WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2026 11:58 A.M.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The House will come to order.

Good morning, colleagues.

In the absence of clergy, let us pause for a moment of silence.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was observed.)

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, May 26th.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Madam Speaker, I move to dispense with the further reading of the Journal of Tuesday, May 26th and that the same stand approved.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Without objection, so ordered.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you. I would like to begin today with a quote from a former member of our Body and the 33rd Governor of this State, Theodore Roosevelt. "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." And I hope that brings us through this budget day.

Madam Speaker, may I have the members' attention so that we can announce the schedule for today? Members have on their desk a main Calendar. Before any housekeeping and/or introductions, we'll 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 immediately.

Members should be aware that we will be also calling for the following committees to meet: Transportation, Social Services, Local Government, Health, Governmental Operations, Education and Children and Families.

I will announce any further floor activity as we proceed. Majority members should be aware that there may be a need for conference once we conclude our work on the floor. As always, I will consult with the Minority on their conference needs.

So with that as the general outline, Ms. Speaker, let

us begin by calling for the Ways and Means Committee to meet in the Speaker's Conference Room.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you. Ways and Means Committee members, make your way to the Speaker's Conference Room, please. Ways and Means Committee members to the Speaker's Conference Room.

We have no housekeeping, but several introductions. We will start with Ms. Woerner for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. WOERNER: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to interrupt our proceedings for the purposes of an introduction today. I am pleased to be joined by Elizabeth Sobol. She is the CEO of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, which is this year celebrating its 60th anniversary. It is nestled in the Saratoga Spa State Park and if you haven't had an opportunity to -- to enjoy the Saratoga Jazz Festival, the New York City Ballet, the Philadelphia Orchestra or any number of Live Nation concerts under the stars at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, may I suggest that you add that to your summer tour this -- this year. The Performing Arts Center has over time been part of the economic Renaissance of Saratoga Springs.

There was a time 60 years ago where you could roll a bowling ball down the street and never hit a person. But because of the investments that were made to build the Saratoga Performing Arts Center which was both a public and a private enterprise and it was -- the ribbon was cut by then-Governor John Rockefeller. It has turned around -- or been part of the Renaissance that turned around our little

Upstate city.

So please join me this morning in welcoming CEO, Elizabeth Sobol, on this great occasion when we'll be passing a resolution to that effect later today and please offer Elizabeth all of the cordialities of the House.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Ms. Woerner, the Speaker and all members, welcome Ms. Sobol to our Assembly Chamber, the People's House, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Hoping you're able to enjoy our proceedings today and happy 60th anniversary to you. SPAC is wonderful, saw my first concert at SPAC. It was great a long time ago, but you do great, great works and it really is the foundation and core for Saratoga area. So congratulations and happy anniversary. Thank you so very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Mr. Alvarez for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. ALVAREZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I rise with great pride to recognize and welcome an outstanding group of Latina entrepreneurs from my district. These remarkable woman [sic] represent the strength, resiliency and entrepreneurial spirit that continue to uplift our communities and inspire future generations. Please join me in welcoming President Maribelle Perez, Elida Emonte, Clarissa Felix, Grace Lantiguia, Rosa Ajuella, Carolla Leranso, Geraldi Belose, Dekelsey Paulino, Kayla Perez, Bianca Rodriguez, Cartia De Los Santos and Jamie Hemenez (names listed

phonetically). We are honored to have them with us on the floor today and I thank them for their leadership, dedication and contribution to our district and to the New York State. Please welcome them to the People [sic] House and extend the cordiality of the floor.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you. On behalf of Mr. Alvarez, the Speaker and all members, we welcome our distinguished guests here to the Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privilege of the floor to our Latina entrepreneurs who are here today. Thank you so very much for all of the contributions you do in and around the district and for New York State. You are the foundation of commerce in our community so thank you for that and thank you so very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Mr. Sayegh for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. SAYEGH: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Today I rise to introduce a trustee that represents one of the largest global organizations celebrating Sai Baba who's celebrating today a privileged resolution on his 100th birthday and it really is significant because of the contribution of this spiritual leader that has promoted peace, love, nonviolence and has promoted volunteerism throughout the world, here in New York State and throughout 50 states and he's represented today through the organization as a trustee, Sandar Venugopalan, who's an IT professional, has exhibited

tremendous volunteerism throughout New York State and in my community of Yonkers and he's here to celebrate the privileged resolution of Sai Baba and to really encourage peace and prosperity and nonviolence. Madam Speaker, if you can please give our -- our dear guest, Sandar Venugopalan, the cordialities of the House.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. Sayegh, the Speaker and all members, we welcome our distinguished guest to the Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor for the wonderful resolution we will hear later today. Anything talking about love and nonviolence and volunteerism we will absolutely embrace that here today. Extending to you to the privileges of the floor again, sir. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings. Thank you so very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Mr. Lemondes for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. LEMONDES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to recognize three amazing men who have done more for high school athletes in recent times than any other group of people. Specifically, their contributions to the sport of wrestling and to student athletes across New York State will be felt for generations.

First, as we honor Mr. Don McGee whose lifelong dedication to wrestling has impacted generations of young athletes throughout Central New York and beyond. From founding the Bear Club wrestling program in Chittenango to helping build the nationally respected Mohawk Valley Wrestling Club, Don has spent decades

mentoring athletes, expanding opportunities and serving as a true ambassador for the sport.

Joining him is Gene Mills, one the greatest wrestlers of Syracuse University history, a two-time NCAA champion, four-time All-American, Olympian and member of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

And last, we're also honored to welcome Dr. Robert Zayas, Executive Director of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, whose leadership has strengthened education-based athletics for hundreds of thousands of student athletes across our State.

Madam Speaker, please join me in welcoming -- in welcoming these distinguished guests to the Chamber of the New York State Assembly and provide them all the cordialities of the House.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Mr. Lemondes, the Speaker and all members, welcome sirs, Mr. McGee, Mills and Zayas to our Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings today. We saw the wrestling photographs down in the Concourse going towards the Well and it was really very impressive. You never really know who participates in wrestling and some actually big name figures were a part of that. So thank you for all you do for student athletics, definitely promotes teamwork; something all of our young people

need to know today. So we appreciate all you do and thank you so very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Ms. Gallagher for the purposes of an introduction.

MS. GALLAGHER: Thank you so much, Speaker. I am proud to introduce three of my constituents. We have Cooper King who is a member of the Debate Team of Middle School 318 in my district where they have just won the borough-wide title of middle school debate. They are accompanied by the wonderful Daniella Gilead (phonetic) who is a supporter and friend and their parent Kathy King. I know all three of them from their incredible involvement in local issues and so I'm very excited to show them how the process works and how debate is put into government here in the State Assembly.

If you can offer them the cordialities of the court [sic].

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Ms. Gallagher, the Speaker and all members, welcome Cooper, Daniella and Kathy to our Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor. It's really exciting to see such young people involved in civics, school debate. It's wonderful. So keep on with that extemporaneous work that you're doing. It will definitely bring you far for sure. So thank you so very much all for joining us today.

(Applause)

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Madam Speaker, the House may stand at ease.

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

(Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m., the House stood at ease.)

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(Whereupon, at 12:37 p.m., the House was called back to order.)

ACTING SPEAKING HUNTER: The House will come to order.

Ms. Levenberg for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. LEVENBERG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to introduce two student constituents of mine, Brigid Byrnes from Briarcliff Manor and Darren Cooney from Croton-on-Hudson. And they are both very interested in politics and what goes on here at the State Capitol, so they are here today. Darren is a -- a senior at Croton-Harmon High School and is interested in possibly pursuing the law -- the law -- a career in law even as he is just going to be a freshman at SUNY Binghamton and Brigid is a rising junior at Fordham who is majoring in political science and minoring in communications.

So I hope that they have a wonderful day here and I hope that you will offer them the cordialities of the People's House.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of

Ms. Levenberg, the Speaker and all members, welcome Brigid and Darren to the Assembly Chamber, our People's House, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Always wonderful to see our young leaders coming to see how democracy in action works. Continued great success at Fordham and an onward to Binghamton, you will have a wonderful time. Thank you so very much for joining us today.

(Applause)

Ms. Rajkumar for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. RAJKUMAR: Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to introduce Dr. T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman; a man who represents the American Dream, someone who seized every opportunity, pursued excellence across continents and used the power of journalism to inform, connect and uplift communities.

Dr. Jayaraman is the founder and editor-in-chief of the *South Asian Herald*; a distinguished news platform dedicated to reporting on the South Asian diaspora in the United States. Since its launch in October 2024, *South Asian Herald* has quickly developed a growing readership nationally and internationally becoming an important voice for a dynamic and influential community. He has built an extraordinary career covering some of the most powerful and important institutions in the world including the White House, the U.S. Congress, the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

He also had served as the Washington Bureau Chief for new -- *News India Times* and *Desi Talk* and he worked with

United Nations Department of Public Information and leading publications such as the *Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India* and *The Tribun*e. His life and career remind us of the highest calling of journalism. To seek truth, deepen understanding and give voice to communities whose stories deserve to be told.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming and honoring Dr. T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On behalf of Ms. Rajkumar, the Speaker and all members, welcome, Doctor, to our Assembly Chamber, extending to you the privileges of the floor. Continued success to you with your *South Asian Herald* and thank you for the work that you're doing in journalism. Now more than ever we need you to be truth seeker and teller. So thank you very much for all the work that you are doing and for joining us today.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Ms. Walsh for the purpose on an introduction.

MS. WALSH: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm rising to introduce a gentleman from my district, Art Hunsinger, who's probably best known for all of his years and years of volunteerism with the Clifton Park Fire Department. But he's here today with -- and -- and wearing a different hat. He's here today with two young ladies who reside respectively with -- in Assemblymember Santabarbara's district and Assemblymember Forrest's district.

So Art is the Director and Executive Team Member for the Miss New York Volunteer Program which is the official New York State Preliminary for the National Miss Volunteer America System. Art is joined by two Miss New York Volunteers, Miss Teen New York Volunteer Eliza Leszczynski and Miss New York Volunteer Shannon Kelly. So Eliza attends Schalmont High School. She is in Assemblymember Santabarbara's district. She hopes to major in predental biology. She's focused her volunteer efforts on rasing money for the OneSight Organization. She's collected and donated over 40,000 pairs of used eyeglasses and has helped create the Raise the Roof Campaign for the Northeast Association of the Blind. If she wins nationally, she hopes to continue her mission of educating on vision care nationally.

Shannon is from Brooklyn and attends the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Her goal is to become an actor or director. Her volunteer efforts include educating people about mental health and empowering individuals to prioritize self-care, creating product drives to provide self-care products to those who can't afford them.

Madam Speaker, would you please welcome these three remarkable individuals to the People's House? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

On behalf of Ms. Walsh, the Speaker and all members, welcome to our distinguished guests, Mr. Hunsinger, thank you for all of the volunteer work you do with the fire department and

this wonderful Miss New York Volunteer Program Organization. And Eliza and Shannon, our royalty here today, we welcome you and extend to you to the privileges of the floor. Hoping you enjoy our proceedings today. What a wonderful thing, volunteering. It's amazing and we have two young people who are doing great works in our community. So thank you all for joining us today and keep up the great work. Thank you.

(Applause)

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Madam Speaker, I would now like to advance the A-Calendar.

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

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you very much. We are going to take up the following two bills: Rules Report No. 216 and Rules Report No. 217. I'm sure we will have additional work to do later in the day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Page 4, Rules Report No. 216, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10007-C, Rules Report No. 216, Budget Bill. An act to amend Part H of Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2011 amending the Public Health Law and other laws relating to general hospital reimbursement for annual rates, in relation to quarterly assessment of known and projected Department of Health

State Fund Medicaid expenditures (Part A); to amend Chapter 165 of the Laws of 1991, amending the Public Health Law and other laws relating to establishing payments for medical assistance, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Chapter 710 of the Laws of 1988, amending the Social Services Law and the Education Law relating to medical assistance eligibility of certain persons and providing for managed medical care demonstration programs, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Chapter 904 of the Laws of 1984, amending the Public Health Law and the Social Services Law relating to encouraging comprehensive health services, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part X of Chapter 62 of the Laws of 2003, amending the Public Health Law relating to allowing for the use of funds of the Office of Professional Medical Conduct for activities of the Patient Health Information and Quality Improvement Act of 2000, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part H of Chapter 59 of the laws of 2011, amending the Public Health Law relating to the Statewide Health Information Network of New York and the Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System and General Powers and Duties, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part A of Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2008, amending the Elder Law and other laws relating to reimbursement to participating provider pharmacies and prescription drug coverage, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Chapter 81 of the Laws of 1995, amending the Public Health Law and other laws relating to medical reimbursement and welfare reform, in relation to the effectiveness

thereof; to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to the effectiveness of certain provisions relating to negotiation of supplemental rebates relating to medication assisted treatment; to amend Part B of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2015, amending the Social Services Law and other laws relating to supplemental rebates, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part KK of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2020, amending the Public Health Law relating to the designation of statewide general hospital quality and sole community pools and the reduction of capital related inpatient expenses, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Chapter 779 of the Laws of 1986, amending the Social Services Law relating to authorizing services for non-residents in adult homes, residences for adults and enriched housing programs, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part R of Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2016, amending the Public Health Law and the Education Law relating to electronic prescriptions, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to amending and extending the voluntary indigent care pool; to amend Part H of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2019, amending the Public Health Law relating to waiver of certain regulations, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part C of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2022, amending the Public Health Law and the Education Law relating to allowing pharmacists to direct limited service laboratories and order and administer COVID-19 and influenza tests and modernizing nurse practitioners, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Chapter 21 of the Laws of 2011,

amending the Education Law relating to authorizing pharmacists to perform collaborative drug therapy management with physicians in certain settings, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Chapter 520 of the Laws of 2024, amending the Education Law and the Public Health Law relating to amending physician assistant practice standards, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part V of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2022, amending the Public Health Law and the Insurance Law relating to reimbursement for commercial and Medicaid services provided via telehealth, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part II of Chapter 54 of the Laws of 2016 amending Part C of Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2005 relating to authorizing reimbursements for expenditures made by or on behalf of social services districts for medical assistance for needy persons and administration thereof, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part C of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2018, amending the Social Services Law and the Public Health Law relating to health homes and the penalties for managed care providers, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; and to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to certain services provided pursuant to a waiver for traumatic brain injuries (Part B); to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to extending certain provisions relating to the distribution of pool allocations; to amend Part A3 of Chapter 62 of the Laws of 2003 amending the Public Health Law and other laws relating to enacting major components necessary to implement the State Fiscal Plan for the 2003-'04 State Fiscal Year, in relation to extending the

effectiveness of provisions thereof; to amend the New York Health Care Reform Act of 1996, in relation to extending certain provisions relating thereto; to amend the New York Health Care Reform Act of 2000, in relation to extending the effectiveness of provisions thereof; to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to extending certain provisions relating to health care initiative pool distributions; to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to extending payment provisions for general hospitals; to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to extending certain provisions relating to the assessments on covered lives; to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to the Comprehensive Diagnostic and Treatment Centers Indigent Care Program, professional education pool funding, and tobacco control and insurance initiatives pool distributions; to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to medical assistance information and payment system; to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to payments for certified home health agency services, long term home health care programs and AIDS home care programs; and to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to the Personal Care Services Worker Recruitment and Retention Program (Part C); to amend Chapter 266 of the Laws of 1986 amending the Civil Practice Law and Rules and other laws relating to malpractice and professional medical conduct, in relation to insurance coverage paid for by funds from the hospital excess liability pool and extending the effectiveness of certain provisions thereof; to amend Part J of Chapter 63 of the Laws of 2001 amending Chapter 266 of the Laws of 1986 amending the Civil

Practice Law and Rules and other laws relating to malpractice and professional medical conduct, in relation to extending certain provisions concerning the hospital excess liability pool; and to amend Part H of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2017 amending the New York Health Care Reform Act of 1996 and other laws relating to extending certain provisions relating thereto, in relation to extending provisions relating to excess coverage (Part D); intentionally omitted (Part E); to amend the State Finance Law, in relation to approval to spend moneys of the Percy T. Phillips Educational Foundation of the Dental Society of the State of New York Fund; to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law, in relation to distinctive license plates for members of the New York State Dental Foundation; to amend Part JJ of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2025 amending the Public Health Law relating to reporting pregnancy losses and clarifying which agencies are responsible for such reports, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part P of Chapter 57 of the laws of 2025 amending the Public Health Law relating to requiring hospitals to provide stabilizing care to pregnant individuals, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Part GG of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2020 amending the Social Services Law and the Public Health Law relating to creating a single preferred-drug list for medication assisted treatment, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to making technical corrections thereto; to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to the look-back period for medical assistance; and to amend the Insurance Law, in relation to referencing the Continuing Care

Retirement Community Council (Part F); to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to modifying definitions related to automated external defibrillators (AEDs), designating the Department of Health as the entity that may authorize the acquisition of AEDs, modifying requirements for public access defibrillation providers, and establishing requirements that providers of AEDs notify the receivers of their responsibilities; and to amend the Education Law, in relation to AEDS (Part G); intentionally omitted (Part H); to amend Chapter 517 of the Laws of 2016, amending the Public Health Law relating to payments from the New York State Medical Indemnity Fund, in relation to the effectiveness thereof (Part I); to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to temporary health care services agencies (Part J); intentionally omitted (Part K); to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to restoring prior enacted nursing home capital rate reductions (Part L); to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to the amount payable for certain services provided to eligible persons who are also eligible for medical assistance or are also qualified medicare beneficiaries, and in relation to clarifying Medicaid requirements for biomarker testing; and to repeal certain provisions of the Social Services Law and the Public Health Law relating thereto (Part M); intentionally omitted (Part N); to amend Part I of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2022 providing a one percent across the board payment increase to all qualifying fee-for-service Medicaid rates, in relation to hospital and nursing home fee-for-service reimbursement rates; and to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to certain reductions in

hospital capital rate add-ons (Part O); establishing a State Fiscal Year 2026-2027 targeted inflationary increase to be applied to certain portions of reimbursable costs or contract amounts for certain programs and services (Part P); intentionally omitted (Part Q); to amend the Insurance Law and the Public Health Law, in relation to substance-related and addictive disorder services (Part R); intentionally omitted (Part S); to amend Part ZZ of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2020 amending the Tax Law and the Social Services Law relating to certain Medicaid management, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; and to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to minimum amounts of certain state aid for the City of New York (Part T); to amend Part A of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2013 amending the Public Health Law and other laws relating to general hospital reimbursement for annual rates, in relation to extending government rates for behavioral services and referencing the Office of Addiction Services and Supports; to amend Part H of Chapter 111 of the Laws of 2010 relating to increasing Medicaid payments to providers through managed care organizations and providing equivalent fees through an ambulatory patient group methodology, in relation to extending government rates for behavioral services referencing the Office of Addiction Services and Supports and in relation to the effectiveness thereof (Part U); to amend Part Q of Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2016, amending the Mental Hygiene Law relating to the closure or transfer of a state-operated individualized residential alternative, in relation to the effectiveness thereof (Part V);

to amend Chapter 670 of the Laws of 2021, requiring the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities to establish the Care Demonstration Program, in relation to the effectiveness thereof (Part W); to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to medical assistance for needy persons age sixty-five or older who are eligible for medical assistance but for their immigration status (Part X); to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to providing for an amended New York managed care organization provider tax (Part Y); to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to coverage for services provided by school-based health centers for medical assistance recipients (Part Z); to amend Part LL of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2024, amending the Public Health Law relating to reimbursement rates for medically fragile children and pediatric diagnostic and treatment centers, in relation to extending the effectiveness thereof (Part AA); and to amend the Financial Services Law, in relation to dispute resolution for emergency services and surprise bills; and providing for the repeal of certain provisions upon expiration thereof (Part BB).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Governor's Message is at the decks [sic].

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. The bill before us contains major components of legislation that are necessary for the implementation of the State Budget as it pertains to health and mental hygiene. This bill includes legislation to extend the Medicaid Global Cap, provide increased investments from the Healthcare Stability Fund and to support hospitals and nursing homes and provide targeted inflationary increase for human service workers.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Chairman yield for some questions?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield? The sponsor yields.

MR. PALMESANO: Good afternoon, Mr. Pretlow. Good to see you again.

MR. PRETLOW: Good to see you.

MR. PALMESANO: Good to talk to you again. We seem to be getting there, that's a good thing.

MR. PRETLOW: Seems like only yesterday.

MR. PALMESANO: Seems like only --

(Laughter)

So true. So I guess I just wanted to start out, obviously we're dealing with the health budget today, right now. And obviously Medicaid is such a big part of this budget. Could you tell me what this bill appropriates? What's the total amount of spending in

Medicaid overall?

MR. PRETLOW: Total -- total Medicaid spending is $117,787,882,000.

MR. PALMESANO: And if I -- just to clarify in that point, is that just for the Department of Health? Because we know there's other outside agencies that are getting Medicaid. Does that 117 billion include those other agencies or is that higher --

MR. PRETLOW: That -- that is all agencies.

MR. PALMESANO: All agencies --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, sir.

MR. PALMESANO: -- total of 117 billion? Okay. And of course I know this being the first one, we -- we got the met -- the Financial Plan earlier and the Medicaid Scorecards. Are they going to become available to the public -- the Medicaid Scorecard become available to the public?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, everything will become available to the public because we're very transparent in our actions.

MR. PALMESANO: Sure.

This budget bill extends the Medicaid global cap while also amending several savings proposals from the Executive Budget. Does this mean that we remain within the Medicaid global cap with this provision?

MR. PRETLOW: The enacted budget includes $2.1 billion or 8% increase so -- to the global caps spending for fiscal year '26-'27 for the global cap is 28.6 billion. So it is unchanged from the

enacted budget.

MR. PALMESANO: So then we -- we -- we do remain in the global cap then, right?

MR. PRETLOW: Absolutely.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. And just to go over again, what is the expected total Medicaid budget for this fiscal year?

MR. PRETLOW: It should be what I gave you earlier, 117.8 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: And how much of this is federal dollars and what is the change from last year?

MR. PRETLOW: Federal dollars is 74.1 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And what is the expected State -- State share of Medicaid for this fiscal year?

MR. PRETLOW: You mean from our General Fund? That would be $32,000,965,000.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And what is that change from last year?

MR. PRETLOW: 294 million.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. It's been I know a common practice to shift spending outside of the Medicaid global cap -- cap calculations due to State spending more than the cap will allow. Does this enacted budget shift any new spending outside of the cap?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. PALMESANO: No? All right. And the Executive Budget projected that the State spending under the global

cap will require a gap-closing savings plan to address accumulative $8.8 billion in spending needs through fiscal year '30. Many of the proposals that were included as saving measures were announced -- were either amended or restored, therefore there's an updated deficit associated with the enacted spending plan, yes? Is there an updated deficit number associated with the enacted budget spending plan?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. PALMESANO: No. So it still remains at 8.8?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: It actually went down a little but -- but, yeah.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. All right. Does this enacted budget address any savings measures that will reduce these out-year global cap deficits?

MR. PRETLOW: We're going to break down the new MCO tax?

MR. PALMESANO: Yes.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. Well, the funding stream is able to collect about .35% assessment on total premium revenues for managed care organizations starting January 1, 2027. The tax is expected to bring in $165 million to net benefit the State for fiscal year '27-'28.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Now med -- Medicaid spending has increased significantly under the current Governor with

the State share ballooning over 75%. However, the State has not had proportionate increases in fraud prevention efforts with New York ranking very low in fraud investigations per billion spent. Are there any provisions in this budget bill that are aimed at reducing fraud and waste to ensure we are good stewards of this important program that is funded by our taxpayers?

MR. PRETLOW: That's being handled by the Medicaid Inspector General.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And do you believe the current State efforts to reduce waste and fraud are sufficient given the upward trend in Medicaid spending within the State?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. For clarity, does this budget bill contain the Governor's proposal to change Medicaid crossover payments to ambulance providers?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Do these changes have anything -- do these changes to the Executive Proposal have any -- a fiscal impact?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: There is -- it's a small increase there. I don't have the numbers in front of me, I'm looking at my notes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Part X of this budget bill makes changes regarding Medicaid coverage for the

undocumented over the age of 65. Are these provisions providing any new benefits to this particular population?

MR. PRETLOW: No, there are no new benefits.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And is there any fiscal associated with the provisions?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah. There's no additional cost there.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. The Executive Budget Medicaid Scorecard included 1.9 billion in financial plan resources. Most of this funding was intended to -- to cover the Aliessa population under Medicaid; however, this is no longer necessary. How does this budget reallocate that previously allocated funding?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: That money's been reallocated to the General Fund. We didn't do anything with it in this budget.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I'd like to pivot to one question relative to the targeted inflationary increase. Part P of this bill enacts a 2.7% increase for various human service providers. The Governor's proposal of 1.7% included 282 million in funding with 176 million of that being the State share. Can you provide us with a dollar amount of how much of a funding increase this is over the Executive Budget proposal?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe the State share is $140 million.

MR. PALMESANO: $140 million?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm sorry, 104 million.

MR. PALMESANO: 104? All right. And I think, Mr. Chairman, I know a couple of my colleagues have some other questions. At this point, I'll go on the bill and I'll talk to you a little later.

MR. PRETLOW: Thank you, sir.

MR. PALMESANO: Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes. Madam Speaker, my colleagues, before us we have the health bill which is part of our one -- well, more than one quarter of a trillion dollar budget. We heard that, you know, Medicaid is one of the largest shares of -- at budget, over $117 billion as was mentioned. You know, we always ask and request that the Financial Plan in the Medicaid Scorecard be given to us before voting and also be accessible to the public. I think one area that I think we always talk about and we hear about, but what are we doing anything about is waste, fraud and abuse in the Medicaid program because we know it's a problem. We often see reports that the Comptroller has identified that and going after some changes, but as my colleague mentioned, this all falls within the -- the Medicaid Inspector General. We actually need to do more in my opinion and in many of my colleagues' opinion to support the Medicaid Inspector General, I -- because what we're gonna do is we're gonna jeopardize those important services that we're providing to the residents of this

State. We really need to do more because I don't feel we're actively increasing the oversight to protect the taxpayers and the important services that these programs provide to them. If we want to address this, it's imperative that we are proactive and not reactive, because I think we are putting the State more at risk from outside factors which can put a more financial strain on us, increase our finan -- possible financial instability. We need to put in place policies to ensure and -- and safeguards so the health coverage that are -- we're delivering is efficient and effective protecting the taxpayers. This will help us ensure that we are working together to protect our State's fiscal stability and the important program like the Medicaid Program.

I will add one other part that from a small -- that I'm happy to see in here that we did this -- the 2.7% inflationary increase. That's what our advocates were ad -- advocating for. Governor put in 1.7%. Seems like in the past, the Governor comes in low, we come in where they wanted and then we always fall in between. I'm glad to see that this budget bill actually gets to that 2.7% that the advocates wanted. It's probably still not enough, but at least we're getting and helping them address the needs because those individuals who care for our most vulnerable need to be protected.

I mean, budgeting is all about priorities, right? We see all the different interests that are coming around from different individuals and groups. There should be no more important interest than taking care of our most vulnerable citizens. Those individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and as someone who

once worked in that field a long time ago, it certainly gave me a perspective and an understanding of what those workers do. Those workers, those direct support professionals who work with our most vulnerable population are truly doing God's work. It's not an easy job and when -- sometimes those individuals are like family to the individuals that are caring for in those homes, in those centers where they're getting services. It's like family to them, and these individuals who do this work do it because they care. They do it because they want to do this work and take care of our most vulnerable, but they are often pushed out because they can't make ends meet because they can go work at McDonald's or Burger King and earn a higher wage and get better benefits than they can working for -- with our most vulnerable citizens. So I'm glad this hits that number that they asked for. What I think we need to be cognizant of this as we move forward when we're addressing budget needs, when we're taking care of our most vulnerable, we have to prioritize that population. Individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, they need our support. Those individuals who care for them are directly at the forefront of improving their quality of care and their quality of life. And what could -- what could be more of a priority than that.

So I just hope as we move forward, I hope we don't have to ask the Governor for a higher increase. Hopefully she puts it in her budget next year and then we can add to it, but at least give the groups what they need so we can have those dedicated individuals working as they do, caring for our most vulnerable citizens. So I am

glad that part is in this budget bill and I -- I thank the Chairman for this time during our discussion and I thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Chair yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I -- I want to dive into the Essential Plan to a degree. I know the federal government recently approved a waiver that would allow New York State to continue receiving Essential Plan dollars to cover the Alessia population. However, we did have to terminate the 1332 Waiver for individuals between 200 and 250% of the federal poverty level. Is there a provision within in this budget bill that would include actions to assist the individuals who are no longer eligible for the Essential Plan in affording or -- or purchasing commercial coverage?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, in answer to -- to your question, I'll give you a rather lengthy answer, you're absolutely right. You know, the provisions of H.R. 1 that was enacted July of 2025 disqualifies most of the lawfully present immigrant population from receiving premium tax credits. Due to this, the current 1332 Waiver will lose more than half of its current operating revenue, rendering it

insolvent beginning in July of 2026. To maintain coverage for as many Essential Plan enrollees as possible, the State received authority from CMS - Dr. Oz - to terminate his 1332 Waiver and reactivate the previously used 1331 Basic Health Program, effective July 1, 2020 -- '26.

The reactivation of this Basic Health Plan allows the State to access $9 billion in Basic Health Plan Trust Fund to offset the loss of premium tax credit revenue and temporarily maintain the solvency of the Essential Plan for over 1.2 million enrollees. So by returning to the 1331 Basic Plan, 470,000 individuals with incomes between 200 and 250% of the federal poverty level will lose the Essential Plan coverage.

The State was not able to offer continued coverage for these individuals due to the immense cost associated with backfilling the loss of billions of dollars in federal funding. So the provision of the healthcare coverage is a longstanding partnership between the State and the federal government. Unfortunately, the actions by our current administration to roadblock longstanding eligibility standards have left thousands now ineligible for coverage.

MR. JENSEN: All right. So having that all been said --

MR. PRETLOW: It's not good, but yes --

MR. JENSEN: -- having all that being said, is there anything in this budget bill whether it's premium assistance or is there anything to help mitigate all the things you just brought up in helping

those who have been affected in that 200 to 250% of poverty level in affording the purchasing of commercial plans on the marketplace since they are now ineligible to be covered by the Essential Plan, or is the plan by New York State just to let them float off into the ethers?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I -- I think that through our Financial Plan we're trying to -- to maintain as many individuals as we possibly can to make -- for them to maintain some form of health coverage.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And then just pigging -- going back to the Alessia, now that I'm pronouncing it more correctly, the Alessia population. So to comply with the court order in ensuring coverage for those affected, we're using the -- reverting back to the original Essential Plan Waiver to ensure that we're complying with the court order?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: And there will be no interruption in coverage for that population?

MR. PRETLOW: Hopefully, no.

MR. JENSEN: Hopefully, yes. Okay. Moving on to in -- is there any concern now that we're tapping into the Essential Plan Trust Fund, which I think you said $9 billion were in that -- was in that trust fund?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, there are. Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Is there any concern that while accessing that money, that we can have the potential that the Essential

Plan does go -- become insolvent by 2032?

MR. PRETLOW: That's -- those numbers are around -- about correct and we're trying to figure out now how to alleviate that and keep it from happening, yeah.

MR. JENSEN: So we are concerned and we're trying to figure out in the out-years how we're going to ensure that this time --

MR. PRETLOW: Absolutely.

MR. JENSEN: -- six years from now we're addressing it?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Moving onto the MCO tax and HCRA. I understand that this budget bill takes the legalized federal money laundering scheme of the MCO tax of .35% on total premium from health plans and extends it from the managed care organizations to all -- all entities that offer health coverage including private commercial plans. Is that --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: -- correct? Okay. Would you agree that by taxing health insurance and health care services, it may contribute to things being unaffordable or less affordable for New Yorkers on a whole?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, they're already bring taxed. There's -- nothing's changing there.

MR. JENSEN: Well, but we're raising -- we're taking

the -- the tax that was just on the MCOs and extending that -- that point .35% tax rate on health insurance --

MR. PRETLOW: I -- I believe it was already there and this is going to be the same --

MR. JENSEN: On the -- on the private plans?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: But it's an increase on the HCRA that was already in place. So we're doing an increase in --

MR. PRETLOW: No. I believe it's gonna be the exact same number.

MR. JENSEN: Exact same?

MR. PRETLOW: Yep.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Is it the most appropriate way of going about things to look at increasing the cost of coverages at a time when, as you just mentioned, we do have close to half a million New Yorkers who are gonna be losing their Essential Plan coverage while they're looking for options on the marketplace essentially making them purchase more expensive plans on New York State of Health?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, you -- as you I know are well aware that we used to depend on federal support. Without that support now, we're still trying to find ways to cover these individuals.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Is there any concern now that we -- we did get a temporary through the work of -- of members of our federal Congressional Delegation like Congressman Lawler that we

did get an extension on the -- the MCO tax. Is extending the tax to include all commercial plans a way to ensure that we're not utilizing it as simply a gimmick, but we're doing it equitably across the entire ecosystem so that we can ensure that pot of federal money does continue to flow to New York State?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I -- I -- I kind of think that, you know, based on the individual you just mentioned, a former colleague of ours, they never should've eliminated it. And with regards to the extension, they really should have extended it for a longer period of time to give us more time to -- to find a recovery path.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Is it fair to assume that commercial plans will now be paying a higher tax than they were under the previous MCO tax arrangement?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Is there any concern that this could affect the overall growth in unsustainability for Medicaid funding in the State ensuring that our out-years have a higher need for State costs?

MR. PRETLOW: This I think is being transferred through the stability fund.

(Conferring)

No, we're increasing funding to hospitals and nursing homes.

MR. JENSEN: Yup.

MR. PRETLOW: So...

MR. JENSEN: Okay. So I know we mentioned that we -- we do have a temporary waiver extension from the federal government and I think we would've and I would agree with you that we'd like to see a longer extension just to not have it come into question, but can we assume that if that is again, not extended, that we can see an increase in the taxing structure to ensure available dollars to that healthcare stability fund?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. Well, I don't think we're looking to -- to increase any taxes. Our investments have been spread out to be sustained over a number of years.

MR. JENSEN: How many years?

MR. PRETLOW: A number of years, I don't know them. Four --

MR. JENSEN: Well, there's a lot of numbers.

MR. PRETLOW: I believe it's like four years.

MR. JENSEN: Four years? Okay. I know that the Governor's Executive Budget Financial Plan included a $750 million in that General Fund support in fiscal year '27 and the $500 million thereafter to support the fund in offsetting --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: -- the loss of MCO tax. Is the General Fund support still necessary?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And how much was included -- is included in this enacted budget?

MR. PRETLOW: $750 million.

