in additional spending authority, bringing our total for the extenders to just shy

of $20 billion for the month that this budget has been late.

Can you tell us today where we stand on the budget progress? And when do you expect us to have the final nine budget bills in place for us to consider?

SENATOR SERRANO: Through you, Madam President.

Senator O'Mara, we are certainly moving along in the right direction. You are correct, this is our ninth budget extender. And it does appropriate for the continuation of state government to allow for funding for important things like payroll costs, SUNY pensions, WIC payments, Department of Labor, transportation, Department of Veterans' Services, and many other items to ensure that our government can function accordingly.

To answer your question, we are certainly moving in the right direction. I don't have a definitive timetable as to when this budget negotiation will conclude and we will vote on the additional -- the remaining of our budget bills.

However, this certainly allows for

us to get to that moment.

SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you, Senator.

Madam President, if the Senator will continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the Senator yield?

SENATOR SERRANO: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senator yields.

SENATOR O'MARA: Senator, on the major policy issues that we've discussed in every one of these extenders that are out there -- primarily, the auto insurance reforms being discussed, the streamlining of SEQR, the New York for All, the CLCPA changes -- what can you report to us today on the progress of nailing down those policy issues and getting ready to move forward with the rest of the budget?

SENATOR SERRANO: Through you, Madam President.

Senator, negotiations on all of those outstanding items continue in earnest. I believe that there has been progress made on these very important issues.

But just to remind everyone that these are not the issues before us at this moment in this bill. This bill is what is known as a clean extender to continue with the functioning of our state government.

SENATOR O'MARA: Madam President, if the Senator will continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the Senator yield?

SENATOR SERRANO: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senator yields.

SENATOR O'MARA: Do we have table targets yet for the joint budget conference committees to start working on?

SENATOR SERRANO: Through you, Madam President. Yes, we do, Senator. We have a total table target of $380 million, which accounts for various amounts of funding across state government.

SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you.

Madam President, if the Senator will continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the Senator yield?

SENATOR SERRANO: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senator yields.

SENATOR O'MARA: And how will that additional spending be divvied up amongst the various tables, the various joint budget conference committees?

SENATOR SERRANO: Through you, Madam President. This amount that I mentioned, $380 million, represents a modest increase over last year, similar to last year in the way that it was divided amongst the tables.

I don't have specific numbers for that, but it will be similar to what we've had in years prior.

SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you.

Through you, Madam President, if the Senator will continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the Senator yield?

SENATOR SERRANO: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senator yields.

SENATOR O'MARA: Since we have table targets today, for the first time in over a

month of the budget being late, can you tell us, with that additional 380 million, what the total spending of this budget is going to be this year?

SENATOR SERRANO: Through you, Madam President.

Senator, at this point, without a final budget to vote on, it's difficult to give you that exact amount. But certainly if you look at what the Executive Budget had and what we as a Senate one-house and what the Assembly had, it will be somewhere within that ballpark.

But at this point it would be premature for me to give a number.

SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you.

Madam President, if the Senator will continue to yield.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Does the Senator yield?

SENATOR SERRANO: Yes.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Senator yields.

SENATOR O'MARA: Senator, with regards to the New York for All proposals that are being discussed, it was reported either today or over the weekend that it's being discussed

that we will be not allowing our counties, our county jails to hold those under ICE detention.

Can you tell us if that is actually being discussed and whether that's been agreed to?

SENATOR SERRANO: Through you, Madam President. As I mentioned a minute ago, there are negotiations happening in earnest.

But just to be clear, the budget bill -- the extender bill before us does not speak to that issue. So what we're voting on does not contain any of those policy issues.

SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you, Senator.

Madam President, on the bill.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator O'Mara on the bill.

SENATOR O'MARA: Here we are on our ninth budget extender, ninth debate on these budget extenders, over a month late with our budget now. The only thing new we've learned so far is we're going to have table targets. Maybe the joint budget conference committees will meet.

But we still have no concept of what the overall budget is going to be between the

Governor's 30-day amendments of I think $262 billion up to the Assembly's proposal of $272 billion. Massive spending of the state.

We're a month late. We have no details on how this is going to be put together in the end. We have nine budget bills that have not been done, only one of the 10 has been done, and that's to authorize our continued payments of our debts, which certainly needed to be done.

But to be here at nine extenders in over a month and still get no information on any of the major policy issues that are holding this budget up is not -- it's not good government, as I've said in every one of these budget discussions and debates that we've had. It's not good for New York, it's not good for New Yorkers. It's not good for us doing our jobs here on preparing for debate of these bills.

And it certainly provides New Yorkers no opportunity to weigh in on the actual discussions and the actual agreements that are coming together. And that's just not good government.

And again, I'm sure no doubt that when these budget Bills do come, they'll come

with messages of necessity from the Governor which will not even give the constitutionally required three-day waiting period for us to have time to review the bills, for our constituents to weigh in with us on where they feel we should be going on these bills.

It's a terrible way to be running government. It's a terrible way to be spending over a quarter of a trillion dollars annually in our state budget now.

It's very concerning. It's unsustainable spending with no explanation to New Yorkers whatsoever. And this process needs to change, Madam President.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Are there any other Senators wishing to be heard?

Seeing and hearing none, the debate is closed.

The Secretary will ring the bell.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 880, voting in the negative:

Senator Weik.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: Thank you, Madam President.

Now let's take up previously adopted Resolution 1713, by Senator Scarcella-Spanton, read its title and introduce Major General Scott Naumann to address us, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Resolution 1713, by Senator Scarcella-Spanton, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 4, 2026, as 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day in the

State of New York.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: It is now my honor to introduce Major General Scott Naumann, commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum.

General?

MAJOR GENERAL NAUMANN: Well, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MAJOR GENERAL NAUMANN: Madam Majority Leader, members of the New York State Senate, thank you for honoring the 10th Mountain Division and allowing us all the privilege of addressing you today from this esteemed podium in this really magnificent building.

And I should say, before I get into my remarks, as kind of an aside, what a privilege for us to kind of witness government in action this morning and for us to see firsthand what and why we choose to defend our great republic.

So I'm reminded by a senator friend of mine that much like some of the architectural elements in this building, government is never finished. So thanks for the opportunity to be

here and to address you today.

The 10th Mountain Division is, without question, one of the most consistently deployed and operationally relevant divisions in the United States Army today. Our home here in New York at Fort Drum provides us with a fantastic venue to conduct training that's relevant to the next fight, while our infrastructure and our services are among the best in the entire department.

