

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

2:25 P.M.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The House will come to order.

Good afternoon, colleagues and guests.

Imam Tahir Kukaj will offer a prayer.

IMAM TAHIR KUKAJ: (Speaking unknown language). In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful, we thank God Almighty for His countless blessings; blessings of this Chamber, members of this great institution of our great State of New York.

We gather during the holy month of Ramadan; a time when many of our neighbors are focused on prayer, self-reflection and acts of service. We've been celebrating this holy month of Ramadan along our neighbors; Jewish neighbors where they were celebrating

Purim. Our neighbors -- Christian neighbors celebrating Lent. Our Hindu neighbors, New Yorkers celebrating Holi. So we pray to God Almighty to derive from the spirit today as we acknowledge the vital demanding work of this legislative Body. We ask for a special blessing upon each member present. Grant them clarity of mind as they weigh the complex issues before them. May they be guided by a spirit of genuine cooperation and the courage to advocate for the common good, putting the needs of the people above the noise of the day. We recognize the immense sacrifice and dedication inherent in this role. We pray that You grant them endurance for their long hours and humility in their authority. May their words in this Chamber be used to build bridges, resolve conflicts, and to lift up those who are most vulnerable among us. May their decisions today leave a lasting positive mark on our great State of New York, fostering a future that is just, equitable and prosperous for all.

God Almighty, bless this Assembly, bless their deliberations, and may their commitment to public service always be renewed. God Almighty, we bless -- we ask You that You bless our New York State and our country, the greatest country on earth, the United States of America.

In Your name we make this prayer. Amen.

MEMBERS: Amen.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Visitors are invited to join members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, Acting Speaker Hunter led visitors and

members in the Pledge of Allegiance.)

A quorum being present, the Clerk will read the Journal of Monday, March 9th.

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Madam Speaker, I move to dispense with the further reading of the Journal of Monday, March 9th and that the same stand approved.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: I have a quote today from Harriet Tubman, and the quote is --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: One moment, Mr. Fall. Can we have quiet in the Chamber, please? Take your seats, take your conversations outside. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The quote that we have here today is from Harriet Tubman and it says, *I wish the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years* -- I'm sorry -- *I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say: I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.* And these words are from Harriet Tubman.

Madam Speaker, members have on their desk an A-Calendar [sic]. After any housekeeping and/or introductions we

will begin our floor work by taking up Calendar resolutions on page 3. We will then consent the following bills: Calendar No. 44 by Ms. Tapia, and Calendar No. 47 by Ms. Paulin. After that we will take up the following bills on debate: Rules Report No. 18 by Ms. Glick, and Rules Report No. 29 by Ms. Rosenthal. I will announce any further floor activity as we proceed.

So with that as a general outline, Miss -- Madam Speaker, let us begin with any housekeeping and/or introductions.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you. We do have a piece of housekeeping.

On a motion by Ms. Rosenthal, page 14, Calendar No. 52, Bill No. A01410, the amendments are received and adopted.

We will start with an introduction from you, Mr. Fall, please.

MR. FALL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a great honor and a pleasure to welcome and introduce Imam Tahir back to the People's House. You know, Imam Tahir has done the invocation during the month of Ramadan for the last eight consecutive years, and I do appreciate him making the trip to Albany from Staten Island. And, you know, Imam Tahir is not only the leader of the Albanian Cultural Center on Staten Island, but he's also a chaplain for the New York City Police Department. He serves our community in so many different ways. He always opens up his community center to the public for various events during every part of the year. And he's also a wonderful reflection on, you know, what this holy month of

Ramadan means. You know, taking care of your neighbors, giving charity and a good amount of self-reflection.

So if you would be so kind to welcome Imam Tahir to the People's House it would be greatly appreciated, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. Fall, the Speaker and all members, welcome back, Imam, to the Assembly Chamber. We extend to you the privileges of the floor and hope you enjoy our proceedings today. We appreciate your annual visit to Albany to give blessings to us for this holy month. Thank you so very much for joining us today. Thank you.

IMAM TAHIR KUKAJ: Thank you. God bless you all.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Eachus the purpose of an introduction.

MR. EACHUS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have quite a bit going on in the House today.

On behalf of Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson, Assemblywoman Paula Kay and myself, I have the pleasure of introducing nursing students from SUNY Orange and CUNY York College. If they'd stand up. There we go.

(Applause)

Joining -- joining us alongside the students are Professor Lisa Zylberberg, Pamela Hylton, Vanessa Carew, Dr.

Margaret Alexandre and Dr. Patricia Burke. These nursing students and faculty are here today meeting with the legislators on behalf of NYSNA. NYSNA is a union that represents more than 42,000 nurses and healthcare professionals throughout the State of New York.

Being the brother of two RNs myself, I have a personal connection to nursing. I'm incredibly inspired to see so many young people about serving their communities, provide lifesaving treatment to New Yorkers, and joining one of the most critical areas of our workforce.

Nursing is an integral part of our communities, ensuring the essential work of keeping New Yorkers safe and is done in a safe way and in a professional manner. As a teacher of 40 years, I know that students represent our future. There's our future right there (indicating) -- thank you, folks -- and the future of New York and shining a brighter future because of those that are here with us today.

With that I would ask, Madam Speaker, that you please welcome the SUNY Orange and CUNY York College nursing students and faculty to the Chamber and extend them the privileges of the House. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

On behalf of Mr. Eachus, the Speaker and all members, we welcome our SUNY Orange and CUNY York College nursing students as you traveled here today to represent NYSNA and all things healthcare. Thank you for all of the wonderful work that you do and will continue to do in this healthcare space. We hope you

enjoy our proceedings today. Thank you so very much for joining us.

(Applause)

Mr. Santabarbara for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. SANTABARBARA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I rise to introduce a very special guest joining us here in the Chamber, my son Michael. He -- he's joining us for today's disabilities rally. And being Michael's dad has been one of the greatest blessings of my life. Michael and I have been on our journey together as he faced the challenges of autism. He brings incredible joy, determination and perspective to our family and to everyone who knows him.

Before coming to the Assembly I worked as a civil engineer. But when Michael was born, it changed my life. My passion changed and it led me here to the State Assembly and to my role as Chair of the Committee on People with Disabilities. Still helping people, but in a different way; advocating for individuals with disabilities and their family, and that's exactly what we did here today. Michael and I today -- today joined self-advocates from across the State who came to the Capitol to share their stories and to advocate for support for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Michael has many interests. He loves cooking. He even has his own YouTube channel where he's known as "Chef Michael." You can find him on YouTube. He enjoys doing puzzles, and he has probably the largest DVD collection I have ever seen. This year he's also playing basketball with the Schenectady Patriots Special

Olympics Team, which we are all very proud of. More than anything, though, my son Michael reminds me every day why inclusion, dignity and opportunity must guide the work that we do here in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I'm incredibly proud of my son and I'm always pleased when he joins us here in the Assembly Chamber and I'm grateful that he's here with us today. If you would please welcome him and extend to him all the cordialities of the House.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Assemblymember Santabarbara -- Dad -- the Speaker and all members, welcome back, Michael, to our Assembly Chamber. It's so wonderful to see you again today. We hope you enjoy the time in our Chamber again, as you always do, and congratulations and continued success, Chef Michael. Thank you for joining us today, Chef.

(Applause)

SPEAKER HEASTIE: Ms. Chantel Jackson for the purposes of an introduction.

