WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026 11:05 A.M.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The House will come to order.

Good morning. It's still morning. Good morning, colleagues. Wonderful to see you.

We will open with a prayer from Bishop Mark O'Connell.

BISHOP O'CONNELL: Almighty God, source of all wisdom and compassion, we gather here in the halls of the New York State Assembly, mindful of the profound responsibility resting upon the shoulders of these public servants. We ask for Your presence to guide their hearts and minds as they deliberate on behalf of the millions who call New York home.

Grant the members of this Assembly, the State Senate

and our Governor a renewed spirit of clarity and perseverance. In this season of complex decisions and vital negotiations, we pray for the grace to find common ground. May the dialogue within these walls be marked by a deep civility and the shared sense of purpose ensuring that the spirit of consensus prevails for the common good.

We ask for a special blessing upon the most vulnerable amongst us; those whose voices are often the quietest, yet whose needs are the most urgent. Let their wellbeing be the steady compass that directs every deliberation.

In a world and a society often fractured by discord, we pray for peace, peace for our global community, peace across our nation and peace within our neighborhoods. We stand together in the rejection of all forms of violence, choosing instead the pass of unity and mutual respect.

May we be inspired by the work of the bridge builder, focusing our energies on creating connections rather than barriers. Let us strive to build these -- those lasting spans of understanding that allow us to reach across differences and serve the people with a single dedicated heart.

May the work of this day unite us in purpose, inspire us with courage, and bless the work of this Session. May it bear fruit that honors Your creation and serves all people with integrity and mercy.

Amen.

MEMBERS: Amen.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Visitors are invited to join the 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 Tuesday, April 28th --

MS. LUNSFORD: Ms. Speaker, I move to dispense with the further reading of the Journal of Tuesday, April 28th and that the same stand approved.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Without objection, so ordered.

MS. LUNSFORD: I would like to begin today with a quote and as I hail from Rochester so does this quote.

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

From Rochester's own, Frederick Douglass.

May I have the members' attention so that we can announce the schedule for the day? Members have on their desk a main Calendar and a debate Calendar. After any housekeeping and/or introductions, we'll begin our floor work by taking up Calendar resolutions on page 3, including one by Mr. Santabarbara in association with today's Legislative Disability Awareness Day.

We will then take up the following bills on consent:

Calendar No. 146 by Mr. Hevesi, Calendar No. 312 by Ms. Paulin, Calendar No. 336 by Mr. Burdick and Calendar No. 337 by Ms. Lunsford. After that we will then take up the following bills ON debate: Calendar No. 222 by Ms. Pheffer Amato, Calendar No. 257 by Mr. Magnarelli and Calendar No. 292 by Mr. Weprin.

Our principal work of the day will be to take up our three Legislative Disability Awareness Day packages. These bills will include Calendar No. 25 by Ms. Buttenschon, Calendar No. 94 by Ms. Kelles and Calendar No. 150 by Mr. Santabarbara.

In addition, we will be calling for the following committees to meet off the floor today: Ways and Means and Rules. These committees will produce an A-Calendar, which we will take up today.

I will announce any further floor activity as we proceed. So with that as the general outline, Ms. Speaker, let us begin with any housekeeping and/or introductions.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you. We have no housekeeping this morning but a few introductions. We will start with Mr. McDonald for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. MCDONALD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today Bishop Mark O'Connell, our new Bishop here in the Albany Catholic Roman Diocese opened us in prayer and we thank him for being here.

Born in Toronto to Americans, he was raised in Massachusetts, Bishop O'Connell is a graduate of Boston College and

St. John's Seminary. Ordained to the Priesthood in 1990, he has served in parish ministry, advanced canonical studies in Rome and held key leadership roles within the Archdiocese of Boston including Judicial Vicar and faculty member at St. John's Seminary.

Ordained a Bishop in 2016, he served as Regional Bishop of the North Region and currently serves as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia. I forgot to mention that he is joined today by many of our members: Member Walsh, Member Woerner, Member Angelino, Barrett, Bendett, Maher, Miller, Romero, Santabara -- Santabarbara, Simpson, Smullen, Steck, Tague and Walsh, again.

So, Madam Speaker, it's an honor, Bishop, for you to be here and we thank you.

When we first met, he talked about his mission is to reach out and meet all the 126 parishes, the several prisons throughout our diocese and at the same token, his mission is to build bridges.

Thank you, Bishop, for being here.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. McDonald, the Capital Region Delegation, the Speaker and all members, welcome, Bishop, to the Assembly Chamber, our People's House, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings today. Thank you so very much for your patience this morning. I'm sure that's in your line of business you -- you hear that a lot so we thank you very much. Congratulations on all of the hard work that do you on behalf of the Catholic Diocese and thank you so very much for joining us today.

BISHOP O'CONNELL: Thank you. Thank you. It's an honor.

(Applause)

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

MS. WOERNER: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to make an introduction today. I am thrilled to be joined in the Chamber today by someone who is really been a friend for several decades. We met when we both lived in California. I worked for Julie Furey for a number of years and I have to say, she taught me a lot of what I know today about how to be -- how to have a strong work ethic, how to speak in public, which as you can tell is something that we all have to do.

Julie has recently relocated to Saratoga Springs. She and her husband, Tom, are horse owners. This is -- we're on the eve of the Kentucky Derby. They are part owners in a former Kentucky Derby winner, Animal Kingdom. She is a small businessowner, an entrepreneur and a very active community member and I'm thrilled that she has joined me today to see how State government works.

And so, Madam Speaker, if you will offer her the cordialities of the House, I would much appreciate it.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Ms. Woerner, the Speaker and all members, welcome to the Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings today. Carrie is exceptional so thank you for

all of the wonderful things that you have done to get her to this point and welcome to the Capitol Region. We hope you enjoy being here with us today. Thank you.

(Applause)

Ms. Seawright for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. SEAWRIGHT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to introduce a very special guest, Coach Ryan Martin, who is here today with three of his basketball players. He is Director of the CUNY Adaptive Sports Program, here as a part of Legislative Disability Awareness Day.

I ask that we please welcome Coach Ryan Martin, players Lance Lee (phonetic), Kahlil Harriet (phonetic) and Jonathan Paguae (phonetic). And I highly encourage you to attend one of their wheelchair basketball games. It's a -- a great, great, exciting afternoon. So I ask that you extend to them the cordialities of the House.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Ms. Seawright, the Speaker and all members, welcome, coach and players, to the Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings today. Wonderful programming that you have and exciting to see you here today. So keep up all of the great work in academics and obviously athleticism. Thank you so very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Mr. Reilly for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. REILLY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to interrupt the -- the proceedings to introduce Alan Grande, New York City Transit employee, retired; Bobby Nash, New York City Transit employee, retired and Keith Leboxu, Local 46 Ironworker. These individuals were one of the first responders in 9/11. Twenty-five years later and we're still advocating for those impacted with health issues due to that horrendous day.

Many of us, if not all of us in this Chamber, have been impacted and seen or know someone who has been impacted by 9/11, whether we lost someone on that day or whether we are continuously losing them due to these health concerns. It's a battle that we continue to fight each and every day. These three men are just a symbol of the fight for the people that are we -- that we are losing.

Even though they may be struggling with their own health conditions, they are fighting for everyone and I commend them for all their efforts.

Madam Speaker, please welcome them to the People's House.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. Reilly, the Speaker and all members, welcome, sirs, to our Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Definitely hope you enjoy our proceedings today, but most importantly, thank you for your longstanding service to our community, the MTA and obviously the New York City area. Thank you for your gracious and heroic

work. We appreciate you being here today. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Ms. Paulin for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. PAULIN: Yes, hi. Thank you so much, Miss Speaker, for allowing me to interrupt the proceedings and introduce the fine Mayor of the great City of White Plains. Justin Brasch is newly in that position, for four months, but he is not new to the community nor to public service. He has been on the City Council for years and was President of the City Council before running.

So -- so although we know he is new to the position of Mayor, we know he's gonna do a -- a great job and we appreciate him visiting us today in the People's House.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Ms. Paulin, the Speaker and all members, welcome, Mayor, to the Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings today. Congratulations to you on your big move. Important role and we are all here to support you. So thank you very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Mr. McDonald for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. MCDONALD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to welcome to the Chamber the fifth grade class from the Rensselaer City School District. Madam Speaker, they are -- are here doing a tour of all the Capitol facilities, then they've been to the State Museum, they've visited the Senate and they've been here for about an

hour or two here in the Assembly waiting for the proceedings to start like -- just like the members. And hopefully they'll get a chance to witness a little history while we're here.

Please extend them the courtesies of the House.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. McDonald, the Speaker and all members, welcome young people to our Assembly Chamber. This is the People's House of the New York State Legislature, we extend to you the privileges of the floor. It's wonderful to see young people here; citizenry in action. It's something that you will be able to go home and tell all of your friends and family that you were sitting in the Assembly Chamber watching how legislation gets introduced and passed. So put this on your bucket list that you've done this already in life. We thank you so very much for joining us and best wishes to you in all of your future academic endeavors. Thank you for joining us today.

(Applause)

Resolutions, page 3, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1231, Mr. Burdick.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 24, 2026, as Student Empowerment Day 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. 1232, Mr. Santabarbara.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 29, 2026, as New York State Assembly Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Santabarbara on the resolution.

MR. SANTABARBARA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today we recognize Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day here in New York State. This resolution is about recognizing people with disabilities. Not just for the challenges that they face, but for their contributions, their independence and their role in every part of our communities. I share a passion for these issues like so many other families joining us here today. Not just at the -- as the Chair of the Committee on People with Disabilities, but also as the father of a son with disabilities.

My son, Michael, he's 24. He has autism and he's faced many of the challenges that we're talking about here today. He's joined us here in the Chamber many times over the years, along with so many other passionate self-advocates. And our journey together has given me a firsthand understanding of how important it is that we get this right. Because when you live that experience, you gain a different perspective. You see where support exists, but you also see where it falls short and you understand how important it is to have those voices included in the decisions that impact our lives. That's

what this day represents. It brings together self-advocates, families, providers from across New York State. People helping shape solutions to help move this work forward. And it also reminds us that inclusion isn't just something that we talk about, it's something that we have a responsibility to act on. So today we pause not just to recognize, but to recommit, to listening, to improving and making sure our work reflects the needs of the people that we serve.

I'm pleased to bring this resolution forward, Madam Speaker, and I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Pirozzolo on the resolution.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to speak. I'd like to thank our sponsor for bringing up this resolution. It is very important and I'd like to be able to use the bill -- Disability Awareness Day in context to some of the things, you know, that we do here. We have an option now of improving the quality of life of many of our disabled people and then sometimes, only certain sections of disabled people, or certain categories. And I find it a little bit disheartening sometimes when we do things that we don't really want to be inclusive to everybody, that sometimes we center some groups as being worthy of getting something and some groups being not worthy of getting something.