MR. JENSEN: Oh. That's -- that's a lot of zeros. Under the new taxing structure, how much does the State anticipate in collecting?

MR. PRETLOW: $165 million.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. We also have -- you -- you broke down some of the ways that we're gonna be spending the stability fund and you may have already said it and if you did I apologize, could you give a breakdown of these allocations and -- and how they may differ from what the Executive -- Executive proposed in January?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I'll give you all of the -- the MCO tax reinvestments. $711 million for hospitals, $451 million for nursing homes, assisted living programs and hospice, $50 million to the physician fee schedule, $50 million to Mainstream Managed Quality Pool, $330 million to the Safety Net Transformation Program, $40 million to clinics and federally-qualified heath centers, $15 million for FQHC value-based payments and $500 million to the global cap offset, which comes to a total of $1.47 billion.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Thank you very much. Pivoting over to the -- the reforms to the Independent Dispute Resolution provision. This budget bill includes provisions that would exclude Medicaid managed care from the IDR process. It would

create payment benchmarks and caps while making changes to the IDR process for the New York State Health Insurance Program. Could you provide the rationale for these changes and any fiscal implications for the State and the individuals enrolled in these healthcare plans?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. (Indiscernible) enacted budget includes savings of $28.5 million by carving the Medicaid out of the Independent Dispute Resolution process. No other state in the United States allows Medicaid in the IDR process. This proposal brings New York in line with 49 other states and the federal government's surprise billing law.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Do you believe that these changes will make it more difficult to recruit providers in underserved areas of the State or participate in out-of-network care?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: No? Okay. How effective is the use of the 50th percentile benchmark in the 80th percentile fee cap in balancing fair payments to providers with cost controls for the health plans?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. I think we're depending on does it -- a reduction on (indiscernible) the next four years, four or five years on the NYSHIP participation and we're going to see how that pans out over the next few years.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Do we have any idea what the

implications are for adding NYSHIP to the State IDR process rather than the -- the federal mechanism?

MR. PRETLOW: We believe that health insurance premiums will go down as a result.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And how might this requirement that IDR entities choose the payment closest to the benchmark effect any sort of dispute outcomes?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. Well, the -- the goal was to bring the margin closer. There are very few providers that are taking advantage of this so it's -- it's what we're just trying to get it all together.

MR. JENSEN: I know in yesterday's conversation surrounding other insurance area reforms we -- we had an idea about how much folks may save. Do we have any idea if this is being done to bring down costs? Do we have any idea what the estimated cost savings are by implementing this reform?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. I think (indiscernible) '21 to '24 the IDA claims have increased 18 times from 778 claims to 14,166 claims per year. I can't give you a dollar amount what that translates to, but you can see the scope of the number of claims has increased drastically.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and then I just wanted to pivot to the integration of behavioral health

services. Part Q of this -- of this budget bill would've created a single integrated behavioral health services license for providers serving individuals with cooccurring mental health and addiction issues through the Office of Addiction Services and Supports and the Office of Mental Health. What was the opposition to this proposal and why do we not see it in this budget bill?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, this is something we're working on still and it'll be done outside of the budget.

MR. JENSEN: So do we expect between now and June 4th that we'll have a standalone piece of legislation addressing this?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe it's already passed this House (indiscernible).

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And with that note, I'm good. Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Jensen.

MS. LUNSFORD: Madam Speaker, can we have the Social Services Committee to the Speaker's Conference Room, please?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Social Services Committee members, please make your way to the Speaker's Conference Room. Social Services members, Speaker's Conference Room.

Mr. Sempolinski.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, ma'am.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Well, thank you, Chairman and I appreciate all the work that you've done on this and your staff and Mr. Palmesano's staff and you've always been very professional and collegial and good humored through this process, so I know we all appreciate that.

My questions are regarding Part P, the targeted inflationary increase. So we're at 2.7 if I'm correct and that is approximately give or take the rate of inflation for this particular area. Am I -- I correct that's sort of where we're at?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: And are there any changes from this year to previous years in what is covered in that section?

MR. PRETLOW: No, sir.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: What was that?

MR. PRETLOW: No, sir.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: All right. Thank you. And there -- there is one adjustment insofar is how the providers have to use this money, and it says that they will submit a written certification attesting the funding we use to first promote the recruitment and

retention of support staff, direct care staff, clinical staff, nonexecutive administrative staff or respond to other critical non-personnel services prior to any salary increases or other compensation for executive level job titles. My one question regarding that is it says, first promote. How would that work practically -- what will that do to comply?

(Crosstalk)

MR. PRETLOW: Well, there's really -- there's really no change from last year, how does it calculate?

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: I'm sorry. Say that again, sir.

MR. PRETLOW: There's no change from last year.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: All I'm saying is the -- the restriction on how they have to spend the money to first -- with employees.

MR. PRETLOW: It's -- as far as I know, there's been no change in how they've done it in -- in the past.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay. All right. So thank you very much.

I'm going to go on the bill then.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: All right. I thank the Chairman for answering my questions. Obviously we started in the Executive Budget at 1.7. We're at 2.7 which is, you know, close to the rate of inflation. There was advocacy from a lot of folks to get to 4-. I would have loved to get to 4-, I certainly would've preferred 4-. But what I am happy about and this time last year I was -- I was very

unhappy because we were nowhere close to the rate of inflation and the difference was not even sort of halfway between the Executive and the one-House budgets. So whereas last year I was very mad, this year my reaction is sort of "meh." You know, we're -- we're trending in the right direction and that is the positive that I want to sort of put on this even though I would've obviously preferred to be a 4- is if you look over the long-term on what was once called the COLA and now the TII, we were in a very shameful, in my opinion, position under the previous Executive on what he was willing to do. The current Executive has been better and in this case increasingly better over time where we've ended up where, you know, we went from not getting anything, to getting something, to -- to getting close to the rate -- on the rate of inflation.

Obviously there's still the backlog from all those years of being behind inflation, which is why I think people wanted to get to -- to get to 4-, but that trendline of increasingly caring about this issue and increasing investments on this is very positive. And so I also want to associate myself with some of the remarks that the ranking member on Ways and Means, Mr. Palmesano, made about the importance of this particular line item. You know, in my opinion, this is where we should start the budget every year because you're dealing with extraordinarily vulnerable people, those who are doing God's work taking care of them and -- and people who are in a position to need help through certainly no -- no fault of their own. So if I hope this trendline continues, I hope that next year we start with an

Executive Budget that's more robust. I hope we can continue to make investments in this area that are increasingly positive.

So while I'm -- I'm not jumping up and down excited, I'm certainly in a better place than I was last year and -- and I will continue to advocate next year in the budget process for increased investments in this area and -- and one thing that's very positive about the TII is it tends to be something that brings within the Legislature especially Republicans and Democrats together. There was very -- across the board, across the ideological spectrum a feeling that we needed to do more and continue to do more in this area.

While there are other areas of this bill that I have very strong concerns about and -- and -- and will sort of dictate where I have to vote on this, I do want to highlight this sort of moderately, very positive situation here and hope that this -- hope that this trend continues into the future.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Slater.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, ma'am.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. SLATER: Good afternoon, Chairman. Thank

you. I just have a very few questions, specifically on the Medical Indemnity Fund, something that we've spoken about a few times in the last couple of months and -- and that we've continued to focus on overall the last several years. This budget bill omits a proposal that would've benchmarked rates for MIF services to other government payment rates while extending the current enhanced rates; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SLATER: Is this a permanent solution for funding of the MIF?

MR. PRETLOW: I wouldn't say it's a permanent solution. It's a solution that we have for the time being.

MR. SLATER: So it's just a short-term fix based on what the Governor had proposed in her Executive Budget?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SLATER: And its enrollment issues regarding the -- the accessibility of the fund, will this require us to go back to the drawing board next year?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe we made any changes with -- with respect to going back.

MR. SLATER: In regards to access to the MIF, do you -- can you tell us how many members of the MIF there are today?

MR. PRETLOW: About 1,100.

MR. SLATER: And do we anticipate being able to support additional members with this current plan?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SLATER: How much additional funding is required for the MIF in this fiscal year as a result of this -- of this proposal?

MR. PRETLOW: About $156 million.

MR. SLATER: Is that lined out in this particular budget bill?

MR. PRETLOW: No. It's -- I think it was in Aid to Localities.

MR. SLATER: It would be in Aid to Localities?

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah.

MR. SLATER: And I'm sorry, so you said that the total that we are allocating for the MIF is 156 million?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SLATER: Is that more or less than we did last year?

MR. PRETLOW: I think it's about the same.

MR. SLATER: I thought we were at about 213 million last year?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. There were -- I believe there were some liabilities from previous years that were paid off that were included in that money.

MR. SLATER: Okay. And so with the 156- we can get into this at that appropriate time if you wish, but I just wanted to make sure I'm clear while we're on the topic. The 156- would allow

the MIF to continue to be solvent and accept new members if needed?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SLATER: Very good. Well, those are all the questions that I have. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will Chair Pretlow yield for a few questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, ma'am.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MS. WALSH: Thank you very much. So I wanted to ask about Part X --

MR. PRETLOW: Part X.

MS. WALSH: -- the Medicaid for undocumented immigrants over 65. It was noted as a technical amendment. Could you explain what that technical amendment does?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. We're taking them from managed care and transferring them to fee-for-service. So it doesn't change their eligibility.

MS. WALSH: There's so much noise behind us, I'm sorry. It's doesn't change their eligibility?

MR. PRETLOW: For -- for -- for benefits, yes.

MS. WALSH: And I -- and I heard you in response to an earlier question indicate that this change in Part X did not -- it was cost neutral. There was no additional cost associated with it; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Correct.

MS. WALSH: Okay. But -- but that doesn't mean that New York spends $0 on Medicaid for undocumented immigrants, right?

MR. PRETLOW: No, it doesn't.

MS. WALSH: Do you happen to know how much New York currently spends on Medicaid for undocumented immigrants?

MR. PRETLOW: It's about $230 million.

MS. WALSH: See, now I was -- and I'm using Google so you're the authority, I'm not probably, but I -- I was just -- I saw a number that was quite a bit higher. I saw $639 million annually on emergency Medicaid for undocumented immigrants.

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah. That's a different part of money.

MS. WALSH: That's a different part?

MR PRETLOW: Yeah, yes.

MS. WALSH: Okay. The number that you just gave, the 200 or so million, was that just for undocumented immigrants over the age of 65?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MS. WALSH: I see, okay. So the -- the -- the total cost for Medicaid coverage for undocumented immigrants could be more the number that I'm talking about because it would encompass more than --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Colleagues, can we have quiet in the Chamber or take your conversations out? Thank you.

MR. PRETLOW: There -- there is a possibility that it could be more.

MS. WALSH: When you look at all ages under the program?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes. Yes, ma'am.

MS. WALSH: Very good. Thank you for that clarification.

The second thing I wanted to talk about was Part P, the Targeted Inflationary Increase section and I -- I definitely echo the -- the comments made by previous speakers about being grateful that we did get up to a 2.7% increase rather than what the Governor's proposal had been. I knew that they had looked for 4%. Certainly when I met with advocates in my office, the -- the number was 4%, but is it your understanding that the advocates are maybe not as happy as they would be with 4% but they're satisfied with the 2.7%?

MR. PRETLOW: I -- I think you're referring to what was in our one-House --

MS. WALSH: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: -- but 3% works out to about $120 million?

(Conferring)

Yeah, every 1% is $104 million.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right. So one of the things I wanted to just touch on was that when I met with advocates about disability services and OPWDD funding, the inclusion -- they were really advocating for the inclusion of care coordination organizations or CCOs in funding increases, and my understanding is that these care coordinators, they assist families to navigate Medicaid and disability services. Do you know whether the targeted in -- inflationary increase will impact in any way positively these care coordination organizations?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe they -- they -- they're included, no.

MS. WALSH: You don't believe that they do?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Pretlow. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Durso.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Chair yield for a couple of questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, ma'am.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. DURSO: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. You looked like you almost got comfortable there for a second.

(Laughter)

But I just wanted to touch on something that my colleague just spoke about again with the -- the Targeted Inflationary Increases. We're at 2.7% this year, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. DURSO: And it says here that -- excuse me. It must be used for recruitment and retention of nonexecutive staff first, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe so.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So when we talk about recruitment and retention of -- and using that, what you just stated was roughly 120 -- $120 million, correctly [sic]?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. DURSO: Can you give me an example of what that could be used for recruitment and retention? So in other words are they using it for signage?

MR. PRETLOW: It would --

MR. DURSO: I'm sorry?

MR. PRETLOW: Pay bonuses, any kind of

remuneration that we have to give them.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So it's not so much advertising and online advertisements, billboards, anything like that to recruit and retain. It's going to be used to specifically monetarily retain those workers?

MR. PRETLOW: I think those items would be very minimal. They have to show exactly how this is money is going to be used. It all has to be basically, you know, put in front of, you know, any -- the governing Body to make sure that they're spending money in the right way.

MR. DURSO: But it can be used in those -- right, it doesn't have to strictly go towards salaries, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. DURSO: Okay. Now is there -- and it has to go towards recruitment and retention first, then it could be used for salaries for those direct care workers?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. DURSO: Okay. Now can any of that money be used towards taxes, benefits, anything like that, or is it strictly for salaries?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm pretty sure it can be used for anything including taxes.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So is that how the money was used last year when it came to direct care workers?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, sir.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So really there's -- there's no sense of who's -- excuse me, I apologize, sir. Who's making that decision on how that money is getting spent, what counts as recruitment and retain -- retention because if we're giving them 2.7% which is just below the inflationary rate, these are our workers that are doing, as said by my other colleague, God's works, but now the money's not guaranteed to go specifically to salaries. They're actually taking a loss from last year and what they got, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Maybe in some cases.

MR. DURSO: It -- can you give me an example of what those cases may be?

MR. PRETLOW: Uh --

MR. DURSO: So in -- in other words -- sir, I -- I apologize. Let me ask more of a direct question, I don't want to -- how much of this $120 million that is essentially set aside for direct care workers, which we all agree are some of the most important workers that we could have in taking care of our most vulnerable, has to go towards actual salaries for some of the lowest paid people in the industry? Do we know how much of -- because it doesn't seem like to this much of it at all.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, there's really no public reporting on that. They just have to attest to it and I don't have the exact number in front of me, but I will be glad to provide it to you at a later date.

MR. DURSO: So there's -- there's -- and not you, sir,

but I'm saying there's no -- there's no public reporting on it, so we have -- really don't know how much money of this 120 million is gonna go toward signage, online recruitment, paper mailers, anything like that to recruit and we don't know how much is gonna go towards actual tangible salaries for workers?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the State agencies that monitor this will be looking at it.

MR. DURSO: So do we have a -- a -- an idea of how much was spent on last -- from last year's budget in the money that was directed towards those workers, how much was spent in salaries as opposed to --

MR. PRETLOW: It's not reported to us, so I would have to say no.

MR. DURSO: Do you think that's a problem, sir? As far as the legislative Body that's directing this money to go towards direct care workers which again, as I'll say, we all think are some of the most important workers and we're all fighting for these workers' salaries, but we don't have numbers on how much is actually going towards the workers?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, sir. You know, to -- to that point, if you are referring to what we had in our one-House, that was included, but it didn't make the final cut as --

MR. DURSO: Who -- who --

MR. PRETLOW: -- several of our -- our more stellar suggestions that were in our one-House budget did not make the final

cut.

MR. DURSO: I would agree with you, sir. Just, you know, if you want, who can we blame for that?

(Laughter)

I won't put you on the spot, sir. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow, that's all my questions.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. DURSO: So I want to thank the Chair for taking my questions and that it was really one just in regards to the Target Inflationary Increases [sic]. Again -- and I'll say it again and I -- I think there -- there's nobody in here that would mind say -- me saying it, again these workers do, do as my colleague said, God's work. They are taking care of our most vulnerable and they are severely underpaid and everybody in this Chamber has fought for these workers to get more money and now we're getting it and we're not sure where the money's going, how it's being directed and it sure as hell is not going into the pockets of those workers. Plain and simple. We should be worried about where this money's going, we should have some kind of report in front of us every single year of how this money's being spent because in all honesty, the money is supposed to go towards, again, the workers that are taking care of these individuals and it obviously is not.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Lavine.

MR. LAVINE: Will the members of the Local Governments Committee please meet immediately in the Speaker's Conference Room? Thank you, Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Local Governments Committee members, please make your way to the Speaker's Conference Room. Local Governments, Speaker's Conference Room.

Mr. Molitor.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, Madam Speaker, I yield.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. I -- I made sure not to make the mistake of asking you to yield based on a limited number of questions.

So I want to focus on the MCO tax. How does that work? How does the MCO tax work?

MR. PRETLOW: I'll give you a breakdown in two seconds.

(Pause)

It collects .35 percent assessments on total premium revenue for managed care organizations that starting in January of

2027 the tax is expected to bring in $165 million in net benefits to the State for fiscal year '27-'28. And of course these additional funds will be used to maintain Healthcare Stability Fund investing going forward.

MR. MOLITOR: Sorry, Mr. Pretlow. I'm having difficulty hearing you. Did you say that that -- that the -- that it's a tax on insurance premium -- on insurance premiums or insurance premium revenue?

MR. PRETLOW: On premium revenue.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. So that's a tax that the insurance companies will pay and they'll pay that to the State?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes. They're already paying it.

MR. MOLITOR: Well, how much are they paying right now?

MR. PRETLOW: I think it's -- hold on a second -- it's a dollar -- I can figure the number out. Okay. It comes out to $1.50 to $2 per member, per month.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. And so then this will increase it by .35 --

MR. PRETLOW: No, this actually decreases it.

(Indiscernible/crosstalk)

MR. MOLITOR: .35 percent?

MR. PRETLOW: .35 percent.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. And when that money is collected by the State, what implication does that have with money

that we may receive from the federal government?

MR. PRETLOW: This goes into our Fund and then we receive a federal match.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. So the higher the tax is the more money we receive as a match; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: That would be correct.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. And then what do we do with the money that we receive as a match?

MR. PRETLOW: Then it gets spent the same way that the additional money -- money was spent previously.

MR. MOLITOR: So it goes towards what exactly?

MR. PRETLOW: Healthcare. It goes to -- it goes to hospitals, it goes to -- you know, like I say, if we spend a dollar in a hospital we get a dollar from the federal government.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. And this tax is applied upon -- across the board for all insurance?

MR. PRETLOW: Everyone pays the same, you know .35 percent.

MR. MOLITOR: So if you're a -- a small business owner and you are buying insurance through the ACA exchange, you are paying -- you could be paying an increase in premiums; isn't that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: You could, but small businesses are not included.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. So if you're an individual,

let's say, who's purchasing on the Exchange, you could see a premium increase as a result of the MCO tax increase, couldn't you?

MR. PRETLOW: So let's say if you're a small group insurer, you're not seeing an increase. You're not part of this. You're not responsible for paying it.

MR. MOLITOR: Well, you just said that it applies across the board to all insurance.

MR. PRETLOW: Large groups like the insurance group that most of us belong to, NYSHIP.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. So if you're a county, one of the 62 counties that offers a large group plan, you could see your cost increase; isn't that right?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes. And they're already paying this under the old method.

MR. MOLITOR: Right. But they're --

MR. PRETLOW: But that's -- that's because we want to be in federal compliance. Otherwise we'll be accused of things like fraud, which is not the case. So what we're doing now is making -- across the board everyone pays the .35 percent. Fiscally, it works out about the same.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. So when the -- when the counties have to pay increased costs because of the rise in the MCO tax and they disburse that cost amongst property tax owners, we should just tell them that, *Hey, we're supposed to do this because we're already doing it*. Is that what we should be telling them?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I'm saying -- I think you're trying to infer that we're raising the rate and we're not. We're replacing the old method of calculating the dollars received with a new method which is more uniform with the rest of the country. So .35 percent is what it's worked out to, and is similar to what the $1.50 to $2 worked out to fiscally.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. So I'm sure someone much smarter than me has calculated what the -- the difference is gonna be in changing the previous method from the dollar -- dollar assessment to this percentage. What is that change going to be?

MR. PRETLOW: There is no change.

MR. MOLITOR: There's no change? It's gonna be --

MR. PRETLOW: As far -- as far as I know -- and I'm not gonna comment on anyone's math skills as to how this number was worked out, but I trust the person that did figure this out. And as far as I know and what this budget anticipates is that there is no change.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Well, I hope you're right, Mr. Pretlow.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. MOLITOR: So, I don't know who the person is who calculated this change. And I would like to believe and hope that this is not going to increase costs. But I hope we can all, next year if it is a problem, hold that person or persons responsible if it is.

Because we have some of the highest health insurance premiums in the nation. We spend more on medical care than on any -- than in any other state. Our Medicaid -- the amount that we spend on Medicaid in New York State is larger than both Texas and Florida combined. And just last year this State tried to raise the MCO tax to increase the federal match and it got struck down because it was extremely problematic and prejudicial. And so I hope what we're not doing here is I hope that we are not going to increase burdens on our counties, on large group insurance purchasers, on individuals who are buying into the Exchange. Because if we start to see increased premiums, that is not going to make anybody -- anybody's life more affordable here in New York. It'll just continue the trend of -- of things being less affordable here in New York.

So, you know, here we are passing another budget bill, and my hope is that we're not doing so on a hope and a prayer. So I will be voting negative on this piece of legislation and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Keith Brown.

MR. K. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Chairman of Ways and Means yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. K. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. Just some questions with regard to the -- the intentional omission of co-occurring disorder measures in this particular portion of the budget. Do you have any particular reason why the co-licensure measures were not included?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. This is something that we've already passed. We're waiting for the Senate to pass it. We did it outside of the budget.

MR. K. BROWN: Oh, really?

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah.

MR. K. BROWN: So we expect to have a bill on that within the next week?

MR. PRETLOW: We've already had a bill. We've already passed it. The Senate has not taken it up yet.

MR. K. BROWN: Okay. And there was -- there was a second part of it in the State of the State that the Governor mentioned with respect to having OMH and OA -- OA -- OASAS-certified providers meet the highest standards through other changes that will be made to break down the barriers between OMH and OASAS. Was there anything like that included or contemplated in the budget by our House or the Senate?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe that was all part of the bill we just mentioned.

MR. K. BROWN: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: So it's already been passed.

MR. K. BROWN: Okay. And then with respect to -- to problem gambling. I didn't see any mention of how we're addressing problem gambling in this State.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, that is -- that is included. We give $500 per unit of gambling apparatus to OASAS which is used for problem gambling. I think you have to look at Part R. Okay. We're expanding the substance use disorder treatment coverage and there are other additions in Part R of this --

MR. K. BROWN: Sorry, can you say that again?

MR. PRETLOW: I said Part R of the bill in front -- in front -- in front of us, it expands the substance use disorder treatment coverage to other addictions.

MR. K. BROWN: And that's -- the problem gambling is in the other addictions?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. K. BROWN: Okay. And then a question; was there any money for Early Intervention and Hospice contained in this budget?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe there's any additional monies.

MR. K. BROWN: Nothing additional?

MR. PRETLOW: Nothing additional.

MR. K. BROWN: Okay. Just bear with me a second.

(Pause)

Oh, with respect to -- there was mention during the budget hearing process about setting up a three-tier process for people that present themselves with substance use disorders and other similar affirmaties [sic] that there would be a way to set them up so that they had a different treatment level based on what level of substance use disorder they had. There was a baseline, an intermediate level and then another level, and then the licensure was going to be connected with that. So we'd match the -- the person who presents with an issue with the proper licensed therapist. Was there anything mentioned about doing that in the budget?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure if that's mentioned in this bill.

MR. K. BROWN: I'm sorry?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe that's part of the bill that we discussed earlier and it is not included in the bill in front of us.

MR. K. BROWN: Okay. All right.

And then I'm -- I'm sure you're aware that there's a major problem in our State when it comes to the reimbursement for therapists with respect to whether they're paid by Medicaid and Medicare or whether they're paid by private insurance. The so-called parity that we fixed in one respect, but we're not addressing it in terms of enforcement. So -- so the practice still continues that if you are a person with an affliction and you get treatment by private insurance, that therapist is only paid 50 cents on a dollar. Have we done anything to address that issue at all, the parity issue?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I think two years ago we mandated that we pay at least the Medicaid rate for those -- for those services.

MR. K. BROWN: Right. And ironically, the problem isn't on the Medicare or Medicaid side, it's on the private insurance side.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, private insurers were paying less than the Medicaid rate.

MR. K. BROWN: Right. So -- so if I'm a therapist --

MR. PRETLOW: And we mandated that they pay at least the Medicaid rate. We increased it.

MR. K. BROWN: Right. So the last couple of years -- we just heard debate on the -- the raising of what we used to call COLA, now the target inflationary rate [sic], the 2.7. We've been over the last couple of years trying to increase that. But if you're a provider and you provided someone with private insurance, you're still not getting paid 100 cents on the dollar. And it's a major problem that we're having out there, because if a provider is going to treat one person that gets Medicare or Medicaid and another person has private insurance, they're more apt to treat the person with Medicare or Medicaid. So this has been a problem. We fixed it in policy several years ago by having reporting to DFS, but we haven't fixed the financial side of the equation. Has there been any attempt in this year's budget to fix that parity problem?

MR. PRETLOW: There's nothing in the budget

pertaining to that.

MR. K. BROWN: Sorry? What was that again?

MR. PRETLOW: There's nothing in the budget pertaining to that.

MR. K BROWN: Okay. Okay, great. Thank you. No further questions, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could we please have the Health Committee to the Speaker's Conference Room?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Health Committee members, please make your way to the Speaker's Conference Room. Health Committee members, Speaker's Conference Room.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote's been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority will generally be in the affirmative on this bill. If you would like to register your votes in the negative you may do so from your seats. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So, I appreciated the discussion that we had, the debate that we had on this particular bill. I wanted to just explain my vote because I do really -- although I'm constrained to vote no on this bill because of other reasons, I did want to say that I thought that as far as the Targeted Inflationary Increase, formerly known as COLA, I'm glad for that 2.7 percent increase. I -- I -- because of the work that I have done historically over the years with the developmentally-disabled community, I -- I -- a lot of advocates come and meet with me, and I know that they really did want 4 percent because -- because they've been historically not treated well in previous budgets. I am glad to see the 2.7 percent. I don't think it's enough. And I would also say that I do wish that there was greater flexibility as to how it could be spent. But I did want to just state for the record that I do agree with my colleagues, and all of us agree, I think, that if we -- if we're going to put cuts in this budget this is not the place to do it. I'm glad to see the increase that we have. I do wish it could have been more, but I do

think that it will help us to continue to make investments in the workers who take care of our most vulnerable.

So I do support that piece of the budget and other pieces as well. Overall, though, I can't support the total amount that's spent on Medicaid. I think it's just a huge, huge part of our budget and I -- I don't think it's sustainable going forward.

So I will be a no, but I do appreciate that piece for the COLA. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh in the negative.

Ms. Giglio to explain her vote.

MS. GIGLIO: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote. I also agree with my colleagues. I was very happy to see in both one-House bills the increase to 4 percent for the COLA. The fact that it got diminished down to 2.7 percent, I agree with my colleagues in that they have been operating at a structural deficit, and the rate of inflation keeps rising and the increase that they are given each year don't equate to what they need to run these homes and run these places where our most vulnerable population goes.

So I appreciate the efforts of both Houses in their one-House bill, but I am not happy to see that it was diminished down to 2.7 percent. And because of many other things in the bill and the spending problem that this State has, especially with the Medicaid budget, that I will not be able to support the bill. But I do appreciate the 2.7 percent increase.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Giglio in the negative.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can we have the Governmental Operations Committee to the Speaker's Conference Room?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Gov Ops Committee members, Speaker's Conference Room. Gov Ops Committee members, make your way to the Speaker's Conference Room.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 8, Rules Report No. 217, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10009-C, Rules Report No. 217, Budget Bill. An act to amend the Tax Law and the Administrative Code of the City of New York, in relation to enhancing and reforming the Child and Dependent Care Credit (Part A); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to excluding certain tips earned from New York adjusted gross income (Part B); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to retaining the deductibility of certain charitable contributions (Part C); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to standardizing the definition of farmer for various credits; and to repeal certain provisions of such law relating thereto (Part D); to amend the

Tax Law, in relation to extending the current corporate tax rates (Part E); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to exemptions from calculation of income in certain cases (Part F); to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York, in relation to the treatment of certain deductions allowable under the Internal Revenue Code in calculating New York City taxable income for corporations (Part G); intentionally omitted (Part H); to amend the Executive Law and the Tax Law, in relation to extending the Commercial Security Tax credit (Part I); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to enhancing the New York City Musical and Theatrical Production Tax Credit (Part J); to amend the Tax Law and the State Finance Law, in relation to alternative nicotine products (Part K); intentionally omitted (Part L); to amend the Tax Law and the Administrative Code of the City of New York, in relation to extending the real estate transfer tax rate reduction for conveyances of real property to existing real estate investment funds (Part M); to establish a sales and use tax reregistration program and a sales and use tax penalty and interest discount program (Part N); intentionally omitted (Part O); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to extending the sales tax exemption for certain sales made through a vending machine for three years (Part P); to amend part PP of Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2024 amending the Tax Law relating to establishing a sales tax exemption for residential energy storage, in relation to extending the residential energy storage exemption for two years (Part Q); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to the petroleum business tax filing deadline for commercial vessel operators (Part R); to amend Chapter 109 of the

Laws of 2006 amending the Tax Law and other laws relating to providing exemptions, reimbursements and credits from various taxes for certain alternative fuels, in relation to extending the alternative fuels tax exemptions (Part S); to amend the Real Property Tax Law and the Tax Law, in relation to making technical corrections to the STAR exemption and STAR credit programs; and to repeal certain provisions of the Real Property Tax Law relating thereto (Part T); to amend Chapter 475 of the Laws of 2013 amending the Real Property Tax Law relating to assessment ceilings for local public utility mass real property, in relation to extending the assessment ceiling for local public utility mass real property to January 1, 2031; and to amend the Real Property Tax Law, in relation to the powers of the State Board of Real Property Tax Services (Part U); to amend the Real Property Tax Law, in relation to expanding the rent increase exemption for senior citizens and persons with disabilities; to amend Part U of Chapter 55 of the Laws of 2014, amending the Real Property Tax Law relating to the tax abatement and exemption for rent-regulated and rent-controlled property occupied by senior citizens, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; to amend Chapter 129 of the Laws of 2014, amending the Real Property Tax Law relating to the tax abatement and exemption for rent-regulated and rent-controlled property occupied by persons with disabilities, in relation to the effectiveness thereof; and providing for the repeal of certain provisions upon expiration thereof (Subpart A); and to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York and the Real Property Tax Law, in relation to

providing notice to tenants regarding rent increase exemptions (Subpart B) (Part V); to amend the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to conforming pari-mutuel tax provisions (Part W); to amend the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to extending the utilization of funds in the Capital Off-Track Betting Corporations' capital acquisition funds (Part X); to amend the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to licenses for simulcast facilities, sums relating to track simulcast, simulcast of out-of-state thoroughbred races, simulcasting of races run by out-of-state harness tracks and distributions of wagers; and to amend Chapter 346 of the Laws of 1990 amending the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law and other laws relating to simulcasting and the imposition of certain taxes, in relation to the effectiveness thereof (Part Y); to amend the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to extending certain seasonal employee licensing requirements for additional race dates at Saratoga Racetrack (Part Z); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to excluding distributions due to certain Federal elections from personal income tax (Part AA); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to increasing tax credits for donations to food pantries by farmers (Part BB); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to authorizing students to donate unused meal funds, meals or meal points to other students enrolled in such school, college or university who are facing food insecurity; and to amend Chapter 678 of the Laws of 2025 amending the Tax Law relating to excluding certain food donations from sales tax, in relation to the effectiveness

thereof (Part CC); to amend the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to additional qualifications for the board members of regional Off-Track Betting Corporations; and to amend Section 2 of Part JJ of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2023 amending the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, relating to the membership of the board of directors of the Western Regional Off-Track Betting Corporation, in relation to the effectiveness thereof (Part DD); to amend the Real Property Tax Law, in relation to the property tax exemption for certain disabled veterans (Part EE); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to establishing a Protecting Our Wallets Energy Rebate (POWER) credit (Part FF); to amend the Racing, Pari-mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to standardbred testing (Part GG); to amend the Tax Law, the Administrative Code of the City of New York and the New York City Charter, in relation to authorizing a city having a population of one million or more to impose a surcharge on property that does not serve as a primary residence; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof (Part HH); to amend the Tax Law, in relation to authorizing additional vendor fees to vendor tracks and video lottery gaming facilities; and relating to directing the Gaming Commission to conduct a study on video lottery terminal vendor fees and commercial casino tax rates; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof (Part II); and to extend the duration of certain brownfield redevelopment and remediation tax credits with respect to certain sites (Part JJ).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Governor's Message is 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: Yes, Madam Speaker. I'm gonna to give you a -- a lengthy explanation and maybe it will then not require many questions on -- on debate.

This bill would enact major pieces of legislation that are required to implement the revenue proposals that are necessary to ensure a balanced State budget. This bill would rise an additional $562 million in State revenues during State fiscal year '26-'27. In the outyears, revenue will increase by 1.9 billion for fiscal year '27-'28 -- 3 -- I'm sorry, $2.3 billion for '28-'29, $1.6 billion for fiscal years '29-'30, and 841 million for fiscal year '30-'31.

Major provisions within this bill include language to provide Protecting Our Wallets energy rebate checks; eliminate income taxes on State wages; enact a temporary Article 9(a) corporate franchise tax extension rate for two -- two years -- three years, I'm sorry. Authorize New York City to impose a surcharge on property that -- that does not serve as a primary residence; enhance the New York City Musical and Theatrical Production Tax Credit; increase income eligibility thresholds for SCRIE and DRIE programs;

streamline the STAR program; enhance tax credits for donations to food pantries by farmers; amend a property tax exemption for certain disabled veterans; expand standardbred testing requirements; and provide extensions to various tax credits and exemptions that already exist in current law.

With that, Madam Speaker, I encourage the members to support this piece of legislation.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, Madam Speaker. Will Mr. Pretlow yield for some questions?

MR. PRETLOW: I knew you'd still have questions.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PALMESANO: A few. We have a few, Mr. Pretlow.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. PALMESANO: Thank you. You'd said -- I just wanna ask again, I -- and I know I'm repeating -- how much revenue -- how much is revenue increased by this bill on a two-year basis? I think you said 560- on a one-year basis; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: It's -- okay, $562 million for State fiscal year '26-'27.

MR. PALMESANO: So for one year. So for two years it would be double that?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe it's 1.9 billion for fiscal

year '27-'28.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And what about the net tax -- not the net tax. How much of a tax revenue decrease?