Simply put, our readiness is locally driven, but our impact is global.

So today I'd like to first provide you with a highlight that highlights some of those readiness impacts, and then I'll outline a few areas for your consideration and continued support and advocacy.

To begin with, let me tell you: Our division at Fort Drum, very busy, as you can imagine. The soldiers of our 1st Brigade recently returned from the Central Command area of operations in the Middle East and are well into train-up for what we anticipate will be a subsequent deployment in the future.

Our 2nd Brigade is already, today as

I speak, in harm's way, supporting Central Command in the Middle East.

The environment has changed quite a bit from when they were originally notified of their deployment, but their resolve remains steady. They're ready to take on any mission, and they will continue even this week to begin deploying to the Middle East.

Our 3rd Brigade is leading our army as what we call a transformation-in-contact brigade. And this places our formations at the cutting edge of developing technology for technology emerging threats, threats like drones and cyberattacks.

Our Aviation Brigade, all of the helicopters that are in our force, just recently fielded the latest Apache attack helicopter, the latest and the newest in the Army, and they just had a task force that returned from the Southern border, where their efforts positively impacted the security of our entire nation.

Our logistics and our sustainment expertise has proven its expeditionary capability, providing world-class support to missions around the globe. In fact, at one point

in time the sun never really set on this expeditionary sustainment logistics unit. They had folks in the Middle East, they had folks in Europe, they had folks in Cuba, they had folks in the Pacific all at the same time. We're really proud about that.

And finally, the division headquarters, where my chair is, recently in the fall returned from Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where we showcased our ability to go solve problems around the country and the world on the Southern border. In this vital role, our headquarters established a joint task force that synchronized security, aviation, and logistics efforts across a 2,000-mile border and an incredibly, as you can imagine, complex operational area.

In fact, it was that deployment last year, the reason that I missed this annual event here in this great Senate. However, since I've returned, I've come in contact with many of you. And just about every time, in addition to a thank you for your service, which we very much do appreciate, I also get asked, What can we do to help?

That question has significant gravity, and it's not one that I take lightly. But my answer to that question is quite simple: Continue your advocacy and support of initiatives that ensure Fort Drum's readiness today and relevancy tomorrow.

Initiatives such as Operation Janus, which puts Fort Drum in the running to be one of the first installations to harness nuclear power through the employment of micro-reactors. If approved, this Army-wide program will ensure the energy resiliency of our installation and the local area of the North Country to ensure that we are prepared to respond to requests from civil authorities or to short-notice deployment globally.

We expect the final decision, in fact, in the next couple of months. And I must say New York State's ongoing support has been integral to our place in the selection process. So thank you for your advocacy there.

Another area of support is the State Health Department's work to ensure a bright future for the North Star Health Alliance that serves our North Country community as well as

Fort Drum. Unlike our other Army bases around the country -- and you may not know this -- when the 10th Mountain came back to Fort Drum in 1985, by design, they didn't build a hospital. The idea was to be totally integrated with the local community.

And so our readiness, the readiness of our soldiers, the readiness of our families, are dependent on the local health community needs that our area provides. So your ability to enable North Star to gain a little bit firmer fiscal ground strengthens the foundation of this unique medical model that we enjoy.

Today I hope to meet with the New York State deputy commissioner for the Department of Motor Vehicles to discuss bringing back a service location to Fort Drum. In the early 2000s, we benefited from this partnership with local government to better serve the needs of our 36,000 servicemembers and their families.

Our needs are not typical for normal New Yorkers, because we come from multiple states and we're often very transient. So having subject matter experts in a DMV that can help address those is much needed, and I look forward

to working with the state and the county moving forward to make this a reality.

We also plan to meet with the director of security intelligence and the acting cyber chief. We're working together on strategic planning and protection training to counter the rapidly emerging technology that is being utilized by adversaries around the world today.

The state's participation in our own annual installation protection exercise this August was very important as we focus on new threats. And I think it will make us all safer. So we look forward to the state's involvement there.

And next month will be one of three installations in the United States Army to open a campus-style dining venue, something that soldiers have been requesting for years. This is essentially a contract-run facility that offers a variety of restaurant-quality menus for soldiers to choose from, utilizing a daily meal allowance.

It allows more choice, it provides healthy meal options at more times to meet soldiers' needs. And it delivers a higher degree of satisfaction.

Why should you be interested? Well, New York's support to the North Country agriculture is part of this incredible effort, because a large percentage of the food that will be served in this new dining venue will be seasonal and locally sourced.

As we are preparing to shut down our main runway on Wheeler-Sack Army Air Field for much-needed infrastructure upgrades, we're looking to local and regional airports for their support in our outload. And as I mentioned, we're busy, constantly moving. The millions of dollars of investment that New York has made in both the Watertown International Airport and the Hancock International Airport in Syracuse, and others, will directly support deployments and homecomings during our air field upgrade.

So we appreciate the ongoing dialogue and your interest in ensuring the nation maintains its power projection capability in the Northeast.

And finally, the New York Power Authority's $1 million investment in a proof-of-concept plant at the Empire State Mine in nearby Fowler, New York, has proven extremely

informative. Fort Drum is now among a small number of installations being considered for an enhanced-use lease with industry specifically for commercial graphite processing. The initiative is just getting off the ground but could prove to be highly impactful to secure national supply lines of critical minerals.

And I don't need to remind this body of our location along I-81 and the proximity to the Technology Corridor and Micron plant, everything that's going on around Syracuse and the rest of the North Country. Tomorrow we will host an Industry Day to showcase this tremendous opportunity.

Simply stated, what's good for Fort Drum is good for the North Country and great for New York. A benefit to the North Country is a benefit to Fort Drum. This symbiotic relationship is part of our foundational design, as I mentioned, and it's what makes Fort Drum special, as compared to the rest of the Army.

You know, it's funny, you all call this annual event the Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division Day, and we call it the Albany Day. But no matter the viewpoint, what makes serving in

the Empire State so special is how we work together.

We recently released our annual economic impact report that estimates that Fort Drum contributed $2.2 billion to the local economy in the North Country. We are -- and we remain -- the largest single-site employer in the state, and we're proud of our positive impact in the surrounding communities that we call home.

There isn't a report, though, that estimates how New York's investments in areas like nuclear power generation services, agriculture, mining, airports -- how those contribute to Fort Drum. It's significant, though. And certainly in dollars invested, but perhaps more importantly in the impact to our readiness now and our institution's relevance in the future.