MS. JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Guess what? We are back, we are bigger and better than ever because we are the Bronx. And I have a number of leaders here from the Bronx I'm going to have them stand up, but you may know they already, Mr. Speaker. We have our Bronx DA. We have our Bronx Borough President, DA Darcel Clark, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson. We we also have Lisa Sorin from Bronx Chamber of Commerce. Robert Rodriguez from Chase. We have Sherlyn Santana from Bronx Community -- Bronx Community Manager at Chase. We

have Jennifer Bernstein, also President and CEO of New York Botanical Garden. These are all things in the Bronx. Matt Eagle [sic], President, Langsam Property Service Corp.; and Meg Ventrudo, Executive Director of Woodlawn Conservancy. And they're all here because today is Bronx Day. And we haven't had Bronx Day in over ten years, but like I said we are back, bigger, better than ever, and I hope that they will receive -- oh, I'm sorry, and a bunch of other companies and organizations and corporations that make the Bronx who it really is. And I would love if you can give them all the cordiality of the floor, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER HEASTIE: Of course. Thank you, Ms. Jackson. And of course I'm happy to see all of you from -- no offense to the other 61 counties in this great State, but ya'll all know my heart is in the Bronx and the Bronx will always be first amongst equals. And I'm so happy for my colleagues that have brought Bronx Day back, and to all the elected officials and the -- and the organizations that have come back. It was a beautiful luncheon today, and I'm looking forward to the reception.

So of course you always have the privileges of the House. You're always welcome to come back. And I also want to add as part of that, one of the awardees today who's getting a Changemaker Award is one of the greatest DJs in all of New York City who happens to be a constituent. And you can hear him on Irie Jam, which is the number one Caribbean radio station. And if you come to my summer barbecue, any event, my -- my holiday party, he

is always the DJ so I wanted to give a special shout out to DJ Madout as well.

(Applause)

So again, thank you all for showing how much we all love the Bronx, and thank you for being here. Thank you.

(Applause)

And I also want to thank DJ Madout because I can't ever get my Chief-of-Staff, Jevonni Brooks to come up here, but she traveled up with -- with DJ Madout. So...

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Reyes for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. REYES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today it is my honor to welcome members of the National Black Nurses New York Chapter Association here.

The New York Black Nurses Association was founded in 1971 as a professional organization that brings together Black nurses throughout New York State to support the health and well-being of their communities and the nursing profession. Through mentorship, scholarship and professional development, the New York Black Nurses Association helps guide and uplift current and future nurses while fostering leadership within the field.

Beyond their work in hospitals, clinics, and nursing education, the nurses are also deeply engaged in community, providing health education, screenings, outreach programs and

resources that help improve health outcomes across the State.

With us today we have representatives from the great -- Greater New York City Chapter; Rochester, Hudson Valley, Suffolk County chapters as well. Dr. Catherine Alicia Georges, past president of Greater New York City Chapter; the current President, Betty Boyle-Duke; Carolyn Austin-Mattison, Second Vice President; Dr. Theresa Lundy, current president; Yolanda Williams-Lewis, current president; and Bryanna Patterson, Chair of Health and Policy from Rochester.

Please, Madam Speaker, please extend all the cordialities of the House to them and welcome our distinguished guests to our Chamber.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Ms. Reyes, the Speaker and all members, we welcome our members of the New York Black Nurses Association and extend to you the privileges of the floor. Hope you enjoy our proceedings today. Continued success, and thank you so very much for all you do for being healthcare champions. Thank you for joining us today.

(Applause)

Mr. Eachus for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. EACHUS: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to interrupt once again.

I rise today in recognition of National Social Worker Month; a time when we honor the dedicated professionals who work every day to straighten -- strengthen our community, support families

and advocate for those whose voices too often go unheard. If you'd stand.

Today I'm proud to welcome the floor faculty and students from the Social Work Program in Dominican University, New York. Joining us are Program Director Melody Hyppolite and Professor Rubina Singh, along with a group of outstanding social work students who traveled to Albany to learn more about the legislative process and to advocate for policies to promote social justice and community well-being. These students represent the next generation of social workers, individuals who are not only learning in the classroom but who are already engaging in advocacy and policy discussions -- one of them happens to be an intern in my office currently -- that will shape stronger and more equitable communities across New York State.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize Samantha Mehan (phonetic), who has served as an intern in my district office over the past year. Samantha will soon graduate from Dominican University and join the social work profession. Her commitment to service and community has already made a meaningful impact in our office, and I know she will continue to make a difference in the lives of many New Yorkers.

Please join me in welcoming the Dominican University New York Social Work faculty and students to the State Assembly, and in recognizing the incredible work of social workers across our State during National Social Work Month. Thank you.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. Eachus, the Speaker and all members, we welcome our guests from Dominican University, the National Association of Social Workers, on your lobby day today. We need you now more than ever, so we are so very glad to see you today, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings today. We hope you had meaningful discussions on your visit today. Continued success to you. Thank you so very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Mr. Slater for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. SLATER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am thrilled to welcome and introduce the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester who is joining us today, up above. This is an historic organizations that has been serving our community since 1939. And we have with us today Chris, Marshall, who are our program directors. And we have as well ten wonderful members, ten youth of our community who are here to learn about State government, tour the Capitol and see government in action. They are our future, it's fantastic to have them here, and I'd just request that you please welcome them and provide the cordialities of the floor.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. Slater, the Speaker and all members, welcome, our Northern Westchester Boys and Girls Club here today to our Assembly Chamber. I cannot see you up there, but we extend the privileges of

the floor to you and hope you enjoy our proceedings today. I love, love, love the Boys and Girls Club and so very pleased that you all are participant members, our future leaders. It's just very exciting to see Boys and Girls Club members here today. So thank you up in our Balcony for joining us today.

(Applause)

Resolutions, page 3, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1023, Ms. Barrett.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 1-7, 2026, as School Social Work Week in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National School Social Work Week.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed, no. The resolution is adopted.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1024, Mr. Lavine.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026, as Reading Month in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed, no. The resolution is adopted.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1025, Mr.

Conrad.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 9-13, 2026, as Civic Learning Week in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed, no. The resolution is adopted.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1026, Mr. DeStefano.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026, as Music in Our Schools Month.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. DeStefano on the resolution.

MR. DESTEFANO: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to speak on one of my favorite resolutions, Music Education [sic] in Our Schools [sic]. They play a vital role in the development in students and should remain an essential part of every school curriculum.

Music is more than entertainment; it is a powerful educational tool that supports academic success, emotional growth, and social development. First, music helps improve cognitive skills. Studies have shown that students who participate in music programs always performed better in subjects such as math, reading and science. Learning rhythm patterns and timing strengthens brain functions

related to -- and problem-solving and critical thinking. Playing an instrument or reading music also requires discipline, focus and practice; skills that benefit students in all areas of learning.

Second, music allows students to express themselves creatively in all school environments where many subjects rely on memorization and testing. Music provides an outlet for imagination and personal expression. Whether through singing, playing an instrument or composing, students can communicate emotions and ideas that may be difficult to express in words.

Music also helps build teamwork and comradery in the community. Band, orchestra and choir programs teach students how to work together toward a common goal. Each musician plays a unique part, but success depends on listening to others and cooperating as a group. These experiences foster respect, responsibility and collaboration; skills that students carry into adulthood.

Finally, music enriches school culture. Performances at concerts, assemblies and community events brings students, families and educators together. These moments create pride, school spirit and shared experiences that strengthen the school community.

In conclusion, music education supports academic achievement, encourages creativity, builds teamwork, and enhances the overall school environment. By investing in music programs, schools help students grow not only as learners, but also as well-rounded individuals.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed, no. The resolution is adopted.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1027, Mr. Durso.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026, as Youth Art Month in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed, no. The resolution is adopted.