MR. PRETLOW: We're not -- the only decrease we're doing is for tax on tip wages.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And -- all right. That's okay.

I want to talk about the pied-à-terre for a minute. This new surcharge would put an annual New York City tax on certain high-value residential properties.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: What specific factors will the New York City Department of Finance use to determine not a primary residence, and how will this provision ensure uniform treatment across buildings and owners to avoid inconsistencies?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, beginning with the City's fiscal year '28-'29, the tax rate would range from .8 percent to 1.3 percent for one- to three-family residences and condos and co-ops with a market value in excess of $5 million. The surcharge applies to a co-op unit -- where a surcharge applies to a co-op unit, the proposals include language to require the co-op corporation to collect the surcharge from the tenant shareholder associated with that unit.

MR. PALMESANO: This proposal has certainly been in the news and it's been talked about pretty extensively. I know obviously the Mayor did a press conference outside one of the

homeowners. One of the concerns we keep hearing about is the potential impact on investment and development in the City. Are you concerned about the threat of reduced investment and development in the City that could help grow the City's housing stock, freeing up more affordable units?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. Again, this proposal would only impact a very small percentage of properties in the City. Additionally, the proposal would exempt certain recently-constructed properties.

MR. PALMESANO: So are you concerned that this -- I know you say a few people, but high-income, high-wealth, are you concerned that that might reduce that investment? Are -- are you -- are you concerned this might reduce that investment from these individuals who (indiscernible/crosstalk).

MR. PRETLOW: We've heard these arguments before, yet the number of high-income earners has increased significantly over the past few years in New York City and New York State, even after raising income taxes a few years ago. People who can afford multi-million-dollar second homes are unlikely to relocate simply because of this proposal.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. We know that the City is on -- is facing severe fiscal challenges in the coming years, and allowing the City to change the amortization schedule is just kicking the can down the road. Is the revenue projected for this new tax on sturdy ground?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Was taxpayer behavior a factor in the estimate for how much this tax would generate?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: And if the tax fails to generate its projected revenue, will we be here next year or the year after trying to figure out another way to make this up, or --

MR. PRETLOW: This is a New York City issue. This is not really a State issue. We're not doing this Statewide. That would be up to New York City. If they don't attain the funds that they think, they may come up with a different idea.

MR. PALMESANO: Sure. I understand that. Will the billing -- the surcharge at the building level -- billing the surcharge at the building level risk imposing costs on uninvolved tenant stockholders?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe so.

MR. PALMESANO: What -- are there -- what mechanisms are in place to protect about -- against passing this surcharge on to noncovered tenant holders -- stockholders?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm sorry, repeat the question?

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah, I can do that. What mechanisms are in place to protect against passing the surcharge on to noncovered tenant stockholders?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the language in the -- in the bill says that the co-op board will collect this solely from the

individuals who own these high-value properties, and it wouldn't be passed on to the other residents of the co-op or condo.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I want to, if I may -- I may come back to this, but I'd like to go to the decoupling provisions of H.R. 1.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: This bill includes decoupling measures from certain H.R. 1 that passed at the federal level --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: -- that really affected timing and treatment of research and experimental expenditures and other deductions. Why -- why is the State moving to increase near-term tax costs on manufacturers when the manufacturing community, who I've met with, I'm sure you've met with, has warned that this will directly undermine investment, expansion and the modernization in New York State?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, sir, I really don't believe that is the case. What we're doing in this legislation is maintaining current law. H.R. 1 took away the -- the requirement to spread R&D expenditures over a number of years to make it fully deductible in year one. What New York State is doing is maintaining what's always been, and having that deductibility spread over a number of years. The net effect to the corporations is negligible because they just don't get it all upfront. They get it spread over the life of the property.

MR. PALMESANO: Wouldn't that be impactful,

though? Because, I mean, there are some states that are decoupling, but there are some states that are not decoupling. Like, Ohio is not decoupling. I don't have New Jersey down as not decoupling yet. South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Texas. Isn't that a risk that we run losing those investments to these states that are more friendly and from an upfront perspective?

MR. PRETLOW: I really hate to compare New York State with any other state.

MR. PALMESANO: I understand.

MR. PRETLOW: For the most part, they don't have as complex a tax system as we have here -- here in New York.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. What is the counter argument to manufacturers who have argued that this provision makes New York State a less attractive place to start or expand a business because it raises the tax, cost of investing, hiring and building here instead of a competitive state that doesn't?

MR. PRETLOW: It -- it does not raise the tax. It maintains what tax is on the board right now. And over the course of the amortization period, the net dollar effect is zero.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. And -- and -- so why is this burden falling on manufacturers who are buying equipment, building facilities, funding R&D instead of on a broader -- instead of on broader fiscal reforms?

MR. PRETLOW: Because that's what was put into H.R. 1. Those -- those are the individuals that got the -- or received

the opportunity to put their R&D costs expensed in one year.

MR. PALMESANO: And there's no concern from obviously your side, the Majority, the Governor, that we run the risk of losing these manufacturers and their investment and taking it to another state that's not decoupling like other states are?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, not -- not to throw anybody under -- under the bus, so-to-speak, but this was a proposal by the Executive and we accepted it.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

I want to talk about the -- some of the other business tax impacts. The Legislature previously scheduled the higher rates to expire at the end of 2026 --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: -- and this budget now extends them further through tax year '29, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Why does it seems every temporary tax imposed by this Body never seems to be temporary?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: We didn't have the funding available to let this expire due to the increased Medicaid costs that we've experienced because of the massive cuts in Medicaid to this State and our need or our desire to maintain as many individuals covered by health insurance that we couldn't otherwise do if we let the tax increases expire.

MR. PALMESANO: Just to counter that argument, if -- if business taxes can be reduced, that increased business activity, possibly increase jobs, possibly increase more investment which would lead to more tax revenue coming in. And if you under -- from that perspective or that argument.

MR. PRETLOW: I -- I really don't think that the tax revenue gained by those actions would be equal to the tax revenue lost by letting the tax increase of the past expire. And we needed something definite, and something definite now, because as stated in the previous bill, in the first of July, which is two months from now, hundreds of thousands of individuals are going to lose their health coverage.

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah. And from a business tax perspective, we know we have one of the highest-taxed states. We know business climate and competitiveness are always at the bottom. How do these rier -- higher rates make us more competitive? And wouldn't lowering tax rates across the board help provide incentives for businesses to invest and stay here and come here?

MR. PRETLOW: That can be argued, but I think that our business community in New York right now is very vibrant.

MR. PALMESANO: How much more does it cost taxpayers to provide incentives, and how much of a strain does it put on local government budgets to provide exemptions and incentives just to get a business to consider sitting -- siting a new construction in the State of New York? Wouldn't just reducing taxes across the board

help with that problem?

MR. PRETLOW: I really -- I don't have the answer to that. Sorry.

MR. PALMESANO: That's all right.

I'd like to move -- move over to the POWER Check program for a little bit, if I could.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: I see that you have this rebate check. How much is that rebate check again?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe we're -- we're giving -- the total would be $1 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: One billion?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: How much would it be for like, a family, for like, income ranges?

MR. PRETLOW: $200 for joint filers with incomes below $150,000; $150 for joint filers with incomes between $150- and $300,000; and $100 for single filer with incomes below $150,000.

MR. PALMESANO: Thank you for that. I know we had a proposal out, too, our (indiscernible). That was one part of it. It wasn't the entire piece of it. I know we talked about it; I don't know if it would fit here, but wouldn't -- if we really want to help on the utility side of things, wouldn't that 2 -- $2.4 billion that's sitting in NYSERDA's hands, wouldn't that have been a better thing to add to them if we wanted to provide that relief to ratepayers?

MR. PRETLOW: That would be, but it's not in this bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, I know. But there are -- there are proposals out there that could fit into this bill. There's a proposal -- in fact, it happens to be my proposal, Mr. Pretlow. Maybe we'll consider it in Committee before the end of -- end of the year. It would basically suspend those taxes, fees, assessments and surcharges that are actually on the utility bill that sometimes make up as much as 20 percent of the utility bill. Wouldn't that have been a good thing to include in this bill to provide fast, direct, immediate relief to ratepayers, especially considering (indiscernible/crosstalk)?

MR. PRETLOW: That is something under consideration right now. Maybe we can get it done in the next two weeks --

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: -- or hopefully we can attack it next year.

MR. PALMESANO: And do you think -- I know there's a lot of talk about affordability. Do you think this one-time rebate is really gonna be -- provide that direct relief on utility bills that New Yorkers want?

MR. PRETLOW: It's -- it's a help. It's a step forward. It's -- you know, to some people $200 doesn't mean a lot, and for many people $200 is a lot. I mean, at the rate we're going now $200 amounts to maybe a bag-and-a-half of groceries.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes. Something is better than nothing, I agree. But we can always do more.

On that point, too, I was gonna ask -- oh --

(Pause)

Excuse me.

(Pause)

I know, and I've referred to it, New York City is getting a bailout to the tune of billions of dollars for budget problems the City created. The ratepayers didn't create the utility affordability crisis, but they're really drowning because of decisions really made in this Chamber. And while I appreciate the attempt to help, we really need to do more. Are there any other existing pots of money that could be used to provide some relief to ratepayers during these hot summer months that are coming?

MR. PRETLOW: If there are they're not in this bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And I think the other point -- I -- and I think I lost my train of thought for a minute. I know we have the rebate; it's something. But in other -- another bill we passed it had a -- provided credits for people that purchase electric vehicles, electric -- you know, to the tune of $30,000 which would be paid for by the ratepayer. So now we're giving them a little bit here, but we're still taking it away from them on the other side, aren't we?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I believe that was an -- an effect of things that happened in Washington that took away the federal subsidies that were being allocated to electric vehicles.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: One moment, Mr. Palmesano. You can use your second 15.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could we please have the Education Committee to the Speaker's Conference Room?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Education Committee members to the Speaker's Conference Room. Education Committee members, Speaker's Conference Room.

Mr. Palmesano for your second 15.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm gonna switch, if I could, to the alternative nic -- nicotine products tax that was included in this budget.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: This -- this puts in place a 75 percent wholesale tax on nicotine products; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, it does.

MR. PALMESANO: This would be in line with other, like, cigarettes, combustible products; is that right?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Why would we want to categorize nicotine pouches and similar products to be folded in the same category and tax structure as tobacco products?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the nicotine is usually a product of tobacco or --

MR. PALMESANO: I know.

MR. PRETLOW: -- and has similar -- similar effects. And, you know, arguably, it has the same health hazards associated with it in the form of gum, tongue and throat cancers, even though the manufactures claim that's not the case. It is also attractive to young individuals since they have been manufacturing flavored nicotine pouches which, you know, we in this House have historically fought against.

MR. PALMESANO: So, I mean, you know, a lot of people are -- are going to these pouches, nicotine pouches to switch over from smoking because it's less harmful because smoking causes cancer. Nicotine pouches -- I'm not saying nicotine isn't a health risk but not compared to smoking. Why are we -- it seems like we're gonna make this more expensive for them. And then if they're comparing, why would I switch if I can have the cigarette with the same thing. You know, I mean, they're gonna pay the same expense. Isn't that a concern?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, you know, there are other optional alternatives like chewing gum to -- to smoking. Nicotine is classified as a poison. It's used in some weed killers. And to ingest it, which one is doing when they put it in their mouth, even though they don't physically swallow it, I don't believe. I -- I only saw one for the first time in the past couple of months. But they are ingesting nicotine

and it's definitely not a healthy product.

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah. How is -- are we -- is there any concern about the -- I believe there is concern about the illicit sales channels now that you're gonna tax this. I know you mentioned your concern for youth, and I -- I saw a study that was -- the National -- National Youth Tobacco Survey said only 1 -- there's a 1.6 percent youth usage. So what is the rationale for taxing nicotine pouches when doing so creates the risk of an illicit trade market that could expand opportunities for youth use through that illicit market rather than, you know, now not being able to access it through a proper retailer?

MR. PRETLOW: We'll -- we'll use the same apparatus in place for the nicotine enforcement for cigarettes and -- on -- on this to make sure that people are not selling untaxed pouches.

MR. PALMESANO: Obviously this is a -- a very regressive tax. And are we seeing what other states are doing? Like, I know Rhode Island, after they implemented this tax their projected revenue plummeted following the wholesale -- implementing the wholesale tax. Are we prepared to deal with that when that happens, and if, you know, revenue estimates that we're talking about being from this?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, like you say, most of these same taxes are regressive taxes. And the people that can least afford them are usually the ones that are paying the most because they utilize the products that we're trying to -- to eliminate. But in answer to your

question, we're doing the best we can with the current situation that we find ourselves.

MR. PALMESANO: Wouldn't it be better to -- instead of expanding the tax to -- to alternative nicotine products, enforce -- and focus on enforcement against illicit sales or sales to minors? Wouldn't it be better to do that rather than increasing the tax?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, you know, we -- we tried that a -- a while ago when we tried to eliminate indoor smoking and that was replaced by vaping. And what we found then is that people used vaping products to attract more kids toward nicotine by introducing all these different flavors, bubble gum and ice cream and all kinds of flavors of vapes, and then we find out that vaping is just as hazardous as smoking. I think -- you know, all of these nicotine alternatives, if they're using nicotine, are going to be ultimately hazardous to one's health.

MR. PALMESANO: This revenue is certainly dependent on consumer be -- behavior. How are we gonna address that, and we're -- as we move forward if, you know -- it's gonna impact the consumer behavior, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm sorry, say it again?

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah, sure. How sensitive is this revenue to changes in consumer behavior, especially if consumers switch to untaxed or lower-taxed products?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. I'm gonna send this -- that's been -- been anticipated in this bill in front of us and it's in the fiscal

plan.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And does -- is the State Tax and Finance Department ready and prepared to administer and enforce this expansion (indiscernible/crosstalk)?

MR. PRETLOW: I would hope so, yes.

MR. PALMESANO: What's that?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes. It was their proposal.

MR. PALMESANO: And how will the State prevent product mislabeling and classification games designed to avoid the tax?

MR. PRETLOW: That would be determined by the authorities.

MR. PALMESANO: And I know there were some other alternatives being proposed by some asking for, you know, to go to a unit-based tax. Is there any reason why that wasn't considered?

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah, it was considered and we decided to go along with the proposal of tax -- of the -- Tax and Finance.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow, for your time.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Madam Speaker and my colleagues, we're -- we're in the process of passing a budget of more than a quarter-of-a-trillion dollars. The fact of the matter is, as we

take up this revenue bill we have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. I'm very concerned about the continuation of business taxes that were supposed to be temporary, that were supposed to go away, that -- the impact that will have on businesses that are here, they wanna stay here. I think that's a concern that I have and will continue to have. Businesses that have -- they want to invest here. You know, they said it was a temporary tax, but yet there -- it's not temporary. And we know that we have a challenging business climate already here in this State.

I'm also concerned about the -- this -- these POWER rebates. It's nice that we're gonna send a $200 check to families, but that's not -- it's just a drop in the bucket to help provide direct, immediate ratepayer relief. There's other things we can do. We could refund that $2.4 billion. I know it's not part of this bill, but we could do that and get that direct relief right back to ratepayers now instead of letting NYSERDA sit on it for green energy programs. We could also in this bill, and we have a bill coming that would suspend the taxes, fees, assessments and surcharges on our utility bills which can constitute up to 20 percent of our utility bill. So I think that's something that we need to look at.

This pied-à-terre tax for New York City, the surcharge. We all saw the Mayor hold a press conference outside the home indicating these individuals aren't doing enough, not paying their fair share. These are the very people who invest significant amounts of money in their communities; whether it's real estate

investment, whether it's business -- job creation. They create jobs that bring more income that is taxed to bring more income into the City and to the State. Those are the same people that increase charitable contributions that help people in our community. And as we see more people moving from -- to Texas, Florida, Tennessee, a more friendly business environment, tax climate, we're gonna see more of those businesses and families leave for a more favorable tax climate. And it's not just the high wealthy in -- income. It's other people that are leaving the State because they're feeling pinched by the cost of living and not getting enough. The tax, regulatory structure -- (someone sneezes) -- God bless you -- the tax, regulatory structure in the State is too burdensome and we need to -- we need to address that. And to think that people aren't gonna leave our State because of this tax because they can afford it I think is just really kind of bad judgment. I worry about that.

I also -- relative to the decoupling. We heard from our manufacturers that said this will jeopardize their investment in the State. This could jeopardize new businesses coming here. If you had to choose between a state that didn't decouple and a state that did decouple, you're gonna go to that state where you're gonna get that upfront investment because it's usually those upfront investments that are critical for a manufacturer to locate, for a manufacturer to grow or expand. States like Texas, Florida, Tennessee, Ohio, New Jersey, South Carolina, North Carolina have not decoupled. I think we missed the point with decoupling. It's not about -- it's about allowing

the upfront investment, the benefit from that. That's gonna -- you're worried about losing revenue, but what you're losing is that upfront investment that's gonna generate more revenue, more private sector investment, more private sector jobs. From those private sector jobs, income that can be taxed. That's gonna be the response when we look at not decoupling, but we're decoupling. We already know that New York's already a difficult place to do business; the tax regulatory, the climate challenges, the energy costs, Workers' Comp. All of it. This would have been a way to jump start more private sector investment. This would have been a way to jump start more job creation here in New York State. Unfortunately, we said no because of the federal government. And I think this really is just gonna hurt our manufacturers and it's gonna hurt our communities as well. I'm just concerned we're losing the opportunity for more job creation, more private sector investment, and yes, which would create more revenue coming into our State coffers so we can pay for these important programs.

And I did want to address the -- the alternative nicotine product again, this 75 percent tax to put it on the same tax level as combustible cigarettes. We've heard from people that have done this, made this change because they were smoking and they looked at this as a better alternative from a health perspective. We know it's not as harmful as smoking cigarettes from the perspective of what we're gonna do. We know in New York people use this. Now we're gonna increase costs on these people who wanna use this

alternative, which is gonna make it difficult. And this is less harmful than combustible cigarettes. Why do we want to increase the cost on them more? And the fact of the matter is, in New York State we spend more than $12 billion a year on smoking-related costs, including more than $7 billion on Medicaid, which we just dealt with in the last budget. This action will take a less harmful alternative away from people who want to try to improve their health and get off cigarettes and make that alternative much more expensive. And the taxes we are collecting from this that we're gonna be paying more, it's gonna be totally offset by the increased Medicaid costs because those people might not be -- have the opportunity to switch. And I know that people were saying -- I -- I remember questioning the Health Commissioner -- or the Tax and Finance Commissioner at a budget hearing saying it's about youth involvement. The -- the -- the National Youth Tobacco Survey said 1.6 percent usage. Unfortunately, I believe this -- what it's gonna do is it's gonna create an illicit market for people, including younger people. We know that happens. We've seen these illicit markets with the sticker stores that come about with selling cannabis. So, younger people are gonna have access to this illicit market, where they wouldn't be able to get it in a store because, you know, there's proofing and other things that go on and that if they follow it the right way. But we're gonna drive people away from a more health [sic] alternative. It just doesn't make sense to me. And I know there was an -- another alternative proposed, a unit-based tax that people came in and suggested that would make this system -- and

not make it as expensive for the user who they want -- people want this alternative. And that's unfortunate that was not considered. That was not addressed in here. And as we talked about, this is a regressive tax and a loss of revenue. And our neighbor Rhode Island did this, and they saw their revenues plummet.

So there are a host of problems with this bill from my perspective. I went down the list; the pied-à-terre, the decoupling, the business tax increase continuing. The POWER check not doing enough. It could have went much further. We should have went much further to help on the utility costs. And of course this alternative nicotine products tax.

I just don't think -- based on these issues, that's why I'm gonna be voting in the negative on this bill and why I would urge many of my colleagues to join me and do the same. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Pirozzolo.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. How are you doing today?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Fabulous. And you?

MR. PIROZZOLO: Okay. I'm just hoping that Mr. Pretlow wouldn't mind, but I'm gonna choose to speak on the bill only today.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill, sir.

MR. PIROZZOLO: All right. So listen. As a legislature, you know, we talk about two things: We talk about -- well, a lot of things, especially this being an election year. We talk about affordability and we talk about safety. And you're going to hear members standing up after this bill is passed and throughout this entire budget process and they're gonna be going door-to-door saying, I am proud that I passed this bill, that I made things more affordable and more safe. So I wanna talk directly to New Yorkers all over the State, but particularly from New Yorkers from New York City and from Staten Island and within my district. Do you actually feel that your life is better? We have a tax here, the pied-à-terre tax, to tax millionaires. And most people will say, *Well, that's okay. I'm not a millionaire. It's not me*. All right, that might be true. But we also have speed cameras. We also have red light cameras. Do you own a car? So you're getting taxed there as well. Some people might say, *Hey, I don't own a car. No big deal*. Do you take a bus? Do you ride the subway? It's $3. Do you think that service that you're getting is worth it? Do you think that the MTA, which has never had an independent audit, is spending your money wisely? Do you think that this Legislature or any of these legislators here are spending your money wisely? Yet they're gonna come knock on your door and how -- and tell you how proud they are to have passed this.

Let's talk about the small businesses. I'm a small businessman. When COVID hit, I was asked to pay more, to contribute more because we have to help. That tax was a temporary

tax. It's supposed to come back, we're supposed to stop. Now we're extending it. How is that right? How is that justified? At a time when small businesses are struggling, we're continuing this tax and adding on with many more taxes, regulations and fees.

If you live in a NYCHA housing complex, do you really feel like this system is working for you? How about when your water doesn't work? How about when your gas doesn't work? How about when there's squalor and rats and vermin throughout your entire complex? Does that make you feel like this Legislature has your best interests in mind? I doubt it very much.

Let's talk about the money we're throwing into public schools. If you live in a low-income neighborhood, if you're a minority, do you really think that the school is taking care of your children? How many children, particularly Black and Brown children, low-income neighborhoods, minority children cannot read and write at grade level. There are some schools in New York City where 90 to 95 percent, if not higher, cannot read at grade level. Does that make you think as a parent we are taking care of your child? Because we absolutely are not. And we probably have the highest per-student ratio in the country. It's been a generational failure when it comes to education. It's time to stop. And what do we do here as a legislature? I hear people stand up all the time and go, *It's not us. It's not me. It's the guy in the White House*. Well, I'm gonna tell you this: Any time an elected official has to point to somebody else for the problem that you're facing, chances are they're the reason that problem

exists.

If you want change, if you want your life to get better, if you want the money that is collected by New Yorkers to be spent on you in a reasonable way that improves your life, it's time for change. And the only way you're gonna get that change is to vote for change in November. You can no longer continue to vote the way you have for generations, because if you continue to do so you will be in the same position you have been in for generations.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pirozzolo.

MR. PIROZZOLO: I'm done. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: You need to make comments relative to the bill, sir. Thank you.

Ms. Forrest -- and actually, we're gonna to go to Ms. Lunsford first.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. If you could have the Children and Families Committee, please, to the Speaker's Conference Room.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Children and Families Committee members, please make your way to the Speaker's Conference Room. Children and Families.

Members, we are speaking -- asking questions on this specific bill only. Thank you.

Ms. Forrest.

MS. FORREST: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. FORREST: Okay. We started this year with families on the brink. Workers and community safety was the gold [sic] post, and we knew from the federal level no help was to be found. We had one job and one job only: Protect New Yorkers from greedy oligarchs posing as federal heads of state. However, now simply stated, this austerity budget falls far short of what New Yorkers organized for, were promised and what we deserve. In particular, it fails to raise revenue to provide for the hundreds and thousands of New Yorkers who are about to lose their health insurance due to the cuts to the Essential Plan, and for those who will lose SNAP benefits due to cuts. And as a nurse, as a mother, and as a representative of thousands of families affected by these cuts, I cannot support this bill. This budget fails to raise the revenue our communities have been fighting to make sure that everyday life becomes a little bit easier.

This year I introduced the Fair Share Act to make sure that New York City is able to raise 2 percent income tax on millionaires, and while it received widespread support, it was not included in this budget. We cannot continue to protect millionaires, billionaires and corporation [sic] for another year, but our communities, our communities are left waiting. In the Assembly one-House we included measures to tax the wealthy. Ten weeks later, though, Governor Kathy Hochul is siding with the ultra-wealthy

instead of working New Yorkers.

This is the reality behind this bill. We have the tools. We have the proposals. But instead of fighting against austerity and protecting New Yorkers, we are accepting these needless cuts and these cruel cuts. This is unacceptable. And I consider it my duty as a legislature [sic] to make sure that we are fighting for real solutions. I know exactly what happens when the State fails to raise the revenue we need. The failure shows up in our hospitals that are closing. The failure shows up at the long lines at the food pantry. The failure shows up at the waitlist in day care centers. The failure shows up when a family loses health insurance. Revenue is not just numbers on a paper. It's not just numbers on a spreadsheet. It is lives. It is decisions. It is my former patients being able to get their medication that they need today. And it's whether -- and -- and it's regardless of the families in my district, my district on Classon Avenue. It's on yours, too. Your Main Street and your back streets. And I wonder with the revenue like this, does the Governor understand what her cuts will do and who they will hurt.

We, the Legislature, came into this year's Session with real plans to fund social services by generating new, recurring, meaningful revenue. So many plans to pick -- to pick from. You could pick any of them. However, we are here, stuck with austerity and next year we're gonna be in the same position again. New Yorkers will be struggling and we will be working to deliver a balanced and fair budget. The government, the federal government

will be delivering more cuts and we won't have the infrastructure to raise more revenue. I cannot stand here and accept a revenue bill that refuses to tax the ultra-rich -- the ultra-wealthy, the 1 percent, while my people and your people continue to pay the price again and again. I will -- I will continue to fight to make sure that we tax the rich. But more importantly, I will make sure that I will be included in the number to make sure that all our communities, no matter the issue, gets something good out of this and not just austerity.

So today I will have to vote no. Thank you, Madam Speaker. You can take back my time.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Manktelow.

MR. MANKTELOW: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Chair allow me to ask a few questions in regards to veterans, Part EE?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow yields.

MR. MANKTELOW: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. Part -- Part EE in this bill, it's to do with veterans and veterans real property tax exemption, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, sir.

MR. MANKTELOW: Do you know how many veterans are in New York State?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure of the number, no.

MR. MANKTELOW: There's about 600,000 veterans, give or take, depending on the year and -- and such things like that. Do you know how many of our veterans actually are VA compensated?

MR. PRETLOW: No, I don't.

MR. MANKTELOW: About -- right now, today, around 153,000 veterans are partially all compensated by the VA. So my question is, under Section 1, line 51, you must have an qualifying condition to receive this exemption.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: Can you explain to us what a qualifying exemption is?

MR. PRETLOW: The eligibility criteria is a veteran must be 100 percent disabled or permanently and totally disabled.

MR. MANKTELOW: That's it?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: So -- so what would be a qualifying condition to get to that?

MR. PRETLOW: I guess being designated as 100 percent disabled.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. So let's say I'm a veteran, I get VA services. I'm 30 percent service-connected, I've got a bad knee.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: I ride a motorcycle, I have an accident. Now I possibly could be 100 percent disabled. Would I still qualify for that 100 percent exemption?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the disability has to be service-connected.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. Let's say I was a diabetic, I was diagnosed during the service. Something happened in service, I became a diabetic. Or I was around a burn pit, had disabilities. I'm riding my motorcycle and I'm 50 percent rated, and something happens to me, I black out because of my service disability.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, this is all at local option. And what we're doing is just increasing the availability for localities to raise the exemption or the -- the discount given to fully-disabled veterans. Most communities already have in place the availability for all veterans to get some sort of a -- of a reduction in their property taxes.

MR. MANKTELOW: That I agree with, Mr. Pretlow. But the question is, who determines that information? Because I've already heard from several veterans about who is 100 disabled, who is --

MR. PRETLOW: The VA would certify as to who was 100 percent disabled. That wouldn't be up to the locality or definitely not this Legislature.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. So it's totally done by the VA?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: And if that veteran is 100 percent disabled, is that --

MR. PRETLOW: Then he or she would be eligible for the increase in the exemption that we're allowing the localities to offer to their fully-disabled veterans.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. And if -- if I'm a veteran that's 100 percent disabled, am I then still allowed to work if I get the exemption?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure.

MR. MANKTELOW: I'm sorry?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure. I -- I -- I don't know if you're allowed to work after you're fully 100 percent disabled.

MR. MANKTELOW: And who would I ask that question to?

MR. PRETLOW: I would imagine the VA.

MR. MANKTELOW: The VA?

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. But just a little while ago we talked about that would be decided by the locality.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the locality gives you the ability to make -- the locality has the wherewithal to provide the availability of the exemption to the 100 percent disabled vet. Your question was in relation to who determines if a vet is 100 percent disabled. That is not determined by the locality. That is determined

by the VA.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. You're correct. And -- and I agree with that.

So going back to the locality. If the locality decides to give the exemption, school tax, county tax, town tax, village tax, is there any funding tied into this from the State?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MANKTELOW: So what happens if the town -- your town decides to give this exemption to their veterans?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, they can. This is -- this is up to local option. If my community wanted to do it, they could -- they have the wherewithal to do it.

MR. MANKTELOW: And I'm -- I'm next-door to your community. My community says, *You know something? We can't afford to do that. We just don't have the financial wherewithal to do that.*

MR. PRETLOW: Then you should move to my community.

(Laughter)

MR. MANKTELOW: That was my next question, because that's exactly what will happen. So what are we going to do to help those communities if that happens?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, like I was saying, it's up to the local communities; the city, town, the city council, the county legislature. Whoever the governing Body is that determines their --

the -- the taxes in that community. It's up to them to make the offer. If they don't feel that they have the capacity to give that tax reduction to their 100 percent disabled vets, that's on them. So if another community can do it, then it's in the best interests of that vet, if they can, to locate -- but I don't think the exemptions will be equal to the cost of moving, so I think that question's kind of moot.

MR. MANKTELOW: All right. And if a community decides to opt in to this, is a there an opt-out clause?

MR. PRETLOW: That's up to the community, also.

MR. MANKTELOW: That could be put into the language --

MR. PRETLOW: They could put it into the language when they --

MR. MANKTELOW: That wouldn't be dictated by the State?

MR. PRETLOW: Right. Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. And I know a lot of us as veterans, we work with our county veterans' offices back at home. Is there going to be anything from New York State -- if this passes, which it probably will, is there anything that's going to be sent to them to give them a heads up to educate them on the number -- the -- the hundreds of veterans that will come in and say, *Look it, I may have 100 percent disability or I do* -- are we going to help educate them to educate our veterans to help them through the process?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, having a -- a -- a -- close

relationship with the Director of Veterans [sic] for the State, affectionately known as Mama V, she had told me or informed me that most veterans don't know of a lot of the benefits that are available to them, for whatever the reason. And one of the things that she's trying the best to do is to inform all of the veterans throughout New York State of all of the opportunities that are available to them, all of the perks that they're entitled to.

MR. MANKTELOW: So the Director is -- you're talking about Viviana DeCohen?

MR. PRETLOW: DeCohen, yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. Last year I believe in this House we passed a bill somewhat like this, and it was -- in that bill it had the same -- kind of the same language, but they had talked about adaptive housing and being unemployable. Is that in the new bill, by any chance?

MR. PRETLOW: No, it isn't.

MR. MANKTELOW: Is what we passed last year still in effect?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe so.

MR. MANKTELOW: You believe so.

MR. PRETLOW: One second.

(Pause)

Okay. What this bill is doing is -- is actually increasing the eligibility. So we're actually enhancing what we did last year.

MR. MANKTELOW: So what we -- what we passed last year --

MR. Pretlow: We're simplifying it, yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: It's simplifying it, but it also says that what we passed last year is still in -- in place.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. Chairman, I thank you for the questions -- or the answers. I appreciate it.

Madam Chair, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. MANKTELOW: I'm sorry, Madam Speaker. I apologize.

I'm a veteran. I'm the Ranking Member on the Veterans' Committee [sic] from the Minority side. But we all love our veterans. We want our veterans to succeed in life, especially if they're disabled. Especially the ones that come back that are maimed, either brain damaged, missing limbs, missing arms. We -- we all want to protect them. As I looked through this, there were a few questions that came up already, and we have veterans that have already asked us that question. You know, what about this, what about that? And I -- I will absolutely support this part of the budget 100 percent. But I want to make sure that we have things defined so when our veterans come to our local county offices and ask those questions or if they come to one of us here on the Assembly floor as an Assemblymember, we should be able to give them those answers. So that's why I wanted to

ask the question -- questions for a little bit of clarification. And again, I'm glad to see this part in the budget, and I will definitely support this part of the budget 100 percent.

So thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Chair, for your time, and thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Would the Chairman yield for some questions on Part K?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: For Part K, absolutely.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow yields.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to revisit the tax on alternative nicotine products. And I know our -- my colleague, the Ranking Member on Ways and Means, brought this up.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: And I know that the differentiation between gum -- nicotine gum like Nicorette and the pouches was brought up. Is there any concern about the inconsistency between treating those types of products differently?

MR. PRETLOW: That really wasn't considered. The Tax Department indicated that they were losing revenues on -- on

sales of these pouches, and suggested a 75 percent on the wholesale tax, which is what we had -- had done. There are some people that were actually pushing for a -- a unit tax on them. I don't know if you're referring -- if you want to go in that direction. But what we have in front of us is a 75 percent wholesale tax on so-called pouches.

MR. JENSEN: Yeah. So, I don't want to get back into the -- the tax rate, per se. Just on the inconsistency. So was the -- was the driver for instituting this tax because of a belief that the -- the nicotine pouches, because of the volume of nicotine in them, was harmful to New Yorkers?

MR. PRETLOW: I would imagine so.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. So how could that be the case when you look at the nicotine gum can be -- is sold in two different milligram variations; a two milligram and a four milligram, whereas the pouches are sold in a three milligram and a six milligram. So you can get a nicotine gum that is untaxed, at a higher nicotine content than a nicotine pouch, which we believe is more harmful to New Yorkers even though the gum has a higher nicotine volume.

MR. PRETLOW: So, Mr. Jensen, are you suggesting that we increase the tax on nicotine gum?

MR. JENSEN: I'm just looking for an understanding about why there's an inconsistency in what we're doing and why we treat --

MR. PRETLOW: That's not addressed in this bill. What we have in front of us is the tax on the nicotine pouches.

MR. JENSEN: So we're not -- we're not taking up or have any concern that the nicotine gum is a chew and park product where you put the product, the gum, along your gums to take in the nicotine just like you would a nicotine pouch?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. Well, there is a difference there where the nicotine gum is an FDA-approved smoking cessation product, where these pouches are not.

MR. JENSEN: So if the FDA were to rule tomorrow that a nicotine pouch is an FDA-approved cessation device, is there a provision in this piece of legislation to --

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I don't believe we -- we tax medical devices.