I've talked a lot about many big-picture initiatives today as we've toured this beautiful Capitol building. But I want to leave you with our thanks, our collective thanks -- for your interest, for your compassion, for your kindness to our soldiers, our families, and the civilians that call our community home.

Seeing so many of you talk with our young 10th Mountain troopers that are showcasing some of our equipment and some of their activities this morning, and asking them about their families and what their plans are after they leave the service, is a clear demonstration of support from the leaders of New York to your military base up in the North Country.

We are humble -- we are humbled. We are grateful for your support because you, our neighbors, our friends and our fellow patriots, are why we commit to a lifetime of service.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak, for your ongoing commitment to our mission, to our people, and for reinforcing the belief that there is no better place to serve than right here in the great State of New York.

Climb to Glory! And thank you.

(Extended standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Now please recognize Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins on this resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Majority

Leader Stewart-Cousins on the resolution.

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

And I really do want to thank you, Major General Naumann -- he made sure that I got the pronunciation right. And he said, "It's like: Now, man!"

(Laughter.)

SENATOR STEWART-COUSINS: And certainly your life has dictated that rapid response.

And certainly I do appreciate the fact that you were able to sit through some of our proceedings and appreciate the fact that we know that as we do these deliberations, we also need to keep government working and going. And so that's what you witnessed today. So I thank you for your patience.

Also, I met the Mayor (finger quotes), Colonel Jason Adler, who's in charge of all the administration. Thank you so much as well for being here.

And I also want to recognize, you know, what you do not only for us but for the cadets and the entire community here.

Also with you, I understand, is Command Sergeant Major Dan Burns, the garrison command sergeant major, and Captain Grant Grainger, the aide-de-camp. And Julie, I see you back there. Thank you. Julie Halpin, who's the public and congressional affairs.

And I want to thank Lieutenant Colonel Jason Hesseling for the invocation earlier, his beautiful invocation. Thank you so much for starting us off that way.

And of course to all the cadets with us today representing the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division here in the Senate chamber as we celebrate -- yes, it's Fort Drum Day for us, and we wouldn't miss it for the world. So thank you so much for being here.

I also want to express my gratitude to Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton, who is the chair of the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs, for steadfastly leading our effort to support our veterans in New York and their military families.

And I also want to thank the sponsor of today's resolution, Senator Mark Walczyk, who represents Fort Drum. And of course as we thank

all of you from Fort Drum, thank you also, Senator, for your service.

And all the members in this chamber who have answered the call to serve, including the Minority Leader, Senator Ortt, who you'll be hearing from, as well as their families: I want to, you know, thank each and every one of you for the sacrifice that you make for our country.

And I just wanted to give a special shout-out because one of my staffers, Emily Bruggeman, her husband Jason Schewe was deployed from Fort Drum. He's deployed overseas. So again, you know, it hits home for us.

And, you know, our hearts and prayers go with all of you here or wherever you go on behalf of us.

And I'm the daughter of a World War II veteran who earned a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star, and the sister of a Vietnam War veteran. And so, you know, I certainly am very serious about the well-being of our military and what you do for us.

And every year this event allows us to commemorate not only the significance of Fort Drum to New York State but the exceptional

sacrifice made by the servicemembers and families who call it home.

Fort Drum, where soldiers have trained for decades to defend us and our allies in times of war and crisis, has stood in our state for over a century.

It's also been the home of the 10th Mountain Division, one of our nation's most distinguished divisions in the United States Army, for over 40 years -- the site in Jefferson County, where it now sits, from 1908; the location of Camp Pine, a vital military training site where many units who fought in World War II and the Korean War trained.

Expanding over 107,000 acres near Lake Ontario, Fort Drum has continued to play an important role in our nation's national security. There, each year, over 80,000 soldiers are mobilized, trained, and kept ready to meet national security requirements.

Fort Drum is not only a center of our country's military operations but also a driving force behind Northern New York's economy. And certainly you've spoken of that, and we hear you. But I'll get to that later.

As the area's largest employer, it provides critical economic stability and supports the daily lives of thousands of active-duty servicemembers and their families.

To New Yorkers, Fort Drum is an enduring symbol of courage, and the soldiers stationed there carry and continue a tradition of patriotism and service.

These are the men and women who run towards danger. Those stationed at Fort Drum represent the very best of our nation: Ordinary Americans who answer the extraordinary call to serve, choosing a life of sacrifice and commitment.

It is that commitment that allows the rest of us to live in a democracy and to live a life of freedom and security.

We've all seen the headlines, and it's clear that challenging days are ahead in our country. And the cadets here today will be among those called to rise to that moment of strength and resolve. So as Majority Leader of the New York State Senate, I want to convey how immensely proud New York is to have you belong in our great state.

And we'll continue to stand with you and to advocate for you and to demonstrate our gratitude -- not only in words, in deeds.

I must say that your presentation of the things that you need us to do was important. Usually people come and they -- we all exchange platitudes. But you had a list. You know, between Operation Janus and making sure your healthcare is sustained, the dining, supporting the agriculture, DMV, the integration into the community, the airport -- we can help you in all those ways.

And so I want you to know that I do appreciate your not only being here and calling this Albany Day to our Fort Drum Day, but giving us the list of things that we need to do to make sure that we continue to be good neighbors for you just as you have been for us and for our great state and our country for all these years.

So thank you so much for your presence here. And thank you, Madam President, for the time.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Majority Leader.

Minority Leader Ortt on the

resolution.

SENATOR ORTT: Well, thank you very much, Madam President.

I want to start off by thanking my colleague Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, not only for her kind words but for continuing this tradition, which goes back certainly long before I was here in the Senate and I know before many of us were here in the Senate.

I want to thank Senator Scarcella-Spanton, who it was noted is the chair of the Veterans, Military Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee -- but not only that, is a military spouse.

And I think for those who are here, maybe you're a military spouse, but you all may have a military spouse. And I think we would all agree that that, at times, is even more difficult than serving in uniform. And so I certainly want to thank her for her continued service.

I want to thank Senator Mark Walczyk, who continues to serve, actually missed -- was it last year? Two years ago -- because he was deployed. And he continues to wear that uniform proudly. And just as proudly,

he continues to represent Fort Drum and serve as the Senator for Fort Drum.

And I know this day -- going back to when he worked for Senator Patty Ritchie, this day means a lot to him both as a soldier and as a Senator.