So I would like to say that in the spirit of the New

York State Assembly Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day that we move forward together as a group and allow all disabled persons to be able to communicate to what comes best to them. Whatever methods that they use, they should be allowed to use. The New York State Assembly should not be restricting that.

So thank you very much for bringing this forward and I will support you in anything that you're doing as far as increasing the disability -- the awareness of disabled persons.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Giglio on the resolution.

MS. GIGLIO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today in support of Assembly Resolution No. 1232 memorializing the Governor to proclaim April 29, 2026, as Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day in the State of New York. As the Ranker for disabil -- for the Committee for People with Disabilities, this day is an important opportunity for us as a legislative Body to recognize and uplift the voices of individuals with disabilities, their families and the advocates who work tirelessly on behalf of them.

It is also a reminder of our responsibility to ensure that our laws, policies and communities reflect the principles of inclusion, accessibility and equality. Individuals with disabilities contribute in countless ways to our society; socially, economically and culturally. Their perspectives strengthen our communities and their resilience continues to inspire meaningful change. Yet despite this,

many still face barriers that limit full participation in everyday life whether in education, employment, transportation or access to services.

Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day is not just about recognition, it is about action. It is about listening to the disability community and ensuring that their voices are at the center of the decisions we make in this Chamber every day. It is about advancing thoughtful legislation that addresses real challenges and creates real opportunities. As we consider the package of legislation associated with this day, we reaffirm our commitment to promoting independence, empowerment and integration for all individuals with disabilities. We also acknowledge the work that still lies ahead and the importance of continued collaboration with advocates and stakeholders.

Today we stand together to recognize the dignity, value and contributions of every individual and to recommit ourselves to building a more inclusive and accessible New York for all. I am proud to support this resolution and I urge my colleagues to do the same and I want to thank the sponsor for bringing it forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Sempolinski on the resolution.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I rise in support of the resolution. I thank the Chairman of the Disabilities Committee for bringing it. I thank my ranking member on

the Disabilities Committee, Ms. Giglio, for her remarks and I'm very proud to serve as the other Minority member on the People with Disabilities Committee. And this is just a -- a wonderful time to take a moment and think of our people, our friends, our neighbors, our family members, in the disability community and what we can do unified as one here in Albany to make their lives a little bit better.

So I -- I gladly support the resolution and I thank the Chairman for bringing it forward.

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. 1233, Ms. Lunsford.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 29, 2026, as Fentanyl Awareness Day 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. 1234, Mr. Lemondes.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 29, 2026, as Undiagnosed Rare Disease Day in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Lemondes on

the resolution.

MR. LEMONDES. Thank you. I would ask you all to remember the Bishop's prayer as I read this.

Madam Speaker, may I begin?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: (Indiscernible).

MR. LEMONDES. Thank you. The resolution's purpose is to recognize the unique challenges of both victims of undiagnosed diseases and conditions and their families who seek answers oftentimes for the rest of their lives.

In 2016, the year of my daughter Elly's death at 16, the Rare and Undiagnosed Network began its awareness campaign for annual recognition on April 29th. Moreover, the associated bewilderment with rare and undiagnosed conditions leaves patients, parents, extended family and caregivers alike in uncomfortable positions. As all families have tragedy of some type, they're usually easier to accept and move on from when you know why. However, when you don't, you find yourself in a very restless and oftentimes perpetually vulnerable position.

As I have sat many times at my daughter's deathbed not knowing if she would survive the night, I was always surprised to see the angel's descend to help. These are the people you wouldn't expect, but are comforted by in recognition that you may not be as alone as you think. To all of them, I offer an eternal thank you.

Similarly, patients plagued by these conditions need extra advocacy as they and their families experience every form of

discrimination imaginable; subtle, overt, unintended, sometimes deliberate. Oftentimes with no precedent to fall back on, there is limited advocacy for them which further exacerbates their care, comfort, education, sometimes jobs and ability to earn a living and end-of-life care as well.

In closing, the burden of uncertainty is so stark that it impacts several other aspects of life for all of those in the circle of people afflicted by these conditions. Please join me in recognizing the unique challenges of those suffering from rare and/or undiagnosed conditions, the burdens on their families, the power of the human soul and all things good.

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. 1235, Mr. Hevesi.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 30, 2026, as Adverse Childhood Experiences Awareness Day 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. 1236, Mr. Tague.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 30, 2026, as Therapy Animal Day in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Tague on the resolution.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My colleagues, I rise today to honor and celebrate the remarkable impact of therapy animals on the lives of so many. These fury [sic], feathered, or scaled friends aren't just pets, they are sources of comfort, joy and healing. Their presence can reduce stress, alleviate anxiety and even improve physical health. For individuals facing challenges, be it illness, trauma or loneliness, the unconditional love and general support of a therapy animal can be transformative.

Veterans working through PTSD, children in need of support following a period of trauma or senior citizens in the need of companionship and company, these are the people that rely on constant and immediate care that domesticated animals can provide. We should continue to encourage and support that healing.

Therapy animals offer a unique form of emotional support, bridging communication gaps and fostering connections. They are ambassadors of hope, reminding us of the healing power of nature and the profound bond that we share with the animal kingdom.

So let's take this day to express our gratitude to these remarkable creatures and the dedicated people who were -- who work alongside of them making a real difference in the lives of others.

Please join me in supporting this great resolution for our therapy animals.

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. 1237, Mr. K. Brown.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2026, as Co-Occurring Disorders Awareness Month in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Brown on the resolution.

MR. K. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to present this resolution today, to proclaim April of 2026 as Co-Occurring Disorders Awareness Month in the State of New York. It's my hope that when I'm not here next year that somebody's going to take up this resolution on a yearly basis.

A co-occurring disorder, also known as dual diagnosis, is the condition of having mental illness in a comorbid substance use disorder. According to the Federal Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administrations 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, approximately 21 million adults in the United States have a co-occurring disorder. People with mental illness are more likely to experience a substance use disorder than those not

affected by a mental illness. No specific combinations of mental and substance use disorders are defined uniquely as co-occurring disorders. The presence of two or more disorders can complicate diagnosis and treatment and integrating both screening and treatment for mental and substance use disorders leads to better quality of life and health outcomes for those living with co-occurring disorders by treating the whole entire person.

Increased awareness leads to early detection and can ultimately saves [sic] lives as timing is critical. Early detection and integrated treatment can together improve outcomes and quality of life for people with co-occurring disorders. It's imperative that there be greater awareness of this serious health condition and more must be done to continue to break down the barriers between the Office of Mental Health and OASAS to increase activity at the local, state and national levels.

I want to thank my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to speak on this and supporting this important resolution.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Steck on the resolution.

MR. STECK: I just would like to thank Mr. Brown for his work on this issue. When I first became Chair of the Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, which is actually its name, notwithstanding our efforts to change it, we held hearings on the issue. We have also succeeded in putting an additional budget line

in for the -- for various programs that provide services to people with co-occurring disorders. On the other hand, we are somewhat hamstrung in what we can do by the existence of the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee because the Legislature no longer has direct control over how to spend the revenue in this particular area.

But, again, thank you to Mr. Brown for his tireless work on the issue.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Sempolinski on the resolution.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I -- I want to rise as the ranking member of Mental Health and thank Mr. Brown for his work on this issue. As the two committee rankers that have to deal with the -- the two co-ing sides of it, Mr. Brown obviously is retiring, he's not running for reelection. So I just want to say to him thank you on behalf of the people of the State of New York for being one of the loudest voices raising awareness on co-occurring disorders.

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. 1238, Mr. DeStefano.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2026, as Bullying Prevention Month in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. DeStefano on the resolution.

MR. DESTEFANO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I promise this will be the last resolution this week. I promise you that.

April is Bullying Prevention Month. It is an important issue that affects schools, workplaces and communities. Bullying can include physical harm, name calling, threats, spreading rumors, or excluding others. It causes emotional pain, lowers self-esteem and can lead to anxiety, depression and poor academic performance. No one should have to live in fear because of the action of others.

Prevention bullying begins with education awareness. Children and adults need to understand that words and actions can deeply hurt others. Schools can teach kindness, respect and empathy for -- from an early age. Rules against bullying along with strong consequences can help create a safer environment for everyone. Parents, teachers and community leaders will play an important role in bullying prevention. They should encourage open communication so victims feel comfortable speaking up, bystanders should be also taught to report bullying and support those being targeted rather than staying silent. Technology has also created cyberbullying which can -- can happen through social media, texting or online platforms. Because online bullying can happen at any time, it is important to teach responsible -- responsible digital behavior and monitor online activity.

In conclusion, bullying prevention requires

teamwork, compassion and accountability. By standing together against bullying, we can build a society where every person feels safe, respected and valued.

I want to thank my colleagues for joining me in supporting this important resolution.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh on the resolution.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the sponsor for bringing forward this resolution that will memorialize the Governor to proclaim April of 2026, as Bullying Prevention Month. You know, I just couldn't resist the opportunity. We spoke about -- I spoke about it yesterday on the floor, I'm going to speak about it again. Yesterday we took up a bill that would require that parents be immediately notified if a child is suspected to have been abused at school. And I have a bill, Jacobe's Law, it's Assembly Bill No. A00945. I've carried it for a few years. It would require that parents be notified if their child is being bullied at school. And as the sponsor just indicated, there are lots of different ways that students could be bullied. Some of them are going to be online and off school hours and would not be something that the school personnel might know about, but if -- it just seems to me as a parent myself that if your child is being bullied, wouldn't you want to know? I -- it -- it just seems like a very common sense bill to get done. And I'm hoping that somebody - and I'm looking to my right here, to the other side of the

aisle, I -- I would really love it if somebody could pick that bill up and get it done because we can proclaim months being Bullying Prevention Month but really -- what would really help would be legislation that would required minimally as a baseline that if a child is being bullied at school that the parents are notified. You would want to know, I would want to know and I -- I think that that's just the very least that we can do.

So I thank the sponsor for bringing this forward. I really hope to see some movement on some practical legislation to make that a reality.

Thank you very much, 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. 1239, Ms. McMahon.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2, 2026, as Polonia Day 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. 1240, Ms. Reyes.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor

Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2026, as Workers' Awareness Month in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Reyes on the resolution.

MS. REYES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today we come together with a shared purpose to recognize the dignity of work, the rights of workers and the responsibility we all carry to ensure safe, fair and respect -- and respectful workplaces across our State. As we proclaim May 2026, as Workers' Awareness Month and designate May 1st as May Day in the great State of New York, it is a time to reaffirm that every worker regardless of industry, background, or role deserves to return home safely at the end of each day. They deserve the ability to put food on the table and to keep a roof over their family's head. They deserve to have justice and liberation from oppressive systems that seek to elevate profit for the few at the expense of the welfare for the many. It is the time to elevate awareness about workplace rights, protections and the importance of fair wages, safe conditions and mutual respect.