MR. JENSEN: So what I'm saying is if the FDA approves a pouch, which I believe they have ruled that it can be used for cessation, and I believe in other nations they have also said they can do it. And we passed legislation recently that we no longer recognize the FDA's medical advice, but we look at other outside health organizations. Is there a provision in this bill that would roll back the tax because it is used for medical purposes?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: I'm -- I'm informed that if the pouches gets FDA approval, then this tax would be rolled back.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: Because then it would be considered a medical device.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Thank you. And is there any concern -- I know in surrounding states that by passing this measure our neighboring states like Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Vermont do not have this tax, and that by instituting a tax on these nicotine pouches it will drive consumers who'd be purchasing other products at a location where they would also buy a pouch and other things, to purchase the pouches and those other things in one of those three neighboring states?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, that's always the case. I mean, you know, Jersey doesn't put a nickel deposit on soda cans and New York does. I know we're not gonna stop selling soda in New York because Jersey doesn't require a deposit. So I can only deal with what's happening in the confines of the State of New York and not really be concerned with what individuals do to go outside of New York to circumvent whatever laws we have in place in the State.

MR. JENSEN: So we're not concerned about --

MR. PRETLOW: We're always concerned, but I -- I can't do legislation with that as a driving force. I have to only look at what's effective and what we need in the State of New York, which is where we all live.

MR. JENSEN: All right. Fair enough, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your answers to my questions.

Thank you, Madam Chair -- or Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Thank you, Mr. Jensen.

Ms. Gallagher.

MS. GALLAGHER: Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: On the bill.

MS. GALLAGHER: I rise today to share my deep frustration with a revenue bill that fundamentally fails to meet the moment, protect New Yorkers and ensure that we are a state where working people can thrive. I am a proud Democratic Socialist because I believe that everyone deserves to live with dignity. I reject the idea that anyone should be one disaster away from losing everything. Year after year we see corporations and the executives who run them get wealthier while everyday New Yorkers struggle to survive. We are the most unequal state in the country and our wealth disparity is growing exponentially. If you or someone in your family gets sick, lives through a natural disaster, is the victim of a crash, your stability is likely ruined. If you're not wealthy, the safety nets available to protect you are few and far between. It doesn't have to be this way.

This year's budget reflected a clear and unique moment. New York's millionaires and billionaires are receiving $12 billion in tax cuts while nearly half-a-million New Yorkers are losing their healthcare as a direct result of these cuts. If there was ever a simple and straightforward opportunity to stand with the New Yorkers over oligarchs, this was it. But we are voting on a budget today that does nothing to cover nearly half-a-million New Yorkers who will lose healthcare on July 1st.

While the pied-à-terre tax is a good policy and an important first step, it will not scratch the surface of the billions we could raise with modest increases to personal income tax and corporate tax rates; tax increases that these wealthy people and companies would not even notice, because they are receiving such large cuts at the federal level.

And, indeed, because the budget has taken so very long, we will have less than a week to debate and vote on other issues that New Yorkers care about. So I am forced to vote no on this revenue bill in this budget. But I can promise you, we will be back next year and the year after that. We will not stop until we truly tax the rich Statewide, and make the investments that ensure New Yorkers continue to have a place where working people can thrive and live.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Thank you, Ms. Gallagher.

Ms. Shrestha.

MS. SHRESTHA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The number of millionaires in the State continue to grow. The amount of corporate profits in the State continue to grow, whereas the households making $75,000 or less make up the biggest group of people who are leaving the State. And they are leaving the State because they can no longer afford to live here and have a decent quality of life. All of this has been made worse by the Federal Administration's cuts on Medicaid as well as SNAP, which means the

most vulnerable people will further find a challenge in continuing to live in this State. But this spending plan from the -- from the Federal Administration also gives tax breaks that disproportionately benefit the wealthy. To be specific, collectively the millionaires in this State will be saving $12 billion every year going forward. And that means the State budget this year had one core function: To -- to address the affordability crisis and act as a counterweight to the assault the Federal Administration is unleashing on the working families of this State. However, the refusal to raise money from those who have it, from those who are hoarding it so as to not invest in programs that would stabilize the lives of our constituents has it -- made it so that people increasingly don't have a reason to truly believe in why they should be excited about democracy. Why they should participate in this process. People need to believe that the government exists to watch out for their well-being. And the message we are sending with this revenue bill specifically, the very explicit refusal from the Executive Chamber to not make the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes is basically saying we are going to allow the working families of New York to be the victims of one of the highest wealth disparities that exist in this country. New York State has so much wealth that it is richer than countries like Denmark and Sweden. But at the same time, we are having people fight over scraps, fight over what program can be funded over another and still have none of these programs fully funded. For example, we do not want people living on the streets, and yet we do not want to fund housing access vouchers which would help

people have stable homes. And that is an ask of only $250 million, which is a drop in the bucket compared to how much money people who are the richest in this State are keeping to themselves. The purpose of money is to exchange hands, not to sit there collecting dust. The purpose of money is not to increase the wealth of a few people. It is to fund our collective well-being. It is to invest in a social infrastructure that gives everybody the opportunity to have a decent quality of life; that includes stable housing. That includes lower utility bills. That includes access to healthcare. That includes access to high-quality education, as well as good well-paying union jobs.

So to say that we are not going to invest in New Yorkers simply because we do not want to touch the pockets of the wealthy is an abdication of this government's responsibility, and for that reason I will be voting no on this revenue bill.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Thank you, Ms. Shrestha.

Mr. Slater.

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

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: For Mr. Slater, absolutely.

MR. SLATER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You're doing good. You're doing good. Just a few more hours.

MR. PRETLOW: Are you saying you're opposed to

this budget because it doesn't tax the rich?

MR. SLATER: Well, that's not really what I want to talk about was your -- there's a couple questions in here about the Child and Dependent Care Credit.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SLATER: If we can just have some clarification, just a few questions on that. This is restructured within this particular bill and replaces the current federally-linked structure with a new standalone State credit beginning in tax year 2026, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SLATER: And obviously, very happy to see that we're trying to address some of the challenges and financial burdens parents are facing in finding affordable and reliable childcare, something our Conference has been pushing for and I know this is one of those bipartisan issues that we've seen commonality with and we -- we appreciate that. Has the Department estimated how many taxpayers will be impacted by the shift from a -- from a federal-linked calculation to this new formula?

MR. PRETLOW: I think we're looking at 230,000 filers.

MR. SLATER: 230,000 filers --

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah.

MR. SLATER: -- that it would impact.

MR. PRETLOW: Which would be 316,000 children.

MR. SLATER: Understood. And how much will the average benefit for qualifying taxpayers go up for the average family of four?

MR. PRETLOW: $576.

MR. SLATER: And this part allows room and board for caregivers, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe so.

MR. SLATER: And can you explain to us -- I -- I just kind of want to make sure I understand exactly when it comes to what we're trying to achieve there for the definition of caregivers. Is that for a live-in au pair, or who would benefit from that particular provision in the bill?

MR. PRETLOW: The same individuals that are under cover in the law.

MR. SLATER: Say it -- right. And so, can you explain to me who those individuals are?

MR. PRETLOW: Suzie and Charlie -- I don't know who they are.

(Laughter)

MR. SLATER: Well, I'm just -- again, I'm just trying to understand when we talk about giving room and board for caregivers what we're -- again, what does that entail?

MR. PRETLOW: Someone whose position is in place to take care of a young individual.

MR. SLATER: So there's no minimum of the

number of young individuals that they would be in charge of?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe so.

MR. SLATER: And would the benefit -- again, just to make sure I'm clear, would the benefit go to the caregiver themself, or those who are paying the caregiver?

MR. PRETLOW: Actually, it's the individual that's paying the caregiver.

MR. SLATER: The employer essentially?

MR. PRETLOW: Employer.

MR. SLATER: Understood. And the other thing that we saw was there were ancillary costs related to educational expenses that were not allowed when they also enable work. Can you tell me why those costs were not included?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. We didn't make any changes to the elibility -- edge -- eligibility criterias [sic].

MR. SLATER: And so are educational expenses included?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, as they are under current law.

MR. SLATER: Understood. How about in regards to some of the regulatory reforms. I know we talked about this I believe when one of the previous bills. Is there anything in this bill that speaks to any of the regulatory reforms that I think both sides of the aisle have been trying to examine?

MR. PRETLOW: The -- no.

MR. SLATER: Just making sure there's no other questions that I have there. All right. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for answering my questions. I appreciate it, as always.

MR. PRETLOW: Thank you, sir.

MR. SLATER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Thank you, Mr. Slater.

Ms. Valdez.

MS. VALDEZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Two facts should have motivated -- define this budget. One is the 450 --

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: On the bill.

MS. VALDEZ: Oh, sorry. Pardon me. On the bill, thank you.

Two factors should have defined this budget. One is the 450,000 New Yorkers who are about to lose their healthcare because Donald Trump and the Republicans in Congress have taken a buzzsaw to our already threadbare social safety net. The second is the $12 billion in tax cuts that the wealthiest New Yorkers are getting this year from that same Republican Congress.

New York State had the opportunity and the responsibility to lead. The overwhelming majority of New Yorkers are demanding that we tax the rich, to invest in the working class of this State, to make our lives more affordable and more dignified. But Governor Hochul answered to different New Yorkers. That small number of billionaires and CEOs who refuse to pay their fair share

and who donate to politicians to keep it that way.

So what are we left with? A pied-à-terre tax on second homes worth more than $5 million; it's a start. And against a Governor who so beholden to her billionaire donors, she swore she wouldn't allow a penny in new taxes. It is a victory. I want to thank the thousands of New Yorkers who made calls, who canvassed their neighbors, who showed up to rallies in their cities and here in the Capitol. Your organizing made a difference this year. But in a moment of profound inequality, when the rich have never been richer, when 1 in 4 New Yorkers lives in poverty and hundreds of thousands lose their healthcare and their food stamps in a matter of weeks, it is simply not good enough. Make no mistake, this is an austerity budget. But we will continue to organize for a just budget that recognizes that it is the working class that make the State run, not the CEOs and billionaires.

I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Thank you, Ms. Valdez.

Mr. Bologna.

MR. BOLOGNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Chairman please yield for just a couple questions?

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Will the Chairman yield?

MR. BOLOGNA: So is staff --

MR. PRETLOW: I'm going to limit you to two.

MR. BOLOGNA: Uh, a couple more, but I'll be brief.

MR. PRETLOW: A few.

MR. BOLOGNA: I'm gonna -- I'm gonna be on Part K if that's all right. So the -- the 75% hold sales tax, these -- and I just -- again, some of these we've gone over but I just want to clarify, these are noncombustible products? We're talking about nontraditional cigarettes here, right?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. And would you agree that a lot of adults use these products as an alternative smoking?

MR. PRETLOW: I'd imagine so.

MR. BOLOGNA: So generally speaking, as we move away from combustible cigarettes, I think that -- would you agree that it's a positive that people are moving away from tobacco to just nicotine even if it's just a gateway to get off all together?

MR. PRETLOW: Possibly, yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So would you agree -- well, it's data, I mean it's from the CDC, that -- that lower income folks are at a three times higher rate of smoking and using tobacco products than -- than higher income earners? Let me rephrase that. I guess I'm telling you according to CDC, lower income earners are at a three times higher rate to smoke and use tobacco products than income earners. So would this excise tax then hit lower income earners at a disproportionate rate than people who don't smoke or use

tobacco?

MR. PRETLOW: As I stated be -- be -- ear -- earlier that mostly all of the sin taxes affect poorer people because they utilize these items more than wealthier people and as a percentage of their income it's a lot higher.

MR. BOLOGNA: So I mean, in a weird way we're actually kind of affectively helping balance a budget on the backs of lower income earners; are we not?

MR. PRETLOW: That is not the purpose of -- of what we're doing. The purpose --

MR. BOLOGNA: Might not be the purpose, but it's the reality of what we're doing.

MR. PRETLOW: -- of what we're doing is trying to maintain the good health of all individuals and to discourage actually the use of tobacco products.

MR. BOLOGNA: Mr. Pretlow, that's all I have. Thank you very much.

MR. PRETLOW: Thank you.

MR. BOLOGNA: Madam Speaker, on the bill if that's all right.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: On the bill, sir.

MR. BOLOGNA: All right. So this bill raises billions of new revenue for New Yorkers that are already struggling with some of the highest tax burden in America. No where is that clearer than in Part K, the 75% hold sales tax. Let me be clear, I'm

not standing here advocating for nicotine use, but I am questioning the logic of lower risk alternatives that many adults use to get away from combustible cigarettes. As I said earlier that lower income earners are three times more likely to use these products than higher income earners and frankly, I find it rich that we are sitting here listening to some folks lose their ever-loving minds over higher income earners but essentially what we're doing is we're making it more difficult for lower income earners to get off cigarettes, increase their risk of cancer and put them into the healthcare system. I -- I -- I just -- I find that a little bit odd. So who's ultimately paying this bill? Working class New Yorkers, lower income New Yorkers, at-risk New Yorkers, blue collar, people struggling with addiction and trying to quit smoking. Instead of helping them transition away from cigarettes, Albany sees an opportunity to generate revenue.

This is the fundamental problem with this budget. Temporary taxes ultimately become permanent. And kind of getting on to the energy thing here with the rebate check, one-time rebate checks does not fix the underlying problem of energy. We have -- our -- I -- I appreciate the fact that someone wanted to pick up the ball and run with it from our Conference's plan, but at the end of day you only got one piece of it. We still need to systematically reduce the cost of energy across the board and a one-time rebate check is kind of a slap in the face to everyday New Yorkers without the additional piece. We're [sic] still have the All-Electric Buildings Act, All-Electric Vehicles Acts, the Cap-and-Invest, 2025 Building Code, the 100-Foot

Rule. We're still systematically getting rid of natural gas, reducing our energy portfolio and doing nothing to increase the affordability or reliability of our entire energy system. But yet, New Yorkers are still supposed to -- to -- to be happy with a $200 rebate check without the long-term benefits of systematic change. It's a change in PR, and really what it is is damage control. And the irony is staggering 'cause our mandates, what we've done in this Body is essentially what has driven up costs to ratepayers across the State. And then we send taxpayers and ratepayers a partial refund and expect to get applause from the very crisis that we helped create. I will die on this hill, but we do not have a revenue problem in New York State. We have a spending problem and a philosophical utility problem.

The answer to all this is fiscal discipline. This budget does not do that. We need permanent tax relief, economic growth and a government that finally learns how to live with -- within its own means. And I will say this on the -- on the nicotine tax, Madam Speaker. While some may laugh about the Zyndiana Jones searching for the lost nicotine pouch in Albany's newest tax adventure, for the working families across this State, nothing is funny about being treated like an ATM machine by their own government.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Thank you, Mr. Bologna.

Ms. Mitaynes.

Oh, pardon me. Mr. Keith Brown.

MR. K. BROWN: On the bill, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: On the bill.

MR. K. BROWN: Our State is not going in the right direction. While we sit here and debate, we ignore problems we're creating right here in this Chamber. We talk about the policies that are coming out of Washington D.C.? Well, let's look under the hood here. What has New York done since 2019? Where does New York stand in comparison with every other state? We have the second highest total tax burden in the country. We have the highest individual tax burden in the country. We have the fourth highest property tax burden in this country. Our residential electricity rates are 62% higher than the national average. Our commercial electricity rates are 63% higher than the national average.

We haven't adequately addressed many social ills. We have a housing crisis, we had over 2,000 New Yorkers overdose last year, we have a veterans suicide crisis and a growing problem of gamble -- problem gambling especially amongst teens, we have a teen vaping problem and a teen mental heath crisis. Childcare is 11.4% higher than the national average. We have the worst business climate in the country. The tax foundation ranks us dead last, dead last in tax competitiveness. We're number one, though, in -- in outward migration. We've lost a million of our residents since 2020. One New Yorker leaves this State for somewhere else every two minutes and what do we do? With this bill today makes it worse. We do nothing about Medicaid fraud. The Empire Center says we've spent $2.1 billion on non-New Yorkers last year. Three million more people are

on the rolls and are financially eligible in med -- to Medicaid in New York State.

And in 2000 when I came into this Chamber, we spent 177 billion as a State. This budget is over 268 billion, an estimated 48% increase. That's some austerity budget, I tell ya. Inflation is 2.4% this year and this budget is an operating spending of 6.8%. It's not sustainable. We don't have a revenue problem, we certainly have a spending problem.

I'll be voting no. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER WOERNER: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Now Ms. Mitaynes.

On the bill.

MS. MITAYNES: Today we're voting for a budget that reflects both the possibilities of what working people can win when they organize and fight and the deep failures of a political system that continues to put wealthy interest ahead of the needs of everyday New Yorkers. Year after year members of this Body are expected to vote on a massive budget bill negotiated behind closed doors with little transparency and little meeting participation from the communities we represent. The people of this State deserve a democratic process where working class New Yorkers, immigrants, tenants, families and environmental justice communities have a real seat at the table, not a process dominated by Executive power and last minute negotiations driven by political calculation. Because while

New Yorkers are struggling to pay rent, afford groceries, keep childcare and stay in their homes, this budget process continues to treat transformative change as something to fear instead of something to fight for.

Communities like Sunset Park and Red Hook that I represent know exactly what the environmental injustice looks like. We live with higher asthma rates, we live alongside polluting infrastructure, truck traffic, flooding risks, peaker plants and industrial contamination. Working class Black and Brown immigrant communities are always the first forced to suffer the consequences when politicians decide to water down climate protections. The consequences will not be abstract. They will impact public health, air quality, flooding, vulnerability and our ability to transform away from fossil fuels and the urgency the crisis demands.

We had an opportunity to tax the rich; an investment that could've represented critical steps toward building publically-owned renewable energy infrastructure that is democratically controlled and centered around public good instead of corporate profit. It creates the opportunity for New York to lead the country in building a renewable energy future that moves away from fossil fuels pollution and racism. We should not have to fight this hard to protect the bare minimum while we have a Governor who simultaneously is weakening legislation that's taken this Body years to pass. We saw this same dynamic throughout our fight for immigration justice. Our communities fought for New York For All; real protections that would

finally establish clear separation between local governments and federal immigration enforcement and ensure immigrant New Yorkers can live with dignity and safety and continue to contribute into the economy.

And then the Governor stood in the way. We were forced to settle for weaker measures and partial protections after enormous resistance and reluctance. Even so, immigrant advocates, organizers and legislative allies fought hard to secure meaningful wins in this budget. These victories matter, but they don't go far enough. At a moment when immigrant families across this country are living in fear and under increased attack, New York should be leading with courage and clarity, not compromise and hesitation. Immigrant communities should never be treated as bargaining chips during budget negotiations.

Our fight does not end here. We will continue organizing, legislating and pushing to strengthen these protections until New York fully lives up to its promise as a safe home for all immigrants. New Yorkers are facing one of the worst affordability crisis in generations. Families are being crushed by rising rents, healthcare costs, utility bills, food prices while billionaires and major corporations continue to receive enormous tax breaks and protections. We fought to the make the ultra-wealthy finally pay their fair share. We fought for real progressive revenue solutions that could fully fund housing, healthcare, public transit, climate investments, childcare and public education. And once again, we face constant pushback.

Instead of fully taxing the rich, this administration chose to protect wealthy interests and corporate power while asking working class New Yorkers to continue carrying the burden of a broken economy.

Now there are important wins in this budget that deserve recognition, but even those victories exist alongside austerity, compromise and missed opportunities that continue to leave too many New Yorkers behind. I recognize the hard-fought victories won by movements, advocates, organizers and legislative allies. Our communities deserve better than incrementalism during a moment of crisis. Working people are looking for leaders willing to improve their lives. They're looking for leadership willing to confront corporate greed, invest boldly in public goods, protect immigrants without compromise and treat climate change like the emergency that it is, and too often this Governor stood in the way of that vision.

Despite those barriers, our movement continues to grow stronger. Working class New Yorkers continue to organize and we will continue fighting for a future where housing is guaranteed, healthcare is universal, energy is public, immigrants are protected and our -- our economy serves the people who make this State run, not the wealthy elite who profit from inequality. This budget did not go far enough, but our fight does not end here. I will continue building a New York that belongs to all of us.

I vote no on this budget.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. WALSH: So I've listened as usual with interest to, you know, there are 150 of us here, sometimes. Well, it seems like there are a lot of us here right now which is kind of good; we're all listening to each other, I hope. And, you know, we have a -- a wide difference of opinion on this bill and on this whole topic of revenue so, I want to just use my time to talk a little bit about what's on my mind with this bill.

This enacted revenue budget increases State taxes by $2.5 billion over two years. It includes an enhancement of the Child and Dependent Care Credit, energy rebate checks, taxes on alternative nicotine products, as well as the new surcharge on high-value second homes in New York City, an extension of business tax rates and decoupling from various H.R. 1 provisions. So by, you know, some budget bills are very thick with many, many, many subparts. This has 36 parts so, you know, we're not gonna like it all. We're -- if you -- if you like all of it, you probably should have your head examined. If you hate it all, you probably don't have a heart. So there are definitely parts of the bill that I think are -- are decent and I am a glass-half-full kind of gal so I'm going to tell you what I like about it so far.

I like the tipped wage income exemption, I think that's good. The rebate checks are good as far as they go. I just think that, you know, again, they're a little -- they're a little gimmicky.

They're not really -- when you go to the grocery store, you fill up your gas tank and you think about what this -- these rebate checks are really gonna mean to you, it's not gonna be that much. It's really not gonna be that much. I -- I -- I'm grateful -- let's put it in the positive spin, I'm grateful that the New York City Pied-à-Terre Tax did not get imported to Upstate. I'm very grateful that that didn't get into the final enacted budget. I don't think we want it up here, but we'll see how it works in the City.

You know, I think when I came here ten years ago, the enacted budget was $153 billion. Last year, it was $254 billion and this year it will be $268 billion; an increase year over year of $14 billion, and I listened with great amusement to that being described as an austerity budget. I don't see in what realm or reality that is an austerity budget when you're increasing it by $14 billion. It -- I just think what I'm coming away with, what I've been feeling for some time now, is that no matter how much money this Legislature has to spend, it will always want more. It will never be enough. It will never be enough and, you know, that has an impact.

The Governor promised no new taxes, but then over time that became no new broad-based income or Statewide business tax increases. So it -- it changed a little bit, the messaging, right? That's Albany speak for -- there are, you know, there is going to be State tax increases, but we're gonna look at -- over two years, it's going to be $2.5 billion. New York City businesses have the highest combined corporate tax rate in the country, while Statewide business

taxes are generally among the highest nationwide. And I won't requote all of the great statistics that were offered by a previous speaker, but suffice it to say that I -- I believe that we are already taxed considerably here. For -- for those of my colleagues who are very disappointed that we're not taxing the rich, I would say we -- we do tax the rich. We tax the middle class and we tax the poor and we already do that and, you know, I think -- I think overall I'm just disappointed again that we're -- it seems as though there are some in the Chamber who are taking a victory lap and kind of saying, *we didn't make it any worse, you know, we didn't make it any worse.* But really, in fact, it was already pretty bad. And I would say that over the ten years that I've been in office, an increase of well over $100 billion is a lot of money and it's -- it -- it is what it is.

Let me say one more good thing, though, before I close. I was very happy to see in Part JJ, which is all the way at the end of this budget bill, very, you know -- of this budget bill, and what this part does, which is very helpful for my district and I did want to point it out, because like I said, I'm -- I believe in calling out the good stuff when it's there. Is -- let me get it in front of me. I have a village in my district, Ballston Spa and it's actually where my district office is, too and that -- they have a -- a very old brownfield site and we've been wanting to see that get redeveloped for like a long time. And there were some brownfield tax credits that were issued several years ago, but then the pandemic happened and a lot of other things happened and proposals, you know, developers kind of came in with

ideas and then those developers went away. And to make a very long story short, those brownfield credits were ready to -- to expire, and that would have really detrimentally impacted the owner of the property and any potential development ideas for the property. It makes it much more attractive to redevelop that property with the brownfield tax credits. So with this Part JJ - and it's not just for Ballston Spa but it's for other areas, too - those brownfield tax credits are going to get extended for a few more years to allow for the appropriate development process to move forward and hopefully we're going to get a good project in there that's really gonna help that village out quite a bit, so I'm very grateful to see that.

So to answer colleagues who thought that we should've taxed more, we should've taken more from those who could, in their view, very well afford it, I would just say I think that this bill does plenty enough damage and I -- I can't support it, although there are certain aspects to it, as there would be with 36 parts to it. There are certainly some parts that I'm happy to see.

So I'll be voting in the negative, Madam Speaker, and I thank my colleagues and you for the time.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Tague.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and on the bill, please.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. TAGUE: I saved you a little time, Mr.

Chairman. I didn't ask you any questions this year, there's no white smoke so we're good. I'm going to be every brief, Madam Chair. This is just ridiculous. Here we are all this time late on a budget spending $100 billion more than what we did back when I first got to this Chamber. And I hear people whining and crying and blaming the Governor, blaming the federal government. No, the blame is in here, the blame is on the Second Floor. There is no one paying attention to what the heck is going on. How can we spend $100 billion more dollars in ten years when we have less businesses, less people living in this State? What is -- what are we doing? And then we attack people that have been successful? Let me tell you what, a lot of those people that you're talking about that are millionaires and billionaires now, a lot of them grew up poor. Started with absolutely nothing, absolutely nothing and they made their way the American way. New York should and never ought to be a socialist State, nor America. I can't believe that we have people in this room that think it's okay to just give away the store and let everybody else pay for it. That is not how this country was -- came to be. Sure in the heck not the way I want to live.

So I mean, I hear all this -- some people are voting for it, some people -- everything I've seen so far is absolute junk. Matter of fact, I want to tear it up and just throw it in the garbage can. This is not responsible. This is being afraid -- this is afraid of saying no to people. And when you're in business and you're running -- and -- and when you're here and you're running government, sometimes

you have to say no. We can't afford it. The people we represent can't afford it. As long as we have our priorities, our emergency services, our law enforcement and we keep the wheels of government going, that's priority.

I -- I just -- I don't get it. I don't get it. I guess I've just -- I live in an area of the State where people work hard everyday and expect to get something back for the fruits of their labor. But what we're doing to people -- and -- and you know what, you want to talk about being rich or whatever, you have to have a million dollars to be able to live in this State, because over the last ten years we've made it so unaffordable for every single person to live here that if you don't have a million dollars -- if you don't make a million dollars, you can't live comfortably here and it's all because of the things that happen in this Chamber, that Chamber down there and the Second Floor. People are out of touch with the real world. They're out of touch how hard people work and how hard people struggle to pay the bills. That's where I came from; blue collar. I started with nothing. Didn't have rich parents, didn't parents give everything to me. I got up 3:30 every morning and I worked my tail off and I paid my fair share of taxes in the last 50-plus years. You want to really do something for the people that you represent? Start thinking about them, not giving away the story [sic], but start thinking about programs and things that can really help them get going while cutting the budget and lowering people's taxes. Why don't we think about that one time?

I could never support anything like this. This is just

absolutely ridiculous. Almost $300 billion with a B. Where the heck is it coming from? And the nonsense about Washington D.C. and the federal government, that's been happening since Obama was in office so I don't want to hear that. And the same thing with health -- the health insurance. There's been a problem with health insurance for the last 30 years. Nobody's fixed it. I don't care what side of the aisle you're on. So ridiculous. Put your money where your mouth is, get a set, get some guts and do what we're supposed to do here. Make the people in the State of New York's lives better by doing the right thing and never mind the politics.

I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Tague. Let's make sure we use appropriate language.

MR. TAGUE: I'm not really --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Well, getting "something" is not appropriate.

Ms. Giglio.

MS. GIGLIO: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. GIGLIO: New York doesn't have a revenue problem, it has a spending problem. Spending is out of control. As my colleague stated earlier, the budget went from 175 billion to today's 268 billion in less than ten years. Taxing, taxing and taxing is not sustainable. Corporate greed, "tax the rich" and now we're

extending taxes on small businesses for three more years and that's the flow; when you run out of the money at the top, it starts trickling down to the bottom, to the businesses and to the middle class.

Money flows into New York City from our State Budget. While the State Legislature or the City Legislature, the Financial Plan from 2026-2029 shows a 16% salary increase for the elected officials in New York City, with 13% fringe benefits and a mere 3% increase for the 80,000 workers that make the City work. What will we do to stop the exodus?

New York's share of millionaires is falling compared to other large states. Wall Street To Y'all Street is real. More than 100 companies are duly listed in New York and Texas and they're planning their exodus. JPMorgan Chase employs more in Texas now than New York. Goldman Sachs is building an 800,000 square foot building in Dallas for 5,000 employees. Wells Fargo opened a new campus in Las Colinas bringing 4,500 workers there from New York. Charles Schwab moved corporate headquarters to Westlake, Texas with 7,000 employees. Bank of America, 5,000 employees to Texas. Scotiabank regional office in Dallas, 1,000 workers there. What will you do to -- what will we do to create a better business environment in New York so that we stop lose -- leaving and losing these large companies that are paying these taxes that we're all talking about here today? The structural deficit and unsustainable revenue source will affect our bond rating in the future. The well will dry out. This spending is out of control and the Wall Street To Y'all Street is real.

They're leaving and it will fall on the middle class.

This spending has to stop and for that reason I'll be voting in the negative.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Otis.

MR. OTIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you all. You know, I think --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill?

MR. OTIS: On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill, sir.

MR. OTIS: I think something that's been left out of the discussion is where the money is going. The money in this budget is going not to state government, but mostly back into the pockets of our communities and our institutions. Healthcare, hospitals and nursing homes needed help, they're getting some relief in this budget, especially Upstate hospitals very much at risk because of what's going on in Washington. We're doing the best we can to help, it may not be enough for some institutions. Money is going back into what we're doing with Foundation Aid and School Aid, back to the taxpayers. We increased in this budget the minimum a school district could get in aid from 1% to 2% for those that are on save harmless, an increase the school district's asked for repeatedly, we did it. Increases in childcare, increases in school breakfast and lunch funding, assistance to utility ratepayers, not just with the rebate program as has been mentioned

somewhat disparagingly, but it's a billion dollars, but also in changing more importantly the rules by which rate increases are approved by the Public Service Commission. Hopefully we'll see better results on those applications. Increases in AIM and other kinds of transportation assistance to local governments back into the pockets that will help buffer property tax increases. $1 billion for our Sustainable Futures Fund which will help us do some of the energy efficiency kinds of programs that we need to do. $1 billion is not enough, but it's what we -- looks like in this budget we can afford.

We added 25 million, so a total of 525 million for clean water programs which has provided to local governments in this State, these programs over $3 billion of assistance since those programs were created. And we have a new $175 million for clean water related to housing. We will see how that program works out, but that is a potential money out the door that helps at the local level.

And with it, it -- it's just too easy to say too much spending without reflecting on the fact that very little of it -- most of our State agencies are at 0 increases for their budgets, it's out the door to help people, help affordability in this State.

So I vote aye on this budget. As with any budget, we're not all happy with every element and that comes with the territory, but we're doing real things to lower costs for the people that we serve. That's something we should all be proud of. I'll be voting aye.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Smullen.

MR. SMULLEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SMULLEN: So here we are with another budget and more new taxes for New York. The new State taxes this year benefit New York City to the tune of a half a billion dollars, yet New York continues to have the number two overall tax burden in our nation. We have the most state and local taxes in the whole country at 12.5 thousand per person in New York State, but meanwhile the Tax Foundation ranks New York number 50. Dead last in the whole United States.

The budget itself is up 5.6%, but inflation last year was only 2.6%. What gives? Why are we spending more than we need to? This spending is at historical levels. It's up from $170 billion in 2019 to almost $270 billion here in 2026. And this spending as we continue -- we spend more than any other big state in the country. California spends $349 billion, but they have 40 million people. It's outrageous. That's because Texas spends only $169 billion and they have 31 billion people, and sunny Florida $114 billion with 23 million people. So is it any wonder that a million people have left Upstate New York in the last year -- years? Is it any wonder that people realize that New York is on the wrong track and they are voting with their feet? We need to stop this insanity.

I vote no on this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Chang.

MR. CHANG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This budget has both positive and negative --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill?

MR. CHANG: On the bill, Madam. Sorry about that --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill, sir.

MR. CHANG: -- on the bill. This budget has both positive and negative and there is as the previous -- as Mr. Smullen says that we lost nearly a million people for the past five or six years and our budgets has ballooned. So why are we increasing the budget while we're losing people and we're paying more per person than not? If we have final way to just -- to find a fraud, waste and abuse in the system we don't even need to increase the taxes. We could even cut the taxes and bring back the business itself. This bill doesn't address that, especially for a useless, wasteful homeless program that doesn't help.

Education. We lost in New York City not even a million kids enrolled. Not too long ago was there over a million, but there's less than a million now and -- and -- and a cost per -- per student in New York City nearly 42,000 in education that we're in the middle of the pack. Not in the top of the pack, but in the middle.

So, this budget as -- as previous my previous colleague is, is not a -- a -- a tax problem or revenue problem, but it's a spending. It's the priorities that we spend on this that is wasteful, that is not accounted to all those nongovernmental programs. They need to be audited, they need to be account for, are they successful or not? We're just pumping useless money.

And I am debating on this bill should I vote yes or no because there's a lot of positive in this bill, there's some tax releases in there. There is some expending and decreasing on government regulations so there are a lot of greatness and goodness on this bill. So that's all I have and that's my thought on this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Moreno.

MS. MORENO: Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. MORENO: As one of the newest members of this Body, I was elected less than four months ago as a proud democratic socialist ready to fight for my constituents at a pivotal moment for New York and our country. I've had countless conversations with my neighbors who are worried about not being able to afford the rent or childcare while watching Trump gut government agencies, slash social programs and threaten the very fabric of our democracy to line his own pockets and the pockets of his billionaire oligarch friends.

MS. WALSH: Madam Speaker, point of order, please.

MS. MORENO: I ran for office precisely because I saw that out State government has --

MS. WALSH: Madam Speaker, point of order.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Point of order. Ms. Moreno, please stop talking for one moment, please.

What is your point?

MS. WALSH: My point is that the comments of the speaker deviate from not only our decorum, but are also not related to the bill.

(Pause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Okay. Your point on decorum, not sustained. Relative to speaking on the bill, it is sustained. We will speak on the bill in front of us today, please.

MS. MORENO: Sounds great.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Moreno.

MS. MORENO: I ran for office precisely because I saw that our State government has a unique opportunity and a responsibility to protect New Yorkers from the class warfare and attacks on our democracy from the federal government.