And of course you're going to hear from our ranker on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator Jake Ashby -- also, I must add, an Army veteran.

Now, there's a couple other folks in the chamber that were in other branches. There's a couple of Marines lurking out there, as there always is. There's a Navy veteran out there. But proud of all their service. Proud of all their service. And proud of all your service.

Major General Naumann, thank you for being here. Thank you for your kind words. Thank you for your leadership of the 10th Mountain and of the Fort Drum installation.

You mentioned -- I think it is fitting -- that your soldiers saw a little bit, a little bit -- a little bit of a preview of kind of what goes on here some days. And I think it's important, I think it's fitting that you're here

to see what you're defending sort of work itself out.

You know, we always talk about the big reasons why you do what you do. Right? Freedom. And that's very true. But I think sometimes we say that and it's like, well, what does that really look like? Right? And it's the freedom to debate. It's the freedom to lay aside a bill. And dammit, it's the freedom to have a late budget if we want to too, I guess. Right?

So -- but it's that freedom. And it's not always pretty. And it's not always as orderly as the military or as the Army -- everything's not "Dress Right Dress" here. But that's what you're defending, that's what you're protecting: Our ability to have these debates and to lay bills aside and go back and forth and pass things and go back and change them. That's what -- that's what it is. And it's happening in state capitals across the country, and it's happening in Washington, D.C.

And I would also, to the soldiers who are from New York, over -- I believe over in this corner there, thank you for being here. Thank you for your continued service to our

country. We're happy to have you near home. I'm sure your families are happy to have you near home. And we're happy to have you in this chamber.

It's an interesting thing, we've heard about Fort Drum and the importance it plays in the community. And I know firsthand, having both been there and in other military installations, the relationship between the installation and the surrounding community is very, very important. Not only for that community, but it's important for the installation.

These are things for my colleagues. People in the Pentagon, people making major decisions about future investments in military installations, will look at what is the relationship between that community and that installation. That plays a huge role in the future of those installations.

And so when there is a healthy relationship, when there is a very symbiotic relationship, that only helps further ensure that Fort Drum will continue to play an important role in the North Country and here in New York State.

Now, you all should know, we have many people -- we have a lot of folks come to the chamber. We also have West Point Day, which is another day we're all proud of here in the chamber, where we recognize the oldest military academy in the country. And we recognize its important role and New York's important role at molding some of the future leaders of the United States Army. Big deal.

You're not being molded -- you are soldiers. You are soldiers. You are leaders. You are the people that those cadets aspire to be. But you are also part of a storied unit. Because when you think about Fort Drum, just like my colleagues in the city would know, just like MSG wouldn't be MSG if it weren't for the Knicks and the Rangers, and Highmark Stadium wouldn't be what it is without the Bills, Fort Drum wouldn't be what it is without the 10th Mountain Division.

And the 10th Mountain Division wouldn't be anything if it were not for the people who wear the patch on their shoulder, if it were not for the leaders who train and make sure that future generations of Americans who wear that patch know that history, know ancestry,

know that lineage.

And I can tell you, as someone in the Army, for those who weren't, when you see that patch -- there are certain patches in the Army that everyone, whether you're a part of that unit or not, you know it tells you a little something about the person wearing it.

When you see a Ranger tab, it tells you a little bit about that person wearing it. When you see an Airborne tab, it tells you something about it, that person. When you see a combat infantry badge, that tells you something.

When you see the 10th Mountain patch, it tells you something about the person who bears that patch. And we have a lot of pride here, a lot of us you'll see, we've got the 10th Mountain lapel pin. We're proud to be the state that hosts the most-deployed unit since 9/11.

But we're also -- we need to recognize what that means for the people in the 10th Mountain. That's a lot of time away from family. That's a lot of hardship. That's a lot of challenges when they return. There's a cost, right? It's not just about being proud: Boy, those guys always go and fight our enemies, how

great is that? Well, yeah, it's great, but maybe not always for the people in the uniform.

So we've got to make sure that we're there to support you, so that we're not just proud of you on Veterans Day or Fort Drum Day, but that we're -- we back that up with supporting you the other 364 days of the year.

Because Fort Drum Day, to me, I know to Senator Walczyk and a lot of us, it's not just one day, it's really -- it's a 365. Certainly for Senator Walczyk, who represents it.

And I think for a lot of us, we recognize what that sacrifice really looks like. And just like we were talking about, it's not always pretty here -- it's not always pretty on the home front. Right? As soldiers, we're trained that we always look like everything's together, but sometimes it's not.

And you need to know that there's people who have your back when you come back from those multiple deployments or that your family, someone has their back. And that's where that community comes back into play in supporting all of you and supporting your spouses and your children. Because if you don't have that

support, you can't do what we ask you to do.

And it is a dangerous world out there. I don't know that it's ever not been, to be fair. But it's not getting less dangerous. And the only thing that keeps it less dangerous for people here are you wearing that uniform.

And that's why we're here today. That's why today is Fort Drum Day for us. Every day this time of year is an Albany Day, General. So, you know, it needs to be Fort Drum Day for the people in this chamber. Because if it's just an Albany Day, you know, that could go a lot of different ways. But Fort Drum Day is a good day.

Fort Drum Day I know is a day that there's a lot of pride in this chamber, for all the reasons I mentioned. And we are honored to have you in this chamber. We're honored by your words. We're honored mostly by your actions, and by the actions of the soldiers who are here and the actions of the soldiers who aren't here because maybe they're somewhere else, somewhere much more dangerous, somewhere where it's not just about a debate about a bill, it's far more serious.

And it's an honor for me to have

served. It's an honor for me to be able to tell -- for people who have never been to Fort Drum, I do believe that places breed a certain kind of person. Fort Drum is the reason the 10th Mountain is the division it is, because they train at Fort Drum. Fort Drum is a tough place. It's a -- can be a harsh place. But it breeds one of the best fighting divisions in the world, on behalf of the values of America. And that is definitely something we should all be proud of, and I know we are.

And so, Madam President, I am proud to speak and support the resolution, and I thank you for your indulgence.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Scarcella-Spanton on the resolution.

SENATOR SCARCELLA-SPANTON: Thank you, Madam President.

And thank you, Leader Stewart-Cousins, for always making this a priority every year.

Thank you, Senator Ortt, for all your kind words.

And of course my partner on this day, Senator Walczyk, who represents Fort Drum, thank you for all you do for that area as well.