Page 13, Calendar No. 44, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A01248-C, Calendar No. 44, Tapia, Zaccaro, Alvarez, Lavine, De Los Santos, Simone, Forrest, Shimsky, Lucas, Cunningham, Cruz, Simon, Sayegh, Bichotte Hermelyn, Bores, K. Brown, Chang, Giglio, Pirozzolo, DeStefano, Pheffer Amato, Weprin, Santabarbara, Walsh, Reyes, Sempolinski. An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to prohibiting the sale, offer for sale, or delivery of xylazine.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 90th day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will

record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A01296-B, Calendar No. 47, Paulin, Sayegh, Lucas, DeStefano, McDonald, Otis, Weprin, Pirozzolo, Norber, Novakhov, Chang, Alvarez, Dinowitz, Dilan, Rosenthal, Weider, Manktelow, Morinello, Angelino, Kassay, Colton, Lemondes, Griffin, Sempolinski, Stirpe, Durso, Mikulin, Shimsky. An act to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to establishing the Rare Disease Advisory Council.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Paulin, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 30th day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So this third reading amendment make changes to the bill-in-chief to expand the number of members on the Rare Disease

Advisory Council, and that amendment provides appointments to the Minority Leaders of the Legislature. So this -- this started back in 2020 when the Legislature established the New York State Rare Disease Working Group, and now this bill would serve to make permanent the working group first established in 2020 by creating a standing council to continue the oversight, awareness and advocacy work of the Rare Disease Advisory Working Group and now that will be a council.

So a key change was allowing the Minority Leader of the Assembly and Minority Leader of the Senate to have appointments on this, which I think is really important. Sometimes we do have concerns when we don't get any appointments onto some of these boards, and I'm very grateful to see that the sponsor amended her bill in order to provide those appointments.

With that change, my previous reservations are gone. I will very happily support this establishment of the Rare Disease Advisory Council. And I'd also like to just note that the ALS Association supports this bill, and that made me think of my good Andy Gilpin, the former Executive Director of CAPTAIN CHS in my district who is battling with ALS right now. I think that working groups like this will really hopefully make a big difference, advisory councils like this will make a big difference.

So I'm very pleased to support it and I will be in the affirmative. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 4, Rules Report No. 18, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09511, Rules Report No. 18, Glick, Colton. An act to amend the Environmental Conservation Law, relating to certain leases relating to the exploration, development and production of gas or oil in State forests, reforestation areas and wildlife management areas.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Glick, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Ms. Glick, an explanation has been requested.

MS. GLICK: Certainly. The chapter amendment just clarifies some of the limitations on oil and gas production leases on State forests, reforestation areas, wildlife management areas and unique areas. And while it allows for the modification, transfer or assignment of existing oil and gas leases in these areas, it prohibits increasing the acreage or expanding the existing wells or drilling new wells. And the existing wells are allowed to continue 'til they are -- until the lease expires, and prohibits renewals in those areas, but allows the continuation and even modification and transfer, but not expansion of the area or drilling new leases on that area.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Would the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MS. GLICK: Absolutely.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. And I think you just mentioned that this allows for modification -- it doesn't allow or it does allow for modification of the existing leases?

MS. GLICK: It allows for modification, transfer assignment while the leases are still current. It would not allow for it to go beyond the time of the lease.

MR. SIMPSON: Does -- would this allow for a transfer of ownership?

MS. GLICK: Well, I -- I think that's -- that is what is intended, yes. But the transfer --

MR. SIMPSON: You think -- I'm unclear. You think it allows --

MS. GLICK: Yes. The transfer, but the transfer would not restart the lease terms.

MR. SIMPSON: The lease terms. Okay. Do you know -- have you looked at the terms of the lease? How long the varied -- varied wells --

MS. GLICK: We did not get a complete rundown of all of the leases. Some of the -- some of the language also was

intended to clarify that this would not prevent plugging of old lease -- old wells because that is a problem. But we -- in some instances there are lots of abandoned wells and we don't have leases that relate to where they -- they are. So knowing the leases that exist, I'm sure there is -- though we don't have that number today for you -- but there are many abandoned wells all over the State and they are probably in the thousands. They're not active, but they need to be plugged. So part of our language needed to be cleaned up so that there could continue to be activity that would be plugging those old wells.

MR. SIMPSON: Would this affect -- would this bill affect the ability for maybe down the road there's new technology, there's -- for some reason -- I mean, I don't know if you've seen *Landman*, but they've gone in on abandoned wells and gone in and hit it big. And is that -- would this bill allow for that or is this the end of those --

MS. GLICK: Not in these areas. If you -- as I'm sure you know, we're looking at 30x30. And these are State forestlands, wildlife management areas, areas of unique significance. And currently, like reforestation areas are defined as lands devoted to watershed protection, the production of timber and other forest products and for recreation and similar activities. So it's not necessarily consistent with that to have oil and gas production, which requires more infrastructure than would be consistent with these uses.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. So do you know when the last request for a modification or expansion of one of these wells

were?

MS. GLICK: Not off the top of my head.

MR. SIMPSON: Do you know of anything recent or...

MS. GLICK: I don't have that in front of me.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. Do you know if there's any applications pending?

MS. GLICK: I'm sorry, could you repeat that?

MR. SIMPSON: Do you know if there's any applications pending right now currently?

MS. GLICK: No. There are no -- and the lease terms are 10-year terms, so currently we don't have any applications.

MR. SIMPSON: They're all 10-year lease terms?

MS. GLICK: Yes. But in the past they were renewals, and this would at that -- at the end of the lease term in these areas, not everywhere but in these specific areas, once the lease term is expired, then there would not be a renewal allowed.

MR. SIMPSON: Is -- is -- can the same thing be acquired through current regulation from DEC or agency guidance? In other words, DEC has the ability to issue a permit or not issue a permit, and I believe there's been legislation in the past that has banned certain activities, fracking being one of them. So essentially, my question is, is this already banned under the --

MS. GLICK: No.

MR. SIMPSON: -- prior legislation that was passed?

MS. GLICK: No. It -- it -- it's not -- there are no -- there's no statute that bans it. We are doing that in this bill. There is no, to my understanding, any restriction that would prevent DEC from -- in these specific areas. Remember, this is just within reforestation, State forest or wildlife management areas. It's those specific areas. DEC is still open to making leases in other areas.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. So in these leases, do you know if there were -- there was language that was contained within those leases that required remediation?

MS. GLICK: I think all -- (conferencing). I'm -- I'm more familiar with the absolute mining regulations that do require it. But apparently, yes. In these there are reclamation. And probably one would think that there are also plugging of wells. It's just that lots of wells were abandoned long before there were regulations requiring reclamation.

MR. SIMPSON: So I want to ask you about the plugging. There -- they -- there are wells that are not plugged that are just sitting there not being used, or...

MS. GLICK: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. It is a decided problem. There -- we had some Federal dollars -- and these are -- these are wells from, you know, decades ago. So the records are a little unclear and they are -- they're in different types of topography. So what -- there's no specific amount that, *Oh, it only costs X-amount to plug a well*. It requires finding them, and then the topography might make it more expensive in one area from another. And so it's

an expensive operation. And DEC has been working on this, and we did have, from the last Administration, some resources so that it wasn't coming out of State dollars. But it -- and they're finding it basically because people say, *Oh, you know, there's some wells back out there*, which is not necessarily the best way to do it. But with old records or non-existent very old records, it's a big job and there are a lot of them.

MR. SIMPSON: So -- and this is --

MS. GLICK: And some -- and let me just clarify. Some may actually be emitting methane. Some may just be admitting brine. But if they're, you know, near someone's -- not far from a well that somebody has drilled for their water and there's brine seeping out of an old well, that's not a good thing for those folks.

MR. SIMPSON: This is -- just so I am clear. This bill is -- is doing two things: It's effectively ending any future use of wells that are producing gas and oil, gas or oil, and also attempting to identify uncapped, unplugged --

MS. GLICK: It's not to identify. It's to -- it was cleaning up language that would not -- that might have prevented -- inadvertently might have prevented the capping of wells. So that is -- it's not identifying them. That is not the subject of this. It was just cleaning up language to ensure that we did not inadvertently make it more complicated to cap wells.

MR. SIMPSON: So I could reasonably assume that within ten years or less that there will be no more oil or gas extraction

from any wells in these areas identified in this bill?