Unfortunately, I have been deeply frustrated and frankly shocked by the undemocratic process by which this budget has been negotiated. Witnessing a budget process that feels completely divorced from the lived reality of my constituents has been

disappointing. We have watched our Executive (indiscernible) the language of affordability and our budget process to insert her own policy priorities of auto insurance industry giveaways and climate law rollbacks while ignoring the vast majority of New Yorkers who wanted to increase taxes on the ultra wealthy. But we know that a real affordability agenda means taxing the rich to fund the essential programs that working people ned -- need to live. Our Governor refused despite the fact that a majority of New Yorkers supported these measures. It was through our movement and the advocacy of thousands of every day New Yorkers that we did win a pied-à-terre tax for New York City. This is an initial and important step towards taxing the ultra wealthy. But the reality is that we have failed to protect New Yorkers from the federal government's egregious budget cuts.

In July, 450 [sic] New Yorkers will lose their health insurance. An additional 300,000 households will see cuts to SNAP food assistance and tens of thousands more will lose the housing access vouchers they depend on to keep a roof over their head. New York State had a chance to reverse these devastating cuts by having the wealthiest corporations that individuals pay their fair share. While the Legislature was ready to take action this section -- this session, Governor Hochul refused. This was not a negotiation. This was a complete capitulation to billionaires and corporations by Governor Hochul at a time they're already receiving 12 billion in tax breaks from the Trump Administration.

This budget does not address the urgent need of New York's working families which is why I will be voting no. But I refuse to give up, we refuse to give up. I know that many of my colleagues are ready to fight, to raise the essential revenue that we will need to protect vulnerable communities, take on the billionaire class and deliver an affordable future and I encourage working New Yorkers to join us. It will take all of us.

Thank you.

(Pause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Tannousis.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. TANNOUSIS: You know, since I joined the Assembly five years ago, the budget has increased dramatically. Almost 40% more than when I started here in 2021. And this budget does nothing more than increase taxes and increase fees and does not do much of anything in incentivizing families to stay here and businesses to stay here. As we continue, we hear more and more people are fleeing the State. They are going to safer, more affordable places to live. And as I sit here in this Chamber and I hear some of my colleagues say that this budget didn't go far enough because it didn't tax enough and tried to villainize people because they are successful.

I am proud to represent a district of immigrants. My

parents are immigrants, came here for that American Dream. We are the land of opportunity, we are not here to villainize success. What we needed this year were tax cuts to put more money in people's pockets, not tax increases that will continue to make living in New York State unmanageable.

I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Morinello.

MR. MORINELLO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've stated this yesterday, I'm gonna state it again today --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill, sir?

MR. MORINELLO: Yes, it's on the bill. I am sorry.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

MR. MORINELLO: As an attorney and a retired judge, we work on definitions and there's two terms that have been utilized both in the budget debates and in the -- on the bills. One is immigrant, two is what is a fair share? I only ask that at some point those definitions be put in and be stated. We have different categories of immigrants and I'd like to know which ones they're referring to. Number two, I'd like to know what a fair share is.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

(Pause)

Mr. Norber.

MR. NORBER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. NORBER: I know that we said this a few times today about -- and we're comparing New York to Florida, but I think we should reiterate it a little bit more. There are three million people living in Florida today than there are in New York State, and it's not that we have a little bit of a difference in terms of the budget. Their budget is $113 billion, ours is now $270 billion. They don't have different type [sic] of people. They have the same type of working class, the same type of middle class, the same type of rich people and the same type of people that need to be taken care of. It's not some magic recipe that we have to look into. This is actually happening in our country. They are able to maintain a budget probably about 40% lower than ours and at the same time probably cutting property taxes. So if we really cared about our working class, I'm not talking about the rich right now and even though they're paying -- what our top 1% is paying 40% of our tax revenue. But if we really cared about our working class, our middle class, our businesses owners, our small businesses owners, we can take that $160 billion discrepancy and give it back to them if we really wanted to. If we cared about the affordability. So I think we should really look at ourselves and not be willfully blind to the solutions that we have here in our country.

So I'll be voting in the negative. Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, while we wait for --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. LUNSFORD: Oh, thank you. On the bill. While we wait for our friends in the Senate, I just want to rise to add some of my comments to what I've heard today. I've just got a little bugaboo about state comparisons since maybe I'm a little raw from this budget, but I think it's worth noting that New York actually has more people than it's ever had. We're growing slower than we used to, but our total population is still bigger by every measure. The total percentage loss of our population is a fraction of a percent. Just want to correct some of the record there.

Also, when you're comparing New York to other states, it's hard to compare New York where it snows to states that have concrete roads that are simply easier to maintain, to states that don't provide as much healthcare as we do, to states that have substantially fewer modes of public transport. Things like that.

I'd just like to point out that New York is an expensive state because we have awesome stuff that people like. If you look at where our population growth has come from, it's come from natural growth, not migration because people move here, stay here and multiply. People want to raise their kids here, people like to live here. My community has been bit -- is bigger than it's ever been.

I'm voting for this budget. There's things I don't like,

there's things that I do, but I know that we can support New Yorkers here by giving them everything that they need and some of that is through revenue raising.

With that I vote in the affirmative and thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Kelles.

MS. KELLES: Thank you.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. KELLES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This budget is about values, who bares the burden and who we ask to contribute more in a moment of extraordinary crisis. Just because working class New Yorkers make less does that mean they should pay more relatively, because that is our current reality. At a time when working families across New York are struggling under the cost of housing, childcare, groceries, healthcare, transportation and rising utility bills, we did not go far enough in asking the wealthiest New Yorkers and the most profitable corporations to pay their fair share. Meanwhile, we are told there is not enough money to fully protect healthcare coverage for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Not enough money to stabilize hospitals, nursing homes, hospice providers, EMS systems and rural healthcare infrastructure already at risk of closure. Not enough money to truly fund universal childcare with living wages for childcare workers. Not enough money to adequately support our -- our public schools, our teachers or fully

address the inequalities of the Tier 6 pension system.

We have the largest number of billionaires of any state in the country, yet half of renter households are paying more than 30% of their income just to keep a roof over their heads. And we did not adequate -- adequately fund the housing supports needed to keep people housed in the first place, including programs like HAVP that help low income New Yorkers facing eviction, homelessness, domestic violence or unsafe housing conditions stay housed and avoid falling deeper into crisis.

We also failed to meet the scale of the climate crisis at a moment when communities across New York are already experiencing flooding, extreme heat, infrastructure damage, rising utility costs, crop losses for farmers and worsening public health impacts. But some -- somehow there is always enough money for tax breaks at the top. According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, New York millionaires received roughly 12 billion annually in federal tax savings from Trump's tax policies. And yet the modest proposals many of us carry to increase taxes on ultra wealthy individuals and highly profitable corporations would not even have clawed back the full windfall they already received.

Across this State, hospitals are warning about service reductions. EMS systems are operating on the brink. Childcare centers are losing workers and working families are leaving New York because they simply cannot make the math work anymore. This is the affordability crisis and working people did not create it. The nurse

working double shifts did not create it, the childcare worker making poverty wages did not create it, the teacher buying supplies out-of-pocket did not create it; yet they are the ones repeatedly asked to absorb the consequences while billionaires and multi -- multi national cooperations continue accumulating extraordinary wealth with many of these large corporations not paying any taxes at all. And when New Yorkers are asked, the majority of people across the political spectrum support higher taxes on the wealthy and profitable corporations to fund public services and affordability measures across the political spectrum. We must come back to fight for healthcare, childcare, housing, schools, climate action and public services. We must come back and insist that in one of the wealthiest states and the wealthiest nations working people should not be the ones carrying the burden while the wealthiest continue receiving billions in tax breaks.

This process is not about simply spending less while somehow getting more. That is not reality. It is about who and where the money is coming from and on whom and where it is being spent. This year we did not go far enough. While I support the good in this bill and vote yes, I will join the majority of New Yorkers moving forward who demand that we do better.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Sempolinski.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So I -- I'm glad that the Assistant Majority Leader brought up state-to-state comparisons because that's where I wanted to go and she said correctly that New York State is bigger than it has been. However, since 2020 the population of the State of New York has grown approximately one million people. Since -- I'm sorry, since the year 2000 the population of the State of New York has grown approximately one million people, that's over 26 years. Over that same period of time, the population of the State of Florida has grown approximately 7.5 million people. The population of the State of Texas has grown approximately 11 million people. So, while it's technically true, we are bigger than we used to be. We are growing at a dramatically reduced rate to our peer group states. Over that same period of time, the net migration over the last 26 years out of the State of New York has been over 4 million people from state to state. The net migration into the State of Florida has been over approximately 4.5 million -- I'm sorry, 3.5 million people and the net migration of the State of Texas has been approximately three million people. So, clearly the weather is not much different now than it was in 2000. What we make the roads in different states hasn't changed that much over the last 26 years. What has increased dramatically over that time is our spending, and we spend approximately what those two states spend together and they are cleaning our clock. So the Governor can talk all that she wants about affordability, and some of my colleagues can talk

about austerity. When we spend that much more compared to peer group states and we tax that much more in this bill compared to peer group states, that's not an austerity budget and you don't increase affordability in the State of New York by ripping funds out of everybody across the income spectrum and then saying, *somehow we're gonna give it back to ya.* Just leave it in people's pockets, cut spending, cut taxes and we would do a lot better compared to other states.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. González-Rojas.

MS. GONZÁLEZ-ROJAS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. GONZÁLEZ-ROJAS: Today we are being asked to make choices about what kind of New York we want to be and whose side we're on in this moment of deep economic uncertainty and growing inequality. First I want to commend the Speaker and my colleagues in this Chamber for advancing an Assembly one-House budget resolution that recognized the urgency of this moment and included the proposals to tax the wealthiest New Yorkers so that we can make meaningful investments in our communities. That vision acknowledged what many New Yorkers already know; we cannot continuing [sic] balancing our priorities on the backs of working

families while extreme wealth continues to grow unchecked. And while New York City Pied-à-Terre Tax included in this budget was a step in the right direction, it was only that, a first step. We must not stop until we truly tax the rich statewide and make transformative investments in housing, healthcare, education and affordability.

At a moment when the federal government under the occupant in the White House escalating attacks on our healthcare system, New York had an opportunity to lead. Instead we did not go far enough. An estimated four hundred and -- four hundred -- nearly half a million people could lose healthcare coverage on July 1st and this budget does not do nearly enough to protect them. We should be expanding access to care, strengthening our safety net and ensuring no New Yorker loses healthcare because of decisions made in Washington. Governor Hochul must take action to ensure these New Yorkers are not left behind. We have the means to do it by taxing the ultra wealthy and asking those who have benefitted most from New York's economy to contribute their fair share, we can protect healthcare and invest in the people and communities that make this State strong.

This budget was a step in the right direction to help address New York City's fiscal challenges, but it could've gone further to protect healthcare and fully invest in an affordability agenda that meets the scale of this moment. New Yorkers deserve bold action. They deserve a State willing to fight for affordability, for dignity and as healthcare for -- as a human right. And we are going to keep

fighting to tax the rich and win a truly affordable New York.

And for these reasons I respectfully vote no on this bill. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

(Pause)

On a motion by Mr. Pretlow, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote's been requested.

Mr. Gandolfo.

MR. GANDOLFO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Republican Conference will generally be opposed to this budget bill; however, any member who wishes to do -- vote in the affirmative may do so at their desk.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will generally be in the affirmative and anybody that would like to vote no, they may do so at their desks.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Pirozzolo to explain his vote.

MR. PIROZZOLO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So as I said before and -- and the members have mentioned, we're talking about $260 billion. That's $100 billion more than ten years ago. The Governor likes to say we're open for business and I have to agree. We're open in the business of keeping your children undereducated, we're in the business of keeping people homeless, we're in the business of keeping people unaccountable for their crimes and their actions, we're in everything that's a bad business, Madam Speaker. I'm not trying to say that there's nothing good out of this budget because there has to be, everything can't be all bad. But to pretend that this is all good and we have the socialist members here standing up and they're very gleeful at how we're going after people's money and their fair share and, you know, no one has any idea. It's all happy and -- and fun. We're gonna get the rest of your money, too, in the future.

People really need to wake up in New York State and they have to understand that, you know, as I said before, you can't blame President Trump for everything and if you want change you're the only thing that can make it changes [sic]. You have to change the way you vote.

Thank you. I'm voting no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pirozzolo in the negative.

Mr. Lavine to explain his vote.

MR. LAVINE: If we've seen anything today, we've

seen that politics can make strange allies. The rugged individualists who have prospered by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps are voting no at the same time the utopian socialists are voting no.

I simply represent communities that are middle class and struggling at a time when consumer confidence in our nation is at an all time low. I am proud that New York with all its described faults is a place that I love, I want to live nowhere else and that we remain the land of upward mobility.

So I want to simply say that we have provided as best we can for education and healthcare and that's important to my communities and I am happy to remain at the pragmatic center at a time when the pragmatic center realizes all too well that our nation faces daunting and unparalleled and unprecedented challenges. The center must hold.

I'm pleased to vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Lavine in the affirmative.

And before anybody else clicks and puts their light on, when you speak on the bill and/or explain your vote, you should be speaking for yourself, not referencing other members, not referencing what other members are voting, what they're doing. This is your explanation of the vote, this is your speaking on the bill. We're not talking about national politics and we are not speaking about how each other are voting. We will be shutting that down. So speak on your own behalf, please.

Ms. Tapia to explain her vote.

MS. TAPIA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I support this budget bill because it advances some strong progressive priorities at a time when New Yorkers are still struggling with affordability, housing costs, childcare costs and economic uncertanigy [sic]. This bill continues our effort to expand the Child and Dependent Care Credit, provides a one-time power credit to help households with utility cost, supports food insecurity, (indiscernible) farm to farm pantry and student's meal provisions and expand protections for seniors and people with disability [sic] to SCRIE and DRIE.

I also want to highlight the amazing achievement we have made together by pushing for a second home surcharge for high-value nonprimary residents in New York City at a time when all united renters and homeowners are being squeezed, it is fair to ask the owners of luxury second homes worth more than $5 million to contribute more. That is common sense and it belongs in this budget. The Governor has said this could raise at least 500 million annually, through [sic] the Comptroller has raised questions about whether the final number might be lower, which is exactly why implementation and transparency will matter. There are more revenue raisers we -- we must continue to explore. Thankfully, we're continuing to preserve revenue by extending the higher corporate tax rate and larger corporations with more than 5 million in income because there is not reason why we should be giving large corporations a quiet tax cut --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you, Ms.

Tapia. How do you vote?

MS. TAPIA: -- are struggling --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: How do you vote?

MS. TAPIA: I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Tapia in the affirmative.

Mr. Chang to explain his vote.

MR. CHANG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As each bills present to each of our colleagues never is perfect. No bills are perfect that satisfy us all. Even for me, I look at a balance, what's good and what's bad and I always think about what's my constituents was best benefit for this bill, and there are many in this bill and there many are not. The one I want to highlight is why this bill good is for the Medicaid to -- to pay for our medical health professions, make sure the hospitals and doctor's offices are -- stay afloat. That's very important. And a few other tax deductions and childcare credits involved. So I looked at it as a positive.

So overall, I look at this bill, I will support this bill as a positive.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Chang in the affirmative.

Mr. McDonald to explain his vote.

(Pause)

MR. MCDONALD: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Sorry about that. I just want to say that I am supporting this legislation. There are a lot of great attributes to this and yes, always there's some things we may not care for, a lot of them actually don't apply to the areas I represent. But what I want to speak about specifically is our support for Upstate cities, both small and large. They are struggling. They're struggling for a variety of different reasons. Although they're forewarned about the ARPA funding going away, sometimes it's difficult to slide away from some of those programs because they're not only well-intentioned, but they're effective. Same token, what we're doing is recognizing that these legacy cities is what built this State and we need to continue to provide them the support. They're under a lot of pressure because the market for employees has gotten much more challenging which is causing upward pressure, healthcare premiums at the local government level continue to rise. So I know it's, you know, cliché to say this, but we need to continue to work on helping to support our Upstate cities. We need to find out what we can do to continue to make them sustainable.

I want to thank the Speaker for his leadership in making sure that we're delivering for these cities, particularly in Upstate New York. And by the way, that funds, helps minimize future tax increases. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. McDonald in the affirmative.

Ms. Glick to explain her vote.

MS. GLICK: Thank you, Ms. Speaker, to explain my vote.

As we've discussed how New Yorkers -- New York continues to fund essential services like schools, higher education, nursing homes, hospitals and to provide some relief to utility ratepayers. It's not really out of line to talk about how the cuts from the federal government have added pressure to our State and that our State to some extent has been targeted as some others have on a part -- a pas -- a political partisan basis while we see those people who have been aligned with the federal administration doing quite well. Now I don't -- I don't seek to villainize successful people. I think that's great. But facts demonstrate that extremely wealthy people have been -- continue to benefit from extraordinary tax cuts that force middle class Americans and New Yorkers to shoulder the burden. So I actually think, almost in a religious way, that greed should be villainized.

Now, a famous New Yorker said, "the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." And the former Governor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had it right and was a president who sought to balance the needs of people who were hard working people, middle-class people and was called a traitor to his class because of it.

So I -- I -- I will be voting for this even though I think we need to do more and I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Glick in the affirmative.

Ms. Levenberg to explain her vote.

MS. LEVENBERG: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote. We finally voted on the State's revenue bill today, almost two full months after the deadline, and once again there was some good, though it does not go far enough, in my opinion. We did get the utility rebates included, which will return a bit of the money we have all been spending on energy. We've extended and continued some necessary tax credits, including the phasing-in of increases to our child tax credit. We also made some changes that will make it easier for residents to apply for and receive Enhanced STAR rebates, which I know is very important to my constituents. But we could have and should have done much more to raise taxes on the ultra-wealthy New Yorkers, who are, as we have heard multiple times, collectively receiving a $12 billion windfall from the federal government. That windfall is being paid for by SNAP cuts, healthcare cuts and other new holes in our social safety net. New Yorkers deserve better than this. We could have gone so much further to make the State more affordable; child care, healthcare and so much more. It's unfortunate because both Assembly and Senate Majorities agreed on sensible, modest increases to the personal income tax for people earning over 5 million annually, and the corporate tax rate for highly-profitable companies doing business in New York, regardless of where they are headquartered.

I'm voting yes because there is good in this bill that

must go forward. I'm going to keep fighting alongside my colleagues to ensure that the wealthy finally pay their fair share and we win a more affordable New York. Thank you. I vote yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Levenberg in the affirmative.

Mr. Eachus to explain his vote.

MR. EACHUS: Thank you, Madam Chair, to explain my vote. If for no other reason, I would have voted yes on this because of Part EE. In Part EE, what we've done is we've corrected a law that we had passed last year which actually didn't allow any veterans to really qualify. And today I want to thank the Speaker, I want to thank Chairman Stern and the Veterans' Committee [sic] for taking this into serious consideration.

Part EE. It states that a county, a city, a town, a village or a school district may adopt a local law in -- or resolution that will allow the primary residence of any seriously-disabled veteran to be fully exempt from taxation and special district charges, assessments and special ad valorem levies. The -- the qualification for this is that a veteran be 100 percent disabled. And let me tell you, if a veteran is 100 percent disabled, we should be doing everything in our power to give back to that veteran and to their family.

And so again, I want to thank them very much, and I want to indicate that I am definitely voting in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Eachus in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Ms. Walsh for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. WALSH: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So we have a very special guest joining us today who some may remember. To my left is Tom McKevitt, who is currently the Nassau County Deputy Presiding Officer, Legislator for the 13th District. But we all remember Tom from his time serving in the Assembly from 2006 to 2017. He was in my chair as Floor Leader. And Mr. Mikulin, who is not here today, is the person who is attempting to fill Mr. McKevitt's shoes. But Tom was absolutely just one of the most brilliant Floor Leaders; was always really on top of his game, very meticulous. Very energetic and very happy to serve and he was very much missed when he -- when he left us. I'm so glad to have him back today.

So, Madam Speaker, would you please extend to him a warm welcome and a welcome back to the -- to the People's House. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Yes, of course.

On behalf of Ms. Walsh, the Speaker and all members, welcome back, Mr. McKevitt. It's wonderful to see you. Once a member, always a member. We know that. Extending to you the privileges of the floor. And it is very, very good to see you. That smile you have is what I remembered when I first started and you

were the -- the Floor Leader. So it's wonderful to have you back. Congratulations on all the good works that you've been doing in the community. Don't be a stranger, it doesn't seem like you come back very often so it's very wonderful to see you here today. Thank you for joining us today.

(Applause)

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We're going to continue our floor work with Rules Report No. 214 on page 3, followed by Rules Report No. 215, also on page 3.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Page 3, Rules Report No. 214, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10003-D, Rules Report No. 214, Budget Bill. An act making appropriations for the support of government. (AID TO LOCALITIES BUDGET).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Governor's Message is at the desk. The Clerk will read.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, Madam Speaker. I have a longer explanation for us today.

After many weeks of hard work and nearly as many extenders, today we are concluding the process of adopting a budget for the State fiscal year '26-'27. The input of our members has guided

the discussions that have led to this legislation. I would like to extend my gratitude to the many individuals who have helped us get to this point. On behalf of the Speaker and myself, I thank you for your consideration and contributions throughout the process.

The enacted budget is expected to authorize approximately $268.1 billion in spending, which is 5.4 billion over the Executive's proposal. This legislation includes a package of revenue proposals that will generate a total of $1.6 billion in the State fiscal year '26-'27, and $1.9 billion in '27-'28. The package also includes $1 billion for utility rebate checks. It is an important step forward and to provide the people that we all represent some relief in an otherwise turbulent economic climate.

Some of the major tax provisions contained in the overall budget framework include the elimination of income taxes on tip wages; authorizing the City of New York to impose a surcharge on property that does not serve as a primary residence; providing a property tax exemption for certain disabled veterans; and enhancing tax credits for donated food by pantries and farmers.

Through these proposals, the Legislature demonstrates our continued commitment to assisting working families. This budget provides $39 billion in general support for public schools, an increase of $1.7 billion over the prior fiscal year. It includes changes to improve the Foundation Aid formula, updating metrics as well as guaranteeing a minimum 2 percent annual increase for all school districts.

The budget also includes $1.6 billion to implement Universal Pre-K Statewide and -- by the '28-'29 school fiscal year. The budget expands free tuition at SUNY and CUNY schools for individuals pursuing associate's degrees in high-demand fields to include those studying at four-year institutions, and increases opportunities for those seeking a nursing degree. Additionally, operating and capital investments are also included for public colleges and universities.

In healthcare, the budget invests $2.2 billion in support from the Healthcare Stability Fund, including increased rates for hospital and nursing homes, and increased federal funds for federally-qualified health clinics. The budget provides $1.3 billion in multi-year support for the Safety Net Hospital Transformation Program, and added $500 million for distressed and safety net hospitals.

This budget continues funding of the $34.5 billion for the DOT five-year Capital Plan, as well as increases of $50 million for local roads and $30 million for Upstate transit.

In addition, the budget allocates a new $1 billion in funding for climate mitigation capital projects, including investments to school districts, residential buildings and municipals -- municipalities in transforming to clean energy. The enacted budget will include $25 million of increases to the Environmental Protection Fund over the prior year, and an additional $25 million, for a total of 2 -- $525 million for clean water infrastructure.

In order to keep up with increasing enrollment in the State's child care program, this budget includes $3 billion for child care subsidies, an increase of $830 million over fiscal year '25-'26.

The enacted budget makes meaningful changes for public employees who are Tier 6 members, investing $146.3 million to support State costs associated with improving pension benefits.

And finally, we're recognizing the importance of ensuring wages for human service workers continuing to rise, including $279.5 million to provide a 2.7 percent inflationary salary increase.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will conclude my remarks, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, Madam Speaker. Will the Chairman yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will -- Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: I will yield for any questions, but I believe my --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. PRETLOW: -- my remarks would answer every question that he could possibly have.

MR. PALMESANO: You were -- you were -- you were certainly very thorough, Mr. Pretlow. I will give you that. But I do have a few extra questions here for you.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Actually, one quick question for you. Where -- where -- where are we -- where -- where's your assessment where we are in this game now? What inning? We're getting there. I know we're getting there.

MR. PRETLOW: We're in the fifth inning.

MR. PALMESANO: Fifth inning. Okay. Just curious.

MR. PRETLOW: Four innings to go.

MR. PALMESANO: The metal's coming together?

MR. PRETLOW: Metal's coming together, batteries are charged up. We're in good shape.

MR. PALMESANO: Good.

MR. PRETLOW: I shouldn't mention batteries, I'm sorry.

MR. PALMESANO: That's all right. Yeah, you don't --

MR. PRETLOW: I don't wanna to get you on a --

MR. PALMESANO: You don't wanna get me going.

(Laughter)

Good -- good point.

Actually, what I would like to get going on here is I know we finally have the financial plan.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: So I'd like to talk by going over

some of those numbers, if we could.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay.

MR. PALMESANO: First, how much does the enacted budget spend on an All-Funds basis?

MR. PRETLOW: All-Funds is $268.1 billion, which is 5.5 billion or 2 percent over the Executive's proposal.

MR. PALMESANO: And that --

MR. PRETLOW: 9.2 billion over last year.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: 3.5 percent.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

How about for State operating funds?

MR. PRETLOW: State operating funds, the estimate is $161.5 billion, which is an increase of 2.6 billion or 1.7 percent over the Executive's estimate, and $12.7 billion or 8.6 percent over State fiscal year '25-'26.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Is it possible for you to give us kind of a breakdown of how this additional spending will be allocated?

MR. PRETLOW: I guess I can. $2.4 billion in Medicaid and Health. $1 billion in Social Services. $543 million for local government assistance. $469 million for education. $300 million for capital projects. $205 million in general public protection. $184 million for higher education. $127 million in general State charges. $52 million for housing. $47 million for economic

development. $13 million for the environment. $10 million for transportation. And $10 million for mental hygiene.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow.

How about our out-year budget gaps for '26-'27?

MR. PRETLOW: For '26-'27, we have a balanced budget for '26-'27.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. And in '27-'28, '28-'29, '29-'30?

MR. PRETLOW: Give me a second.

(Pause)

Cumulative is $30 billion. 2.4 percent above the -- the Executive.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

I'd like to talk about Reserve Funds now. Our Conference has always advocated for making deposits into our Reserves Funds for the purpose of helping the State in true economic downturn. Does this budget include any increase in our reserves?

MR. PRETLOW: No, it doesn't.

MR. PALMESANO: How much --

MR. PRETLOW: The current -- well, you want to know -- the current Rainy Day Reserve is $8.138 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. How about the economic uncertainties total fund?

MR. PRETLOW: 4.2 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: And the tax stabilization total?

MR. PRETLOW: 1.618 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Thank you.

The Governor has also -- has consistently highlighted her success in bolstering the State's reserves to unprecedented levels, providing a strong safeguard against unforeseen economic downturns, or so-called "rainy days." With significantly lower reserves than previous years, is the State maintaining the 15 percent reserve level?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: How will the State respond to a potential economic downturn if the reserve levels drop below 15 percent?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, we don't expect that to happen, but we will handle it --

MR. PALMESANO: I -- I'm sure.

MR. PRETLOW: -- as the need arises.

MR. PALMESANO: Are reserve funds being used to help with additional spending needs in this budget?

MR. PRETLOW: For the current fiscal year, yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Anything from that you can break down specifically, how that's being used?

MR. PRETLOW: I think we used, like, two-and-a-half billion dollars for -- two-and-a-half billion dollars for our fund balance for this year.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Has there been any

discussions about making econ -- the Economic Uncertainties Fund a statutory reserve fund that has a specific use and payback provisions instead of a cash fund that can be used for any purpose?

MR. PRETLOW: That's not being contemplated.

MR. PALMESANO: All right.

I want to talk about debt now, if I could. When passing the Debt Service Bill the numbers were still in flux. Do we have an updated debt outstanding number for fiscal year '27?

MR. PRETLOW: You said for fiscal year '26-'27?

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, please.

(Pause)

MR. PRETLOW: 71.8 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: And it's State-supported.

MR. PALMESANO: How does that compare to the Governor's number and compared to last year?

MR. PRETLOW: Last year it was 61.6 billion. And we are projecting for fiscal year '27 71.8 billion, going up in fiscal year '28 to 80.8 billion, and fiscal year '29, 89.5 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. The (indiscernible) financing measure was put into law to address cash flow needs during COVID-19. Why do we continue to extend this authorization when the State's receipts are coming in higher than forecasted and we continue to increase spending each year?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. We're still handling some

of the State obligations that have been around since COVID.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

Now, the State will come close to breaching the statutory debt cap in fiscal year '31 with only about $832 million left under the cap. Are there any measures within this budget that would reduce the State's overall debt burden?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe it just pre-payments.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

For this bill, how much does this bill -- before we get into some more details, how much does this bill appropriate?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the total appropriation for the Aid to Localities --

(Pause)

$242.3 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And is there a fiscal impact or actual amount to be spent?

MR. PRETLOW: The All-Funds is 208.2 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. So for programs funded within -- within this bill, particularly discretionary or newly-established ones, are they subject to performance audits by the State Comptroller to measure actual outcomes, or do they solely undergo basic internal agency financial compliance reviews?

MR. PRETLOW: The latter.

(Pause)

MR. PALMESANO: I didn't hear -- I didn't hear

what you said. I thought you were waiting.

MR. PRETLOW: No, the latter.

MR. PALMESANO: I didn't hear what you said. What?

MR. PRETLOW: The latter.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Gotcha. Sorry, thank you.

So -- so to ensure that taxpayer dollars are achieving their intended outcomes, can you commit to sharing all the internal evaluation reports, statutory compliance data --

MR. PRETLOW: I don't have access to all of that.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. That's fine. I just wanted to ask.

I would definitely like to talk about education for a moment, if I may. Based on the enacted budget data, 64 districts across the State will see a decrease in their UPK aid because of changes we are making to the UPK program. Can you explain in simple terms why these districts are seeing a cut?

MR. PRETLOW: I -- I don't believe that is accurate, sir.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. When the Executive Budget was released --

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. The -- the data is -- is -- the way the report -- the way it's reported is being changed. The data hasn't changed. They're not getting any less money.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Because I guess, you know, from we're looking at our numbers, you know, how -- you know, we're worried about how the districts are supposed to move towards mandated -- mandated Universal Pre-K in two years if their UPK allocation is not up to -- up to where it should be. Okay.

When the Executive Budget was released, we were told that the UPK changes would generate an additional $130 million in claims for reimbursement through the UPK aid that was not reflected on the school aid runs. Has that estimated change -- has that estimate changed as we receive feedback from districts during budget cycle about their ability to scale up their programs?

MR. PRETLOW: That hasn't changed.

MR. PALMESANO: No? Okay. I just want to ask about prior -- prior year aid claims. We know that's always an issue at a time when districts are struggling to find new revenue and taxpayers are already paying some of the highest property taxes in the nation. What's the justification for not providing even modest appropriations to take care of some of these backlogs?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I don't think we have the -- the funds for that.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: We had it on our one-House. I wasn't -- it didn't make the final cut.

MR. PALMESANO: All right.

I want to talk about the energy affordability guarantee

real quick. In here I know it says it's for those individuals who electrify their homes through the NYSERDA EmPower Program, they do not spend more than 6 percent of their income on electric bills. How is this quantified? How does this determine to make sure that they know that it's only 6 percent of their income, and if they don't -- if they meet that 6 percent -- exceed that 6 percent threshold, what happens?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. It's being used -- it's being calculated based on income tiers, similar to how tiers on your income tax forms are.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Also, I know that the budget provides $33 million in new funding to provide participating utility customers, including their service -- service territory on the Long Island Power Authority, a $25 per month credit on their utility bills utilizing eligibility criteria to be established by the Department of Public Service. Can you provide any details concerning eligibility thresholds for this funding?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't have that available to me.

MR. PALMESANO: No? Okay.

I'm gonna -- I'd like to pivot to some funding relative to migrants and the Office of New Americans. Obviously, we know the -- the migrant crisis that we had going on in the City and the funding concerns, can you provide an update on how much the State has spent overall the last few years on the migrant crisis in New York

City? How much the State has spent?

MR. PRETLOW: Approximately 2 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: How much will the State spend --

MR. PRETLOW: We have reimbursed New York City for about, what, 2 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: So 2 billion?

MR. PRETLOW: 2 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: And how much will the State spend this fiscal year?

MR. PRETLOW: There's nothing in the current appropriations.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. So just the 2 billion we've given them?

MR. PRETLOW: From last year, yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Now, has the new mayoral administration been seeking reimbursements to help with the migrant costs?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the monies that we were referring to earlier were -- by law, New York City was responsible for providing housing and that money was used to pay for housing for them.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

I had one question I wanted to ask you on Raise the Age, if I may. Does this budget remove -- remove any barriers

preventing counties outside of New York City from receiving Raise the Age funds?

MR. PRETLOW: We didn't change anything there.

MR. PALMESANO: Does it address counties' concerns that without upfront funding they may struggle to implement Raise the Age and cannot wait to be reimbursed by the State for such spending?

MR. PRETLOW: No, the reimbursement methodology has not been changed.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I know, but the problem still exists. Are there any changes allowing counties to access Raise the Age-related program funding before they spend their own county funds?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. PALMESANO: No? Okay.

I'd like to go to local government assistance a little bit here. I know there's -- how much is in here for -- we have AIM funding and then we also have the Temporary Municipal Assistance funding.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: How much is in the Temporary Municipal Assistance funding?

MR. PRETLOW: 150 million.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And I know we had the question about taxes, these temporary taxes. Will this mean this is

gonna be temporary permanent assistance or no?

MR. PRETLOW: It's -- hopefully.

MR. PALMESANO: Hopefully?

MR. PRETLOW: Hopefully.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. Is there any way that the, you know, you know, given -- are we -- is the Majority Conference that we're gonna be giving enough to help those many municipalities to stop so they don't have to increase local taxes, disrupt their budgets with the assistance we're giving them?

MR. PRETLOW: That is the aim.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: No pun intended.

MR. PALMESANO: Relative to New York City aid. I know they're -- we know they're getting a lot of assistance from the State throughout this budget. But in this bill we have a clear picture of cash (indiscernible) to the City. The 500 million to help close the budget gap. A refund of $150 million in intercepted sales tax revenue. 45 million to offset certain public health costs that are shifted to the City. And we know that the State and the City have no problems generating revenue, but the forecast consistently underestimate actual results. And I know that this language here requires attestation from the City that the aid will be used to help close their budget gap and avoid further burdening of City taxpayers. Shouldn't this assistance, this extra assistance, this bailout, however we want to refer to it, come with more contingencies, though, to ensure that the recipient of these

funds take the steps to mitigate the need for future assistance?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. There's -- there's oversight involved.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And do we foresee that we're gonna need to continue this level of assistance for the City in the future?

MR. PRETLOW: Hopefully not.