Workers are the backbone of New York. From construction sites to classrooms, from hospitals to small businesses, their dedication drives our economy and strengthens our communities. But with that contribution comes a shared obligation to protect them, to inform them and to empower them.

Workers' Awareness Month reminds us that knowledge is power. When workers and the response -- and their

representatives understand their rights, they are better equipped to advocate for themselves and others. When employers prioritize safety and fairness, everyone benefits from increased productivity and stronger workplaces. Too many workers still face unsafe conditions, wage violations or barriers to speaking up.

This month challenges us not only to acknowledge these realities, but to actively work towards solutions. So throughout May, especially on the first of the month, May Day, let us educate, engage and uplift. Let us strengthen partnerships between government, labor organizations and employers and let us recommit ourselves to building a New York where every worker is valued, protected and heard. Together we can ensure that Workers' Awareness Month is not just a moment, but a movement. Happy May Day to all workers here in New York and abroad.

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. 1241, Ms. Rajkumar.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim July 23, 2026, as Egyptian Heritage Day 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 20, Calendar No. 146, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A05893-A, Calendar No. 146, Hevesi, Meeks, Zinerman. An act to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to allowing prospective and current agency personnel complete training through remote training methods.

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.

Page 33, Calendar No. 312, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A02425-A, Calendar No. 312, Paulin. An act to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to payments of certain expenses by adoptive parents.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: 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.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 35, Calendar No. 336, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10160-A, Calendar No. 336, Burdick, Simon, Otis. An act to amend the Public Service Law, in relation to requiring public assistance payments for residential gas and electric service are accepted and credited by utilities.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

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.

Page 35, Calendar No. 337, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10393-A, Calendar No. 337, Lunsford. An act to amend the Civil Practice Law and Rules, in relation to defining satisfaction of judgment and authorizing satisfactions to be filed on affirmation.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last

section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 60th 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.

Page 7, Calendar No. 25, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A00688, Calendar No. 25, Buttenschon, DeStefano, Hevesi, Pheffer Amato, Sayegh, Simon, Shimsky, Santabarbara, Colton, Steck. An act to amend the Executive Law, in relation to providing minimum basic training related to handling emergency situations involving individuals with any physical and/or developmental disability to all firefighters.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Buttenschon to explain her vote.

MS. BUTTENSCHON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This piece of legislation is to provide parity across the State of New

York for individuals that may be seeking assistance from our first responders in a great time of need. I am very fortunate in the district that I represent that training is provided in a manner to ensure individuals with disabilities are cared for. However, this is not across the State of New York and this bill will just ensure that best practices by many of our fire departments will be shared across the State as those emergencies arise and may include an individual with disabilities.

So again, I thank you for the time and I will be supporting this legislation.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Buttenschon in the affirmative.

(Pause)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 14, Calendar No. 94, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A02589-A, Calendar No. 94, Kelles, Lupardo, Jacobson, Meeks, Santabarbara, Otis, Seawright, Simon, Steck, Davila, Reyes, Colton, Angelino, Burdick, Weprin, Shimsky, De Los Santos. An act to amend the Civil Rights Law, in relation to waiving the State's sovereign immunity to claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

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.

Page 21, Calendar No. 150, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A06021-B, Calendar No. 150, Santabarbara, Burdick, Griffin, Sempolinski, Ramos, Walsh, Zinerman, Sayegh, Giglio, Weprin, Lee. An act establishing the "Blue-Ribbon Commission on the Future of New York State's Service Delivery System for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Act"; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon the expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Santabarbara to explain his vote.

MR. SANTABARBARA: Thank you, Madam

Speaker. This bill is about moving New York's developmental disabilities service system forward. It reflects a shared commitment to strengthening support for individuals and families by improving access, building a stronger workforce, expanding housing opportunities and planning for the future. It brings the right people to the table; self-advocates, families, providers and experts to focus directly on these challenges and drive real solutions forward, because if we're serious about improving the system, we have to be willing to take a hard look at what's working and what's not working. That's exactly what this bill does. This is about making the system more coordinated, more responsive and better aligned with the needs of the people that it serves.

Families are looking for stability, for clarity and a system that they can always count on. Individuals with developmental disabilities deserve the support they need to live with dignity, with independence and with opportunity and we have a responsibility to deliver it. This bill moves that work forward and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Santabarbara in the affirmative.

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the sponsor. I know that this is a bill that we've taken up a few times now and it has passed unanimously and I will continue to

support it. I would just say that one of the implications of the bill is that there are undetermined costs to OPWDD. Here we are in the middle of budget negotiations. I just want to be sure that as we -- as we move forward, as we consider all of these really important issues, that OPWDD has the funds and funding to be able to do quality work here. I think that it's -- it's very, very important.

So I hope that as we vote for it, I hope that as we get through our -- our budget process that OPWDD does get the funding that they need to deliver what we need them to deliver to really help us to have a fuller understanding of this very, very important topic.

I'll be yes.

Thank you.

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 26, Calendar No. 222, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08436, Calendar No. 222, Pheffer Amato, Sayegh. An act to amend the Civil Service Law, in relation to resolution of disputes in the course of collective negotiations.

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

An explanation has been requested.

Ms. Pheffer Amato.

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Thank you. This bill would require subsidies of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority, the Capitol District Transportation Authority and the Central New York Transportation Authority and their employees to submit all unresolved contract negotiations to binding arbitration.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Sempolinski.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for a couple questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Absotootly.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: I thank the sponsor. So I just want to sort of go through some of the details of this bill and clarifying to get some things on the record. So am I correct that this type of binding arbitration has long been the practice for the MTA and the other Downstate authorities?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Correct.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: All right. And then in Chapter 814 of the Laws of 2021, we added the Upstate authorities to have similar binding arbitration; is that also correct?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Correct.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay. And so what this bill would do is amend that change from 2021. And so, am I correct that that would -- the change is substantively the now the subsidiaries of the Upstate authorities would also be subject to binding arbitration just as the authorities themselves are and the Downstate authorities are and their subsidiaries?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: You are absolutely 100% correct.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Awesome. Now, what type of subsidiaries do they have, do we know how many there are? Can you give me some examples of the particular entities that would be impacted and now subject to binding arbitration?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: The specific ones? I mean there's a zillion.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Or just some -- just some examples just so we know what the type of energy that we're talking about.

(Conferencing)

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: The subsidiaries of the Niagara Frontier Transportcharge -- Transportation Authority, the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority, Capitol District Transportation Authority, the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority. Those would be the ones.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Yeah. So I -- I understand the -- the authorities themselves were already subject to binding

arbitration, but your change is to include their subsidiaries --

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Access Transit Services, Capital District Transit Services, No. 1 Capital CDTA Facilities Inc., which are all covered under the CDTA.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay. So tho -- those would be the type of entities that would now be subject to the same binding arbitration in case of a labor dispute that their parent organization already is?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Yep. They were just --

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Gotcha.

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: -- left out in the 2021.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Gotcha. And just to clarify the procedure in this case and the arbitration procedure. If there's a dispute, they can't come to an agreement, each side would appoint a member to an arbitration board and those two members would then appoint a third member and that would be the binding arbiter to resolve the labor dispute. Is that the correct -- am I correct that that is the procedure?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Again, 100%.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Awesome. And that is -- am I also correct that that is the procedure that is currently used for the Downstate authorities and the Upstate authorities? That being said, there is no change to the procedure or the membership of the arbitration board, we're just adding people to that procedure?

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: And we're making sure

that all those people we're adding are all treated equally. Correct.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Correct. Right. And -- and again just to clarify, this arbitration board is designed to be equitable where you have people from both sides and the, you know, the third party is one that everybody can agree on and there is a procedure in place which is also not changed in case there's a dispute as to the third arbiter.

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Correct.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Awesome.

MS. PHEFFER AMATO: Again, 100%.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay. Well, I thank you very much.

I'm gonna go on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So I appreciate the -- the sponsor answering my questions and -- and wanted to sort of -- the two things that I wanted to make sure we're -- we're clear is exactly the type of entities that are being covered, and we've moved from this being a Downstate procedure to an Upstate procedure including the subsidiary organizations. Then also to -- to make clear that we have what appears to me to be a pretty fair process as far as appointing the arbitration board and there is no change to that. It is an equitable arbitration board and no change to that procedure and you end up hopefully with a board that gives a -- a fair arbitration that's fair to both the authority and their constituent labor organizations.

I'm gonna be voting in the affirmative, but I appreciate the sponsor clarify those things for the legislative record.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Fitzpatrick to explain his vote.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do not believe that any contract disagreement when negotiation is unresolvable you can always come to an agreement. Binding arbitration will lead to higher costs, leading to higher costs for people who use our transportation services and even higher taxes if those are involved. In Suffolk County we have a long history of binding arbitration and it's funny, in our periodical *Newsday*, this very well-known arbitrator, I won't mention his name, but wrote a letter complaining about the high taxes on Long Island. And one of the columnists at *Newsday* said, *isn't it rich that here's the guy whose singularly responsible for, you know, the large increases in property taxes thanks to these contract negotiations complaining about the high taxes.*

So I don't believe that binding arbitration is necessary. It will lead to higher costs and for that reason I am voting no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Fitzpatrick in the negative.

Mr. O'Pharrow to explain his vote.

MR. O'PHARROW: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. After spending 25 years in the NYPD, we had a contract negotiation with -- with the Office of Collective Bargaining; that didn't work out too well, so we went to PERB, a State arbitrator. And since then, I'm no longer with the department, but I felt that all of our members in the police department truly benefitted from PERB. And as we can see as a result of that, I'm a union guy. I will always support our unions and any contract negotiations for the wellbeing of all members.

So I will vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. O'Pharrow in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the result.)

The bill is passed.

Page 29, Calendar No. 257, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08017, Calendar No. 257, Magnarelli. An act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law, in relation to increasing weight limits for vehicles powered primarily by electric battery power and other fuels.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: An explanation has been requested.

Mr. Magnarelli.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yes, Madam Speaker. This bill would authorize vehicles fueled primarily by natural propane or hydrogen gas or by electric battery to exceed statutory weight limitations by up to 2,000 pounds. However, no such vehicle could exceed the posted capacity of a highway or a bridge.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Miller.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for a few questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Mag -- Magnarelli. Given the subpar existing condition of many of our local roads and bridges, how does this bill account for the potential additional wear and tear from heavier vehicles? Particularly on the infrastructure that has already strained and our local town highway workers struggle to maintain.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Well, to my knowledge, okay, and from the reports that I have seen so far or at -- have been reported to me, there is no -- this will not increase the wear and tear on those roads.