MS. GLICK: Yeah, I would say that's fair.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. Thank you.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, we're in the midst of an energy crisis in New York, and yes, it began before the Iran conflict. Residents are seeing utility bills skyrocket into thousands of dollars for single-family homes. I spoke to a business just outside of my district that got a \$15,000 increase in their energy bill from the month prior to this month. Our Governor has spoken about embracing what many of us in the Minority Conference have been advocating for: An all-and-above approach towards achieving our climate goals. Goals borne both on environmental stewardship and what we were told since the beginning passage of the CLCPA, in the name of affordability. I don't think we've seen affordability at all.

This bill typifies the contradictory approach this State has had with its conflicting policy goals. We have massive proven reserves of natural gas beneath our feet in the Southern Tier that is dispatchable. We provide jobs, generate wealth and energy security in New York while enabling New York residents lower energy costs. In Pennsylvania just across the border which, by the way, we purchase gas and electric from, they're seeing a 40 percent less cost in their energy. Instead, we're gonna contradict these goals with renewable energy siting on our farms, our fields, ecologically-sensitive areas,

ignoring conservation goals, increasing costs and, more importantly, ignoring communities who do not want battery storage, industrial solar arrays and windmills in their communities. This seemingly benign bill is one more roadblock that restricts opportunities and pushes more agenda policies on our hurting residents.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Ari Brown.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you -- thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MS. GLICK: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you. Good afternoon.

I think we heard from my colleague we can all agree there's affordability issues, specifically when it comes to energy in this State. So I ask, if a gas well falls in the forest and no one's allowed to drill it, does it still reduce heating costs?

MS. GLICK: The -- as near as we could tell, there's less than 1 percent of production that comes out of all of these wells, as best as we could gather from DEC. So this is not a significant contributor to the gas production. And it is -- it should be clear to everyone that renewable energy is actually now costing less than fossil fuels and creating less pollution. So this is a -- not just a minor bill,

but a truly benign bill in that very, very little production comes out of these existing sites. And we are making a decision that our State forests, our wildlife management areas which include, you know, watershed protection areas, should not be the site of industrial oil and gas production. We're not looking at restricting opportunity in other places. This is just those types of areas that the State is trying to preserve for the purposes I previously stated.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Sponsor. I -- I was trying to read the bill and try to see what was allowed and not allowed. So let me just try to get this straight. We're allowed to plant new windmills on these State lands, but not drill for new gas wells. So does that mean this energy policy now depends on how the wind blows?

MS. GLICK: I would say that in some of these instances there may be an edge -- I mean, wind has to be -- you're generally on a ridge. You're not sticking a windmill in the middle of trees because that doesn't make any sense. So some of that's a little bit of a specious argument.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Sponsor.

Madam Speaker, on the bill, please.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. A. BROWN: So the way I see it, this bill is another example of Albany potentially saying no to the very resources that keep our home warm and our economy running. We seem to think that if we ban drilling in New York the fuel will magically

appear from somewhere else, cleaner, cheaper and guilt-free. And if, in fact, a gas well does fall in the forest and no one's allowed to drill it, you know what? It still could have lowered the heating costs of hardworking American families.

New York should be leading with balance, not bans. Conservation should be smart stewardship, not shutting the doors to American energy. Conservation shouldn't mean confiscation of opportunity.

Madam Speaker, New York can protect its forests and fuel its future. We don't have to pretend it's one or the other. And for that reason I will be voting negative on this bill. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Bologna.

MR. BOLOGNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Would the sponsor please yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MS. GLICK: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. BOLOGNA: Thank you, Ms. Glick. Out of curiosity, are you able to then guarantee that ORES is not siting wind and solar on any of the aforementioned in your legislation?

MS. GLICK: I can't guarantee a whole a lot more than what comes out of my mouth. I believe that, as I said before, that it's possible that there is a ridge line that is within the State forestland

that is an appropriate location because it is the ridge line where there is wind and where there are no trees. So I don't want to categorically say that there would be no renewable energy on a ridge line and that that land is not State forest land. So I -- I can't guarantee that. But I would say that it does not make sense for most of these areas, which are largely forested or reforested, to have either oil and gas or renewables because of the infrastructure needed to support either. But it is possible that there is a ridge line that is State forest land that is appropriate for a -- for windmills.

MR. BOLOGNA: So in the interest of that goal, you know, in the interest of transparency, would you agree that it's important that ORES is forthcoming and transparent in obviously siting and telling us where they are putting renewables. And I understand that that's not necessarily part of the actual chapter that we're discussing right now. But I think it's important because as we're talking about energy as a whole, I do think that the public -- you know, as we're doing here with -- with gas and oil -- know specifically where renewables are going and if they are in contrary to any of the environmental protections that we in this building claim to be trying to save.

MS. GLICK: I agree that ORES, which has to go through a siting process, should be more responsive.

MR. BOLOGNA: Good. Well, thank you very much for -- for the -- answering the questions.

Madam Speaker, on the bill. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. BOLOGNA: You know, for the better part of a decade as a staffer for a long time of it, I have watched this Body systematically reduce our energy supply throughout the entire State. And then on the exact same token we have increased our electric demand when 50 percent of our electricity still comes from natural gas.

People, when you decrease supply and increase demand, prices skyrocket and that's what we're experiencing right now. That's not politics, that's basic economics. So I would urge everyone as we continue to actually heed the words of the Governor and actually truly embrace an all-of-the-above platform. Because the only thing that we have done in the past decade is systematically reduce and eliminate natural gas from our energy portfolio and chip away at it piece by piece by piece while giving organ -- agencies like ORES carte blanche to site things wherever they want.

So with that, I will be voting in the negative. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Glick on the bill.

MS. GLICK: Just to close, I -- I want to be clear that the areas that are covered by the bill are State forestlands and our forests which are contained and sequester carbon are important, and yet under threat from climate change stressing a lot of different species throughout the State. And that there are, because of climate

change, more invasives. So the State forestlands, which are really important to produce oxygen at the same time that they are sequestering carbon, we should be protecting them and that's the purpose of this. And wildlife management areas and reforestation areas, those areas are about protecting watershed. There is -- you know, we are blessed in that we have a lot of fresh water which most of the other states envy. And yet, we should be protecting those resources from what is a minimal, a de minimus amount of oil and gas production. To argue that somehow ending these leases over the next number of years is in any way a part of undermining our all-of-the-above agenda is, A, ridiculous, and B, I would hope that we would not see people continue to oppose the expansion of renewable energy which is cheaper, produces less emissions, and is safe. The argument it's not always reliable because it rains sometimes or it's -- the wind isn't blowing. So now the argument is we can't have any battery storage, which would answer the reliability issue, and that, as -- as if gas never catches on fire or blows up a house, where battery storage has very, very defined protections for the public and for those facilities.

So I -- I hope that people understand that this is truly just a minor fix and a minor bill that protects key areas of the State and does not undermine energy production in any significant way.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote has been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minority Conference will, generally speaking, be in the negative on this piece of legislation. But if there are members who wish to vote yes, now would be the time to do so at their seats. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will be supporting this piece of legislation. For those that would like to vote in a different direction, they can do so at their desks.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, I appreciate the dialogue and the debate that occurred. I just want to make a couple of points for the benefit of -- of us all.

Last year when we took up the bill-in-chief we had bipartisan opposition. We had 48 no votes. This was a chapter amendment that was insisted upon by the Governor as a condition to her signing this piece of legislation. So I do take it -- I -- I did think it was important to note that while the Governor has signaled that she's

looking for an all-of-the above approach, this chapter amendment does the opposite. It -- it does not -- it -- it curtails any development of a certain kind of energy that -- so it's not -- it's not looking at an all-of-the-above approach. It's actually limiting production.