MR. PALMESANO: I know -- I also noticed that there's -- in this budget also has other cities around the State are getting some extra assistance, bailout assistance for their budgets; like, including Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Mount Vernon and Yonkers. This aid all comes with the same language imposed on New York that would require an attestation that the aid has helped close the budget gaps. Any idea why so many cities around the State are struggling to maintain their budgets?

MR. PRETLOW: Just the general cost of living, fringe benefits on municipal payrolls. There a lot of things that cause cities to -- the -- the inability to collect proper property taxes, the need to revalue -- you know, to reval property, housing. There are many issues that are causing several of the cities in our State to be on the brink of fiscal disaster.

MR. PALMESANO: And -- and certainly they're dealing with rising utility costs like families, businesses as well. And certainly they're gonna be dealing with rising pension costs because of

the, you know, some of the enhancements that were passed, too, right? So they're gonna have to deal with that. Given that -- and I know I asked about New York City. You don't see this as a recurring issue we're gonna have to continue to provide extra assistance to these other municipalities, are you?

MR. PRETLOW: I -- I don't foresee anything, but I -- it wouldn't surprise me.

MR. PALMESANO: I know many local gov --

MR. PRETLOW: At least in the short-term.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I know many local governments across the State are managing these inflationary pressures; you know, stagnant AIM funding. Obviously we've got the temporary assistance, growing service demands. Is there -- isn't there a more holistic approach we could take to relieve these burdens, such as working to make the State more competitive to attract business, to bring businesses to these communities so we can increase their tax base? Wouldn't that be a good approach to help deal with these fiscal crises that are going on?

MR. PRETLOW: It may be.

MR. PALMESANO: I'm sorry?

MR. PRETLOW: It may be.

MR. PALMESANO: It may be. All right.

I have a question I want to ask. There's a program of grant to counties on emergency response equipment and vehicles. There's $50 million provided for grants to counties for emergency

service equipment. Does this program differ -- or how does this program differ from the Volunteer Fire Infrastructure and Equipment Grant Program?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. I think you're referring to -- to what's available only to volunteer fire departments, and this new funding can be allocated for any municipal -- municipally-used vehicles.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

I know I -- there's a question I wanted to ask you on -- on agriculture for tariff relief. I know the enacted budget includes $30 million in local assistance funding for relief from federal tariffs on agricultural products. How do we envision this $30 million tariff relief getting into the hands of our farmers who need it, and what safeguards are gonna be in place to prevent fraud, waste and abuse?

MR. PRETLOW: I think that'll be administered through Ag and Markets.

MR. PALMESANO: Let Ag and Markets --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: -- handle the administration?

MR. PRETLOW: And I'm pretty sure that any farmer that's entitled to it will know how to get it.

MR. PALMESANO. Okay.

I have one housing question, the Housing Access Voucher Program. The budget provides another $50 million for the

Housing Access Voucher Pilot Program. How has the rollout of this program gone since March 1st?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, like you just stated there's 50 million in there now and nothing new has been allocated.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. Has there been any issues in administering the vouchers?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I think we're expecting a report this coming November to see how the program is working and if it needs to be tweeted [sic].

MR. PALMESANO: Do voucher recipients need to be State residents at the time of their application?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. PALMESANO: How long does it take for recipients to receive their voucher after applying?

MR. PRETLOW: That'll be determined in the report.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

I want to go back that I -- I didn't get to before, a little bit on the preamble language at the beginning. The preamble language within this bill once again authorizes the Division -- Director of Budget to withhold payments in the event of a structural imbalance. What -- what payments are exempt from this withholding authority?

MR. PRETLOW: They'd be the same as last year.

MR. PALMESANO: Same as last year. And what happens if there's a structural bal -- imbalance of less than $2 billion?

MR. PRETLOW: If it's less than 2 billion, I think we

will -- would just continue on -- on our -- on the path. If it's more, then we have to take corrective actions.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I know past budget bills use a different mechanism to identify a structural imbalance during a given measurement period. Why wasn't that measurement used here?

MR. PRETLOW: This is the same as last year.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. All right. Let me just check here.

(Pause)

You know, Mr. Pretlow, thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

I'm gonna go on the bill now, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Madam Speaker and my colleagues, certainly when we're spending more than a quarter-of-a-trillion dollars, there's going to be good things in here. I'm glad we finally got a chance to talk about the financial plan and walk through that. I appreciate the Chairman's time. You know, some things that are in this budget -- in this bill that are good is, obviously, education increase -- aid increased. You know, we wanted -- the -- the Governor proposed 1 percent, we wanted to at least get back to that 2 percent base and we were able to do that. Obviously, to see an increase in library funding is a good thing. To see this -- the temporary assistance, municipal assistance for local municipalities. Hopefully the word assist -- "temporary" in this case means it becomes

permanent like it seems like the tax increases -- temporary tax increases have -- have been.

I was very glad -- I didn't get a chance to answer -- to ask a question, but I was very glad to see the appropriation for Donate Life. That's a very important issue for myself, a lot of people in this House.

But my concerns are much more broader [sic]. Again, when you're talking about a quarter-of-a-trillion-dollar budget, think about it; that's 60 billion more than when the Governor took office. That's nearly 100 billion more than when one-party control took over Albany Chambers and the governorship. Again, I will remind you. We do not have a revenue problem in this State, we have a spending problem. But what do we do? We continue to increase spending. We continue to increase debt. We continue to grow and increase out -- out-year budget gaps. We continue to have more taxes, more extensions of temporary taxes. Not adopting tax relief that would help encourage private sector investment and job creation. We should be looking to reduce taxes, regulations and spending. Let's really get at the heart of these rising energy costs. You know, property taxes are burdensome. We need to be fiscally responsible. That's what the people want us to do. That's what the people need us to do. We need to encourage private sector investment in job growth and job creation. This will help turn our economy around here. This will help businesses come here. This will help businesses stay here. This will help families stay here versus continuing our nation-leading

outmigration of more families, farmers, small businesses, manufacturers leaving the State.

This fiscal path we are on, this spending path we are on is not sustainable. It's certainly not feasible. It's certainly not wise or smart. We have to do better. We must do better for those individuals, families, seniors, veterans, disabled, businesses that we serve. Listen, our families and businesses are making difficult decisions each and every day. They don't spend their way out of a problem, they make tough choices. They cut their budgets. They pay down their debt. We don't do that. We just keep spending. We just keep taxing. We keep just putting more burdensome and costly regulations on families and on businesses. We just keep increasing our debt. Why? I think the answer is I think sometimes -- and I've said this in this Chamber -- I think -- to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I think sometimes you think this is your money and forget it's the people's money. It's sad and it's wrong.

For these reasons and many other reasons, I'm gonna be voting in the negative on this bill, although I'm happy with some of the things that are in here. But the bigger structural problem where we're heading with this overall budget, a budget of more -- again, a quarter-of-a-trillion dollars. I mean, that's a very large budget.

So for that reason and not having more controls on spending and not making the proper decisions, I'm gonna be voting in the negative and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Chairman yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I get into health questions, I do have one education question. I'll give time for the line change. Correct me if I'm incorrect. Is there $100 million being allocated in this budget appropriation for three-year-old UPK in New York City?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe there's a line item for that.

MR. JENSEN: There's no line item for 100 million appropriation to fund the three-year-old UPK in the City of New York?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, there is funding available if they increase the number of seats that are already provided.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. So that's -- so if there are more seats that are increased in New York City --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: -- there is a subsequent appropriation based on the formula -- formulated change to help New York City

schools (indiscernible) --

MR. PRETLOW: No, that's all part of their Foundation Aid.

MR. JENSEN: Foundation Aid? Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: There's not a separate line item for that.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Fair enough. So we're doing that for New York City. But there are 73 school districts across the State that offer -- also offer three-year-old UPK. Do those school districts have the equivalent increase to their Foundation Aid to help cover the costs for any new enrollments they face?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: Why?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I -- I believe they're getting the flat $10,000 per student for all of their young people.

MR. JENSEN: So they're getting 10,000. How much would it be --

MR. PRETLOW: For -- for four-year-olds, yeah.

MR. JENSEN: Well, but 73- offered for three-year-olds. So New York City gets it but the rest of New York State doesn't?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Nice for New York City and not nice for the rest of us Upstate.

As we noted -- now shifting to health. As we noted

throughout the budget process and earlier today, I know that a lot of the specific details surrounding the Medicaid funding aren't directly in Article VII language or appropriation language. Before we took up this bill, was there a financial plan published or an available public Medicaid Scorecard?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe it's been public.

MR. JENSEN: Not public?

MR. PRETLOW: No, not yet.

MR. JENSEN: On -- on double-secret probation?

In the Executive Budget proposal's Medicaid Scorecard, it was included approximately 1.9 billion in financial plan resources for the Medicaid Global Cap due to anticipated changes with the Essential Plan. However, since the -- the Executive Budget we have had the (indiscernible) we talked about earlier approved, making that portion of the financial plan unnecessary. Do we know what is the total amount of the financial plan resources being used in this budget to offset the Medicaid Global Cap?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe it's zero.

MR. JENSEN: Zero? Terrific. And without the Medicaid Scorecard being publicly available yet --

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I believe it's been given to you already.

MR. JENSEN: Well, yeah. But -- but --

MR. PRETLOW: It's not -- it's not public, but you have it.

MR. JENSEN: Well, but for the -- for the seven people watching --

MR. PRETLOW: You're special, Mr. Jensen. You have it.

MR. JENSEN: You're -- you're a very sweet boy, Mr. Pretlow.

Could you walk us through some of the specific funding that we would see based in Medicaid for a couple of different items? First of all, the reallocation for nursing home VAPAP funding.

MR. PRETLOW: You're referring to the $20 million?

MR. JENSEN: Yes.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. That was used for pay for capital rehabilitation.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. So that was -- we reallocated that to the tune of 20 million?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. For the health home qualifying conditions reform.

MR. PRETLOW: Pardon? Say that again, please. I'm sorry.

MR. JENSEN: The -- I'm sorry, I was speaking not directly into my microphone. Health home qualifying conditions reform.

MR. PRETLOW: We restored that.

MR. JENSEN: To 5 million?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe so.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

How about aligning personal care fee for service administrative reimbursement at 15 percent?

MR. PRETLOW: I mean, we are experiencing a seven-and-a-half million dollar savings there.

MR. JENSEN: Seven-and-a-half million. Okay. Thank you.

In the Health and Mental Hygiene budget there was an amending of the Governor's proposed changes to biomarker coverage, which was a proposed savings of $50 million.

MR. PRETLOW: Yeah.

MR. JENSEN: Is there a new fiscal attached with the proposal due to the amendments?

MR. PRETLOW: No, there isn't.

MR. JENSEN: There's not?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

Moving to the MCO tax. HMH legislation we took up earlier lined out approximately $1.3 billion in Health Stability Fund investments. I know we talked about it a little bit earlier, but for those seven people watching I just want to get into it again. Is this the full amount of revenue that we received -- that was received under the previous MCO tax extension?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: No? What's the difference?

(Pause)

MR. PRETLOW: It's about $1 billion of additional spending.

MR. JENSEN: 1 billion in additional.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Also in HMH that we took up earlier we authorized a new MCO and HCRA tax framework. Could you provide the amount the State projects to receive under this new tax for fiscal years '27 and '28?

MR. PRETLOW: That's about $165 million.

MR. JENSEN: In which fiscal year?

MR. PRETLOW: '27.

MR. JENSEN: '27. What would it be for '28?

MR. PRETLOW: '27-'28.

MR. JENSEN: Combined, or both years?

MR. PRETLOW: It's the whole fiscal year. It's one year.

MR. JENSEN: Yes, but then we have one fiscal year and then another fiscal year.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, you had asked for '26-'27.

MR. JENSEN: No, I asked for '27 and then '28.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. For '27-'28 fiscal year it is $165 million.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: And there's nothing in '26-'27.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Moving -- would there -- is there any overlap between the previous MCO tax arrangement and the one we approved a few hours ago?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: No? Okay.

Moving to the Essential Plan. We're no longer receiving the funding for the Aliessa population enrollees under the Essential Plan. Could you provide a projection of federal revenue compared to the expenses for the Essential Plan moving forward?

(Pause)

MR. PRETLOW: Are you referring to tax credits that we've received?

MR. JENSEN: The revenue versus the expenses.

MR. PRETLOW: I don't have that information, sir.

MR. JENSEN: Would that be something that we would see on the financial plan or the Medicaid Scorecard once it is public?

MR. PRETLOW: More than likely the Financial Plan when -- when it's publicized.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And I know we brought this up that earlier today that I believe it was mentioned that there is $9 billion in the Essential Plan Trust Fund?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: How much do we anticipate after this fiscal year will remain in the Trust Fund?

(Pause)

MR. PRETLOW: About 6 billion.

MR. JENSEN: So 3 -- we're -- we're --

MR. PRETLOW: We're drawing down around 3 -- 3 billion a year.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And we -- we anticipate it to be consistent over the next few outyears, the $3 billion --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And I know earlier today we talked about that there is a concern that the Plan could become insolvent as soon as 2032 and we're going to be looking in the future to address that. But do we have any idea that in the event that the Plan does become insolvent, do we know what -- what sort of resources from the General Fund would be required to continue providing coverage for the Essential Plan?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, 2032 is a long ways away. We haven't looked at it that closely at this point, but I'm pretty sure that arrangements will be made to ensure that its insolvency does not come to fruition.

MR. JENSEN: So we will cross that bridge as we approach it.

MR. PRETLOW: Well -- well, we're approaching it now. We're not gonna wait until we get there.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: But we do know that there's a situation in the future that we have to address.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. I know earlier my -- my colleague from Yorktown brought up the Medical Indemnity Fund, and this budget bill includes 155-and-a-half million dollars in funding for the Fund, which is a little over 55 million less than last year. Will this funding be adequate to ensure services for those currently receiving MIF services?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe so, yes.

MR. JENSEN: As well as prospective enrollees?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. And I know that the HMH budget bill extended the current rates and excluded the Governor's proposed benchmarking of rates to Medicaid and Medicare. Is there a possibility that funding issues for the MIF reoccur and that there could be a need for a new proposal to keep the MIF solvent this year or in future years?

MR. PRETLOW: Not -- not this year, but maybe in future years.

MR. JENSEN: In future years it could become another bridge we have to cross?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Good. Okay.

I know that our -- our Ranker on Ways and Means

was very passionate, along with a lot of members on -- on both sides of this House, for Donate Life. How much was included in this appropriation for Donate Life?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe it was about $1 million.

MR. JENSEN: $1 million. How does that compare to last year?

MR. PRETLOW: Same.

MR. JENSEN: Same? How much was included for spina bifida?

MR. PRETLOW: I think it was about 75,000.

MR. JENSEN: 75,000. Okay. Is there any funding for the Alliance for Safe Kids?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: Is there any appropriation to fix the long-term inequity of Early Intervention services across the State and clear backlogs?

MR. PRETLOW: There is no additional.

MR. JENSEN: No additional?

MR. PRETLOW: No, sir.

MR. JENSEN: And I know that in the Health Stability Fund we talked about earlier that there was some hospice funding. Is there any money directly appropriated to hospice care in this budget appropriation?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you very much, Mr.

Chairman. I appreciate your answers.

Madam Speaker, thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Molitor.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. So I wanted to ask you on this bill, this is one of our appropriation bills, where in this bill is there a funding for the new convertible pistol ban that will be in effect?

MR. PRETLOW: The Department of Criminal Justice [sic].

MR. MOLITOR: Sorry, what -- what --

MR. PRETLOW: DCJS.

MR. MOLITOR: What's the exact line item for that one?

MR. PRETLOW: Do you want me to go through the bill and find the line?

MR. MOLITOR: Well, I --

MR. PRETLOW: I'll take up your entire 15 minutes looking for that line.

MR. MOLITOR: I would like to know -- I would like to know what -- how much money this particular bill appropriates for the new convertible pistol exclusion.

MR. PRETLOW: It's $500,000, half-a-million dollars.

MR. MOLITOR: Where's -- where can I find that?

MR. PRETLOW: In the DCJS budget.

MR. MOLITOR: And -- and --

MR. PRETLOW: It's not -- there's not a separate line for it, but that's how much we're assuming will be utilized out of their General Fund balance.

MR. MOLITOR: So -- so $550,000 is gonna be allocated for what exactly?

MR. PRETLOW: For a task force.

MR. MOLITOR: A task force?

MR. PRETLOW: The creation of a task force, yes.

MR. MOLITOR: That's gonna do what?

MR. PRETLOW: To evaluate the technological aspects of the bill that we're passing.

MR. MOLITOR: Well, but the -- the bill that we've already passed adds a -- a new criminal penalty. So how does that have anything to do with this appropriation bill that we're passing?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. So the task force has to come up with a program to evaluate the feasibility of how we can

control or oversee 3D printers and the blocking technology that we think exists.

MR. MOLITOR: I -- I understand. I'm not talking about 3D printers. I'm talking about --

MR. PRETLOW: It's all part of the same program. We're trying to keep illegal guns off of the streets, and we're trying to keep ghost guns, 3D printed guns and -- and guns with other technologies that we think that we can utilize to keep criminals off the streets.

MR. MOLITOR: Well, but -- but the bill that we passed just a couple days ago, that creates a -- a new criminal penalty for someone that sells, transfers or possesses a gun that is currently legal but will not be legal as of May 31st of 2027.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, but that's not in this bill.

MR. MOLITOR: No. But what I'd like to know, and maybe your -- maybe you can answer it -- and maybe your answer is this, is there anything in this bill that appropriates money for that new criminal penalty?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Thank you.

Is there anything in this bill that supports the Local Cops, Local Crimes Act?

MR. PRETLOW: For this particular program you're referring to, or in general?

MR. MOLITOR: Anything in this appropriation bill

that we're discussing that supports --

MR. PRETLOW: Then no.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Is there anything in this appropriation bill that supports the -- the New York State Bivens Act?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Is there anything in this appropriation bill that supports restrictions on immigration enforcement by State employees and municipal governments?

MR. PRETLOW: That would be in the State Ops bill.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. But not this bill?

MR. PRETLOW: Not in this bill.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Is there anything in this bill that supports the prohibition of immigration enforcement in schools?

MR. PRETLOW: Not in -- not in this bill. That's State Ops, also.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Is there anything in this bill that supports the enforcement of sensitive location protections from immigrant -- immigration enforcement?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MOLITOR: Anything in this bill that supports the prohibition for law enforcement face coverings?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MOLITOR: And anything in this bill that supports the Office of Immigrant Trust?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow, for answering my questions.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Manktelow.

MR. MANKTELOW: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Chair yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. MANKTELOW: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. I'm sorry I had to get you back out of your chair so quick.

MR. PRETLOW: That's okay.

MR. MANKTELOW: I just want to go over a few numbers with the veterans' benefits --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: -- in this part of the budget. I just got a chance to look at this first thing this morning for the first time, and I just want to make sure I'm clear. You said $9.7 million that we have in the budget this year for veterans' benefits?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe that's the correct number.

MR. MANKTELOW: And is that an increase or decrease from last year?

(Conferring)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. If you're comparing

numbers, this year versus last year it looks as though there is a decrease but that's really not the case. But money was transferred to the Department of State to handle certain programs that were handled after the Department of Veterans' Services used to handle.

MR. MANKTELOW: Yes, I believe that was the 415,000 for the (indiscernible) index --

MR. PRETLOW: 525,000.

MR. MANKTELOW: 525-?

MR. PRETLOW: Right. It's for the Alex R. Jimenez Literacy -- Legacy Policy [sic], yeah.

MR. MANKTELOW: All right. Thank you.

So I kind of went through the numbers really quick myself, along with our Ways and Means staff, and it looks like it's about three-quarters-of-a-million dollars less from last year -- or from this year -- from last year to this year. Do you agree?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: All right. So I'm wondering, you know, year after year, Gary, we see the veterans budget come through, and year after year it's -- I'll always refer to it as the pawn on the chessboard. The Governor uses it to -- to negotiate. But why do you think the Governor constantly wants to either negotiate or gut these benefits for our veterans?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, she's really not doing that. She's just transferring some of the expenditures that were formerly made at the Division of Veterans' Services to the Department of State.

The overall -- the Legislature actually added money to the veterans' programs. The total amount that was shifted was $525,000 for the Alex J. Ramirez [sic] Immigrant Legacy program [sic], and $250,000 for the Military Family Relief Fund.

MR. MANKTELOW: Yes, I -- I did see that. And -- and there's a -- another one, too, as well. So let's talk a little bit about the -- the Military Relief Fund, Family Relief Fund [sic]. Why was it decreased from last year to this year?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. This is a -- a tax check-off, and doing it this way reflects better as to how much money is being allocated toward it.

MR. MANKTELOW: I'm sorry, I did not hear you.

MR. PRETLOW: It's a tax check-off, like on your income taxes. And doing it this way better reflects how much money the State is putting towards the programs.

MR. MANKTELOW: All right. Have -- have we ever took [sic] a look at how these families are getting that information?

MR. PRETLOW: I haven't, no.

MR. MANKTELOW: Has the State?

MR. PRETLOW: I would imagine they do, but not through the Legislature.

MR. MANKTELOW: All right. Who would you suggest I reached out to to find that information?

MR. PRETLOW: The Department of Veterans'

Services.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay.

Secondly, also, our Vietnam Veterans of America New York State Council, they were at 100,000 last year, now they're at zero this year. I was wondering why.

MR. PRETLOW: I believe that they're no longer operating the program.

MR. MANKTELOW: They are no longer operating --

MR. PRETLOW: They -- they backed away from it, yeah.

MR. MANKTELOW: So is that -- that's the case, they did back away?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, they called us and said we are no longer going to administer the program.

MR. MANKTELOW: All right. All right, Chair. Thank you for answering my questions.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. MANKTELOW: Just one last thought. Again, we constantly shift our -- the monies for our veterans. Our New York State Veterans' Department [sic] is probably one of the smallest-funded departments in New York State government. We constantly see that money getting cut or moved around. I just wonder why we do that. And as I look back to our -- our local districts back home, we

have the Veterans Outreach Center of Rochester and Monroe County, Madam Speaker, and they were at $350,000 last year. They're at $350,000 again in this budget. I'm thankful that they weren't cut, but I know with the amount of money that we've cut from our veterans' organizations, from our -- from this veterans budget, we could use that money to help fund the Veterans Outreach Center at a higher level. I know talking with the Director and many of her staff and many of the veterans that go there, men and women, they do so much for the veterans short-term and long-term. And again, with a budget that's increased so much, why are we not funding them a little more this year? We've ad -- advocated for that. We went through the budget process, but yet still it's a flat line stagnant number. And I hope next year when we get back to this budget that you all will take a hard look at what we do for our veterans and make sure we fund them at a proper level.

So thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to say a few words on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: On the bill.

MR. MANKTELOW: No, I already did that.

(Pause)

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Mr. Sempolinski.

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

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Will the

Chairman yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Yes.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Thank you. So, my questions regard the line item on Tribal State Compacts.

(Pause)

MR. PRETLOW: Could you repeat your question, please?

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Yeah. My -- my -- I haven't asked -- I just wanted to make sure you had the right staff on. So, Tribal State Compacts is the topic of the line of questioning. Are you ready to go?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay. So am I correct that the -- the payments in this line item this year, we're looking at $306 million?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: And that's 55 million more than the previous enacted budget?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, sir.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: All right. And am I also correct that the Seneca Gaming Compact expired over two years ago?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, it did.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: And am I also correct that the line item in question for the new year, for the year we're about to

intact, assumes, because of those numbers that I just cited, that it will be status quo for this coming fiscal year regarding the payments (indiscernible/crosstalk)?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't know what the state of the negotiations are right now with the Seneca Nation and the -- the Second Floor, the Executive.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: That's fair.

MR. PRETLOW: Hopefully they do come to some sort of an agreement before the next fiscal year.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: I -- I concur with you. Thank you for answering my questions.

I'm gonna go on the bill briefly.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: On the bill.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Yeah, so this is something that very disproportionately affects my district. I represent the vast majority of the Seneca Nation. And the fact that we've been more than two years in extensions on the Compact I think is indicative that the Executive is not negotiating in good faith on this. I would hope that we -- I concur with the Chairman that I hope this comes to some sort of resolution far sooner rather than later. This is a major portion of the economy in my district. And the Senecas certainly employ a lot of people who are Senecas, but they employ thousands of people that are not Senecas. And so they're an intrinsic part of the economic fabric of the Southern Tier and Western New York. And -- and the reason I bring up the line of questioning that I did is my concern is

when we assume in the budget, as we have the last couple years, that the State is going to continue to receive the type of revenue exactly as it would if the existing Compact continues in further extensions, that gives me pause that perhaps that's what the State is assuming will happen. So I continue to urge the Governor to negotiate a fair compact with the -- with the Senecas, and it would benefit every one of my constituents across the board.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Mr. Fitzpatrick.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Madam Chair [sic]. Would the sponsor yield for a couple of questions after he's finished chewing?

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. PRETLOW: I can chew and talk.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: The sponsor yields.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is -- is there any appropriation in this budget bill for a benefit fund operated by SEIU 1199?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure.

(Pause/conferencing)

The Healthcare Stability Fund.

MR. FITZPATRICK: That -- that's operated by

1199?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, sir.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Okay. Is Medicaid funding being used to --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, it is.

MR. FITZPATRICK: -- (indiscernible/crosstalk) that Fund? It is. Okay. How -- how much?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe it's around $1 million.

MR. FITZPATRICK: I'm sorry?

MR. PRETLOW: $100 million.

MR. FITZPATRICK: 100 million? Okay. And will this require approval by the federal government?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe so.

MR. FITZPATRICK: No? Okay. And what is the purpose of this line item?

(Pause)

MR. PRETLOW: Looking up the line in the bill now.

(Pause)

It's for health -- health insurance.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Just for health and health insurance?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Not for any type of lobbying or anything like that?

MR. PRETLOW: No, absolutely not.

MR. FITZPATRICK: No? Would it -- and in your opinion, is it appropriate to use any Medicaid funding for any type of lobbying to increase Medicaid spending?

MR. PRETLOW: In my opinion, no.

MR. FITZPATRICK: No? Okay. Very good. And is there any language in the budget bill that would prevent that type of activity? Is there any mention of that?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe so.

MR. FITZPATRICK: No? Okay. Very good. All right. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

MR. PRETLOW: Thank you.

MR. FITZPATRICK: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair [sic].

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Thank you. Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will Chair Pretlow please yield?

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: The Chair yields.

MS. WALSH: Thank you so much. So I would hold the two volumes up of over like around 2,300 pages but I might be

accused of using a prop, so I will not, but I was wondering if you could let me know how much money has been appropriated in this budget bill for the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation?

MR. PRETLOW: I would have to find that out if you give me second. If it's in here I'll find it for you.

(Pause)

I believe around $7 million.

MS. WALSH: That's what I saw, too, $7 million, and I think that that is consistent with what was in the Governor's proposal maybe and the one-House budgets, but I wasn't completely sure what the genesis was. It seemed like it was around the same amount of money consistently --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MS. WALSH: -- yeah. And that money is, I believe, earmarked for improvements at Peebles Island to improve I think some of the kiosks and some of the sidewalks and stuff around that area, around Peebles Island; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure what it's going to be used for.

MS. WALSH: Okay. I -- I believe it is earmarked for there.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay.

MS. WALSH: Just by way of contrast, how much are we through this bill providing to the Buffalo Bills?

MR. PRETLOW: There is a contract for the Buffalo

Bills that's a reoccurring contract.

MS. WALSH: Yeah. How -- but this year aren't we providing $6.7 million?

MR. PRETLOW: In total, yes.

MS. WALSH: Okay. And the FIFA World Cup which is not unlike the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation occurring once in -- in New York this year, how much are they getting for marketing?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe maybe $20 million.

MS. WALSH: $25 million.

MR. PRETLOW: 25, oh.

MS. WALSH: Isn't that something? Yeah. Makes perfect sense, right? Yeah. Okay. So the Public Campaign Finance Board's gonna get 100 million, right?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MS. WALSH: Yeah. The -- that's -- that seems pretty high. The one thing that really struck me were all the bailouts of a bunch of cities that are closing gaps. Living, you know, and working in this area, I'm following my local news about the City of Albany. We knew that the City of Albany was looking for 20 million and then lo and behold, now it's 40 million. Is -- does that concern -- does that concern you at all that that amount of money doubled?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, you know, if you -- if you look at that list, we have new administrations that when they got into office they found a lot of skeletons in those closets.

(Laughter)

MS. WALSH: Yeah, looks that way. Looks that way. Okay.

I saw that public radio and public TV are each going to get $2 million each for a total of 4-.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MS. WALSH: And -- and that's going to be kind of spread among the different public radio and public television stations?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MS. WALSH: Okay. And is that -- am I correct in remembering that last year we did something kind of similar only it was for newspapers, wasn't it?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MS. WALSH: No? I thought we --

MR. PRETLOW: We -- I think we did radio -- we did for radio last year.

MS. WALSH: Oh, was it radio last year? Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: $4 million --

MS. WALSH: I remember the New York Press Association was really psyched that they had gotten some kind of money in the budget. I thought it was last year, maybe it was the year before. I don't know.

Okay. Let me just go through my notes here. So many things have already been covered, I don't want to be too repetitive.

(Pause)

I think at this point you've answered my questions very well, Mr. Pretlow and I -- I would like to at this point just go on the bill, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: On the bill.

MS. WALSH: So, this -- this is just a -- a lot of pages to this bill. There's a lot of great stuff in this bill. I mean, you got library aid, school aid, UPK, the 4201 schools, school meals, AIM funding, it supports the county sheriffs. I mean, it -- it's got so much good stuff in it, but I did want to point out and I'm -- I did get it confirmed from the Chairman, I -- I am continuously shocked by the complete lack -- really almost complete lack of funding for such an amazingly important Statewide and national event like the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation. It -- it's astounding to me. I mean, we're -- we're putting $7 million in. Do you know what other states are putting in? Like -- and states that can't even claim nearly as much history as we can in the State of New York. And I'm not just -- although I do represent portions of Saratoga County and we do claim an -- an awful lot of history as being arguably actually the turning point in the American Revolution. I'll take that up with one of my Assembly colleagues who believes that it was the Battle of Oriskany, but I'm going to say it was Saratoga. And you know, I just think that $7 million to improve a kiosk and some walkways at Peebles Island, it's shameful. It's absolutely shameful that a budget this big and a one-time event and especially when you put that up against $25

million to do marketing for the FIFA World Cup. Now similarly, I mean, that's going to be a big draw. People are going to be coming in probably from all over the world for the FIFA World Cup, but I think that's great. I think it's great for New York to be hosting it, but we're gonna be getting a lot of historic international tourism coming to New York State because of the 250th. And I know that our his -- our State historians, our county historians are going to do the very best that they can with the funds that they have, but I think we're really missing a tremendous opportunity here to -- to encourage that kind of history tourism and to really mark a once in a lifetime event. I mean, I was alive -- I was alive when we celebrated the Bicentennial and that was a huge deal. This just seems to be not really being marked as well I think by New York. So I think that's really unfortunate. I don't care for that.

And as far as the skeletons in the closest and the reason why the City of Albany and some other cities need so much more than we had originally expected. That's concerning. I mean, I'm not saying that we have our budgetary House in order here. I -- I -- we would be complaining about it now for days and for probably years for some of us, but to go from a $20 million ask to 40 million in order to close budget gaps for one city and the City of Albany, come on. I mean, I -- somebody needs to be taking -- I -- I hope that they're taking a very hard look at that.

So, anyway, I -- that's all I'll say about this bill. There is an awful lot to like, there's an awful lot of things that I do

support in here. I don't know how my vote's actually gonna come out because there are some things that still are concerning in the bill.

So thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Thank you.

Mr. Chang.

MR. CHANG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Chairman yield for a question?

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. PRETLOW: For a question? That's one.

MR. CHANG: Very simple question, Mr -- Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your persistence and your perseverance for today. Thank you very much.

This is regarding on Education, on Foundation Aid.

MR. PRETLOW: Right.

MR. CHANG: So the total education bill is 39 billion, an additional 1.7 billion over last year.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. CHANG: The Foundation Aid is increased for 1 billion. So does it -- because last year, many of my schools didn't have any Foundation Aid especially after school. Does it also fill up the --

MR. PRETLOW: Well, every -- every school is guaranteed at least 2% of an addition in Foundation Aid, and some of the differences in the Foundation Aid and the total education increase

have to do with special categories that were given additional school aid like English Language Learners and -- and -- and the poverty rate or the homelessness rate of individuals in a particular school district.

MR. CHANG: And has the formula for the -- the school Foundation Aid, have that change or -- or -- or remains the same?

MR. PRETLOW: The formula is basically the same with the creation of Foundation Aid.

MR. CHANG: Because from -- from the blow-back I received for those school who did not receive it and they felt that they were slighted and they felt that the -- the formula wasn't -- wasn't fair. So I hope this increase will balance it out compared to last year.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, are you referring to the New York City's formula --

MR. CHANG: Yes, New York City.

MR. PRETLOW: -- versus the State formula? Because I can assure that in the State formula no one has been slighted. The -- the number -- is -- the number is what the number is and it always comes out the same if the formula is followed. New York City always has those special circumstances. It does contribute -- have a bit more, it's almost half of the total student population in the State. It has several hundred schools, having several thousand teachers and it also has some special requirements that it has to contend with.

MR. CHANG: Well, thank you.

On the bill, Speaker [sic].

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: On the bill.

MR. CHANG: Thank you. As this bill has many -- a lot of good and not so good. For education, I'll always support that. In particular, the universal free school meal for lunch and for -- and for breakfast for all and including charter school and none -- nonpublic school which I wholly agree to and I wish we could include this budget that combatting school food waste, and I've been to many schools that food are not being eaten and cannot be donated or destroyed. I mean, sour milk can be destroyed, but there are many good food that cannot be donated for -- for kids who don't eat. And sometime I do look at some of the -- some type of the food that I wouldn't even eat it myself but can be donated is good for us. I wish we include part of this program that we paid for it, now our taxes and then if there's -- there is school waste, there's school extra food, should be donated to a designated food pantry instead of just throw out in the garbage. I wish we include that as a policy.

There is a -- and that's all I have, but thank you very much. I'm also wrestling to -- how to vote for this bill and thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Thank you.

Mr. Lavine.

MR. LAVINE: Thank you. So I just want to highlight some provisions of this -- this bill --

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Is it on the

bill, sir?

MR. LAVINE: Yes. Certainly.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: On the bill.

MR. LAVINE: On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Thank you.