I want to welcome everyone visiting the New York State Senate chambers today from Fort Drum, especially the Major General, all the leadership, and all the soldiers here with us today.

We're here to honor the remarkable efforts of every man and woman stationed at Fort Drum and serving in the 10th Mountain Division. Today we pay tribute to their vital contributions to our national defense, and their continued bravery.

Fort Drum acts as one of the largest employers in the region for both military and civilian workforce, and supports local small businesses, housing, retail, healthcare and construction.

A few years ago I actually had the privilege to visit Fort Drum. I went with my husband, who as it's been mentioned, he actually served in the military himself. So he got a real kick out of me getting in the helicopter and waving down below to say hi to him.

So it was one of my favorite memories, and one of the biggest honors of my life, to be able to come see the work that Fort Drum does firsthand.

Those strong partnerships between the installation and local government, schools, and nonprofits, is what sets Fort Drum apart from most military installations in our country.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of 9/11, it is important to note that not too long after the September 11th attacks, which shook not just New York but our entire nation, the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division displayed extraordinary courage, and our state will always be grateful for the role that they played.

Fort Drum is not only a symbol of military excellence, but also a cornerstone of Northern New York's economy, serving as the region's largest employer and supporting the livelihoods of thousands of active-duty servicemembers. There are over 35,000 soldiers and family members at Fort Drum. They're our neighbors, coworkers, classmates and friends.

And on a personal note,

Major General, I really liked what you said: When you say thank you for your service, we respond "What can we do?" And you laid out a list.

And I will say I was going to reach out to my staff to make sure they got it all down, but our leader had it memorized way before. So she works harder and faster than every single person in this room.

But I think it's really important to hear what we can do for you. Because I can say, on a personal note, my husband did two tours to Afghanistan, and I look at especially the young soldiers over here -- I'm not sure if you've deployed yet. But my goal in this role -- I chair the Committee for Veterans -- is to make sure that when you do get out of service, this is a good place to land on your feet.

Make sure you have the resources that you need to not just survive, but to thrive. Make sure that your family members, your children have the resources you need. Because as Senator Ortt mentioned, this is something that impacts the whole family.

And my favorite thing about

Fort Drum Day every year is that I get to speak to the people like you, hear what you need the most. And last year I had a great conversation with so many younger people, and they were telling me about their daily lives.

And it's really important to note that Fort Drum is the most deployed unit in the entire country. And it's not just one parent who deploys sometimes, it's multiple parents, multiple deployments. And we know firsthand -- I know my colleague Senator Ashby, Senator Walczyk, we have a lot of veterans here in the chamber; thank you all for your service -- it impacts the entire family.

So when I met with the soldiers last year, they were telling me sometimes -- and it is such an amazing thing that you share the hospital. It's really important for the North Country. But one of the things I heard is sometimes it is difficult, particularly for the spouses or the children, maybe getting appointments. And I was able to reach out to Cohen Veterans Network, which sets up kind of hubs for mental health resources in communities.

And they don't have one in New York,

but they are going to be opening one. So that's an impact of those conversations last year. And it's still kind of in the new phases, but it's really important that you are up here because we hear you. We appreciate you. And we deeply, deeply respect your service.

And with that, thank you so much. I proudly vote aye.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Ashby on the resolution.

SENATOR ASHBY: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to thank our Majority Leader, Leader Ortt, our leader, and our chairwoman for her amazing work.

And thank you to the Major General and your command team for joining us today and for your continued leadership and service.

And when we think about the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum, we think about the Battle of Anzio, we think about Somalia, we think about the Siege of Sadr City, which lasted over four years, the Battle of Kamdesh. Some of these have generated major

motion pictures, which I think is how some people associate themselves with it. But they're so much more than that. The resolve that it took to lead during those times has inspired future generations of soldiers who join us here today, and it's what is going to carry that legacy forward over time and over generations.

And it does have an impact here on us. Staff Sergeant Alex Jimenez -- that name is no stranger to this chamber. Member of the 10th Mountain Division. New York State will be -- is the first in the nation to generate legislation like that.

It's wonderful that you get to sit here and see what we do here. I think it would be even more inspiring for us to see what you do. There's no reality TV show that I think can adequately portray that. There's no book, there's no movie for that.

But to look upon these soldiers here today, measuring their commitment to what we have each and every day in this chamber, and in the state and in this country, that opportunity -- I think it's important for us to think about that, to put ourselves in their shoes as young people

serving this nation -- whether they're married or single, whether they have children that they will be leaving at one point in service to this nation -- a career, what that looks like, how that will inspire us to make better laws.

But it's not always easy. It's not always what you see on TV. Sometimes you are cold, hungry, tired. Not like we are here. Not like we are perhaps next week or whenever, when the budget is coming around, but in a very different way. And yet that resolve continues of the tradition and leadership that you inspire and has been inspired through previous generations.

So it's just a wonderful privilege for me to join with the 10th Mountain Division here today. I want to say thank you to the soldiers who are here. You inspire us with your commitment and your desire to serve.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Walczyk on the resolution.

SENATOR WALCZYK: Thank you, Madam President.

Happy Fort Drum Day and

10th Mountain Division Day, everyone. Thank you for all the pride that you've displayed here today.

And I want to thank the Majority Leader, the Veterans chair, and the Secretary of the Senate for continuing this legacy that we've built here in honoring New York's division, the 10th Mountain Division.

Now, there's some New York soldiers, they call it a home of record. So this is where they came up, where they grew up. You've got Staff Sergeant Anthony Steban, from Bethpage. You've got Specialist Noel Ortiz from the Bronx, you've got Specialist Andrew Young from Honeoye Falls. You've got Private First Class Alex Mendez Martinez from Ridgewood.

And I asked these soldiers -- and this is -- this is key, because sometimes you may not know this. Fort Drum gets negative 35 in the winter. Based on your deployment cycle, you might not see the finest part of North Country weather in the summers. So it gets kind of a bad rap sometimes.

That same tough training environment that Leader Ortt described, it's not the nicest

place when you're a soldier coming out of basic training and you can write down on your request to the Army, which they may or may not abide, you can write down Italy and Hawaii and lots of other places that if you grew up in New York State, you might say, That's my first request.

This is what I want to tell you that's so special about these individuals. Every single one of them requested to be stationed at Fort Drum, New York. Cool.

Thank you for serving. Thank you for also being New Yorkers and wanting to stay home close to family and be a part of our community in Northern New York, no matter where you came from.