MR. MILLER: Okay. Thank you. And how does this proposal interact with the authority local municipal -- local

municipalities currently have to sait -- to set weight limits on their own roads and bridges? And does it in any way limit the local control?

(Conferencing)

MR. MAGNARELLI: I think if it's a posted weight, like a posted weight of a bridge or a posted weight of a certain highway, those posted weights would control, okay? But if it's not, then this, being a State law, would control.

MR. MILLER: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Magnarelli.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Thank you.

MR. MILLER: Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. MILLER: While I appreciate the intent of this legislation, we have real concerns that have been raised by our local highway superintendents. We're on the front lines maintaining our roads and bridges every day. New York already ranks 45th nationally for the percentage of major highway, roadway, pavements in good conditions and 46th for deficient bridges.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, excuse me, 27% of our bridges show significant deterioration in key structural components. Local roads account for approximately 85% of centerline road miles in New York State and our town highway departments are already struggling to keep up with maintenance under current -- under current funding levels through CHIPS and other programs.

While alternate fuel vehicles are already in operation, increasing allowable weight limits raises serious concerns about additional wear and tear on infrastructure that is already strained. There are also important questions regarding federal consistency and preserving the authority of local municipalities to set weight limits that reflect the conditions of their own roads and bridges. I am hopeful that in future budgets we can work toward increasing investments in our transportation infrastructure so local governments are not left to shoulder this burden and so we can ensure our roads remain safe and reliable.

For these reasons, I will be -- I will be voting no today and I encourage the rest of our colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Chair and thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Pirozzolo.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor please yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yes, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. PIROZZOLO: All righty. Thank you, sir. I just wanted to go over a couple of things and I heard you say something before about a 2,000 pound --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yes.

MR. PIROZZOLO: -- could you explain that, please? I'm not sure I understood it exactly.

MR. MAGNARELLI: It -- it just says that any of these vehicles that are fueled by natural, propane or hydrogen gas or by electric battery can exceed statutory weight limitations by up to 2,000 pounds.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Okay. Thank you. So if I read in the summary of provisions, it kinda does say that. It says, *to exceed the weight limits provided for in current statutory by up to 2,000 pounds, but no more than 82,000 pounds.* So it's not really 2,000, it's up to 82,000. Two thousand might be the smallest number maybe?

(Conferencing)

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yeah. Eighty-two thousand is the whole vehicle, not just going over -- kind of like a double limitation. Two thousand over the limitations. It -- it goes by axles and things like that, each one, okay? And that's the 2,000 pound limit. Then overall, it's the 82,000 for the whole vehicle.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Okay. So the reason I was asking before you even get to it, I wanted to talk about as we continue, is that from the way you read it and the way you speak about it, it's making us think maybe, you know, if a battery-operated truck, a car is a little bit heavier that we're going to increase that posted weight limit because that vehicle itself is maybe only 1,999 pounds heavier than before, but actually, depending on the configuration like you're saying, the axles and things like that and the load, possibly distribution, it's

really 82,000 pounds. It's not 2,000 pounds.

MR. MAGNARELLI: It could be 82,000 pounds, yes.

MR. PIROZZOLO: So then that makes me even more concerned because I know that there's a built-in buffer system from the FOS, which is a factor of safety of point -- of 1.5 to .2, which talks --

MR. MAGNARELLI: I'm not -- I'm not following you.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Okay. So the factor of safety is -- is basically how we build our roadways that when a vehicle can possibly exceed this posted limit or this posted weight limit. And I'm going to use primarily I guess for us -- I'm gonna talk about the New York State Thruway because basically for us, all roads kind of lead to Albany.

The New York State Thruway was built 1949 to 1960 and people would say, *well, gee. How do we continue to use the Thruway since all these trucks have gotten so much heavier and now these battery-operated vehicles?* When the Thruway was built they kind of used something called a Superhighway Standard. It was intended for these roads to exceed the lifetime of whatever the technology was and going into new technology. So I think that's pretty good, but, you know, as I said, all roads may lead to the Thruway. Our local roads lead to the Thruway and our local roads were certainly not built with that same standard. And you're going to

be having bridges in towns, villages, cities -- you know, like I have some property over here in Greene County and -- and a bridge had like washed out, hasn't even been rebuilt yet to the budget, but there's another bridge, right? That bridge does not necessarily have the same lifespan as --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Okay. Sure.

MR. PIROZZOLO: -- in the New York State Thruway. So that's, you know, all together different -- different standards. Like there's one called HO-93 for the Thruway for modern trucks, and then there are other standards for our local roads. So my concern is really this: If we're saying -- and just at the 2,000 pounds, forgetting the 83,000 pounds, right, and just the 2,000 pounds and I'm gonna use a battery-operated school bus to really focus in on this. A battery-operated school bus is about 40,000 pounds heavier without students in it than a non-battery school bus. Our roads, okay, using a local road and bridge standard, are made to withstand 30,000 pounds, okay. So now you have a school bus that's 44,000 pounds driving back and forth and back and forth, different weather conditions especially for our local roads. When we're talking about what's underneath them, instead of being maybe nine inches of concrete like on our Thruway or bigger roads, they have dirt. They have gravel. These underlayments get soft and now you have a -- a school bus coming 44,000 pounds on a road that was only supposed to be 30,000 pounds.

So my concern here is with doing this is that, I don't

know and I'm concerned really now about this 80,000 pounds, is what did we look into? You know, did we talk about, did we look into the standards, did we see if our infrastructure can withstand it?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Well, I -- I think what we really looked into was the federal government has promulgated rules that require certain things, and these rules that we're promulgating today will coincide with the rules from the federal government. You're bringing up situations where certain vehicles may exceed even the numbers we're allowing today. That could happen, which means they would not be allowed as of today.

This is kind of a first step in moving forward on these vehicles as they progress. We don't have heavy trucks right now, we don't have the school buses on the road right now and so this is a first step in where we have to go.

MR. PIROZZOLO: So I'm going to disagree because for the trucking industry, there's some sort of a mandate that for every two diesel trucks they buy they must buy a battery-operated truck.

MR. MAGNARELLI: I think that's been put on hold.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Enforcement has been put on hold --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Correct.

MR. PIROZZOLO: -- but not implementation. So these poor guys are gonna get slammed when they decide to do the enforcement, *oh, for the last six years you should have bought this many battery trucks. Go do it.* But that's not what I'm talking about.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Right. Right.

MR. PIROZZOLO: That is not germane to the bill.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Right. Gotcha.

MR. PIROZZOLO: You know, I'm disagreeing a little bit with what you're saying because I understand this a first step, okay --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yep.

MR. PIROZZOLO: -- but in that first step -- and here's just an example, has any thought been given to limiting the speed of a battery-operated vehicle when it's on a Thruway or a local road?

MR. MAGNARELLI: I have no idea.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Okay.

MR. MAGNARELLI: I don't. What I -- what I think we're basing this on are the federal statutes, the federal limitations and making our State statutes coincide with those.

MR. PIROZZOLO: I get it and I don't mean disrespect but that's kind of nice. But I live here, the federal government doesn't live here --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Right.

MR. PIROZZOLO: -- right? And I want to make sure that the vehicles on my roadways are safe for my family and my children, which may or may not exceed --

MR. MAGNARELLI: And so do I, sir.

MR. PIROZZOLO: -- which -- well, so that's why

I'm kind of debating this bill a little bit. And the reason I'm talking about speed, okay, is because if you have a truck or a vehicle that is 2,000 pounds heavier, if there is a soft underlayment on the highway, those tires kind of act like a blade, and the faster that vehicle goes, it's pushing down and a faster vehicle will create more damage. So if we were to slow down the speed limit of some of these battery-operated vehicles, I'd say that's possibly okay.

And then to point out what my colleague said before, battery-operated vehicles or alternative vehicles do not pay a gas tax. And in not paying a gas tax, who is going to pay for the increased road wear of the infrastructure that they are destroying?

So again, we can maybe talk about that as it's relevant to the bill, but it is. So I'm really just trying to point out that I don't like this bill because so much, you know, it's going to have intended consequences, which you probably hear me speak about often -- how often we pass things and bad stuff happens because we do. I think this bill is kind of that way and I would hopefully consider it be withdrawn or modified.

Thank you, sir.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Okay. Thank you.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Madam Speaker, may I speak on the bill?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PIROZZOLO: So as I mentioned, a battery-operated vehicle has nothing but increased wear -- wear and tear on

our roads. Everybody knows it, it's been debated. A battery-operated vehicle, if it were to crash into a guardrail, whether it's a truck or a school bus will blow through those guardrails. Guardrails aren't really intended to stop a heavy vehicle like this. What they're really intended to do is maybe redirect the direction of a vehicle for safety purposes.

So I think battery-operated vehicles not only are they going to be a burden to our infrastructure and our electric grid, what they really are is an unfunded mandate for roadways and repairs for every road everywhere in New York State. And before we start trying to decrease that buffer zone, which we have set up for all of these reasons, we should consider a lot of other things like how it is when we live here, what's the use of these going to be and not a set of guidelines. I'm not saying it's arbitrary, but it's coming from the federal government. And what we're supposed to do is take those guidelines and use them for what makes sense for us, not just blindly doing what somebody else does somewhere else which is what we are so infamous for, if you will.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I encourage everybody to really reconsider it and vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Durso.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield just for a couple quick questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor

yield?

MR. MAGNARELLI: (Indiscernible).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Mr. Magnarelli. So just for clarification, you said before that if a local town, municipality, county has a different weight limit than the State weight limit on a highway or -- or Thruway or anything like that, they're still allowed to impose those weight limits, correct?

MR. MAGNARELLI: If -- if they're posted, yes.

MR. DURSO: And when you say by "posted," you're meaning literally posted on the roadway?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Correct.

MR. DURSO: Now will that -- now can the State supersede those local laws for any purpose at all?

MR. MAGNARELLI: I guess there'd have to be a reason for that posting of that road. You couldn't just make all the roads in the municipality a certain weight.

MR. DURSO: Well, okay, but my -- my question is or -- or really what I'm saying is that we have a lot of local towns, small villages that post those because of not only the weight of the vehicle and -- and obviously the wear and tear on the -- the roads that they're driving through but also height, obviously, size of the trucks, size of the roadways so that they can and cannot go up and down those streets. If you're in a -- a smaller community of smaller streets, some of those trucks won't fit on there even if they're a delivery truck, some

kind of construction vehicle. So that would really be my question. If you're driving down the Thruway or a state highway and we allow these postings to go up or the amount -- the weight of that vehicle to go up, but then they now have to get off that main thoroughfare or that -- that roadway as my colleague was saying and come on to those local municipal roads. Does the State vehicle or the State supersede those local laws?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Not the ones that are posted, no.