Now, we know that fracking is already banned in New York, and some industry folks have said that even if it wasn't, industry would not lease in these particular areas. But still, just based on just the principle of it, I think that to basically allow an organization like ORES to trample on local control and to put solar and wind in sensitive areas if it's their idea, but then at the same token on this chapter amendment further restrict where other kinds of energy development can occur just doesn't make sense to me. I mean, if you just look at the Adirondack Park, it's not just a State forest. It's a six million-acre patchwork of public and private land. And I -- I can't say that in that entire area of over six million acres you couldn't responsibly have some kind of development occurring some place at some point in the future.

So I -- I just can't support this. And I really think that the Governor needs to kind of get her story straight if she's for it or against it. I'll be voting no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh in the negative.

Mr. Novakhov to explain his vote.

MR. NOVAKHOV: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote.

First of all, I -- I can't support something that makes the lives of New Yorkers less affordable. New York is facing a growing energy crisis. Too many New Yorkers are paying hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars per month just to keep the lights on and their homes warm. Natural gas remains the cleanest and most reliable large-scale energy option available to our State today. It produces far fewer emissions than coal and oil, and it can power our homes and businesses at a much more affordable rate. While we continue developing renewable energy -- and no one is against it -- natural gas must remain part of the solution to keep energy reliable and affordable for New Yorkers.

Once again, I cannot support something that makes the lives of New Yorkers less affordable. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Novakhov in the negative.

Mr. Chang to explain his vote.

MR. CHANG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to explain my vote as a negative. You never know, new technologies might mature that might make it even more efficient. Even though fracking has been in the technology for decades, but even prior to that a useless well became very, very useful. And -- and you never know that we have therm -- geothermal energy that might be in those -- in those leased land that we can utilize that.

Until we get commercially-grade [sic] fusion energy,

we must maintain all sources of alternate energy, all sources, to keep our energy affordable. And my constituents are complaining about why our electric rates is [sic] up, and are also questioning about renewable energy as being affordable because there's a lot of tax credits, a lot of energy -- renewables energy company always asks for the State for some subsidies. So really, I think there's a lot of accounting tricks that would account for affordable. Gas and -- and fossil fuel is a mature industry, over 100 years old. Do you know what the pricing would be and do you know how to get that?

So I really question about what's affordability on renewable energy. Let the market forces dictate. Let the market force understand where we want -- where we need our energy. And I explain my vote as no. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Chang in the negative.

Mr. Tague to explain his vote.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just cannot believe the hypocritical nature of this bill. While we are using up hundreds of thousands of productive, tillable prime farmland in Upstate New York, people in this Body supported that. Today we're taking up a bill not to use property for natural gas. I -- I just do not get it. I just do not get it. While people at home have went from \$150 electric bills up to \$500 in the last several months because of the policies that have come out of this Chamber, that Chamber, and the Governor's office, our people are struggling. It's really a shame when

we have these resources right here at home in New York State to take care of the people that we represent and make their lives more affordable, and we do this.

Again, I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Tague in the negative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 4, Rules Report No. 29, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09460, Rules Report No. 29, Rosenthal. An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to actions involving coerced debts; and to amend a chapter of the Laws of 2025 amending the General Business Law relating to establishing a right of action for claims arising out of coerced debts, as proposed in legislative bills numbers S.1353-B and A.3038-B, in relation to the effectiveness thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Rosenthal, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Ms. Rosenthal, an explanation as been requested.

MS. ROSENTHAL: This bill is a chapter amendment to Chapter 710 of the Laws of 2025 which establishes procedures for victims of coerced debt to dispute such coerced debt with creditors and hold their abusers liable for debts incurred.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Bologna.

MR. BOLOGNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Would the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. BOLOGNA: Thank you, Ms. Rosenthal. So before I begin I do just want to make something very clear about my intent here. As Ranking Member on Banks, I'm raising these questions solely to seek clarity for creditors and ensure the practical implementation of this legislation is fully understood. Nothing in my question and/or remarks should be interpret -- interpreted as diminishing the seriousness of domestic violence and abuse in any way, shape, or form or victims. So I just want to get that out of the way right off the bat.

So as far as the chapter is concerned, just so we're clear about the amended bill before us, when a debtor claims that a debt was incurred through coercion within one of the relationships defined in the bill, the creditor must stop collecting review of that claim; is that correct?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, there's a -- there's a whole process, yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. But for -- for the purposes of this, during that review process --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: -- the creditor must pause activity on that debt, correct?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, within ten days of receiving notice from the debtor.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So, yes.

MS. ROSENTHAL: That just gave you more detail.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So in that one form of documentation allowed under -- under the bill, is a sworn statement from a qualified third-party; is that -- is that correct?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. And just so I understand, is that individual who is the qualified third-party, do they -- is there a requirement that they have to have been present for the coerced debt?

MS. ROSENTHAL: No.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So it's just a written statement. It could be a written statement or hearsay?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes. It's -- it's not based on some casual conversation that someone had with their neighbor who happens to be a lawyer. It had to have taken place with the -- the third-party acting in their professional capacity.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. But again, to clarify, they did not have to be physically present for the coercion?

MS. ROSENTHAL: No.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. And if I'm reading the bill

correctly, during the creditor's review of the claim, the bill restricts the creditor from contacting the individual accused of the coerced act; is that accurate?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes, that is.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So now we have the creditor that has to make a determination of coerced debt without necessarily having been there or talking to someone who has been there, in addition to which now they can't talk to the people that they're investigating.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, generally it takes place between the -- the victim and the abuser. So...

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So the creditor has to make a determination based on -- based on legally-defined relationships from witness transactions, and they're prohibited from contacting people that are accused of coercing the debt.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: So how -- how can a creditor be reliably expected to make a determination of whether that debt was actually coerced?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, because the -- the -- the victim presents documentation in evidence of the debt having been coerced.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So respectfully, we're asking a private creditor to make determinations that would normally be made by a court or a social service agency in pretty much any other

circumstance, right?

MS. ROSENTHAL: It could be.

MR. BOLOGNA: I mean, do you see any flaw in that?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Do I see any what?

MR. BOLOGNA: Flaw in that thinking.

MS. ROSENTHAL: This -- this bill is intended to provide a pathway where none existed before for victims of coerced debt.

MR. BOLOGNA: And I'm not necessarily refuting the -- the pathway that you're trying to create. I'm trying to point out -- you know, again, this is a chapter amendment and these things were not necessarily amended in this chapter. So from a practicality standpoint, I'm just trying to gain clarity on what we're actually trying to accomplish here.

MS. ROSENTHAL: I think -- I think you're questioning the basic premise of the bill and the chapter amendment.

MR. BOLOGNA: I would disagree.

MS. ROSENTHAL: However -- however, there -- there are already interactions that take place between creditors and who they think owe the money.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. If -- so if the creditor suspends collection upon receiving documentation but they can't fully investigate the claim, are there any safeguards that exist to prevent the misuse by individuals seeking to avoid legitimate debts?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Okay. So, I have not heard of any cases where someone who's a victim of domestic violence, for example, or someone who's been trafficked or a senior who's been taken advantage of by a caregiver making up so they don't have to pay something. Making things up. That -- that doesn't happen.

MR. BOLOGNA: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you. Did you say that never happened?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I say that doesn't happen that survivors of these kinds of situations make things up; however, there are severe penalties for perjury built into this chapter amendment.

MR. BOLOGNA: All right. So aside from general perjury laws, the bill itself does not create any type of new -- new laws or consequences for somebody who would fabricate a claim, correct? Outside of general perjury.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, a general perjury is -- is a serious claim. Secondly, the creditor may decide based on what they've seen submitted that it's not a coerced debt. They have that option as well.

MR. BOLOGNA: Well, we'll get there. I'm still focusing on the potential of fraudulent claims and what is -- what is being done in this legislation to prevent that. Because I'm not an attorney, but from my understanding perjury charges in a civil case are very rare. So again, I ask just to clarify, there's nothing in this legislation outside of the reliance on perjury to prevent dishonest behavior, correct? There's no extra punishment, no other crimes?