MR. LAVINE: So I would like to highlight some of the provisions that I think the folks in my part of the country will like. Glen Cove Senior Center, 50,000. Glen Head Glenwood Business Association, 15,000. Glen Cove Boys and Girl Club, $49,000. Glen Cove Youth Bureau, 49,000. Glen Cove CDA, 5,700. Roslyn Youth, 49,000. Roslyn Rescue, 5,000. Town of Oyster Bay to protect shellfishing, that's 75,000. Island Harvest, 300,000. Long Island Cares, 300,000. Youth & Family Counseling in Oyster Bay, 49,000. The Oyster Bay Railroad Museum, 4,500. Town of Oyster Bay, 40,000. Westbury Amateur Baseball, 5,000. Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf, half a million dollars. Sea Cliff Fire Department, 25,000. Plainview Chamber of Commerce [sic], 2,500. Plainview American Legion Post 1812, 3,500. EAC Nassau Senior Respite, almost $120,000. Nassau County Cornell Cooperative Extension [sic], almost $400,000. Law Enforcement, Nassau and Suffolk, half a million. Nassau Suffolk Law Services, 120,000. Nassau Coalition Against Domestic Violence [sic], almost $46,000. Pre-K for Nassau BOCES, three-quarters of a million dollars. After school grants for Nassau and Suffolk, $2 million. "High-need" districts, Nassau and Suffolk, half a million. Nassau Suffolk Irrigation Programs, 150,000.

Almost done. Visiting Nurses for Nassau, 200,000. Nassau Suffolk Guardianship, half a million. Building trades pre-apprenticeship programs for Nassau, 200,000. Nassau County itself, almost 200,000. The Nassau County Museum of Art, 15,000. Central Nassau bay -- Baseball, 10,000. The Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center, at least 2,000 and if they're listening, they know it's gonna be a lot more than that. The Nassau County Auxiliary Police, $3,750. Nassau Bus Service, 3 million. The Belmont Park neighborhoods, 5 million. Hempstead Housing, 215,000. Hempstead Nassau Auxiliary Police, 3,750. Town of Hempstead itself, $25,000. And finally, the Hempstead American Legion Post 390, that's 3,750 and these are not all.

So I just have the sneaky suspicion that the folks that I'm privileged to represent would not be terribly pleased if I were to consider voting against this bill. So just a little preview, chances are I'm voting for it and thank you for letting me address this particular measure.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: Mr. Bendett.

MR. BENDETT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Wow, that was pretty impressive.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: On the bill, sir?

MR. BENDETT: I'm on the bill, yes. I apologize.

ACTING SPEAKER BUTTENSCHON: On the bill

MR. BENDETT: That was really impressive. I sit here really jealous, really jealous of my colleague who was able to rattle off millions and millions of dollars for the people in his community, his wealthy community. I know where Sea Cliff is, I've been there. That's a really -- really high-end area. And I have fire departments that are really struggling that have to host a roast beef dinner just to pay for their banquets.

As I just sat here listening to that, I'm really, really insulted. Really insulted that so many people in our communities are disenfranchised. I pay a lot of taxes. A lot. So do my people that live with me, you know, live in my communities. And for them to not get their fair share is very insulting.

Thank you.

(Applause)

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

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote's been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Republican Conference will generally be in the negative on this piece

of legislation, on this budget bill. But if there are yes votes, now would be the time to cast them at members' seats.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will generally be in the affirmative on this vote. If you would like to vote no, you may do so from your seats.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Sempolinski to explain his vote.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: I'm voting no on this. I just want to highlight something. We have in this bill $887.6 million in miscellaneous financial assistance to a variety of cities, sort of chosen, picked out nice cities and I just want to pick out one of them. $55 million to the City of Buffalo. The population of the City of Buffalo is 278,349. You take $55 million, divide that among that, that's $197.59 per person in the City of Buffalo in additional funding.

The largest city in my district is the City of Olean and if you do the same math, City of Olean should get $2,753,862.96. People in my district are gonna pay for these bailouts for these cities that are wildly irresponsible. Where -- where does -- where do my constituents -- what's the form they fill out? Where do they apply for

their money? Because they got to pay for this. Seems like it's unfair to me.

I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Sempolinski in the negative.

(Pause)

Mr. Eachus to explain his vote.

MR. EACHUS: Thank you, Madam Chair [sic], to explain my vote. When we take a look at this bill, it's many, many pages long, but I immediately go towards the veterans section and it's just amazing what we are doing for our veterans here in New York State. We're appropriating more than 17 million for this year, reappropriating 31 million. One of the famous programs is the Cohen Veterans Network and a half a million there and then to assist our county sheriffs, we have a 20,000 for Orange County Sheriff's Department and a 1 -- 100,000 for the Rockland County Sheriff's Office.

I am also very pleased to say that we are recognizing SUNY Orange which is a community college as a center of excellence and we are giving it $250,000 to start its program with AI and those types of things.

We also are working with mental health and the veterans suicide program with $1 million and peer-to-peer which we all know is very successful in veterans programs with 2 million. It's just amazing. One of the most famous programs that all of my justice

departments and sheriffs departments, police departments do is the Joseph P. Dwyer Program which we're putting another $8 million into.

And finally I've been asking for this and finally it's here. Again for the veterans, they do support Girls State and Boys State and we're giving them each $150,000 each and I thank the -- the Speaker for this and all the folks that worked to get this money into the budget. I know that these folks who are in need will really appreciate it.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Eachus in the firm.

Mr. Chang to explain his vote.

MR. CHANG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There's a -- a lot of good things in this -- in this budget earlier as I say and there's a lot of bad things. One -- as -- one thing that's -- encouraged that the veterans are getting their fair share of education budget. A lot of localities especially in New York City, Brooklyn that I represent, there's many, many funds are -- are supporting them in these programs.

Unfortunately, there's one program I haven't seen very much is teaching civic class; Americanism, patriotism and many classroom that I walk through in -- in my district, many of them don't even have an American Flag. I used to grow up with the American Flag inside a classroom but I don't see them what -- now. I don't know, is Americanism being -- being -- being frittered away? So I

believe in teaching as a basic course as civic, especially for new immigrants, what is Americanism and being patriotic in this country.

Other than that, I will support this bill because of many good things that have -- that -- that my constituents would benefit the most.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Chang 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. 215, the Clerk will read..

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10004-D, Rules Report No. 215, Budget Bill. An act making appropriations for the support of government, Capital Projects Budget.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Governor's message is 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: Yes, Madam Speaker. Before us today we have the Capital Projects Bill. This appropriation bill

provides $23.5 billion for State fiscal year '26-'27 while authorizing disbursements up to 21.4 billion when an All-Funds basis for Capital Projects in the same year. The Capital Projects Bill makes critical investments in transportation, health, education, economic development, public protection, social welfare, housing and other areas. Transportation and economic development capital obligations for $10.7 billion or 50% of the total spending for State fiscal year '26-'27. Capital spending over the next five years is expected to average $22.2 billion.

And with that, Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to fully support this bill. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Chairman yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. PALMESANO: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. Good evening.

MR. PRETLOW: It is evening. Good evening, sir.

MR. PALMESANO: So before I get into a lot of detailed questions, I'll just start out with some top line questions. How much does this bill appropriate -- appropriate?

MR. PRETLOW: This bill's appropriating $23.5 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: What is the fiscal impact or actual amount to be spent in this bill?

MR. PRETLOW: We're going to spend $21.4 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. How much in new debt is authorized in this bill?

MR. PRETLOW: New debt, 11.4 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. How much debt will be issued in fiscal year '27?

MR. PRETLOW: You're talking about new debt? The new debt is 11.4 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Sorry. Can you identify the appropriations or programs in this bill that are discretionary funds supported by the Governor and the majorities that do not have a set recipient or are not distributed by a formula?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure I understand your question. You want to know what the appropriations include?

MR. PALMESANO: Sure.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. For Transportation, it's $6.2 billion, or an increase of $80 million over the last year. Health and Mental Hygiene is $1.8 billion. Education and Higher Education is $2 billion. Economic Development is $2.8 billion. General Government and Public Protection is $1.9 billion. Parks and Environment is $3.7 billion. Housing is 1.3 billion. Social Welfare is 110 million and all

other capital appropriations amount to $3.7 billion.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I see there's a -- the CREST, Resiliency, Economic Sustainability and Technology. The CREST program has over 1.8 billion in reappropriations. With that amount reappropriated, why is it necessary to authorize an additional $385 million in bonded capital --

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the CREST program is an ongoing program to help our health facilities --

MR. PALMESANO: Sure.

MR. PRETLOW: -- and many of the applications that have been put in for past allocations have not been drawn down or they have not drawn down the fund. So what we're see -- what you see before you is an increase for this year and you also see what's re -- residual from prior years.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. So you think the -- what we have in -- in the reappropriation is not enough to meet our needs without having to add another 385 million?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I see that this bill is also transferring $156 million in uncommitted economic development funds to the local community assistance program. What were these funds originally designated for and why are they no longer needed for these original programs?

MR. PRETLOW: They may be for prior allocations or from allocations that were requested by individuals that no longer

have appointing authority, the various reasons for those monies to be transferred.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I see that this bill's breaking the -- these funds into two separate pots; one for the Statewide Local Community Assistance Program and one for the adaptive Local Community Assistance Program. Can you explain what the difference is between the two, and why is one program getting over 125 million more than the other?

MR. PRETLOW: This is a consolidation of all the old -- older programs and putting it into one big -- one number rather than have a lot of orphan numbers all throughout the budget.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I'd like to pivot to transportation for a minute if I could?

MR. PRETLOW: Certainly.

MR. PALMESANO: Certainly the issue of CHIPS is something I've been very vocal about, our entire Conference has been very vocal about, I know some of your members have been very vocal about it. I do see this does have a $50 million increase; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, it does.

MR. PALMESANO: Now, I know when we did the -- I can't remember what was in the one-House, but I remember the Senate did a $250 million increase. Do we understand -- and I mean I know it's in negotiation, but why we ended up with just $50 million and not more?

MR. PRETLOW: This is what came out after the negotiations. I'm pretty sure our one-House had more, but this is what we finally flushed out to.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Do you believe that $50 million is enough to meet the needs of our local communities for the --

MR. PRETLOW: Oh, I -- I think 100 million would be better.

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah. Can't argue with that, Mr. Pretlow. I agree, but -- but it's 50-.

Our -- our counties and municipalities continue to report a growing backlog of local road repairs. I guess my concern is at what point does the State acknowledge that flat or near flat infrastructure aid is effectively a funding cut after inflation, and the reason I say "inflation" is there's a study that came out that said the three year federal highway cost index over the past three years was 70%. So any amount we're giving to our local municipalities is being eaten away by inflation. So -- so we'd be looking to take that into consideration maybe in the future hopefully?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, inflation is always a concern and that's why you're seeing an increase in this year's allocation. The infrastructure of all of our State roads, be the county roads, State roads, or local municipal -- municipal roads are all in real need of repair. We had a really horrendous winter this year, caused a lot of rain -- had a lot of rain and then freezing and thawing which caused numerous potholes which are extremely expensive to repair. You

know, patching a pothole really doesn't work, a patch usually comes apart. So if you have a series of potholes on a street, it's usually more cost effective to redo the entire street, but we spend over $1 million of mileage trying to do -- trying to do streets and localities really don't have the wherewithal to do that, nor does the State or the counties.

MR. PALMESANO: Certainly. Obviously you know I've been a -- a very vocal critic of the CLCPA and I'll talk about a portion of that in here in a minute, but when we see how much we're spending on this program, we know that program alone's [sic] more than a quarter of a trillion dollars probably. I think there's $1 billion of additional funding for the sustainability program which we'll talk about. Wouldn't it be better to use more of that money for -- some -- at least some of that money of that $1 billion for CHIPS to kind of boost-up to meet that inflationary increase? Wouldn't that be a better way to do that for bonding that much money?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I -- I think that you can't change the purpose of funding that's in existence now.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. All right. Well, then I will move here a second -- yes. Water infrastructure. I know under Environmental Conservation the budget includes $175 million for water infrastructure in support -- in support of more housing and it says $50 million is focused on rural areas. Could you tell me what specifically in the new -- what specifically this new funding is intended to address that hasn't been addressed through the normal water infrastructure mechanism? Is there something new about this?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, water infrastructure that will be -- will become hookups to new -- to new housing.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. So it's for new house -- new house --

MR. PRETLOW: Right, basically.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. Now, I'd like to go to that sustainable future program we talked about if I may?

MR. PRETLOW: Sure.

MR. PALMESANO: The enacted budget, as I understand, restored the Governor's sustainable future programs from last year, which allocates $1 billion for climate resiliency initiatives, which also -- while also introducing additional legislative oversight and specific funding allocations including the reappropriations from last year. The total amount of this funding comes to $2 billion. How is this program being paid for?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the -- the $1 billion is made up of $500 million for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and then from that you have $300 million for renewable energy projects, $75 million for zero emission transportation, $50 million for methane reduction programs, up to $50 million for any of the above privileged program purposes and $25 million for the Environmental Protection Fund. The bulk of this is -- is gained through bonding.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And how is this accounted for in the Financial Plan?

MR. PRETLOW: Pardon?

MR. PALMESANO: How is this accounted for in the Financial Plan?

MR. PRETLOW: Bond -- as bonded capital.

MR. PALMESANO: Bonded capital, okay. And I'm sure you generally support enhanced legislative oversight for climate-related expenditures, both within this proposal and across other climate-focused programs, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: And how do you believe such oversight can ensure effective use of these funds and accountability in achieving the climate goals?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the purp -- that's the purpose of oversight; to ensure that things are doing done -- are being done correctly.

MR. PALMESANO: Has any of the prior funding been spent yet and if so, on what?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure. It's been allocated, I'm not sure if it's been spent.

MR. PALMESANO: That's okay. Last year's enacted budget as we said provided $1 billion for this program, all of which is reappropriated. Now it seems we're adding another $1 billion. Can you tell me why this is -- this funding is necessary when last year's funding wasn't touched?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, like I said, the money -- I just -- I just said --

MR. PALMESANO: Oh.

MR. PRETLOW: -- the money's been allocated, but it has not been spent --

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: -- so you do a reappropriation to cover the al -- the allocations that were made in the prior year. When the money is spent, it's charged against your reappropriations and we have another $1 billion that's coming in online this year.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. A sif -- a significant portion of the sustainable future funding supports electrification initiatives such as EV chargers, thermal energy networks and electric school buses --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: -- with hundreds of millions of dollars going towards electrification incentives. What assurances does the State have that New York's electric grid can handle the additional demand these programs will create?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, we have energy grants out, you know, a lot of what our plans were in the past were negated by, you know, actions where wind and solar reimbursements from the -- from the federal government no longer existed. We still have a program in place to ensure that these electrical components are in place when we get back online.

MR. PALMESANO: So should we -- because -- because concerns with the grid and the reason I bring it up is and I've

talked about it on the floor, the NYISO has said we have both short-term and long-term reliability gaps that are -- that are out there that need to be addressed --

MR. PRETLOW: Right.

MR. PALMESANO: -- and -- but yet, we continue to -- this march towards full electrification of everything; heat pumps, vehicles. Shouldn't really we be prioritizing grid reliability investments before expending -- expanding these electrification mandates?

MR. PRETLOW: I think they're being done in concurrent with one another.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. All right. I wanted to go to the portion of the bill that deals with the electric fleets, vehicles for the fleet. 17 million -- it's my understanding there's 17 million, the same as the Governor, same as last year to support the conversion of light-duty vehicles in -- in New York State fleets; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: I believe so.

MR. PALMESANO: Do we know right now how big the State fleet is for light-duty vehicles?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm sorry, say that -- I'm sorry. I didn't hear you.

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah, I'm sorry, Mr. Pretlow. Do we know how big the current State fleet is for electric vehicles on light-duty?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't have that information, I'm

sorry.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. I guess I would ask the same question on heavy-duty. You probably don't have that then?

MR. PRETLOW: No, I don't.

MR. PALMESANO: That's okay. Do we know how big our State fleet is of vehicles?

MR. PRETLOW: Are you including like police vehicles and trucks for -- for highway departments? It is -- it is large. I don't know the exact number --

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: -- but I can -- I can assure that it is substantial.

MR. PALMESANO: Now it's -- it's my understanding when we pass this in the statute, by 2035 our entire light-duty fleet has to be converted to electric; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: That's the plan.

MR. PALMESANO: And then by 2040, the medium and heavy-duty fleet would have to be con -- converted; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: That's the plan.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. And it's also my understanding that the State -- if -- a couple years ago, we had benchmarks that had to be in place. I remember in 2025, it was supposed to be 25% of the fleet, 2030, 50% of the fleet, 2035, the entire fleet as we acknowledged. Do we know how much of our fleet

has been converted? We don't know what percentage of the fleet has been --

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure what -- what the percentage is but we did push those numbers back in the bill when we did the CLCPA.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay, that's fine. The other thing on this I -- I would like to point out and I'll probably emphasize when I talk, too, it's my understanding in the language of this statute if the State of New York has issues on converting the fleet by 2035 or 2040 for the heavy-duty fleet even, issues of cost, issues of feasibility, issues of reliability, practicality, they could pause that because it's not a re -- it's not a mandate, it's a goal. Is that right? Is that accurate, what I'm saying?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: It is? Okay. And isn't it -- I mean, it's a different issue, but isn't it interesting that -- that the State has that out for costs, feasibility, reliability, practicality, so if they can't make their 2035 goal and/or the 2040 for heavy-duty, then they just don't have to do it. But our school districts and thank God we pushed back the timeline to 2040 for the conversion of their fleets, but if our school districts can't have -- if they have concerns for cost, affordability, reliability, practicality, they won't have that same option, correct, because they will have to begin buying them in 2030 --

MR. PRETLOW: I know they -- they -- we do have a waiver system in place that if they come to -- if they reach any

hardships in purchasing or obtaining the electric school buses they can apply for the waiver.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And with this $17 million that we have there, which was the same amount as the -- as appropriated last year, is there any requirements in the law, in the legislation, that would require the materials, the sourcing to be sourced here in the U.S.? Any like, buy American requirements in the law that they have to follow or no?

MR. PRETLOW: I don't believe. Not in -- not in this budget.

MR. PALMESANO: No. Okay. And you probably know the reason why I ask you that question --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I do.

MR. PALMESANO: Should we dive into it a little bit, or maybe no?

MR. PRETLOW: We shall not.

MR. PALMESANO: We shall not. You know, maybe I'll just do it on my -- on my on -- on the bill comments.

MR. PRETLOW: You -- you're perfectly welcome, Mr. Palmesano --

MR. PALMESANO: I know, Mr. Pretlow. I appreciate it. But it is -- I just think it is kind of ironic. Mr. Pretlow, I really appreciate your time and answering some of my questions here.

Madam Speaker, I will go on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: As I said with the last bill, you know, when we're spending a quarter-of-a-trillion dollars there are gonna be good things in it. When you're borrowing money to buy things or support things, there are gonna be some good things. You know, like I point to the Library Construction Grant. That's an important program that we talked about. And we talked about CHIPS. I mean, CHIPS is something we have been advocating year after year. It's an important program to our local municipalities. Unfortunately, I think $50 million is just a drop in the bucket. Although I'm appreciative of the increase -- I mean, I know they'll be appreciative of the increase. W hat I'm concerned about is it's not gonna to meet the need. Because as I said earlier, according to the Federal Highway Cost Construction Index, the inflationary increase for our municipalities has increased over 70 percent over the past three years. So any money that we're giving to them is being eaten up by inflation. And I think that a stronger, more vibrant commitment from us, a stronger partnership from us -- and maybe if we would have done what we did in our one-House and what the Senate did, that would've showed a much more stronger commitment to address that. And I will tell you, because we see it. We have deteriorating roads and bridges all across our State. And when we push for these local roads and bridges and culverts, it's warranted and justified. Why? Because 87 percent of the roads in New York State are owned and maintained by our local municipalities. Fifty-two percent of the 18,000 bridges in New York State are owned and maintained by our local

municipalities, and 48 percent of the miles driven are driven on our local roads. And when we see the reports that came out, like TRIP came out that said it's costing New York drivers over $40 billion annually, more than $3,700 a person, in driving with damage to vehicles, less fuel efficiency. Problem after problem. And yet but we don't make the critical investments we do. We just kind of -- like my colleague was saying, we're just patching potholes. That's not gonna solve the problem, and the costs are gonna go even higher. And I just think that that investment, that commitment could have been better.

And I think -- when I think of the Sustainable Futures program, you put 1 billion in it last year. It doesn't seem like we appropriated much from it in -- in re -- reappropriating. Now we're putting another billion in. And when I've been critical of the CLCPA and this program it's how it impacts ratepayers. Now we're borrowing money to pay for some of these things. You know, we got the electric vehicles, you know, higher electric rates. These policies continue to hit New York families', seniors' pocketbooks; whether it's through more taxes, whether it's through higher electricity rates, whether it's through higher bonding costs that are being bonded to pay for these programs. It just doesn't make sense. It's not affordable. It's not feasible. It's not reliable. And when we talked about the electric vehicles, when I had the conversation with the Chairman, how interesting is that when we look at the fleet, the -- I'll -- I'll compare it to the heavy-duty fleet. The State of New York's heavy-duty fleet has to be converted by 2040. And now because of that pushback on the

electric school buses -- thank God we did something like that; it should be repealed, in my opinion -- but at least we pushed it back to give them a little bit of breathing room. So now our -- our school districts have to have their fleets converted by 2040, and supposedly the State of New York has to have their fleets converted by 2040. Here's the kicker, though. The language in the bill for the State says it's a go for the State to convert their fleet. Not a requirement. What does the language say in the -- in -- in the statute for our school districts? They have to convert their fleet by 2040. It's a requirement. Sure, there's waivers and a waiver process. And I know if you were talking to your schools during this process, they were complaining about the waiver process. It wasn't helpful. It wasn't getting us to where we go. And now -- so we got a little bit of -- of a pause, but the problem doesn't go away. The problem is still there. The fact of the matter is in a few short years the school districts are gonna have to buy electric school buses again. The infrastructure is still not there yet. The capacity is still not there. The costs are still expensive. The range issues are still issues. This is problematic. But yet, we're gonna ask them to do this and complete the conversion. And oh, yeah, like I said, the State of New York has an out if they can't afford it. If it's not feasible to do it. If it's not practical to do it. If the energy grid infrastructure is not there for it to take place. But yet our school districts and local property taxpayers don't have that same luxury or privilege. So yeah, we gave them a little bit of pause, but the train's still coming down the tracks at them full speed and when it hits, it's

gonna hit hard. It's -- it would be nice if it was a goal for the school districts, too, instead of a mandate.

So as I'll conclude my comments, yeah, there's some good things in here. But remember, this is more borrowing. This is more debt to go on top of record levels of spending. To go on more taxes. To go on more regulations. Madam Speaker and my colleagues, this financial path, as I've said over and over again during these budget discussions, it's not sustainable. It's not feasible. It's not workable. And it's not in the best interests of the people we represent back at home. It's not in the best interests of trying to encourage more businesses to stay here. To invest here. To grow here and not leave here like we continue to see businesses leaving time and time again because of the policies that we enact.

When I talk about energy policy, if you talk to that -- businesses, they care about two things: Is their energy affordable, and is it reliable. And I'm telling you, if they can't get affordable and reliable energy in New York, they're gonna go elsewhere, and they are. My one colleague, when we talked about the financial services industry that have left the State of New York to go to states that don't have as much bureaucracy, don't have as much on taxes, don't have as much on problems that make it more difficult. Where they going? They're going to Florida. They're going to Texas. Going and taxing this capital, taxing businesses that we want to invest here and create jobs here is not gonna make them stay here. It's gonna make them leave here, and they already are. And certainly holding a press

conference outside of the apartment -- or the home of an individual who does invest in these communities, does invest in these businesses, does create jobs, does create economic activity, it's just another tax on top of more spending, on top of more debt. And as I said, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, this is not feasible, it's not sustainable, it's uncontrollable. And we really have to stop and look at what we're doing with the policies that we implement in this House.

So for that reason, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, I will be voting in the negative on this bill and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you so very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Miller.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chairman yields.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. I'd like to stay on the Transportation section of this.

MR. PRETLOW: Which section?

MR. MILLER: Transportation.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. MILLER: And I have a few questions for you

on this, and the first one is do you feel our roads, bridges and transportation infrastructure is in good shape?

MR. PRETLOW: I think I stated earlier I -- I know it can use some improvement.

MR. MILLER: Okay. But would the $50 million in CHIPS funding increase --

MR. PRETLOW: I think I said earlier, 100- would be better.

MR. MILLER: Yes, it would. How did we come with up the figure of 50 million when you know --

MR. PRETLOW: We use -- we use the resources we have at hand and the availability of other resources and how much we can bond for. You know, we have bridges that are in dire need of -- of help right now in this State.

MR. MILLER: Yes, we do. And thank you for agreeing with me on that.

(Indiscernible/crosstalk)

But there are places in the budget we may have been able to find some -- some additional funding for our roads. And I know the -- the Ranker of Ways and Means, our Ranker on Ways and Means touched on one.

MR. PRETLOW: But I think there are other things we could have done. We could have done something to look at the usage of salt on our roads because the misuse, as I'll put it, of salt on our roads is causing the deterioration of our bridge infrastructure, and

it's also causing the salination of some of our fresh water. That's something that I personally feel should fall under CHIPS; it'll probably come under clean water, which is also part of this bill. But I'm not in charge of all of that. I'm just trying to get the finances passed.

MR. MILLER: Okay.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill, sir.

MR. MILLER: Every year we have a sea of orange here from -- from our local highway superintendents, our county highway superintendents talking about the roads, our bridges, our infrastructure and how we have watched the decline here in New York State, not only for this -- the -- the year we talk about, but over the last 50 years we've watched the -- watched the decline.

You know, as we drive in here and we drive over a bridge system coming off I-90 over here to the Capitol, just think of what that replacement and that maintenance is gonna cost us. You know, let's just look at the -- the appropriations here. We got BRIDGE NY, 200 million; same as last year. CHIPS. Luckily we were able to put another 50 million in, but every year the highway superintendents come and they ask for 250 million. You know, this isn't a linear function on -- on the decline of our roads and bridges, it's an exponential function. So every year that we can't fund to the proper level, we're getting farther and farther and farther behind the eight ball.

Extreme winter recovery. We talk about our extreme winters every year. And right now we're still experiencing the thaw cycle as our roads are still heaving. You know, I drive 40,000 miles a year all over New York State and Central New York, and we're watching these roads fall apart more and more and more.

PAVE-NY. Luckily we have $150 million here for it; same as last year. And last year was the same as last year.

Pave our Potholes. And we all get e-mails on pothole alert. What are we doing about those? 100 million. That won't even touch half of them in the Southern Tier.

And our State Touring Routes [sic]. 140 million; same as last year.

You know, 87 percent of our roads are local roads, and we all drive on them. Not only do we all drive on them, our business -- our businesses rely on them. Our economic development relies on them. Our safety for our residents, our safety for our school children rely on them, and we can't put enough money in there to maintain our highway infrastructure. It's really sad that we all talk about this every year. And every year in March we have that sea of orange and how we're gonna -- we're here fighting for our roads, our infrastructure. And, you know, in -- in the Senate one-House bill there was $250 million additional for CHIPS funding. Luckily, we were able to find 50 million.

Madam Speaker, I hope in the future we can fund to maintain the decline here in New York, because right now we are not

funding to maintain the decline on our infrastructure. We need to do better than this. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Molitor.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Madam Sponsor. Will the -- or Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. So this is our second appropriations bill, and I'm gonna ask you some similar questions.

Does this bill contain any funding for the new convertible pistol prohibition that will go into effect on May 31 (indiscernible/crosstalk)?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm -- I'm not following. What -- what are you looking for? Is it capital funding for --

MR. MOLITOR: Does this bill contain any funding for the new Penal Law section that's gonna -- regarding convertible pistols?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. Does it contain any appropriation for -- I won't go through the entire immigration omnibus as I did before.

MR. PRETLOW: There's no capital funding for any of the immigration issues that you mentioned earlier, sir.

MR. MOLITOR: I'm sorry. I didn't hear you.

MR. PRETLOW: There is no capital funding for any of the immigration issues that you mentioned earlier.

MR. MOLITOR: In this bill, or in --

MR. PRETLOW: In this bill. Yes.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay.

That's all the questions I have. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: All right.

Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would Chair Pretlow yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. I want to start with under Ag and Parks; humane societies and animal shelters.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SIMPSON: There's 10 million appropriated in the budget, and the last sentence, not less than $500,000 is earmarked for projects in underserved municipalities or regions. Is there a map or anything that has been developed to identify those underserved

regions?

MR. PRETLOW: No, but there's a definition for underserved regions, though. I don't have -- I've never seen a map that -- that drew that out.

MR. SIMPSON: It -- it's not tied to any of the other programs that are under it; it's specifically for this program, right, where it's underserved -- underserved by humane societies or shelters?

MR. PRETLOW: Right. If they don't have a humane society -- which we're referring to humane societies and animal shelters. So underserved would be an area that does not have an existing animal shelter.

MR. SIMPSON: I understand that. This -- this funding is also available for capital improvement grants to existing humane shelters?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SIMPSON: So it would make sense that, you know, some of these regions would. But I live in an area that's pretty rural. It's very sparsely populated with a humane shelter, but there is a great need. So I'm just wondering, you know, how I could find out if that's an underserved area. That was the premise of my question.

And then under Environmental Conservation and Energy, under the Clean Water Infrastructure [sic], you know, 750 million. I know in past budgets and budget discussions that we've had over the years, you know, there's been an issue of, a question of how quickly we're able to get the money out the door to address the issue.

MR. PRETLOW: Right.

MR. SIMPSON: Do you know the status of last year's funding --

MR. PRETLOW: No, I do not. That would probably go -- go through -- I personally don't know. The money's awarded annually, and that does not come through the Legislature. It probably goes through DASNY or some other --

MR. SIMPSON: It goes through -- I couldn't hear you.

MR. PRETLOW: I said it probably goes through DASNY or some other governmental agency, but it does not go through the Legislature.

MR. SIMPSON: Yeah, I was referring to, like, the EFC, you know, within DEC.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. All right. Well, thank you. Thank you for your answers.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote's been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Republican Conference will generally be in the negative on this

legislation, but yes votes may be recorded now at members' seats.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will generally be in the affirmative on this bill. If you would like to deviate from that position, you may do so at your seats.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Anderson to explain his vote.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to explain my vote on the Capital Projects Budget. Tonight in this budget bill specifically, there is a $1 billion fund for Sustainable Futures. And the Fund, according to the language of the budget bill, is supposed to help to protect communities that are struggling either with storm surge, flooding and all of the other impacts of climate change.

Madam Speaker, it is my hope that the dollars that are reallocated from last year and allocated again this year will actually be spent on communities like the ones that I represent. I represent a community that is surrounded by water, a peninsula. Whether it is a high water table with high ground -- with high ground water, or our beach and/or bay that needs to be protected. The reality

of the situation is is that, Madam Speaker, we're nearly two decades post-Superstorm Sandy and there's not a single leg of protection along Jamaica Bay. But we are seeing projects continue to advance along our beach, which is very important -- which is very important to protect. But there are a lot of homeowners who are Black and Brown who live along the Bay, and I'm always wondering if that's the reason why that they're not receiving dollars.

So I'm grateful that this Sustainable Future Fund that is in this Capital budget bill will make it through, and it's my hope that those dollars will find their way to the Rockaways and other communities that are impacted by storm surge.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I withdraw my request and proudly vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Anderson in the affirmative.

Mr. Cashman to explain his vote.

MR. CASHMAN: Madam Speaker, to explain my vote. Tupper Lake has been dealing with a water crisis for far too many years. And while the people of Tupper Lake have been resilient, they should not have to shoulder this alone. And many residents have been forced to rely on portable water. But I am increasingly proud to being -- to be able to help in this situation with a critical and historic investment in Tupper Lake. All New Yorkers deserve clean water they can drink, that they can bathe in, and cook. And this is one step forward towards a safer and healthier North

Country. There are no Democratic or Republican waterlines. These funds directly impact the health and safety of this community, and that is a universal benefit. This is a monumental investment, and it will also further the economic development of the Village and surrounding area. It will breathe new life into this region. We need sustainable solutions to bring resources to the North Country, and this investment is one of the best examples in this budget.

It has been a great pleasure to work with leadership, as well collabor -- collaboratively, excuse me, with Mayor Fontana through this process, and I vote in the affirmative. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Cashman in the affirmative.

Ms. Kay to explain her vote.

MS. KAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My district is predominantly rural, and we really have a crisis of healthcare in the 100th District. And I am so proud to be able to say that two organizations, The Center for Discovery and EverGreen Meadows [sic] for middle school girls in crisis, have been funded with this budget. This healthcare funding is really going to be transformational, and I thank leadership for everything that they have done.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Kay in the affirmative.

Ms. Kassay to explain her vote.

MS. KASSAY: Thank you. I rise today in support of this Capital Projects budget bill. I am particularly -- I want to speak to

the $20 million that has been allocated for resiliency projects within the County of Suffolk. And more specifically, even at least 6.5 million of that which will go towards the -- the Stony Brook Mill Pond Dam project. This been a project that has gone too long unrepaired, and this funding from the State will absolutely help with moving that timeline along and making sure that the community's economic engine, public safety and environment are restored as they should be. And I'm very proud to have helped bring this across the line and am proud to vote yes on this Capital Projects budget bill.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Kassay in the affirmative.

Ms. Shimsky to explain her vote.

MS. SHIMSKY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We spend a lot of time at budget time here talking about investing in the future; often, that means things like education, social services, libraries and so on. But the fact of the matter is, nothing can happen unless we take care of the underlying physical reality, which means our infrastructure; our buildings, our roads, our utilities, our water and wastewater provision. We know that we are way behind where we need to be to make sure our infrastructure is functioning properly and is well-maintained. New York State's roads rank 47th among 50 states in their -- in their quality at this point. We have all kinds of problems in the C to D range with various parts of our infrastructure.

We need to plan for the future. This budget will help

to some degree. We've taken some of the edge off of inflation, for example, with the extra $50 million in CHIPS fund -- funding, and we've done that with some of our own State responsibilities as well. But in order to take care of everything and to transition into the future with clean, sustainable energy sources that will save us money and all kinds of other innovations that are needed in transportation, building systems and so on, we are going to have to take a serious look when we look at how we are going to tackle affordability issues, child care and everything else. We are also going to have to look at long-range planning to make sure our infrastructure becomes second-to-none again.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Shimsky in the affirmative.

MS. SHIMSKY: I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Chang to explain his vote.

MR. CHANG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I mentioned previously, this -- this budget bill has a lot of positive and a lot of negative budgets in there. But let me emphasize the -- the positiveness of this bill that I support.

First is infrastructure. This is already need to be done current to maintain the physical infrastructure of New York City and the State because we need that to be run. We need to have transportation, roads and people to move effectively and efficiently.