MR. DURSO: So as long as they post it even if it is a State vehicle, correct?

MR. MAGNARELLI: A State vehicle?

MR. DURSO: So if it's a State truck, right, that let's say, New York State decides to go to all electric vehicles --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yep.

MR. DURSO: -- at one point when they're making everybody else do it but haven't done it themselves --

MR. MAGNARELLI: It would apply to all vehicles.

MR. DURSO: But it would apply to vehicles, correct?

MR. MAGNARELLI: I believe.

MR. DURSO: Okay. And now, you had said earlier that there was from some study that I -- I'm not sure which one -- if you had cited it or not so I apologize, saying that heavier vehicles do not cause more roadway damage; correct?

MR. MAGNARELLI: That's correct.

MR. DURSO: Is that coming from State DOT? Is that coming from --

MR. MAGNARELLI: No. It was a, if I remember it correctly, it was a California study and I'm trying to find out exactly where it was but I can't.

MR. DURSO: But it was -- it wasn't done by New York State or New York State --

MR. MAGNARELLI: No, it was not.

MR. DURSO: Do --

MR. MAGNARELLI: It was a -- okay. Where was it? University of California Institute of Transportation study back in 2021.

MR. DURSO: Okay.

MR. MAGNARELLI: That's what I was citing.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, sir. Do we have any studies in regards to the same thing from the State DOT or any of our universities in New York State regarding our roadways?

MR. MAGNARELLI: I'm not aware of any right now.

MR. DURSO: So how can we go by a study that's being done in a different state on the other side of the country when we haven't done a -- a study in the -- we do studies on everything. We haven't done a -- a study in this State regarding New York State roadways, the infrastructure that we have, done by the New York

State DOT, so we now know what we're dealing with when we're making laws like this. How can we do that -- regard to someone else's highways who don't have -- do not have the same weather we have --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yeah.

MR. DURSO: Right. We have four seasons and in -- in California they don't. Their roadways are built different, we don't know if they're -- they're using the -- the same type of materials, so how can we go by a study that's being done in another state on the other side of the country?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Well, again, I want to go back to the idea that this is being done to coincide with fedical -- federal statutes.

MR. DURSO: Understood.

MR. MAGNARELLI: That's number one. Number two, the DOT I talk to often. They have never raised anything about this bill. Nothing. So my -- my assumption is that they don't have a problem with it. All of the manufacturers, all of the trucking associations, everybody is in favor of this bill.

MR. DURSO: Okay. No, understood that. So you're saying in your conversations with the DOT as of now, they have no issue --

MR. MAGNARELLI: There is no --

MR. DURSO: I'm sorry?

MR. MAGNARELLI: No issue. No.

MR. DURSO: No issues with that. And you said

we're obviously bringing it up to the federal standard?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Correct.

MR. DURSO: Correct? So we always follow the federal standard in this Chamber, correct? Or is it just the ones we want to pick with?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Sometimes.

(Laughter)

MR. DURSO: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Magnarelli. I appreciate it.

MR. MAGNARELLI: You're welcome.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Angelino.

MR. ANGELINO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to speak on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. ANGELINO: In a past life I was a motor vehicle crash reconstructionist. It was the longest, hardest school I had ever taken in my law enforcement career. And I learned that mass always wins in an accident. Any type of crash, even a speeding vehicle, the heavier the vehicle, basically the safer you are in that vehicle, but that vehicle is gonna do the most damage.

Currently, everything that we drive upon, walk upon, all of the infrastructure was designed in the '50s and '60s. We're using bridge technology from the 1800s and everything is geared towards

what we're operating right now as far as the weight and the max weight. I think right now without a permit for a tractor trailer is 80,000 pounds.

Any time a heavy vehicle is involved in a crash, the severity is much worse for all the vehicles involved and the inertia weight of the vehicle usually does more damage to the passengers in both vehicles. The guardrails we have right now, as my colleagues have said, are actually called guide rails and a heavier battery-powered vehicle is going to peel right through that guardrail. The -- it -- it can't -- the guardrail cannot resist the weight of a -- a heavy vehicle hitting it at speed.

We have greater impact of forces on the passengers inside any heavier vehicle. And it's also a much higher risk for pedestrians and cyclists. Obviously, the weight of any vehicle hitting a pedestrian or cyclist, but we add to that. A lot of times a battery-operated vehicle doesn't have the audible cues that it's in the area. Meaning it usually runs pretty quiet or if not silently.

One of the biggest factors you have to consider with a heavier vehicle is the stopping distance. A 60 to 0 stopping distance on a highway or a 30 to 0 stopping distance in a city. That's going to be extended by several feet and that's -- that is a matter of life and death on a city street. And not even to mention, fire risk and that's a whole 'nother ball of wax. You know, there -- there's a lot of things involved with heavier vehicles that all of my colleagues have mentioned. That tire wear is a big deal. Expense-wise, nobody wants

to buy tires more often, but the reason you're buying tires more often is because of the weight and because of that weight, a lot of microplastics are being off-leaded into the atmosphere at a greater rate than we currently have with a lighter vehicle. There's a whole plethora of reasons that we need to reengineer our infrastructure if we're gonna start having these much heavier vehicles.

I could go on and on but I won't. And I would just encourage people to think about this before they vote no.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, Madam Speaker. Believe it or not, just on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: My colleagues did a good job asking the sponsor some questions so I didn't want to really belabor those points and more questions, but I do think they made some very good points. Our ranker on the committee talked about how we have declining road conditions, declining bridge conditions in the State of New York, how we rank near the bottom, gave those percentages. My other colleague talked about the Advanced Clean Truck Rule [sic] regulation, it's on the book, getting into the important point that was agreed to. There's a delay on enforcement, but there's not a delay on the implementation.

The problem with that is our -- our dealers -- our

customers, they're building up deficits that they still have to meet. For every four ICE vehicles they purchase, they have to purchase an electric truck. That's problematic because they're building up those deficits and there'll be significant impacts later. Why we're not delaying enforcement, I do not know. We know about the weight differentials and obviously -- and with a budget where CHIPS is flat, it's concerning. And I know it's in the memo and I know my other colleague got into the discussion with the Chairman about the -- the study. Well, there is study that was done here in New York recently in conjunction with Cornell University with the New York State town highway superintendents. They've shared that through con -- conversations as well. The thing we need to know on the electric school bus mandate, the -- we -- we all are hearing from our -- our schools about these costs. How much it's gonna cost, how the -- it's three times as much to purchase an electric school bus versus a near zero-emission diesel school bus. They talk about the cost, they talk about the cost. What we don't hear a lot of people talking about is the weight. The weight of a near zero-emission diesel school bus, the -- the buses our -- our pe -- our schools are using now, are about ten tons per axle. An electric school bus are about 14 tons on the front axle and 25 tons on the rear axle. So this study was done and again, in conjunction with Cornell University and the New York State town highway superintendents. What did that study say? It will increase the cost for maintenance from 20- to $50,000 more per mile above and beyond what it is now. It will increase rehabilitation costs by

more than $550,000 per mile above and beyond what it is now. I know that the California study says that they saw like a 1% decrease in life use, this same study said that we would see a decrease in road life use by 20% from ten years to eight years. That is significant, my colleagues, that is something we need to take into consideration as we rush through this electric school bus mandate the impact on the cost for our school districts, the cost to power, but also the cost to the towns that we all represent that are gonna bear the burden of this. And then whenever we see a budget from the Governor that keeps CHIPS flat and how we have to fight tooth and nail every budget cycle to ask for more CHIPS money. Keeping in mind that 87% of the roads in New York State are owned and maintained by our local municipalities. Keeping in mind that 52% of the 18,000 bridges in New York are owned and maintained by our local municipalities. A CHIP -- a flat CHIPS budget is unacceptable especially with this electric school bus mandate it's on the -- that's coming down the tracks barreling at the public with no delay or help in sight.

And -- and again, I'll -- I'll bring this point up; I am still baffled how we are asking our school districts to convert their entire school bus fleets by 2035 and no one's answered this question, no one from the media asked the Governor or -- or the leaders this question; why are we asking our school districts to convert their fleets by 2035, but the State of New York does not have to convert their medium- and heavy-duty fleets until 2040? A full five years after our school districts. Why are we asking our school districts and property

taxpayers to be the guinea pig for this social experiment? It's not gonna work. It's too costly, it's too damaging. How about the State of New York does it first and shows it can be done properly and that they can get all the kinks out, cost? Oh, by the way, even though it's 2040 for the State, they have an out for feasibility, they have an out for reliability, they have an out for cost. They don't have to do it if they don't want to, but our school districts are mandated with this largest unfunded school mandate.

So as we negotiate the budget, as I know that's going on, maybe we haven't gotten to the dollars amounts, when you're talking about the CHIPS program keeping in mind this weight of these electric school buses, we should be increasing CHIPS significantly. Two hundred and fifty million dollars is not a big ask in the context of a quarter of a trillion dollar budget when we see funding for other programs that aren't as much of a priority. So I hope you keep that in context during your conferences and when you're negotiating with the Governor. This is something we've advocated for, this has bipartisan support, by the way, the $250 million. It had $250 million in the one-House budget, we should have $250 mile -- million. We didn't have in our budget but there was an increase. I hope we push for that keeping in mind these numbers that I just shared with you, just the impact on the electric school bus mandate on our town roads, significant cost, so that CHIPS increase is justified and warranted to address that. And I hope we take that into consideration in light of the study that's out there that it's done here in New York in conjunction

with Cornell University with those preliminary numbers that are out there.

I think that's something we got to consider moving forward, so I just wanted to share that information with my colleagues. I hope we take that into strong consideration as we move forward. This is a good reason right there to increase the CHIPS funding for our local towns, villages and communities during this budget process given the impact, the weight of these vehicles on our communities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Tague.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What budget bill are we on?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: We are not on a budget bill right now, sir.

MR. TAGUE: Oh, okay. Would the sponsor yield for a couple questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yes, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. TAGUE: I just -- I have almost 30 years of experience in the heavy highway construction industry and working with heavy highway trucks. So I -- I just don't understand the purpose of this bill. Whether this bill -- whether you have a vehicle that has an

engine in it or a battery, 82,000 pounds is 82,000 pounds. Doesn't matter. Eighty-two thousand pounds with a battery in it, 82,000 pounds with an engine in it, the truck is going to handle the same way under the same weight no matter what. But what I don't get with this, Mr. Chairman, is we're increasing the weight limit for vehicles powered primarily by electric battery power and other fuels, what other fuels are we considering in this, number one? And number two, if you're telling me that, you know, they're gonna increase it a ton, why don't we just up the limit from 82,000 to 84,000 and cover every vehicle?