MS. ROSENTHAL: The same as for any other fraudulent claim. And -- and my premise here is that the survivor of abuse is not going to put in the time and effort and dealing with what their abuser did to them, to get out of a debt. That's my premise, that they will not be lying and cheating on this. But there is the perjury hanging over their head.

MR. BOLOGNA: To be very clear, I am not talking about people who are the victims of domestic violence or coerced debt. I am talking about people who are not victims of any of those crimes or any of those situations who would use now this mechanism to get out of a perfectly real and, you know, a legitimate debt that they owe. So there's no scenario in which you could see that someone would ever abuse this?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, as -- as I said, there are internal processes by which the creditor examines the submission by the debtor, and if they decide that they are not valid then they can say, *Sorry, you owe the money.*

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So with that premise, then, under Section 604-ee of the bill, the individual who allegedly caused the coerced debt is held financially responsible for that debt; is that accurate?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: All right. So that means that a creditor, and possibly the debtor if they've already made the payments, could file a lawsuit against an individual to recover that money

assuming it's within the statute of limitations. Is that also an accurate statement?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So to put this in real life terms, if I'm a lender and I make a cost-benefit analysis to determine if it's cheaper for me to just eat the cost of a -- a debt that I lent out because someone may not be able to pay it back. And my other option is going to court, filing litigation; court fees, legal fees. Is it not possible that as a lender my response to this piece of legislation could be tightening my credit standards and limiting my willingness to -- to make loans or making it more difficult to get loans?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I mean, that is -- that is not part of this bill and it's not part of this chapter amendment.

MR. BOLOGNA: Well, I -- I guess what I'm talking about is the implement -- im -- the implements -- the implications of the chapter amendment. Is it not possible to conceive that lenders, based on this in the scenario that I just laid out, would -- would not make credit harder to come by?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I have no idea. You could make up any kind of hypothetical and then theorize the consequences.

MR. BOLOGNA: Ms. Rosenthal --

MS. ROSENTHAL: (Indiscernible/crosstalk.)

MR. BOLOGNA: With all due respect, this isn't a hypothetical.

(Indiscernible/crosstalk)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: We are asking and answering questions, please. Okay? Thank you. For both of you.

MS. ROSENTHAL: The chapter amendment does not address the business practices of a creditor. But this is similar to protections that other states have implemented. So the -- you know, the lending community is similar and this is not unfamiliar to them.

MR. BOLOGNA: Again, respectfully, is it not our job in this building to figure out what the implications of the legislation that we pass are going to be? Is it not our responsibility to ask those questions and how it's going to impact the market? Is that not literally what we're doing here?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I already answered.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. Well, I have a couple more -- again, I thank you for bearing with me. I'm hoping you might be able to clarify two provisions that appear very confusing in this. So, at the top of page 6, Section 604-bb --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: Subsection 4 it says that submitting a request for consideration to the creditor is not required before bringing legal action. But then at the bottom of page 6, top of page 7, Section 604-cc it says that lawsuits cannot be started unless the debtor has submitted a request for reconsideration. These two statements literally say opposite things.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Okay. So there have been discussions about that and it's something that we'll be talking about

addressing after this chapter amendment.

MR. BOLOGNA: So you're suggesting making a chapter to the chapter?

MS. ROSENTHAL: No, it would be a new bill.

MR. BOLOGNA: A new bill. But you're agreeing that these two things say exactly the opposite, right?

MS. ROSENTHAL: It's inconsistent, yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: It's inconsistent. Okay. So if it's inconsistent here and we've made acknowledgements and maybe staff has made acknowledgements, maybe folks who this is going to impact understand that there's literally opposing language in the actual bill, how is the lender supposed to make a determination of what their responsibility is? I mean, the -- the text is wrong.

MS. ROSENTHAL: As I said, we're going to address that, and -- yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: Ms. Rosenthal, in all due respect, I -- I'm not in a position here to be voting on pieces of legislation that are literally contradicting each other. I -- I -- I can't in good conscience end this debate without asking why are -- why are we considering voting on a piece of legislation that we know is wrong without any type of amen -- amendment to it going forward? There's no guarantee of an amendment. Nothing is guaranteed. So why would I sit here and let my colleagues vote on something that is knowingly wrong?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I don't know. You voted for it

in Committee.

MR. BOLOGNA: Because I thought that it was very important to have this discussion right now to bring to light some of the issues in this bill. Because it's very important that our constituents know and have a visible record of what is happening. That is why.

MS. ROSENTHAL: I think you're losing sight of what this chapter amendment does. I already said it's inconsistent. We will fix it and that remains my answer.

MR. BOLOGNA: And I am not disagreeing with you

--

MS. ROSENTHAL: Okay.

MR. BOLOGNA: -- on the basis of the chapter amendment. What I am disagreeing with you on is the fact that this -- this was an oversight that was not fixed, and yet we are still here expected to vote on it.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Okay.

MR. BOLOGNA: Fair enough.

Madam -- thank you very much, Ms. Rosenthal.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. BOLOGNA: Financial coercion and exploitation is a very serious issue, and victims absolutely deserve protection. However, this bill places creditors in a very difficult position. A, it's wrong. But, B, it asks lenders to determine whether coercion occurred within complex family and intimate relationships

defined across multiple statutes. We are asking lenders and creditors to essentially be a court system and a social service system. At the same time, creditors have to rely on documentation that may not relate to the transaction itself, and are restricted from having the ability to investigate those claims.

These determinations are typically made by courts and social service professionals, not by creditors. And for that reason -- and again, it's wrong -- I will be voting in the negative. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield, please?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MS. WALSH: Thank you so much. So I just want to just run through -- I feel like it helps me to understand the bill a little bit better by running through an actual concrete example. So let's say that there -- I guess -- let me start -- before I get into that I just want to clarify that the domestic violence that is involved could be the result of a number of different kinds of relationships, correct? So it could be child/parent, it could be elderly person/caregiver.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes. As -- as I -- I think I said earlier in response, that it could be, you know, domestic violence

between a partner -- but between two partners, but it could also be a trafficking. It could also be a parent/child.

MS. WALSH: Yeah. And the gender is irrelevant, too.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Correct.

MS. WALSH: So let's just say there's an individual who goes to a member of their clergy and sits down with clergy and says, *I was coerced into applying for a credit card.*

MS. ROSENTHAL: Right.

MS. WALSH: *And I was coerced into using that credit card and I racked up a lot of charges on that credit card, but I wouldn't have done it had I not been coerced into doing it.*

MS. ROSENTHAL: Okay.

MS. WALSH: Okay? And then at that point the -- the -- that person who is going to try to make a case that -- that the debt was coerced, and that member of the clergy would then do some kind of a sworn affidavit saying -- and what would that affidavit say? Like, what would be the proof in that affidavit?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I mean, we're not -- we don't -- we don't specify the language, but basically affirming that the victim had told them in their official capacity that they were coerced. And so it's a statement basically saying that.

MS. WALSH: And -- and under the bill, if the -- they only have to -- there's a list of things that can be produced in support of the idea that it's coerced. Only one is required.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Correct.

MS. WALSH: So that -- that affidavit by that clergy member could be the only piece of evidence supported to document the coercive debt.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Correct. But the debtor also has to provide a statement under penalty of perjury that the debt was coerced.