And then Lieutenant Colonel Ferguson, he snuck in too. He's from New Rochelle, New York, just down the river from us here.

Major General Scott Naumann, thank you so much for your leadership always. It's been an exciting time to command. The 10th Mountain Division is always an exciting division to command. But you've had especially trying times and interesting missions, and you've

done a phenomenal job in your time as command. Thank you for being such a great partner of the North Country.

And without CSM Brett keeping his steady hand on the tiller -- we appreciate him and the backbone that he gives to the division.

And as the Majority Leader pointed out, there's also -- we call it -- in the Army we call it a garrison, but she referred to Colonel Adler as "the mayor." It's the right way to think about Fort Drum. It really a city unto itself that is a partner with the community around it. And he and CSM Burns have done a phenomenal job leading that village that is Fort Drum, New York. Thank you so much for your service.

The 10th Mountain Division has -- and it's right in their song, if you ever hear the 10th Mountain Division song -- they have a glorious history. And I know some of you are humming it in your heads right now.

They went from an elite alpine training unit, kind of an Army experiment, saying, hey, we're going to get into the mountains of Europe, we're going to need some

elite combat troops that can do alpine training. And in 1945 that training directly resulted in us taking Riva Ridge, their capture of Riva Ridge. I won't go through the whole thing, but read a book on it. A phenomenal exercise of the military mind and the can-do, and truly embodying of climbing to glory.

They went on to break through Po Valley and really break the back of the Italian army in all of that hard fighting in Southern Europe.

And then we fast-forward. And 1985, the year that I was born, was also the year that the 10th Mountain Division was reborn here as Fort Drum in New York State. They say that it was built by a Plummer, a Cerjan, and a Carpenter. That's because Carpenter was the first commanding general, Cerjan was the engineer that designed the cantonment area and some of the training areas for Fort Drum as we know it today, 170 square miles of our training area at Fort Drum -- and also Plummer.

And I want to tell this for the staff that are in the room. So Colonel Plummer got a job in the Pentagon as a staff officer, and

he wrote a white paper about what a light infantry unit should look like. And in 1985 he saw it realized in the 10th Mountain Division.

So don't think, when your boss asks you to do some research and put together a good paper, that it's all for naught. Because if Colonel Plummer hadn't done that great work, we wouldn't have the 10th Mountain Division the way that we do today, and certainly Fort Drum wouldn't be the place that it is.

Their glorious continued on, as Senator Ashby was pointing out, in the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan, the humanitarian missions in Somalia and Haiti, Operation Desert Storm, the list goes on. Because we say the sun never sets on the 10th Mountain Division patch. And that's true.

You've got the 2nd Brigade commandos out in Iraq and in Syria right now; the Southern border mission; and everywhere in between -- the 10th Mountain Division is always moving and they're moving for you as New Yorkers and us as U.S. citizens.

They're light infantry, they're blue collar innovators, they are great patriots who

keep us safe here and around the globe. And I encourage you -- they've got some great displays down in the LOB. I was really excited to see the M250 -- that's the new SAW, if you're old school -- and the M7, which is heavier than the M4. Go downstairs, pick that thing up. They've got some awesome equipment showing, as General Naumann pointed out, supported and ready today, relevant tomorrow.

They're constantly innovating, getting ready for the next fight and innovating for the next fight for all of us.

So what's next? Thirty-six hundred soldiers a year actually transition out of the military at Fort Drum. That's an opportunity for all of us here. Home of record soldiers coming back as New Yorkers, or others have that come from other areas of the country and call Northern New York their home right now -- 3600 of them annually, we have an opportunity.

After World War II, we watched as the 10th Mountain Division came home. They became the Ski Patrol and built a bunch of mountains -- ski resorts, but they did a lot more than that. If you look at the legacy of the

10th Mountain Division, when they came home they did amazing things for this nation.

They can do amazing things for New York State as part of our future. And Next Move NY is working on that right now. Wounded Warrior Project and other amazing groups are doing similar things to make sure that we're taking care of those soldiers that come home, and also provide them opportunities to be great citizens in New York State.

You know, they have the motto which is "Climb to Glory." This is the Excelsior State.

So no matter what, keep climbing. We'll see you all at the top. And may we all climb together to make the 10th Mountain Division ready today and relevant tomorrow, all the way to the tippy-top.

I vote aye.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Rhoads on the resolution.

SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you, Madam President.

And we've had so many wonderful speakers today who have spoken about how special today is, and it's certainly true.

I do want to thank the sponsor of the resolution, Senator Scarcella-Spanton, and obviously our Majority and Minority Leaders for their amazing words, Senator Walczyk, of course, and Senator Ashby.

Today truly is a special day. It's a unique and special honor. There are a great many things -- if you have the opportunity to watch debates in this chamber, there's a great many things that we don't agree on. But today is one thing that we all agree on.

And that is the great sense of pride that we have -- of you, of Fort Drum, of the 10th Mountain Division and what you mean to New York and, more importantly, what you mean to this country.

Some of the most special times that we have are actually chances that we have to get back home, because it's an opportunity for us to check in and refocus on the reason that we serve.

But Fort Drum Day is an opportunity for us to check in and refocus our priorities on

the reason that we serve in this chamber. We are here to serve you, just as we are here to serve the people that we represent back home.

Your service is awe-inspiring. I have a colleague back home who is a Marine Corps veteran who often says that you raise your right hand to take the oath, and you write a blank check to the United States of America for a price up to and including your very life, to defend our freedoms, to defend what we have here in this chamber.

And I know, Major General, you mentioned how beautiful the chamber is. The only reason that we get to be here, the only reason that we're enjoying our 250th anniversary of our founding as a nation is because we've had men and women who have been willing to make that sacrifice, to defend that freedom, to make it possible for us to be here.

And so today is an incredibly special day for us here in this chamber, but it's an opportunity for us to celebrate your service, your continued sacrifice, the amazing history of Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division, but what you mean for this country.

And we have a number of soldiers that are here today. And thank you, Senator Walczyk, for mentioning them. I am proud to have one from my district, hailing from Bethpage, and that is Staff Sergeant Anthony Steban.

And, Staff Sergeant, if you wouldn't mind standing just so everybody can see you.

But I had a chance to chat very briefly at the start, and what an exceptional -- what an exceptional person. He actually was a Golden Eagle from Bethpage High School, joined the United States Army in 2013 as a fire support specialist and completed his initial training at Fort Sill in Oklahoma.