(Conferencing)

MR. MAGNARELLI: Okay. Let's take it one at a time. First of all, the different kinds of fuel would be natural, propane or hydrogen gas are possible on top of an electric battery.

MR. TAGUE: So that doesn't include diesel or gasoline?

MR. MAGNARELLI: That's already there. I mean --

MR. TAGUE: But -- but -- but -- but what you're saying is, though, we're not gonna increase the weight limit for vehicles other than the ones that are listed here. So if you have a gas or diesel, you still have to stick to the 82,000.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yeah. Without a permit we wouldn't increase them. You're correct.

MR. TAGUE: Okay. Well, that's where I -- that's

where I got a problem. Again, it doesn't matter whether it's got a battery in it or an engine in it, 82,000 pounds is the limit for a reason. Either the condition of the roads, the amounts of axles that you have underneath the vehicle. Listen, you can operate a vehicle in the State of New York as long as the Thruway Authority or DOT approves it or local municipality, you can run a vehicle at 150-, 160,000 pounds if you have enough axles under the vehicle and you get a permit.

MR. MAGNARELLI: You gotta have a permit, correct.

MR. TAGUE: Absolutely.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Correct.

MR. TAGUE: So what I'm saying here is, why don't we make it fair across the board? If you guys need another 2,000 pounds, why aren't we just increasing the vehicle weight where you don't need a permit to 84- or 85,000 pounds across the board?

MR. MAGNARELLI: I -- this is the way they've done it, this is the way the federal government's standards have come down and we're trying to adhere to those.

MR. TAGUE: My thinking is why isn't New York State being the leader on this? I think you've done an excellent job as our Chair of --

MR. MAGNARELLI: Well, thank you.

MR. TAGUE: -- of -- of Department of Transportation anyways, Mr. Chairman. But I think this is about common sense. We have people in this room that have been in this

industry that can be very helpful. Let's use some common sense on something like this and let's go back to the trucking folks, the professionals and say, *hey. You know, here are some areas within the State where we need to make some structural changes or fixes.* They should be a priority as my esteemed colleague Mr. Palmesano just mentioned about more money should be put into the budget for transportation and for CHIPS and I'm a -- a big proponent to that -- or a big proponent of that because I think our infrastructure is in some serious trouble here. But we have professionals both in -- in -- at the Thruway Authority and the DOT that can say, *okay. All the roads in Section 1 or in Zone 3, Zone 4, any vehicle 85,000 pounds or less do not need a permit and we -- the -- those vehicles can drive on those roads.*

MR. MAGNARELLI: Well, there's a lot of things that you just mentioned that I agree with. There's no bigger proponent of CHIPS increases than I am. But having said that, we're just trying to conform to the federal standards at this time. The trucking industry, the trucking associations, everyone is in favor of this bill and that's why it's here.

MR. TAGUE: Well, I -- and I appreciate that and I've worked with those folks both professionally and here as -- as a State Assemblymember, but I am going to oppose this bill because I -- I -- again, I don't think it's fair and I dont think it's right that somebody could drive an electric vehicle or a propane vehicle and they're allowed to be at 84,000 pounds, but Joe Schmo that's got a -- a 2012

Mack truck and trailer has to stick to the 82,000 because it's not an el -- it -- it -- because it's a diesel vehicle or a gas vehicle. I don't think that's right. Like I said, 82,000 pounds is 82,000 pounds. So if you let somebody travel at 84,000 pounds over a structure that can only handle 82,000 pounds, we're gonna have failure. Doesn't matter what it's -- what's driving the vehi -- what's inside the vehicle powering it, 82,000 pounds is 82,000 pounds.

(Conferencing)

MR. MAGNARELLI: The only thing I can say to you is it's 82,000 pounds is the max, not 84- and right now it's 80- --

MR. TAGUE: But you're adding --

MR. MAGNARELLI: No. It's 80- to 82,000.

MR. TAGUE: Okay. But you're adding -- you're allowing vehicles --

MR. MAGNARELLI: No. 82- -- 82- is the max.

MR. TAGUE: All right. But what you're saying is we're allowing --

MR. MAGNARELLI: You can have the same argument, but it's simple.

MR. TAGUE: -- we're allowing these other vehicles 2,000 more pounds than what's already on the road. That's what I'm trying to say here.

MR. MAGNARELLI: Yeah.

MR. TAGUE: There's a limit for a reason, but you're telling people that have battery-operated vehicles that they get an

extra 2,000 pounds to travel on a roadway where vehicles that are traveling with combustion engines let's say cannot travel over the -- with another 2,000 pounds. That's what I'm trying to say here. That's wrong. Eighty-two thousand pounds is 82,000 pounds.

MR. MAGNARELLI: I hear ya.

MR. TAGUE: Not -- no -- but you can't let somebody travel at 82- but everybody else only at 80- over a structure that can only handle 80,000 I guess is the way to put it. What's the difference? I mean this is like we're just -- I -- again, and I know a bill, I know it's not you. I know this bill's coming from wherever, but unfortunately there's a lot of that in this Chamber where nobody uses any common sense and says, *why don't we all just get together and let's fix this the right way?*

MR. MAGNARELLI: Okay.

MR. TAGUE: That -- that's my point.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. TAGUE: First of all, I want to thank the Chairman. I have a great relationship with him and as I said, he does a great job leading the Department of Transportation Committee. I just -- this is just again a lack of common sense. Why -- why would we put a bill up that allows some people to go at a certain weight but others cannot? It just -- it -- it doesn't make any sense. A structure is a structure and it can only handle a certain amount of pounds before it fails. So either we need to -- somebody needs to learn how to get

these electric battery-powered vehicles and propane vehicles a little bit lighter, or we need to increase the weight another 2,000 pounds for all vehicles. It's as simple as that.

And let me tell you what, they build the new vehicles today, as my colleague in front of me said, a lot of these new trac -- tractor and trailers, these things better -- drive better than cars and they're safer than cars. Where we lack, as my other colleague mentioned, is we're not doing our part as the State of New York with our infrastructure, with our own communities. Every single year we leave CHIPS flat. We put no more money into our municipalities or even our State Department of Transportation.

We just had a failure just outside of my district on I-88 again. Where about ten, 12 years ago we actually lost two people and they were killed when a structure gave way right on a major -- right on a -- a -- a major highway between Binghamton and Oneonta.

This is what we miss in this Chamber. The priorities, the things that mean life and death for the people that we represent. Here we are almost four weeks late from a budget and we're worried about social programs instead of life and death issues that are within our constituency. That's what we should be doing, that's what the -- how the budget should be done. Priorities first. And it's just -- it's -- it's ridiculous how we do business in this place. It's ridiculous. It's -- it's very aggravating. Very aggravating.

So, Madam Speaker, again, this bill needs some work before I'll support it. I'll be -- I'll be voting in the negative. But again,

appreciate, respect and thank the Chairman for his work on this.

Thank you very much.

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 Republican Conference will generally speaking be in the negative on this piece of legislation, but if there are those who wish to vote yes, now would be the appropriate time to do so at their seats.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority will be in the affirmative on this vote. If anybody would like to deviate from that, please indicate by pushing your button.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

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.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In -- in the absence of Assemblymember Smullen, I -- I'm tasked with announcing that the Republican Conference will be immediately conferencing in the Parlor right now. So if members could please report back to the Parlor.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you. Immediate Minority Conference in the Assembly Parlor.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Madam Speaker, could you please recognize Assemblymember Clark for an announcement?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Clark for the purpose of an announcement.

MS. CLARK: Madam Speaker and my colleagues, I'm also here to announce Majority Conference right now in the Speaker's Conference Room. Majority Conference in the Speaker's Conference Room.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Majority Conference, Speaker's Conference Room.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Madam Speaker, if you could please place the Assembly at ease until the completion of conference.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On Ms. Lunsford's motion, the House stands at ease.

(Whereupon, at 1:28 p.m., the House stood at ease.)

****

(Whereupon, at 3:00 p.m. the House was called back to order.)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The House will come back to order.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Members have on their desks an A-Calendar. Ms. Speaker, I now move to advance the A-Calendar.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Lunsford, the A-Calendar is advanced.

Page 3, Rules Report No. 104, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11165, Rules Report No. 104, Pretlow. An act making appropriations for the support of government; to amend Chapter 98 of the Laws of 2026, relating to making appropriations for the support of government, in relation thereto; to amend Chapter 100 of the Laws of 2026, relating to making appropriations for the support of government, in relation thereto; to amend Chapter 102 of the Laws of 2026, relating to making appropriations for the support of government, in relation thereto; to amend Chapter 104 of the Laws of 2026, relating to making appropriations for the support of government, in relation thereto; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr.

Pretlow, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Governor's Message at the desk. The Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: I hereby certify to an immediate vote. Kathy Hochul, Governor.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: An explanation has been requested.

Mr. Pretlow.

MR. PRETLOW: Absolutely, Madam Speaker. This is another extender, the eighth in a -- in a -- in a series. This extender would ensure funding for State operations and other programs through May 4th. The bill includes additional funding for emergency payroll, children's health insurance programs, unemployment insurance, OPWDD services, veterans' programs and general State charges.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do have questions this time.

Will the Chairman yield for some questions?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. PALMESANO: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. You did answer my first question; I see it up there. This goes 'til Monday, May 4th. As we asked in Committee, with the total amount now with this being our eighth extender, what is the total appropriation to date?

MR. PRETLOW: The total is $16.4 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And this increase above the previous extender is how much?

MR. PRETLOW: $1.5 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I think it was just yesterday, if not yesterday this week, our colleague down the hall made a comment and said that we're at the end of the middle. I'm not really sure what that means, but I'm really more concerned of what you think, where you think we are. I'm not gonna ask what inning it is, I'm not gonna ask you what the weather is. But I'm really kind of concerned -- I just really -- where you think we are in this budget process right now. I know you said we've had some -- some progress?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, as I said earlier, my focus is on the fiscal aspects of the budget, and the person down the hall that you're referring to is referring to the overall budget, which includes many of the policy items that are holding things up right now.

MR. PALMESANO: Sure.

MR. PRETLOW: So in the context of the conversations between the two Houses and the Second Floor, they're making serious progress as it -- with regards to -- on the policy issues. How I'm looking at it is -- of course I'll use our baseball analogy. We're still, you know, hitting through the first inning because we haven't started talking finances yet. That will come together quickly once these policy issues are taken care of. But right now as far as the fiscal aspects of the budget go, we haven't proceeded very far.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Fair enough.

Relative to the -- I know you -- you want to focus on the policy -- the -- the fiscal. But may -- I just wanted to ask you some questions, if I could. I know last time when we spoke about this on Monday, you said we were making progress. If there's anything you might be able to add or elaborate on what might be happening, anything that you could add or elaborate on what's happening with tax policy in this budget? (Indiscernible/crosstalk.)