MS. WALSH: Okay. So let me just direct you because I do wanna clear this up for myself. On page 4 of the bill, starting at around line 9... okay. So I see what you're saying. So a sworn or notarized statement by you, the alleged debtor --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: -- under penalty of perjury.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: Okay, that's required. And then -- and then it says,"... provide adequate documentation of coerced debt -- I'm on line 13 -- one -- "... provide one of the following documents", but you may provide more. And the one I'm looking at is a notarized statement, line 21, from a qualified third-party that you reported the coerced debt to.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: So those are the two affidavits that you're referring to --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: -- that would be sufficient to

document the -- or potentially sufficient to support the coerced debt. Okay. But isn't that clergy member -- just following up on the example -- isn't that clergy member just reporting hearsay? Aren't they just saying, *The debtor told me that this was coerced debt*? Aren't -- isn't that person just reporting hearsay from the -- from the allege -- from the debtor?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I mean, we -- and then there are examples here of social workers, attorneys, doctors, nurses, therapists, employees from government, non-profit agencies that work with survivors of violence, members of the clergy, law enforcement officers. These are people who occupy important positions in society.

MS. WALSH: Sure.

MS. ROSENTHAL: And -- and so it's really their reputation on the line as well.

MS. WALSH: But -- and I'm not impugning any of their reputation at all, but all they -- you've already established from prior debate that the individual who's providing that affidavit didn't have to be there and actually be a witness to the coercion. All they have to be a witness to is that the debtor went to them and said, *This debt was coerced*. They're just reporting what they've been told, which is what hearsay is. Is -- isn't it being -- is it -- how is it being offered? Is it being offered for the truth that this was actually coerced debt? I mean, that's the definition of hearsay. Why are we even allowing that to bolster a claim by -- by a debtor that this was coerced debt?

MS. ROSENTHAL: You know, part of the problem is that victims of domestic violence, they are battered physically, emotionally, and often the survivors don't feel like they can go to the police. They feel like the only person they can confide in is a member of the clergy. And that's why we added -- we chose them to be part of the list because they are trusted members of society.

MS. WALSH: And -- and I don't have any question that the individuals that you named are all important people in the community who could provide wonderful support to a person who was a victim of human trafficking or domestic violence. I don't question that in the least. What I'm questioning, though, is why we would allow -- or actually require a -- a statement, a hearsay statement from one of those individuals to bolster what the person is alleging as the debtor? Why do we even -- we wouldn't allow that in court. We wouldn't -- we wouldn't allow that. So why do we -- why do we allow that here?

MS. ROSENTHAL: As I said before, we were looking for people that a domestic violence survivor would have confided in. And we're not assuming that it's hearsay. We're -- we're saying here's a path for a domestic violence survivor who's survived many things, including being forced to take on debt that is not theirs. They have to -- it would be a notarized statement. And as I said earlier, there's still a process. The creditor can still say, *Wait a minute. I don't believe you.* So that's always an option after they do their investigation.

MS. WALSH: Okay. So let's jump to that, then.

Let's say that that is the creditor's decision --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: -- that this -- *We don't find this credible. This doesn't need a preponderance of the evidence for us.*

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: So they deny it. And then -- and then what is -- what's the next step in the process then?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Okay. So -- okay. So what the creditor can do within five days of completing their investigation, they can cease collections or they can recommence collections. And at -- if they decide to recommence, then the -- the alleged debtor has an appeal, one appeal, and the debtor may submit that request to reconsider and provide additional documentation.

MS. WALSH: And is that appeal to the creditor? Is it --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: Okay. So it's not to, like, a court or anything like that.

MS. ROSENTHAL: No, no.

MS. WALSH: Okay. Okay. So they can -- they can ask for reconsideration.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: And -- and then if it's still found to be not credible by the -- or doesn't meet the standard of proof by the

creditor, then the creditor can just continue to go ahead and collect the debt.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: Okay. Is there any -- anything else after that that can happen, or anything beyond that or does it just end then?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I mean, the debtor themselves could go to court and try to get a judgment against their abuser, the person who coerced the debt.

MS. WALSH: Can the -- can the -- the debtor go into court against the -- the -- the creditor and say they made a big mistake, they didn't --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes, to -- they could, to get a declaration from -- from the court that the debt was coerced.

MS. WALSH: That it was coerced.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Correct.

MS. WALSH: And then if that happens --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

MS. WALSH: -- then does the debtor have to pay attorneys' fees to the -- to the alleged debtor?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I believe so. The -- the debtor may be entitled to attorneys' fees.

MS. WALSH: Okay. But in -- does -- is it --

MS. ROSENTHAL: (Indiscernible/crosstalk.)

MS. WALSH: -- written in the bill anywhere?

MS. ROSENTHAL: (Indiscernible/crosstalk)

something the court --

MS. WALSH: Oh, I apologize, I couldn't hear you.

MS. ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry. But that would be something the court would decide whether to award attorneys' fees.

MS. WALSH: I did see something in here about attorneys' fees --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MS. WALSH: -- and actual damages and things like that. That's why I was asking.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But the court would determine that.

MS. WALSH: Right. Right. It's not automatic. I think it says --

MS. ROSENTHAL: No, no.

MS. WALSH: -- shall have a cause of action against the creditor to recover statutory damages of \$1,000, actual damages, if any, and the costs and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred in bringing such action.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

MS. WALSH: Okay. So they do get attorneys' fees, it's just they're gonna be set by the court, whatever that --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Correct.

MS. WALSH: I imagine -- usually the attorneys will submit a bill and says, *This is what I spent on the matter*, and then the

court will decide how much.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Right. And -- and in most cases the survivor is -- is receiving the volun -- the services from a social service agency, for example. So it's probably not some high-powered white-shoe law firm, but, you know, an agency that -- that -- whose mission is to help survivors of domestic violence.

MS. WALSH: Right. Right. Yup, understand. So is there anywhere in the bill anything that says that the creditor gets their attorneys' fees back if this whole thing unfolds and -- and they're found not to have been having done anything wrong? And I would think that a, say it's a bank or a -- a credit card company or, I don't know, I don't who it would be, but they -- they have to just pay for their own attorneys' fees all along here?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Okay. If -- it it's -- if they are going after the abuser, then they get attorneys' fees. Not if they're going after the -- the sur -- the survivor, the alleged debtor.

MS. WALSH: Okay. So could you say that again?
I'm so sorry.

MS. ROSENTHAL: If they're going after the abuser, the coercer, then they may be entitled to attorneys' fees. If they're going after the alleged debtor, or the survivor, then they're not.

MS. WALSH: Then there's -- then -- okay. So I wasn't talking about going after the abuser. I was using an example where it was between the -- the -- the lender, you know --

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. WALSH: -- the creditor or the -- the alleged debtor.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes. So, no.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right.

Do you have any idea -- I was just curious about this -- how many people this could impact? I mean, do you have any data or anything that shows how much coerced debt you think is out there?

MS. ROSENTHAL: You know, it's -- it's really hard to pin that down since they haven't had a pathway. So there have been -- you know, I'm sure survivors speak to a creditor and say, *Listen* -- you know, such agreements are made all the time, so -- but we don't have data it.

MS. WALSH: Okay.

MS. ROSENTHAL: So once this goes into effect, then we can start the process of -- of collecting data on this.

MS. WALSH: Very good.

MS. ROSENTHAL: But we do know that economic abuse and coerced debt are serious issues within the DV community. And you hear more and more about seniors being taken advantage of, and you just, sadly, hear more of this stuff. So I think it will help a wide range of victims.

MS. WALSH: Well, thank you very much for answering my questions.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

MS. WALSH: Madam Speaker, very briefly on the

bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. WALSH: So I think -- I definitely think that this bill comes from a place of good intention. I -- I really do. I -- I think some of the saddest calls that I have gotten in my office are from elderly -- elderly folks that I represent who have been taken advantage of by family members or by caregivers. People who are vulnerable anyway. I -- I -- I had the greatest amount of sympathy for them, and I do think that this bill comes from that place. My problem, I guess, is really -- was with the original bill, and its -- and also this significant, very significant rewrite in this chapter amendment. Because I think as was stated in the previous portion of this debate, there are some problems with the way that the bill is currently written, and I really -- I don't -- I -- while I do credit and feel enormous sympathy for those who have truly been taken advantage of or have been abused, I do think that the sponsor's statement that nobody would make this up, you know -- and -- and I'm paraphrasing -- but the gist was that nobody -- you know, nobody would lie about this. I -- I just don't agree with that. I think that this could be something that could be taken advantage of.