Staff Sergeant Steban has been on two combat deployments, one in Afghanistan in 2016 and one in Iraq, as well as two overseas tours in South Korea, in 2014 and 2020. Staff Sergeant Steban has been to multiple Army courses, including TMO training and joint fire observer, JFO training.

His dedication to the Army and service to his country has been recognized with many awards and medals, including the Combat

Action Badge, the Army Commendation Medal, which he's received on four occasions, and the Army Achievement Medal, which he has received on seven occasions.

He is actively pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in management information of systems from the University of Maryland Global Campus in Adelphi, Maryland. He has 90 credits completed so far, will be completing his degree in 2027, at which point he plans on unfortunately leaving the military, but fortunately for him, going back to his home in Syracuse, where he hopes to start his career in project management with his wife and stepson by his side.

So, Staff Sergeant, I want to thank you for being here today. I want to thank you for your service and sacrifice.

Madam President, I proudly vote aye in favor of the resolution.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Helming on the resolution.

SENATOR HELMING: Thank you, Madam President.

As we heard from previous speakers,

Fort Drum is such an important part of our state.

As Major General Naumann mentioned, it's the largest single-site employer in the entire state, providing hundreds and hundreds of jobs, contributing over $2 billion to our state's economy.

The last time I visited Fort Drum -- and for anyone who hasn't been there, I really highly recommend that you tour the base. The last time I was there, it was just before the deployment of the 1st Brigade Combat Team. It was actually -- it was my son-in-law's first deployment with that team with the 10th Mountain Division.

And I bring that up -- and I talked to the Major General about this, about there's something just so uniquely special. I've been to a number of bases, but something uniquely special about Fort Drum, the base and the community. You can just feel the love that both the soldiers and the civilians have for the United States of America. You can feel that deep respect for our military, and the pride in being a part of Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division.

From World War II to today's

missions, the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division have earned a reputation for training in tough conditions and delivering when it absolutely matters the most.

And today I am so very proud to recognize one of those soldiers, a constituent of mine, Sergeant Andrew Young. His story reflects the very best of the 54th Senate District.

Sergeant Young grew up in Honeoye Falls. He is a graduate of Honeoye Falls-Lima High School. His path reflects the kind of values we deeply respect: A strong work ethic, a commitment to learning, and a desire to serve something greater than himself.

He joined the United States Army in October of 2021 as a fire control specialist. After completing his training at Fort Sill, he was stationed at Fort Wainwright, where he served with the 28 Field Artillery Regiment.

In April of 2025, Sergeant Young transferred to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery Division Artillery, 10th Mountain Division. He now serves with the division's Innovation Lab as a project lead for the Reaver drone system.

At the same time, he continues to invest in his future, pursuing a degree in software engineering with a minor in unmanned aerial systems through Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

For his meritorious service, Sergeant Young has earned the Army Commendation Medal, three Army Achievement Medals, and the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

Madam President, Sergeant Young represents the kind of service that makes Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division what it is.

Sergeant Young, to you, to all of the soldiers at Fort Drum, to the leadership team, on behalf of the people of the 54th Senate District, I offer you our heartfelt thanks and deepest respect as you continue your climb to glory.

God bless you all.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Bailey on the resolution.

SENATOR BAILEY: Thank you,

Madam President.

Days like this remind us of why we're here, who we serve, and why we serve them.

Madam Leader, thank you always for this resolution; Senator Scarcella-Spanton; my colleague Senator Walczyk, who represents Fort Drum.

But, Major General, you brought something to my attention that -- I think I mentioned it, but I want to make sure I mention it for the record. Those of you who serve, you sign your name to serve people that you don't know. You take an oath. I don't think many people realize the gravity of what you soldiers are doing. You sign up to serve, protect, honor and possibly die for people that you don't know and will never meet. If that's not heroic, I don't know what is.

So I just wanted to thank you for that. The gravity is not lost on anybody in this chamber of what that is and what it takes to serve.

And I have the honor of, instead -- in place, in stead of Senator Sepúlveda, I get to recognize an incredible individual, Sergeant Noel

Ortiz, if you could please stand.

Sergeant Ortiz is from God's country, the Bronx, New York -- all of it is God's country, the mainland -- and he went to Archimedes Academy in the Bronx.

And if you know who Archimedes was, he was the one who accurately was able to calculate pi, and he also was the one who was able to determine what buoyancy was. And buoyancy is staying above water. And you help us as a country stay above water, Sergeant Ortiz.

He has an Associate's of Science. He's working on his Bachelor's of Administration from Purdue University -- go, Boilermakers.

He joined the Army in 2015 as a cannon crew member, and he completed his initial training in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, deploying to Afghanistan in 2020 and Iraq in 2023. Some really tough times in our nation and in our world.

He spent time as an instructor for the Field Artillery Basic Officer Leaders Course from March 2016 to January 2019. He was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division in January 2019. And he has been noted for his outstanding service

with many awards -- too many to name here today -- that include the Army Commendation Medal with "C" device; the Army Achievement Medal, and the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

Now, it says that you plan to obtain your Bachelor of Science in business administration -- I just want to make a friendly amendment. I don't think you're going to plan to do that, I think you're going to achieve it and do so with flying colors -- in order to further distinguish yourself as a leader in the U.S. Army -- another friendly amendment, you have already distinguished yourself as an amazing leader here in the U.S. Army.

You plan to serve for 20 years in the U.S. Army. And Sergeant Ortiz, I say, from the Bronx to the world, whatever you plan, you will achieve.

Thank you for your service. Thank you for representing the best of the boroughs, thank you for representing the greatest of us as a humanity. Congratulations, and thank you for continuing to represent us.

I proudly vote aye on the resolution and congratulate you and your family, Sergeant.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Salazar on the resolution.

SENATOR SALAZAR: Thank you, Madam President.

Today we honor these New Yorkers who dedicate their lives in service of our country. I am proud to recognize and to welcome to our State Capitol today a servicemember who grew up in my Senate District, Private First Class Alexander Mendez. Private Mendez, if you will please stand. Thank you.

Born and raised in Queens, Private Mendez has known from a young age that he wanted to give back to his community. As a teenager he attended the High School for Health Professions and Human Services in the city.

Soon after graduating high school, and without delay, he chose to begin his military training. In 2024 he left home and headed to Oklahoma to join the U.S. Army as a joint fire support specialist.

Then, in 2025, he was assigned to the Third Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment in Fort Drum. This past fall, he made his way to

the First Infantry Division Artillery.