MR. PRETLOW: Well, as I said before, you've -- you've asked for language. I mean, there is progress. There's progress on all the four major areas. But there is no language together because one thing leads to another, so it all has to happen at the same time. So using my magnet example yesterday, when the magnet drops, everything comes together and we have a full package.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. So that would hold true for auto insurance, SEQR, immigration, Tier 6, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: And -- and then the same on climate?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: And -- and on climate I'd like to delve a little bit into that, if I may. If you don't mind. This week we had a proposal that was introduced that would provide utility relief for State workers who are impacted by the delayed budget. Before we -- we go any further, are there any State workers that are not getting paid? Because of these extenders, aren't we taking care of those State

workers or is it really just us?

MR. PRETLOW: The only State workers I'm aware of that are not getting paid are members of the New York State Legislature.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. So that -- that -- that piece of legislation would only benefit us, then, if that were to move, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: That legislation will not see the light of day.

(Laughter)

MR. PALMESANO: I -- I can't tell you how happy I am -- we're happy to hear that. And on that front, though, we know that our ratepayers, our people back at home, there is -- we're 50 to 60 percent higher than the national average. Like, there was a report out, I read this this morning, saying it's 70 percent higher than the national average. So as much as -- and I appreciate what you just said about that bill not going anywhere, is there discussion about significant -- about real relief that will be provided to lower energy costs for families, for seniors, for veterans? Are there proposals that you can share with us that would actually reduce costs and energy bills for -- that are being discussed as part of this budget?

MR. PRETLOW: There are several proposals on the table. Most were included in our one-House.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: Those are all under discussion

still.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. Any -- any talk about possibly the $2.4 billion that NYSERDA is sitting on?

MR. PRETLOW: It's all being discussed.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. That's fair enough.

Mr. Pretlow, as always I appreciate your time very, very much. Thank you very much, and Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Well, Madam Speaker, my colleagues, the score is now eight budget extenders, one budget bill. I probably meant to ask him how many more budget bills are extenders we expect to have. I probably forgot to ask you. But I'm sure there's at least -- you know, another one is gonna come Monday. After eight extenders there is no defined endpoint. And at this pace there's almost no doubt this budget is gonna be later than last year. And like I said earlier, our colleague down the hall said we're approaching the end of the middle. I guess the main question I'd ask is what does that actually mean? There is no visible transition from the middle to the end that I see. There is no public framework. There's no outlined agreement. It's an indication of issues that remain and what have been resolved. At some point, phrases like -- like this stop signaling progress and start highlighting the absent [sic] of progress. Our New Yorkers that we're representing across the State are not following inside terminology or negotiating phrases, they're really looking for a result and action. And right now what they see is a process that is

without clear direction or a timeline. And what I'm seeing and what many of us are seeing is a disconnect.

And I will talk about -- you know, with the policy that's being talked about, one area that I -- I think it's important to talk about on the climate side of things that I asked the question, I know there's climate change -- climate policies being addressed. But what about direct ratepayer relief? Will this budget provide direct and immediate ratepayer relief? I certainly hope it does. It better, because our residents need direct ratepayer relief right now. And that disconnect I've seen the past week -- couple weeks with some policies; the one we talked about that my colleague has basically said is not gonna see the light of day. But to -- to see a proposal like that that would say -- that would just benefit us while our residents are on the brink, that is just kind of a detachment and a disconnect from what's going on.

And then there's another policy we debated in [sic] this floor that would provide rebates paid for and subsidized by ratepayers with higher utility bills to subsidize the purchase of electric lawn mowers or electric weed whackers for businesses, for schools, for hospitals. This would all be determined by NYSERDA. The same NYSERDA that came out with an estimate saying if we don't make changes to the policies, residential home heating costs will increase to over $4,000 annually. The same NYSERDA that says if we don't make changes, the price of a gallon of gas will increase $2.23 a gallon above and beyond what it is now. The same NYSERDA that said the

price of diesel will increase $2.41 a gallon above and beyond what it is right now. The same NYSERDA that said utility costs for small and commercialized businesses will increase 46 percent depending on utility and facility size. The same NYSERDA that said transportation operations, trucking operations will increase more than 60 percent, and we know the impact that will have. And like I said, the report that just came out this morning I saw, now our residential electricity rate is nearly 70 percent higher than the national average. They're on the brink. But it's the same NYSERDA that's sitting on over $2.4 billion in ratepayer funds that have already been collected sitting there so they can spend money on green programs and policies that we've advocated and passed. We trust NYSERDA to handle this money? We want NYSERDA to spend more of our residents' ratepayer money? We think that's a good idea? I would ask any one of you to go back to your constituents and say, *Hey, will you pay higher utility bills to help subsidize some -- a business or a school or a hospital to get an electric lawn mower or a weed whacker, or do you want re -- direct ratepayer relief right now?* You and I already know the answer to that question. They're gonna say they want direct ratepayer relief right now. We need to do that and we need to do that quickly.

So you say how can we provide direct ratepayer relief right now? I know my colleague said there's proposals. I know in the one-House bill there was a rebate which we -- we support, too. But that can't be in and of itself. It can't just be a rate freeze, because that doesn't do anything to reduce rates. But what we should do is direct

that that $2.4 billion sitting in NYSERDA's coffers should get immediately rebated back to the residents of this State to show them that we understand that they're suffering and we're gonna do the right thing. We're gonna provide them back that money, that surplus money, and provide them direct ratepayer relief now versus subsidizing electric heat pumps, electric vehicles, electric lawn mowers. That's what people want. They want direct ratepayer relief.

We could also look at the taxes, fees, assessments and surcharges that are on our utility bills. In some instances, you all know that can account to more than 20 percent of an individual's utility bill. We can cut that off right there. That would provide a relief up to 20 percent immediately. These things together could do good things.

We should also be looking to do -- do what NYSERDA's talking about or NYISO is talking about to ensure that we have a reliable and an abundance support of generation. Yes, we need to look at repowering natural power plants. We need to look at putting new natural gas power plants on line. There hasn't been one in many, many years. When we do that we increase supply. We can increase -- deal with the pipeline constraints. There's things we can do. All these things will provide relief, and we could do that right now with this budget with some of the things that we've talked about and we've advocated for.

And of course we know our school districts are suffering with their budget votes. I mean, they had the budget votes

that -- they're waiting on -- they didn't get their -- their aid yet. And when it comes to the school districts, they have the mother of all unfunded mandates, the electric school bus mandate that's gonna cost them significant amounts of money. We know tens of billions of dollars just in replacement costs, infrastructure improvements and charging infrastructure. And I know others when they talk about it they say, *We're giving money to the school districts. We've got money in the Bond Act*. I don't know if you might recall at a budget hearing a couple years ago when we asked the -- the NYSERDA president and Co-Chair of the Climate Action Council, *If you take all the money from the State and the federal government that put in, how many school buses would that purchase?* She said about 3,000. We have a fleet of nearly 50,000 school buses. So who's gonna make up the difference? My local property taxpayers, your local property taxpayers. We need to not just pump the brakes on this thing, we need to slam the brakes. We should not just let them get waivers, we should be extending this thing. And as I said earlier, I'm having a hard time understanding why no one can answer this question. I'm having an understand -- hard time understanding why the media doesn't ask the Governor this question. Why are we asking our school districts to convert their entire school fleets by 2035 when the State of New York does not have to convert their heavy and medium -- medium fleets until 2040? Well, when you have -- but the State of New York, like I said earlier, they have an out for feasibility, for costs, for that. They can stop for whatever reason. But our school districts don't have that

same privilege. Why are we -- why not make the State of New York do it first? Why are we asking our school districts and local property taxpayers to be the guinea pig for this social experiment? Let's provide relief to them now. Let's delay this thing because they need the -- they need the delay, they want the delay. They can't implement it. And those that are buying electric buses are having problems.

Listen. We need long-lasting solutions to bring down energy costs. Not just proposals that shift away from addressing the problem. And as we continue to talk about phases and process, the -- the real consequences are growing.

Late budgets create uncertainty. School districts have sent out their military ballots for school budget votes last week, and their property tax report cards were due on Monday. Municipalities; our municipalities are planning their budgets right now. They have road construction projects they want to do, but they have no certainty about how much State aid they're getting, how much CHIPS aid we're gonna give them, which we should be giving them a lot more CHIPS aid, absolutely. And even just yesterday, the largest municipality in the State of New York, New York City, said they're delaying their budget 'till May 12th because the State funding and revenue is still being negotiated.

The longer this drags on, my colleagues, the more pros -- proposals get thrown in the mix, creating even more uncertainty and less transparency. At some point -- at some point we must move past the middle to find an actual endpoint and deliver a

complete budget that reflects the responsibility of this institution. Because right now we are not even close to that.

Of course I will be voting for this extender to ensure our State operations continue and our employees get paid. That responsibility is not optional. I will be voting in the [sic] favor, Madam Speaker, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SMITH: Thank you. I just want to take a moment to express concern on behalf of school districts across the State of New York. My colleague just iterated the fact that our school districts are obligated, our volunteer school board members are obligated to present a budget to the voters to fund their -- their schools. The budgets must be finalized by May 5th. It's now April 29th. We're getting increasingly close to the date where they have to finalize a budget, and they don't know the State aid they're gonna be receiving. The Governor proposed a minimum 1 percent increase. School districts across the State are looking at costs that are rising tremendously; the cost of health insurance, the cost of a lot of things that we talk about in this Chamber every single day. The final budget may include impacts that they will need to deal with. My colleague

just mentioned the electric bus mandate, if that -- whether it's dealt with or not in this budget. We're talking about changes to the pension system. That could increase costs to our school districts.

So the fact is that we have abdicated our responsibility to deliver a budget that's timely. Our districts are not able to present that to the voters. May 5th is when they need to finalize that budget so it can be put up for a public hearing, and then voted on May 19th. And I think we need to really join together and -- and urge that this be completed because, again, it's not fair to our districts, it's not fair to our property taxpayers. I can speak as a Long Island representative, the number one issue I hear is, *My property taxes are too high,* and -- and it's something that they're dealing with. They want to provide an excellent education for our children. We need to make sure that we finalize this budget to get those numbers out there.

In a few minutes we're gonna be considering another bill that -- you can look; school districts are starting to unravel because of issues that are not dealt with in the budget.