So I think that the bill needs some work. I do think, like I said, that it comes from a good place, but I can't support it in its current form. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Chang.

MR. CHANG: Thank you. Will the sponsor yield, please?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. CHANG: Yes. Thank you. I just wanted to clarify. The -- the debtor and creditor have to be in residence or a location in New York State?

MS. ROSENTHAL: The bill doesn't specify.

MR. CHANG: If we're only applying for State law, what happened [sic] if the creditor is across a different state? Would this have an application for this coerced debt?

MS. ROSENTHAL: I mean, if they're doing business in New York this would apply to them.

MR. CHANG: Okay. Now, what happened [sic] if the creditor sold that paper to another party, let's say to a collection agency or some other third-party in a different state, would this be apply [sic] them?

MS. ROSENTHAL: If -- if they're doing business in New York State, yes.

MR. CHANG: If they're not?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Then -- then they're not.

MR. CHANG: Okay. So for this -- I appreciate what you write the bill [sic], you know, especially for domestic violence

and -- and I have heart for that and we need to protect the innocent and being coerced. But we need better language for this. Because I -- because debt can be easily sold to commercial widely and freely. They don't need to hold this. And what happened [sic] if they go out to a different state and sold it and -- to another collector. So they could ignore with coerced debt.

MS. ROSENTHAL: No. No. I mean, they're just transferring the problem to someone else, but it's still pertains to business in New York.

MR. CHANG: But only if it's New York --

MS. ROSENTHAL: By the way, collection agencies almost always negotiate a deal, so I think they're -- they're used to -- to that kind of interaction.

MR. CHANG: But you say only they do business in New York State. They can go to different states and sold [sic] the paper. And how would that solve this problem to -- to the -- to the debtor? How does the debtor have some protection? If it's coerced if you have, you know, that language only for -- for business in New York State?

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, here it says -- it says here in -- on page 5, if the creditor is also a debt collector or debt collection agency notify -- they have to notify the original creditor that it has ceased collection activities because the debt was found to be coerced. So they have an obligation to tell the agency that they're selling the debt to that they have this business here in New York.

MR. CHANG: But it's not -- see, you're based on debt collection. All right? They [sic] doing collection for the -- for the creditor. We're talking about selling the paper. Selling the paper to a new ownership.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

MR. CHANG: Then how does [sic] the debtor able to communicate to the -- to the new creditor and the new creditor may be in a different state and doesn't have any business in New York.

MS. ROSENTHAL: The same way you'd communicate with them -- because many of them you'd communicate by e-mail, for example. Or --

MR. CHANG: Does that --

MS. ROSENTHAL: You'd call -- I -- I think this is all a hypothetical. I -- I said if it's doing -- if they're doing business here in New York it applies to them. I think that's simple, but that's the answer.

MR. CHANG: But that's only for doing business in New York. For the person -- for the creditor. So there's no protection if -- if all that transaction is done outside of New York or outside the country.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Well, I -- I think I've answered this, and I think as I said earlier, hypotheticals wander into territory that we're not even contemplating. The bill doesn't contemplate hypotheticals. I think you're making it a little more complicated than it actually is.

MR. CHANG: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Thank you.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

MR. CHANG: On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. CHANG: In the current form it's flawed, but thank you. The sponsor is trying to do protecting the debtor itself for coerced debt. But it needs some work on -- on the bill. As my fellow colleague Ms. Walsh said, that it needs -- it needs some work and I will vote no on this, this current form because it creates too much conflict. If the bill does pass, it creates too much conflict for -- for lawyers and -- and the court to figure out what's -- what should be a clear path.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote has been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minority Conference will generally be in the negative on this piece of legislation; however, there may be some exceptions, and those individuals, those people can certainly vote yes at their seats at this time.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will be in the affirmative on this piece of legislation. For those that would like to vote differently, they can do so at their desks.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Rosenthal to explain her vote.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote.

I -- I want to ensure that the -- the purpose of the bill -- the purpose of the chapter amendment is to help a victim of coerced debt have a path to challenging the burdensome debt that they were forced to incur by their abuser. The -- the -- that sort of got muddy during the debate. Creditors have access to many resources, as they did during this chapter amendment. It is the abused, the survivors, who need assistance, and their lives are ruined often. The last thing that they are thinking of is how to fool a creditor. They're actually trying to rebuild their lives and get out from under this kind of economic abuse which their abuser foist upon them to control them and keep them stuck, and stuck to them forever. And so this provides a path for them. The creditor has enough opportunity to decide, *I*

don't believe you, but the -- the victim also has the opportunity to provide documentation that says, *This was forced upon me*.

So for that reason I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Rosenthal in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Madam Speaker, do we have further housekeeping or resolutions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: We do have a piece of housekeeping.

On a motion by Ms. Woerner, page 38, Calendar No. 240, Bill No. A09113-A, the amendments are received and adopted.

We have a privileged resolution by Mr. Meeks. The Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1036, Mr. Meeks.

Legislative Resolution recognizing Tuesday, March 10, 2026 as Harriet Tubman Day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Meeks on the resolution.

MR. MEEKS: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for an opportunity to speak on this resolution.

Whereas, Harriet Ross Tubman was an American heroine and patriot who faithfully served her country and liberated her people; her tireless efforts to attain freedom for those enslaved and her dedication to stop the inhuman -- inhuman practice of slavery should be recognized and celebrated. It is only fitting to pay tribute to an American heroine who sacrificed everything for the well-being of people and her country.

And whereas, in June of 2003, legislation to make March 10th a day of commemoration was signed into law; March 10th recognizes the lifetime achievements and the historical legacy established by Harriet Tubman and her many accomplishments throughout the State of New York.

And whereas because of her color and her status as a slave, Harriet Tubman was denied the opportunity to learn and to read or write. Nevertheless, she was able to rise above the limitations which were placed on her as a slave and as a Black woman.

And whereas, in the mid-1850s, Harriet Tubman made the acquaintance of United States Senator, Secretary of State and former New York Governor, Governor William H. Seward and his wife Frances in Auburn, New York. In 1857 the Searwards provided a home for her in Auburn, which she sold -- which they sold to her later.

And whereas, this home will become the new base of operations for the Underground Railroad. When the Civil War began, Harriet Tubman was able to liberate hundreds of her people to

freedom through this efficient network. She was proud to claim that she never ran her train off the track and never lost a passenger.

Whereas, during the Civil War Harriet Tubman served in the Union Army in South Carolina, first as a cook and a nurse, and later as a scout for raiding parties and a spy behind Confederate lines. After her service in the Union Army, she returned to Auburn, New York, where she lived the remaining years of her life. In 1903, she transferred ownership of her property to the A.M.E. Zion Church.

And whereas, Harriet Tubman's death on March 10, 1913, the Church developed and managed her home and adjacent -- adjacent property in order to sustain her memory. She was buried in the Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, New York, with full military honors. Currently, the Harriet Tubman home and property are registered as a national historic landmark in Auburn, and the site is also part of the National Park Service Freedom Trail.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity to speak to our great ancestor Harriet Tubman, the great work that she's done to free her people and to serve the United States of America.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed, no. The resolution is adopted.

We have a number of resolutions before the House. Without objection, these resolutions will be taken up together.

On the resolutions, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed no. The resolutions are adopted.

(Whereupon, Assembly Resolution Nos. 1029-1033 and 1035 were unanimously adopted.)

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: I now move that the Assembly stand adjourned, and that we will reconvene at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 11th, tomorrow being a Session day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On Mr. Fall's motion, the House stands adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 4:16 p.m., the House stood adjourned until Wednesday, March 11th at 11:00 a.m., that being a Session day.)