He also enjoys playing guitar in his spare time.

Private First Class Mendez, I extend my deep gratitude to you for your service. You chose an honorable path, knowing that it could lead to a a life of great physical and spiritual challenges.

The "Great-Teenth" Senate District and New York State thank you for your hard work, for your commitment to your fellow New Yorkers, and for your service to our country.

Thank you, Madam President.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

To our guests, Major General Naumann, the leadership team, the incredible soldiers, and everyone visiting here from Fort Drum, we thank you for your service. We thank you for your commitment to serving us, to protecting us.

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

Please rise and be recognized.

(Extended standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

The resolution was adopted on March 10th.

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, Senator Scarcella-Spanton would like to open this resolution for cosponsorship.

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

Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: At this time recognize Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick for an introduction.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick for an introduction.

Senator, if you'd hold on.

Excuse me. Can we have some -- there's a lot of movement behind the Senator.

(Pause.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK:

Thank you, Madam President.

Today I have the special honor of introducing an extraordinary constituent from the 9th Senate District, Thomas Ortiz, who is visiting from Inwood.

Thomas is a first-grade student at Lawrence Primary School, but today I want to recognize him for what he's done outside the school.

Thomas Ortiz, just seven years old now, with the help of his mother, Angela Ortiz, who is also here with us today, recently published a book, "Thomas Makes a Promise." The story is based on a promise he made to his mother to make a new friend everywhere he goes.

Thomas used his experiences to encourage other kids to step out of their shell and help others make friends.

The story follows Thomas from the park to the grocery store, karate class, the aquarium, the airport, including his own friends and his older brother Ace as characters.

By writing this book, Thomas is working to encourage his fellow classmates to be

kind to one another, to be brave around new people and in new situations, and to embrace the joy of friendship.

Thomas's story, while meant for people a few years younger than all of us in this chamber, has lessons worth remembering for everyone. He teaches us that connection can happen anywhere.

Thomas, I want to thank you for joining us today as well as to congratulate you for the accomplishment in publishing a book. You have achieved something truly special to spread a heartwarming message, creating something you should be very proud of.

Madam President, I ask that you welcome Thomas and his mother Angela and his father Thomas Sr., and extend to them all the privileges and courtesies of the house.

Thank you.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Thank you.

Thomas Ortiz, congratulations on your book. I hope you're making lots of new friends and just continue remembering that kindness is extremely important.

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

Please rise and be recognized.

Congratulations.

(Standing ovation.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Gianaris.

SENATOR GIANARIS: Madam President, let's take up the calendar, please.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 101, Assembly Bill Number 1388A, by Assemblymember Rosenthal, an act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 3. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce

the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 101, voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Chan, Gallivan, Griffo, Lanza, Oberacker, O'Mara, Ortt, Stec, Tedisco, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 45. Nays, 13.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 112, Senate Print 557, by Senator Krueger, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number

113, Senate Print 616, by Senator Stavisky, an act to amend the Executive Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 137, Senate Print 1327A, by Senator Parker, an act to amend the Public Service Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 137, voting in the negative:

Senator Walczyk.

Ayes, 57. Nays, 1.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 172, Senate Print 3111, by Senator Helming, an act to amend the Education Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Senator Oberacker to explain his vote.

SENATOR OBERACKER: Thank you, Madam President.

And I would like to thank Senator Helming for bringing this really very important bill forward.

I think we can all agree, if we've spent some time in our local communities, just how important volunteer firefighting is, and the services that of course are extended to the communities.

You know, interestingly, Madam President, I didn't realize just how long I've been fortunate enough to serve in fire service, and it really didn't come to mind until I heard Senator Walczyk say that he was born in 1985.

I started in fire service actually in August -- this year I'll be celebrating 40 years. So, Senator Walczyk, you were a very visual point of seeing how long I've been in fire service.

And along with that, Madam President, I would like to also just extend my thanks to Senator Rhoads and Senator Rolison, who have served their local communities in it as well.

And real quickly, just a quick story. My first time being called out into service, it was a grass fire. And I can remember going back to the back of our truck, and I

grabbed what's called an Indian tank.

And for those of us that are in service, we know what those are all about. And those are metal tanks that will have eight -- or, excuse me, five gallons of water in there. But a gallon of water weighs 8.33 pounds, so that's a 40-pound tank.

And I remember laughing at all the older members who grabbed a broom to put the fires out.

Madam President, I have served long enough now that I grab a broom.

So with that, Senator Helming, thank you for bringing that forward.

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

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

Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 321, Senate Print 2458, by Senator Comrie, an act to amend the Public Authorities Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

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

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 455, Senate Print 161A, by Senator Ramos, an act to amend the Education Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 5. This act shall take effect April 1, 2027.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to

Calendar 455, voting in the negative:
Senator Walczyk.
Ayes, 57. Nays, 1.
ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.
THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 577, Senate Print 2291, by Senator Harckham, an act to amend the Real Property Tax Law.
ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.
THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.
ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.
(The Secretary called the roll.)
ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.
THE SECRETARY: Ayes, 58.
ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.
THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 614, Assembly Bill Number 1422, by Assemblymember Cruz, an act to amend the Criminal Procedure Law.
ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: 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 PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 614, 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.

Ayes, 36. Nays, 22.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 791, Senate Print 2050, by Senator Webb, an act to amend the Election Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Read the last section.

THE SECRETARY: Section 2. This

act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 791, voting in the negative are Senators Borrello, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Martins, Rhoads and Walczyk.

Ayes, 53. Nays, 5.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

THE SECRETARY: Calendar Number 798, Senate Print 2398, by Senator Persaud, an act to amend the Civil Rights Law.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: 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 PERSAUD: Call the roll.

(The Secretary called the roll.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: Announce

the results.

THE SECRETARY: In relation to Calendar 798, voting in the negative are Senators Ashby, Helming, Lanza, Mattera, Murray, O'Mara, Ortt, Palumbo, Rhoads, Stec, Walczyk, Weber and Weik.

Ayes, 45. Nays, 13.

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: The bill is passed.

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

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

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

SENATOR GIANARIS: I move to adjourn until tomorrow, Tuesday, May 5th, at 3:00 p.m.

Happy Star Wars Day, everybody!

(Laughter.)

ACTING PRESIDENT PERSAUD: On motion, the Senate stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 5th, at 3:00 p.m.

(Whereupon, at 12:57 p.m., the Senate adjourned.)