So I'll be voting yes on this to continue to pay our State workforce, but I am -- you know, on behalf of the people I represent, the people that all of us represent, as the Ranking Member of the Education Committee, as a former teacher, as a parent, a PTA member, I'm outraged at the fact that we don't have those final education numbers, and I think we can do better.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: 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 just want to pick up on something that was raised by our Ways and Means Ranker behind me here about the -- the media covering what's going on here. I -- I mean, the media's right down the hall. They cover what they can. But this whole process is so mired in secrecy that it's -- it's very difficult for them to write thoughtful, investigative pieces based on tweets from the Governor or an oft comment made during her Statewide tour at different appearances around the State. That's -- that's not gonna lead to an intelligent, thoughtful conversation. I mean, the bottom line is when this budget finally does come together, you know, we're gonna get briefed with -- with briefing memos that are still warm. And then we're gonna have to come in, and with reduced debate time due to the Rules changes that were passed a couple years ago, we're gonna have to try to intelligently inform the voters and ourselves about what this budget contains.

So again, I'll continue to support the extender because I want to see government continue to operate. I'm not gonna try to

jam things up. But, you know, that's the reason why we can't really have good government here because it is completely secret. And those of us who are in this room are left out of that conversation, essentially. So I'm not happy. I will continue to vote yes on the extender. Thank you.

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 3, Rules Report No. 105, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11166, Rules Report No. 105, Pretlow. An act authorizing the South Country -- Country Central School District, in the County of Suffolk, to finance certain deficits by the issuance of bonds and providing for advance school aid to such district; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof (Part A); and to amend Part III of Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2023, amending the General Municipal Law and the Executive Law relating to directing the State Inspector General to appoint an independent monitor for the Orange County Industrial Development Agency, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof (Part B).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Pretlow, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is

advanced.

Governor's message is at the desk. The Clerk -- the Clerk will read.

An explanation has been --

THE CLERK: I hereby certify to an immediate vote. Kathy Hochul, Governor.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

An explanation has been requested.

Mr. Pretlow.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, Madam Speaker. What we have before us now is an Article VII bill. It actually can be considered a companion bill to the bill that we had just passed for the extender, the one-week extender. If the members would look at the breakdown of that one-week extender, there's a $7 million incremental -- not incremental, but a $7 million increase in school aid. That $7 million is being totally allocated to the South Country Central School District, and it also includes -- this bill also includes deficit spending, giving them bond authority. And the Orange County Industrial Development Agency monitor. We're -- we're authorizing an extension of the monitor for Orange County IDA.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for just a little bit?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor

yield? The sponsor yields.

MR. PALMESANO: So, Mr. Pretlow, obviously we have an Article VII bill here. Are we hoping to have more Article VII bills to follow here in the near future as well?

(Pause)

I'm sorry. Obviously this is an Article VII bill.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: This is our second Article VII bill. Obviously it's our hope to take up more Article VII bills in the near future; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, if the -- if they're still doing extenders, then the extender requires a language interpretation, then yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And understanding, obviously, with the school district and the appropriation, could you just explain a little bit more about the -- the Part B, a little bit more about this independent monitor for Orange County IDA and why that's necessary to do this in this Article VII bill at this time?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, there has been a re -- request by individuals to extend the lifespan of the Orange County IDA. Right now it's about to expire. This gives it an additional one year of life.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And is -- with that, we have obviously the support of the County to implement this, asking for this? This is being asked for by the County?

MR. PRETLOW: We haven't really (indiscernible).

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. So we're doing it without knowing what the County --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Mr. Pretlow, thank you very much for your time. I have no further questions.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Slater.

MR. SLATER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for a few questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. SLATER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Just a few clarifying questions as -- as it pertains to the Orange County IDA provision. Can you tell us how much the monitor is costing taxpayers in Orange County?

MR. PRETLOW: It's not costing anything.

MR. SLATER: Really? There's no bills associated with the monitor for the Orange County IDA?

MR. PRETLOW: The IDA is paying for it. It's not paid for by taxpayers.

MR. SLATER: And do we know how much that

IDA -- is costing the IDA at this point in time?

MR. PRETLOW: No, I do not know.

MR. SLATER: And do we know what entity oversees -- my guess is that the monitor is providing bills because it's my understanding that they've spent more than a half-a-million dollars or approximately a half-a-million dollars during this timeframe, the IDA has.

MR. PRETLOW: That's about right.

MR. SLATER: And so is there an entity or -- or an individual that oversees the bills that are issued by the monitor to the IDA to be paid?

MR. PRETLOW: The State Inspector General.

MR. SLATER: Very good. And does the -- does the monitor -- does the monitor only apply to Orange County specifically?

MR. PRETLOW: This one does, yes.

MR. SLATER: Is there any concern considering the geographical location of Orange County as it relates to it being a border county; bordering New Jersey, bordering Pennsylvania. Is there any concern about the impact that this is having on economic development (indiscernible).

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. SLATER: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. SLATER: No. And does the language expand in any way the powers of the monitor?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. SLATER: It's a straight extender.

MR. PRETLOW: It's the same as the -- it's just continuing the authority that the monitor had previously.

MR. SLATER: I appreciate that. And over the last two years since the monitor has been in place, has the monitor reviewed any of the IDA's records as part of its job?

MR. PRETLOW: That's part of their job. I imagine they did.

MR. SLATER: And have they issued any reports related to those reviews?

MR. PRETLOW: I personally haven't seen any. No.

MR. SLATER: None that were -- that this -- my understanding is there was a report issued in 2024 based on --

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe that was a public -- public report, though, was it?

MR. SLATER: I believe it was.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay.

MR. SLATER: That the monitor had reviewed the past records and -- anyway, that's fine.

Were there -- and I guess this goes to my next question. If we aren't aware of any review, even though I believe there was one that was conducted, do we know what the findings or has -- or any reporting that the monitor has referred the IDA for?

MR. PRETLOW: There were problems that were

identified by the monitor.

MR. SLATER: And my understanding is that the problems that were identified, I think that -- I think that it's agreed to that there were issues. But all the members of that IDA either are -- either resigned or are no longer part of the Orange County IDA.

MR. PRETLOW: That would indicate serious problems to me.

MR. SLATER: I -- I agree. But is -- is -- is that -- is that an understanding that we both have, that all the members have been changed on the Orange County IDA?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe that's the case.

MR. SLATER: Okay. So we are applying a monitor to basically an entirely new entity because of the make-up of the IDA?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, it's -- it is the same IDA, and I don't know what vestiges of the issues that were left by the former IDA members. So the new monitor -- or the same monitor, the existing monitor that's being continued for an additional year will have the ability and authority to oversee what's going on with the new board.

MR. SLATER: But he's had those same powers and authority over the -- when you say new board, it's the existing board, by the way. So if there were any issues, the monitor has had the last two years-plus to refer any concerns or issues, my guess is, to the next level of authority. Is that a fair assumption?

MR. PRETLOW: I think so.

MR. SLATER: And that has yet to happen.

MR. PRETLOW: There's still concerns that people have -- there's still issues that are around, yes.

MR. SLATER: There's still issues --

MR. PRETLOW: There's still issues.

MR. SLATER: -- that are around. Can you tell me -- and -- and because I -- I didn't see any language in the bill. But is there an off-ramp here at some point that the Orange County IDA is able to accomplish so that they know when their -- when the monitor will no longer be needed?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, this extender is for one year, and then we'll reeval -- reevaluate it.

MR. SLATER: Based on what criteria?

MR. PRETLOW: Based on what they find, if -- if anything.

MR. SLATER: I understand. Well, thank you very much, Chairman. I appreciate you answering my questions today.

Madam Speaker, if I can, just on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SLATER: And I really do appreciate the Chairman's answering my questions. I know -- you know, this is unfortunately a local issue. I don't even represent the -- the county that is impacted, but it does beg the question of standards. Because right now we're hearing that there's been a monitor in place, but there's been really no findings of the functionality of the Orange County IDA

with its present members and the way that the board is currently made up. And when we want to understand what needs to be accomplished for the IDA to move forward without the monitor, it's based on the -- the notion that there are still issues that are existing, but those issues have never been brought to light or referred to either the authorities or any other entity within the State government. And so it really begs the question why we're doing this. And it really begs the question if it's even needed. When you have a brand-new IDA, new members who are not associated with the past sins of the previous members, it begs the question to what point and to what extent does the monitor need to continue to exist in -- in the fashion that it is. I think it's concerning that there's no off-ramp that's built here; that we're gonna continue to reassess, it sounds like, in perpetuity every year. And I do think that -- and there has been, by the way, concerns raised in Orange County by union contractors over the impact that this has had on economic development, on generating good-paying jobs, and making sure that the -- the economy of Orange County continues to churn. So I do want to just raise those issues for the record.

I do appreciate the Chairman answering my questions, and Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Eachus.

MR. EACHUS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. EACHUS: Let me answer some of those begging questions that were just given.

The largest part of my district is geographically, as well as population-wise, in Orange County. There are five other IDAs in Orange County, and we are not monitoring any of them. Why? Because they do everything by the book, as it may be. In 2021, criminal charges were filed against three of the leading officials in the ID -- IDA, including the former County Exec, who all pleaded guilty. But there were no charges put up against them other than replacing the money that was determined to be taken at that point. This led to us placing a monitor on the Orange County IDA in 2024. And just to give a little vision on old board members and new board members, just at the end of this last year, 2025, new board members, okay? They -- the IDA violated State law and illegally barred the monitor from an executive committee meeting. In that meeting they voted to approve $100,000 for hiring a lobbying group or some concerned group that would help them get rid of the monitor. And that, of course, was without the monitor there.

The monitor is a person who advises the IDA and helps them to make the correct decisions. We are simply protecting the taxpayers' money when we put this monitor in there, because the board itself is not doing that. And I would hope that everybody votes for this and the IDA monitor for Orange County. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. DeStefano to explain his vote.

MR. DESTEFANO: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to explain my vote.

First of all, I'd like -- I'd like to thank the Governor, the Speaker and my colleagues for -- who made the South Country part of this extender. This school district has been pushed to its limits; positions eliminated, spending slashed, programs, teachers, literacy coordinators, math interventionists, sports and AP programs cut. This community has sacrificed enormously. They're in distress and they needed help.

This is not a bailout. This is a loan to pay back the -- the non -- I'm gonna say the people don't understand a lot of what's been going on. We were brought to this fact last year and we've been working on it ever since. You have my word that I will make sure that the people that are responsible for this are held accountable for what happened in this school district. My only concern, and my focus has only been about the kids. Why do these kids have to suffer for the actions of a few? We want them to be held accountable. I promise you in this Body that I will make sure that they get the -- the education that they rightfully deserve.

Thank you, and I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. DeStefano in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Madam Speaker, do we have any further housekeeping or resolutions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: We do 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. 1242-1246 were unanimously adopted.)

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: I now move that the Assembly stand adjourned until Thursday, April 30th, tomorrow being a legislative day, and that we reconvene on Monday, May 4th at the call of the Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On Ms. Lunsford's motion, the House stand adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the House stood adjourned until Thursday, April 30th, that being a legislative day, and to reconvene on Monday, May 4th at the call of the Speaker.)