And the small increase to support the Second Avenue Subway system, improvement of the National Guard facilities, there [sic] definitely need to be done. Many facilities are well over a century old. Supporting libraries, very extensive in New York City. And even though it's a very small increase of $10 million, but in my borough of Brooklyn I represent is the Botanical Garden, the Aquarium and the Zoo that this [sic] funds will support that, which I do know that many of my constituents' children do go to that -- using that facilities.

Overall, unfortunately this budget is not broad enough to -- to completely upgrade our infrastructure, our bridges, to a current standard. More need [sic] to be done. But again, there's some budget [sic] in there, there's some allocations that is not, I call it "wisely spent." But overall, to think about our -- our community and my constituents and I support this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Chang in the affirmative.

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So I'm going to support this bill, and I wanted to just call out a couple of the things that I think are really important for -- for my region. The county infrastructure grants are really important. The emergency medical services, or EMS modernization that needs to take place is being supported here. The Volunteer Fire Infrastructure and Response Equipment Grant Program I think is very important. And -- and I

could name a lot of other things. And then lastly, as many people have said, the CHIPS funding I think is really important. I'm glad to see it increase. I also share the concern that many people voiced that I -- I just don't think it's gonna be sufficient. Everything that I'm hearing from my highway superintendents, the counties that are dealing with increased weather events and the strain of all of the EV and the heavier, you know, vehicles and everything on the roads, it's -- it's gonna need more money as we move forward. But I am glad to see that it was increased somewhat, and that at least Extreme Winter Recovery, BRIDGE NY, PAVE-NY, Pave our Potholes, all that stuff remains at least at the same levels as last year. So I -- I really do think that as we look big picture at our State spending plan as a list of our priorities, I think that our priorities really need to be in maintaining our infrastructure.

So I'm pleased to support this bill. I -- I would just note that the legislative additions of $490 million, I don't think any of that's coming back to my district, unfortunately. But I'm sure it will do a lot of good in other people's. So I'll be in the affirmative. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Walsh in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am delighted to announce our two final budget bills, Rules Report No. 212 and Rules Report No. 213 on page 3. I would like to note, sunset's at 8:22. Let's see what we can do.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you very much.

Page 3, Rules Report No. 212, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10000-D, Rules Report No. 212, Budget Bill. An act making appropriations for the support of government (STATE OPERATIONS BUDGET).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Governor's Message is at the desk.

The Clerk will read.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: An explanation has been requested.

Mr. Pretlow.

MR. PRETLOW: The bill before us contains major components of the legislation that is necessary to implement the State Operations bill. This bill includes $64.9 billion in appropriations, or $44 billion in All-Funds spending to support the essential functions of State agencies.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Sorry about that. Madam Speaker, will the Chairman yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the Chair yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Chair yields.

MR. PALMESANO: Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. Top of the 9th, bottom of the 8th?

MR. PRETLOW: Actually it's the bottom of the 8th.

MR. PALMESANO: So I'll swing big here, I guess. No, just kidding.

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I predict a grand slam in the bottom of the 9th, so....

MR. PALMESANO: I'm not going there. Sorry, I had a little inside joke there. How -- how much does this bill appropriate?

MR. PRETLOW: I thought I just told you.

MR. PALMESANO: I know.

MR. PRETLOW: I'll -- I'll tell you again.

MR. PALMESANO: I didn't hear you. I'm sorry. If I could ask you to repeat.

MR. PRETLOW: The bill includes $64.9 billion in appropriations.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And what is the fiscal impact or actual amount to be spent?

MR. PRETLOW: 44 billion in All-Funds spending.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Thank you.

I want to ask a couple questions on agricultural, specifically around the Office of Renewable Energy Sitting [sic], if I may.

MR. PRETLOW: Absolutely.

MR. PALMESANO: The budget contains -- continues to provide funding for ORES to facilitate the sitting [sic] and approval of renewable energy projects across the State. Given the continued State investment in these efforts, do we know how many acres of agricultural land have been converted for wind and solar development over the past five years? Do we track that? Do we monitor that? Do we have that data? That would be helpful to have if you have it.

MR. PRETLOW: Sorry, sir. I do not have that data.

MR. PALMESANO: No? Maybe that's something we can ask of them to track so we know.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Because you would agree that the taking of prime agricultural land is not a -- a good thing or a healthy thing for these projects, wouldn't you?

MR. PRETLOW: Not being a farmer or a person in agriculture, I -- it seems to be a lucrative investment for many individuals. So it may not be beneficial to excess food production, but if it's for increasing -- increasing one's -- one's wealth, that may be the

direction they wanna go.

MR. PALMESANO: Sure. I -- I'm certainly -- I don't blame the farmer, because unfortunately some of the policies of this House have really punched them in the chin in -- in a number of ways. So I -- I don't blame the farmer. But we -- it is a concern that we've had about the prime farmland. But I'll go on.

Is there anything in this budget bill that will help the Department of Ag and Markets to address the health and safety consequences of dam -- of damage to wind and solar facilities on these agricultural lands? Anything in here that will help Ag and Markets help address those issues or concerns or problems?

MR. PRETLOW: Not to my knowledge.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And do you know, to your knowledge, any information -- has the State ever conducted any analysis on the long-term economic impacts of taking thousands of acres of agricultural land out of production for industrial-scale energy products? Do you have any data or information on that?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Do we know how many of these renewable energy projects approved through ORES have -- have -- well, we know many haven't approved -- have faced opposition from local governments or residents, and with that wide volume of opposition that we continue to see in many local communities, particularly in Upstate New York, why does the State continue to override these local concerns and opposition?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, we're -- we're pursuing -- the goal is of the climate goal -- goals. You know, the voters of the State of New York, when they passed the Environmental Bond Act, committed billions of dollars for clean energy and for clean air and clean water. And what we're trying to do is to follow through with our commitments to the people of New York that did authorize us to do the Environmental Bond Act.

MR. PALMESANO: I -- I understand that. And I know the Bond Act was approved to do some funding, but that was for a host of issues.

MR. PRETLOW: And what -- what we're discussing right now are part of the -- one of those issues --

MR. PALMESANO: Yup.

MR. PRETLOW: -- or some of those issues.

MR. PALMESANO: Sure. And when I look at that -- and I know how you said to approve for the climate bills that we passed to address that need -- are you possibly aware -- you might not know, and that's fine -- but it's just 90 percent of our generation in Upstate New York is already emission-free while 90 percent of the generation in Downstate and New York City is fossil fuel-based. Are you aware of those statistics?

MR. PRETLOW: Unfortunately, we do not have a Niagara Falls in New York City.

MR. PALMESANO: No. And certainly we have natural -- or we have nuclear and we do have wind and solar.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: But I guess with that, isn't it something maybe we should be saying if more of the emissions are coming from Downstate, shouldn't we do some of the -- more of the work Downstate before we take prime farmland and things of that nature?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, I -- I think in a previous debate I had indicated that 90 -- I'm sorry, 51 percent of the population of the State of New York lives on 2 percent of the land. That means the bulk of this State is actually -- I use the word "empty" because the Empire State -- but there's -- it's -- it's a lot of area for these facilities that you're referring to.

MR. PALMESANO: I understand. I understand where you're coming from.

Regarding environmental conservation and energy on that same concept. I know you know the NYISO has continued to raise the alarm -- and I mentioned it in our previous debate -- about grid reliability. And we really have put ourselves in a position because of the support of the CLCPA, the closing of Indian Point which was clean energy bringing 2,000 megawatts of power to 25 percent of the population in New York City. Can you tell me, is there anything in this bill that supports the development of re -- reliable base load power such as natural gas or nuclear power in this bill or this budget?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the Governor has proposed

building I think three or four nuclear power plants in the distant future.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. All right. Bear with me, Mr. Pretlow.

MR. PRETLOW: I have all day, sir.

MR. PALMESANO: Public protection, correctional facility funding. As we know and I think we talked about before, we know because of the staffing crisis that we have in our correctional facilities, the Governor fired 2,000 corrections officers. I believe there's a shortage of over 4,000 corrections officers, so they had to resort to put our emergency National Guard inside our correctional facilities, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: That is correct.

MR. PALMESANO: And they've been there for over a year now, correct?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, they have.

MR. PALMESANO: And we spent about $535 million last year; is that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: I'm not sure of the number, but I think we'll probably spend the same amount this year.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And then so we're probably looking at over $1 billion in funds to have the National Guard in there?

MR. PRETLOW: Over the period of the two years, yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. And do you -- with that funding that we've spent in there, do we have any reports from the Governor back or do we know what, you know, what specifics can be provided on plans to stabilize the system with this funding? I mean, are we getting any specific plans back? Because obviously they're not trained to be corrections officers. Do we understand --

MR. PRETLOW: Right. Okay. Well, we've done several things to try to alleviate the problem. Most recently yesterday we did a pension bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Right.

MR. PRETLOW: We also did away with the Death Gamble.

MR. PALMESANO: Death Gamble, which was great.

MR. PRETLOW: Which the corrections officers wanted. We spent $3 million on recruitment. We have $150 million in hiring and retention benefits that were being offered to new recruits. So the Governor is doing all she can to fully staff up the DOCCS facilities with actual fully-trained correction officers.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Do we know how many National Guard --

MR. PRETLOW: Three thousand guardsmen are currently deployed.

MR. PALMESANO: Three thousand guardsmen?

MR. PRETLOW: I shouldn't anticipate your

questions.

MR. PALMESANO: No, you're good, Mr. Pretlow. So you're good. So 3,000 guards?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: So it's 4,600 vacancies.

MR. PALMESANO: Since we're on corrections, I have a question I want -- I know on the Commission of Corrections [sic] there's -- there's $3 million in additional funding that's provided to the Commission on Correction [sic], but the board of this Commission currently can't do anything because they don't have enough members. Do we know --

MR. PRETLOW: Are you referring to the $3 million that is set aside for recruitment?

MR. PALMESANO: No, I'm sorry. This on the Commission on Corrections [sic]. There's -- it's my understanding there's $3 million in additional funding to provide the Commission on -- provided to the Commission on Corrections [sic], but it's hard for them to do anything because the board currently can't do anything because they don't have enough members. My question was going to be on that front. Do you know or do we know when the Governor plans to fully staff this Commission?

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. I'm not sure of that. But I do know there's a commission for the establishment of a medical examiner's office, but I'm not sure of the commission you're referring

to.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: Members are still being appointed.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

(Pause)

One second. I'm sorry.

There's one question on health I want to ask, because I know we were talking about -- we talked about the nicotine pouches before. This budget bill does not include the 4.7 million for vapor product enforcement that was in the Executive proposal. Should we assume this is due to the omission of other vapor product tax proposals?

MR. PRETLOW: So, we did reject the Article VII that was in the Governor's original submission.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. PRETLOW: We didn't think that they needed any additional funding.

MR. PALMESANO: And then I want to get into the Office of Cannabis Management, if I could. I'm sorry to keep making you guys get up like that. I apologize. I promise I'm not doing it on purpose.

We've obviously seen problems with the Office of Cannabis Management.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: We've -- we've seen, you know,

as far as enrolling, problems with when they had the -- the distance set up. I'm just kind of curious, do we know how they're dealing with the issue of the illegal illicit sticker stores, you know, that are still operating? Is that -- are we just empowering the locals to deal with that or is the State Office of Can -- are they do anything on that? Are we hearing any feedback from them on that?

MR. PRETLOW: We -- we passed legislation last year giving the Office additional enforcement powers. And I have noticed several so-called "smoke shops" in my travels through Westchester and -- and -- and farther Upstate that were closed for the sale of illegal cannabis.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. One -- one more question on that. I know -- I know this budget provides $79.8 million to support the Office of Cannabis Management, which is really $11 million -- 11.7 million more than last year. This increase is supposed to support contractual services for implementing the Office of Cannabis Management's Seed-to-Sale tax and trace system. Can you tell us the status of enrolling all of the active licenses within the STS system, and how does the STS system work?

(Pause)

MR. PRETLOW: Okay. They're in the process of staffing up -- up right now. I -- if you ask me the same question in a month from now I will give you a better answer.

MR. PALMESANO: I promise I won't be asking you the question in a month from now, how about that?

I want to ask a question on the Office of Child Care and Early Education. It's my understanding this new Office of Child Care and Early Education is being allocated 1.5 million to implement universal child care.

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

MR. PALMESANO: How will this office -- and do we have any idea how this office will intend to implement this? Is there a timeframe for its implementation?

MR. PRETLOW: There's no timeframe set at this point, but we just need the monies available. And I -- I believe you're talking about what's happening in New York City. I know there's several school districts outside of -- of the City that are going to be doing under the guise of pre-K early child care.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. Will the -- this office be responsible for providing any cost estimates for the universal child care? Will they be doing that?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. PALMESANO: No. Do we know how much -- how much would implementing -- do we have how much implementing universal child care in New York State will cost?

MR. PRETLOW: Not specifically for that, but that number would be in the Aid to Localities.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay. That's fine.

Mr. Pretlow, you know, I appreciate your time very much. Thank you. I'm just gonna to go on the bill now for the rest.

Thank you, Mr. Pretlow, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Madam Speaker and my colleagues, the end is in sight. One more bill after this. Our State Operations budget bill, just a couple points that I kind of talked about during in the -- in -- in -- during the debate I just wanted to highlight. It's very unfortunate that we still have to spend probably over $1 billion now to staff our correctional facilities with our National Guard individuals who really never wanted to do that and they were forced into doing it. Don't have experience being inside correctional facilities. We know working inside our correctional facilities is a dangerous job, but they're there to help. This happened because, you know, the Governor fired 2,000 of our corrections officers and because the situation inside our correctional facilities, the violence inside our correctional facilities, the mandatory overtime, the other challenges that they were facing was problematic. One way to get more corrections officers -- I mean, I will say on a positive note what we did yesterday in passing the Death Gamble legislation was probably one of the most positive and significant pieces of legislation this House has done to support our corrections officers. I'm glad we did that. I was proud that was part of that bill. It's something we've been advocating, especially after we passed it unanimously three times and the Governors -- two different Governors vetoed it several times. But what we want to do, if you want to take care of the staffing crisis inside our correctional facilities, we need -- we need to double down

and pay these corrections officers more money, give them better benefits, give them more staff. Make the work environment inside the correctional facilities safer, whether it's, you know, the screening of contraband -- you know, we've seen stories after stories. We see about the assaults happening inside our correctional facilities on a regular basis. We also see about stories of corrections officers and other civilian staff being overcome by substances that are getting inside our correctional facilities. So we can make the system inside our correctional facilities even better so we just have people working there and not just having to deploy the National Guard at a cost, like I said, of over $1 billion over the past two years.

I will talk about ORES again for a minute just because, you know, we see them time and time again, ORES -- I mean, they are taking prime farmland. And as the Chairman said, you know, it could be a -- lucrative for our -- our farmers. And I don't have any problems with the farmers looking out for their best interests, but because what this Body has done to our farming community over the years has not been positive. It goes back to the Farm Labor Act [sic], it goes back to other provisions that we've done that have made it very difficult and challenging to farm. So we -- we allow them to put solar and wind on their farm. We didn't allow them to get natural gas out of their own land for some reason because we thought that was a bad idea. Especially to the farmers in the Southern Tier who were screaming for it to happen. On the PA border they (indiscernible) it happens to them. And they can do it on the PA

border but they can't do it in the Southern Tier of New York. But that's another discussion. But we continue to prioritize wind and solar, which is not a reliable base load generation. The ORES continues to over -- override local input, local control. If a local community doesn't want solar or wind in their community, why are they being forced to have it? Just to meet these clean energy mandates? And the problem with this, too, is the amount of land this is taking up. When you talk about base load generation, natural gas and nuclear and reliable base load generation. And just to put it into perspective, the land use matter of this, for solar in the Climate Action Council Plan it says you need eight acres per megawatt. And the Climate Action Council Plan calls for 60 gigawatts of solar. That is 480,000 acres of land. You know where that land's gonna to come from; it's gonna come from Upstate New York because we have the land, as the Chairman acknowledged. But if you look at nuclear, which is energy-dense, Indian Point, which the previous Governor thought was a great idea to shut down, that was 2,000 megawatts on 240 acres of land. So eight acres per megawatt or 240 acres for 2,000 megawatts. FitzPatrick up in Central New York, it's 800 megawatts on 900 acres of land. So when it comes to a land use perspective, nuclear far -- is far, far superior to wind and solar. From a land use perspective it's a far, far superior alternative from a reliable, dispatchable base load generation. And when you levelize those costs out over the entire lifespan of the projects -- because nuclear facilities last longer than wind and solar projects -- those panels, those

windmills, they last -- they last longer. So when you levelize those costs it's even more cost-efficient. And with the technology advancing the way it is, when we get there it's gonna be even better. But until we get there, because the -- the NYISO said we aren't there yet, the technology's not there yet, we need natural gas. But we continue to see this hostility of natural gas. That's why it would be nice to see some things from the State support on that side of it. I know the Governor calls for all of the above, but policy after policy we continue to see doesn't show that all-of-the-above approach. It just seems to have more of a hostility really designed to dismantle the affordable and reliable natural gas infrastructure supply and delivery system; designed to take away consumer choice on how you heat your home, cook your food, power your building and the vehicle you drive. It will jeopardize the reliability of the grid and lead to more nation-leading outmigration.

But for the host of reasons, like others, you know, the amount of money we're spending in this budget, the amount of debt we're taking on, taxes, as part of this whole package with the State Operations bill, I will be voting in the negative and I ask my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Molitor.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will

the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Absolutely.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. PRETLOW: And Mr. Molitor, I'm gonna anticipate your questions. You're finally on the right bill.

MR. MOLITOR: Here we are. We made it.

MR. PRETLOW: In this bill, 40 -- $4.5 million is -- is assigned to the Attorney General's Office of Management of Immigrant Trust [sic].

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. And it's my understanding that the Immigrant Trust Office [sic] is -- is basically to enforce subpart A, subpart C and subpart D of that immigrant omnibus bill.

MR. PRETLOW: I believe so.

MR. MOLITOR: So you agree with me that that money that you just referenced does not have any connection to the other sections of that bill?

MR. PRETLOW: Well, the Office of Immigrant Trust is supposed to do a complaint review and investigation. They do training and defense and representatives for State employers -- I'm sorry, employees.

MR. MOLITOR: Right. But, like, for example, subpart B of the immigrant -- Immigration Omnibus Act creates the New York State Bivens Act, which is a cause of action. And that has

really nothing to do with the Immigrant Trust Office [sic]; isn't that correct?

MR. PRETLOW: It has nothing to do with this, no.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. And is there anything in this bill that -- or any appropriation in this bill that's connected to the convertible pistol ban?

MR. PRETLOW: No.

MR. MOLITOR: Okay. All right. I -- I don't have any further questions. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. R. Carroll.

MR. R. CARROLL: On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. R. CARROLL: Last year, this Body passed a piece of legislation that created the Statewide Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Center at the State Education Department. This was important legislation to address the literacy crisis and to help some of our most vulnerable children who struggle with language-based learning disabilities. This year, in this budget, we provide $1.5 million of direct State funding to make sure that center can do its necessary work by hiring professionals to promulgate best practices, professional development and guidance to schools throughout the State.

I thank the leadership here in the Assembly; particularly Speaker Heastie, as well as Governor Hochul, for making sure that this necessary funding for the Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

Center happened this year. I want to again thank Governor Hochul for her leadership on literacy and evidence-based practices in our classrooms to solve and to address the -- the literacy crisis in our State.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will Chair Pretlow just yield for --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MS. WALSH: -- for a little bit --

MR. PRETLOW: Yes, I will.

MS. WALSH: -- a little bit.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow yields.

MS. WALSH: Okay. Really, my questions, out of just pure curiosity, have to do with the emergency response funding under Correctional Facility Emergency Response. Do you know how much longer we're going to be doing things this way, where we have the National Guards people in there doing this instead of corrections officers?

MR. PRETLOW: We have 4,600 vacancies in our penal system right now --

MS. WALSH: Right.

MR. PRETLOW: -- we have -- have assigned 3,000

National Guardsmen and women to fill some of those or most of those vacancies --

MS. WALSH: Right.

MR. PRETLOW: -- we put several things in place to try to recruit and retain several of the existing employ -- retain existing and recruit new employees so that we can reduce the number of National Guards people that are now assigned in our -- in our system.

MS. WALSH: Okay. And --

MR. PRETLOW: But I can't give you a date. They look -- now, if there were a job fair tomorrow, we'd hire 4,000, they'd be -- they'd be gone day after tomorrow.

MS. WALSH: Okay. Thank you so much, Chair Pretlow.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. WALSH: Yeah. So, I mean, one of my biggest problems with this particular bill is this section. And, really, what it is, I mean, everyone talks about the wildcat strike and everything that happened, you know, last year that precipitated the firing of all the corrections officers. I mean, here we are, we're in another year of having National Guardsmen in doing the work that trained, skilled corrections officers had done and should be doing because, I mean, the National Guardsmen are great. Actually, I -- I know one of them better -- that's doing it and, you know -- but they're not trained for this.

And I don't know -- I -- I don't know how the cost compares between the $535 million that's appropriated in this section of the budget versus what it would cost to be fully staffed with corrections officers, but in a way it really -- that -- that's secondary to me than the fact that when you have incarcerated individuals, they want to be able to use programs that are available for them while they're in and they -- they can't do them because they don't have proper staffing within the correctional facility. And so, in a way, there's a lot of finger pointing on this issue. You know, is it the corrections officers' fault for the wildcat strike? Is it -- is it the State's fault for creating an environment that made it so unpalatable that they decided to walk off? Is it a self-inflicted wound on the part of the State by allowing this to perpet -- I mean, do we -- are we -- do we have a complete lack of thousands of positions that aren't filled be -- it's not just simply because we have corrections officers that don't feel like working. They were told that they could not be rehired, I believe, the ones who walked off and didn't come back when they were supposed to. So now we got this just huge gap and this is creating a huge gap for the communities that host correctional facilities as well. I mean, this is a huge part of their economy that's just shot.

So I -- I really am hoping that there would be some kind of an end in sight, but I don't really see anything to draw any comfort from out of this section of the budget. It just seems like it's becoming like a new normal. Well, just, we'll throw $535 million at it same as we did last time and, I guess, last year, 514.9 million of last

year's emergency funding has been spent. So it's -- it's getting spent. But this is -- this is not -- this is not the solution.

So I -- I just wanted to bring that up. That's -- that's one of my big problems with this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

(Pause)

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: Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Once again, the Republican Conference will be, generally speaking, in the negative on this piece of legislation, but affirmative votes may be cast now at members' desks.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will generally be in the affirmative on this bill. If you would like to cast a no vote, you may do so from your desks.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote)

Mr. Chang to explain his vote.

MR. CHANG: Thank you, Madam speeder [sic] -- Speaker. I would like to explain my vote. There's a lot of good, a lot of bad and a lot of pork, I seen. A lot of self-licking ice cream program that is, I believe, is a duplicate. And when I look at my district and education side, veterans, support of military, I look at overall that it will benefit, then I vote for the affirmative for this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Chang in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The bill is passed.

Page 3, Rules Report No. 213, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10001-A, Rules Report No. 213, Budget Bill. An act making appropriations for the support of government (Legislature and Judiciary Budget).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Governor's message is 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: Yes, Madam Speaker. The bill before us contains major components of legislation that is necessary to enact the Legislature and Judiciary Budgets for State fiscal year '26-'27. This includes an All Funds appropriation of $4.8 billion.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill, sir.

(Applause)

MR. PALMESANO: And I wanted to go on the bill instead of explaining my votes [sic] in case I needed a little bit more than two minutes. Not a lot more, but just so I have it.

I really just want to start out my comments to say, first, thank you to my colleague, Mr. Pretlow, the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Thank you, Mr. Pretlow. It's been an honor and a privilege to work with you when I got put in this position and sit next to you during the budget hearings. I've enjoyed our conversations, I've enjoyed our debates, I've enjoyed our banter, I've enjoyed that we can laugh a little bit while we have these discussions. So I just wanted to say thank you to you, first and foremost.

I also wanted to say thank you to your staff, Phil and your team. First, I apologize for making you guys run back and forth when we bring up different issues. I just wanted to say thank you to all of you guys for what you do. I know the incredible work you do for Gary and your whole -- your whole Conference. And thank you

for the relationship you have with our Ways and Means team, too. I know how much they appreciate it and we appreciate that you have that relationship with them. So, thank you and we salute you, too.

(Applause)

And certainly, when I look up there and I see that word "Legislature", I think of our staff in the Minority Conference. Every person, every department, every role, every position, I truly hope you know what a vital part you are of our Conference, that we need you and we thank you. We simply do not function without you. Thank you so much for all you do.

And if you'd allow me a little point of personal privilege here, I'd like to speak about the men and women sitting behind me and I hate that my back is turned to them. When Leader Ra entrusted me with this position, it was a great honor and I knew I was lucky and I knew how great our Ways and Means team was. But the privilege I've had to work so closely with all of you for these more than three months, I've been able to see up close, firsthand, how simply incredible you are, your steadfast commitment and dedication is, your incredible and tireless work ethic, your perseverance. The long hours with little sleep and you always, always have a smile on your face. When we say, *thank you*, you say, *we're here to help.* And you help. I'm amazed watching you. It's amazing to work with you. Listen, you shine all the time, but you especially shine this time of year. And I hope you never, ever question how much I, how much the Leader, how much all of us appreciate you and the words I'm saying

here today does not do the justice to express it.

And I will say, in the past, when votes come out but I'm down negatively on a lot of budget bills, I kind of vote no on the whole package. And many of our members do the same thing and I understand that, but not this year. Not this year. This -- for this bill, when I see the word "Legislature" up there, I see our incredible staff behind me, I see our incredible staff that we work with and I just want to say, thank you to all of you. God bless all of you.

Madam Speaker, I vote yes.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Molitor.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow, will you yield?

MR. PRETLOW: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you. Mr. Pretlow, I'm assuming that in this bill there are no appropriations for the convertible pistol ban or for the immigration omnibus --

MR. PRETLOW: There are absolutely no appropriations for pistol bans, immigrants or anything else. This is strictly the Legislature and the Judiciary.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. MOLITOR: So, this bill funds the Legislature. And over the final four appropriation bills, I pulled out two pieces of policy legislation and established that there isn't any appropriation related to those policies. Why is this important? We all swore an oath to uphold the New York State Constitution. Many of us on both sides of the aisle have lamented that there is policy in this budget and in previous years.

We've had -- there's a lot of policy in this budget that has not gone through the committee process and it should have, of course. But most importantly, those policies that I have pulled out and I'm sure there's others, violates Article 7, Section 6 of the New York State Constitution. And we can say, *oh, Silver v. Pataki,* but this Session's not over and if we're really serious about doing something about policy in the budget where it shouldn't be, we should propose a Constitutional amendment to change it. We could do that this year and that's what we should be doing.

And for that reason I'll be voting no.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. WALSH: So while I do support the part of the bill that talks about the legislative spending, because it's a 4.5% increase over last year, I don't appreciate the additional monies that are going in for the Independent Redistricting Commission. But my real problem with this bill is the Judiciary spending. Oh, my God. It's huge. Do -- have you guys seen this? I'm sure you've seen it. I just got briefed on it this morning. But it's up 8.8% over last year. It -- it's $359.2 million more than last year, okay? It includes 15 new judgeships. Where? Not in the 4th Judicial District, I'll tell you that. I think that they're all Downstate. They're not helping us any up here. And it -- and a salary increase of 2% for all judges and justices. So I think the Legislature portion of the spending, I think it's appropriate and I'll support that, but I can't vote up on this bill because of the judiciary spending. I think it's ridiculous. I -- I don't know.

That -- but let's -- let's not end on a down note. Let me end on a happy note here. Mr. Palmesano just got up and he spoke and in true Phil Palmesano fashion, thanked every other person in this room, including his fantastic WAM staff. He thanked Philip, he thanked -- he thanked everybody else. I'd like to thank him. I mean, he stepped into some big shoes at the beginning of this Session and he stepped in and he's performed very admirably. I think that his back and forth with Chair Pretlow has been very respectful, very productive. It's been just a very honest debate and conversation and I think that's the way it ought to be. And I really want us to all thank

Phil. He didn't mention the Congo very much --

(Laughter)

A little bit. A little bit. But he was -- he was great. He was really great. He did a great job. And I just would like for myself and I think from our members and hopefully from some of yours, all of yours, we could all just say thank you to -- to Phil Palmesano and the entire WAM staff for all the wonderful work that they did.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Pretlow.

MR. PRETLOW: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, Madam Leader, I don't know how advisable it is to talk about judges' salaries as being an attorney, but I won't go -- I won't go there.

(Laughter)

Back in February, the Governor gave us a budget, her version of a budget, which was then followed by 30-day amendments. We had 14 public hearings in which leadership changed. I first sat next to Mr. Ra and then it was transferred to Mr. Palmesano and we got -- I got along perfectly with both of them. And here we are 56 days past the April 1st deadline, but we are now finalizing a budget and I think this is a good budget.

Since this is a moment of thanks, I have to first thank The Speaker, first, for giving me this position. And secondly, trusting me with the debate and defending the Governor's budget.

Secondly, I have to thank the Ways and Means staff.

As your Ways and Means staff is great, my Ways and Means staff is fantastic. And, you know, with -- under the leadership --

(Applause)

Well, it's -- it's -- it's hard -- it's hard when you start calling names, but Phil's name has been called several times. I -- I -- I don't know how he does it, but -- but Phil knows every number in those thousands of pages of budget. You ask him a number, he somehow knows the right answer. I don't know how -- how he does it. But him and -- and Marie and Victor and everyone below them, they're the team leaders, they're all just fantastic. And everybody did their thing. You know, I -- it's kind of difficult when we're doing the curly shuffle here. So I -- I would appreciate it more if we stick to one subject at a time.

(Laughter)

So -- you know. And -- but, anyway, I think we did -- we did great. I think this is a good budget. I'm glad that it's finally done. We have one week and two days of Session left and we have to do hundreds, maybe even thousands, of bills in the next time.

(Laugher)

I would appreciate if you guys didn't lay the bills aside so we can get -- get them. Vote yes, vote no, but don't lay them aside, definitely, because --

(Conferring)

Oh. I didn't thank Program and Counsel, Jen Best and her crew. Where are you, Jen? She's somewhere here. Okay.

Oh, there she is.

(Applause)

Yep. Yeah. Jen -- Jen -- Jen and Aubree, they pick up -- they -- they do the other half of this. So I think we -- there's a good team. And I -- and I think that we as a group, all of us, our colleagues, have a good camaraderie together and we all work together. We don't have any crazies on either side, which I think is a -- is a good thing and if you do, it's not showing on the floor. So that's -- that's okay.

(Laughter)

I don't know what goes on in your Conference, but I do know on the floor, everybody's most respectful and we get what we have to get done.

So, with that, I guess we can read the last section? Or is it -- is it time?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: I'll be -- we have a bit more work, Mr. Pretlow.

MR. PRETLOW: Okay.

(Laughter)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you, sir.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS JACKSON: One more time.

(Applause)

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, thank you. What an amazing opportunity to be here. I have been watching for the first time in my entire career as an Assemblymember the budget being debated virtually. I'm not sure how people watch that on TV.

(Laughter)

But I watched it, obviously, because you, one, want to keep up with the issues and two, you want to support and honor your colleagues the way you should be and paying attention to what they're saying and doing. And, certainly, at this point, want to really honor the Speaker for his ability to pull everybody together and make something out of it. This is how the sausage are made. It's not cute. In fact, it's ugly. But it gets done. So congratulations to everybody who had a part in this.

But I particularly want to honor this young man right here (indicating). Gary is such a cool person to -- you can't tell if you've upset him or not.

(Laughter)

He just nicely responds and pretty much shuts down the conversation as he does so. And so I'm really very, very proud of how you've managed to be the Chair of Ways and Means. I -- when I got here Denny Farrell was the man who was standing stellar and tall, and making it happen. And to see you follow his footsteps in the way you are is impressive. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you, Madam Majority Leader.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote's been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Republican Conference will generally be in the negative on this bill. But if there are affirmative votes, now is the time to cast them at one's seats.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference is generally gonna be in favor of this piece of legislation. However, as you know, sometimes some of us are not. And if you are not, you should feel free to do so at your seat.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Steck to explain his vote.

MR. STECK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to thank Member Walsh for take -- talking about a taboo subject. In this

year's budget hearing, I was asked as Chair of the Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse that we provide $44 million in further funding for drug court. I asked the Speaker whether she had sought the money from the Office of Court Administration. She replied that OCA said to get the money from OASAS. The OASAS budget increase is 0.1%, while OCA is getting an 8% increase. Clearly, OCA can afford to fully fund Drug Court.

We keep ceding legislative authority and funding to OCA without sound reason. OCA claims they are an independent branch of government. They misconstrue what judicial independence means. It means independence in deciding the cases before them. No one is interfering with that. But they are no different than any other state agency in relation to legislative authority over the budget. It is a rule of government that bureaucracy tends to expand its power unless it is reined in. I see the need to bring this ever-expanding giant octopus under control.

I vote in the negative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Steck in the negative.

Mr. Beephan to explain his vote.

MR. BEEPHAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To recap, I can tell you this is probably the first that I've voted for majority of the ten budget bills, but so much of what we've been advocating for is a conference as in a community was in them; from delays to the CLCPA and the bus mandate that my schools have been

asking for, to the inclusion of the desk -- Death Gamble bill for our corrections officers. I'm proud that Dutchess County is one of the counties that's included in the Universal Childcare Pilot Program. And on top of that, the increased stability for the PSC to regulate utility rate increase. And these are all things that my community has been asking for over the years.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I vote aye.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Beephan in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results)

The bill is passed.

My colleagues, we have more work to do here.

(Boos/jeers)

On the main Calendar, resolutions, page 3, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1445, Rules at the request of Ms. Kay.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim August 7, 2026, as Purple Heart Day in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Kay on the resolution.

MS. KAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Purple Heart Medal is the oldest military decoration in the world in present

use, and is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to members of the United States military who have been wounded or killed in action.

From the days of George Washington, our nation's military leaders have been awarded the Purple Heart in the name of the President to honor almost two million Americans who have been wounded in battle or killed in action. The National Purple Heart Hall of Fame [sic] is located in New Windsor, New York, and is an officially-recognized State park under the jurisdiction of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

The freedoms and the securities that we cherish as Americans come at a very high price for those serving in the military. It is fitting and it is proper that we, who are the beneficiaries of their courage, of those who risk their lives, leaving their families behind, express our appreciation and eternal gratitude for their sacrifices and courageous acts.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the late former Sullivan County District Attorney Steven Lungen, a Purple Heart recipient, and of course members in this Chamber today; Joe Angelino and our very own, the one and only Sergeant Wayne Jackson who are both recipients, and we are so grateful for your sacrifice and service.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Eachus on the resolution.

MR. EACHUS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The

National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is in my district, and the one thing that I did want to mention is that the Purple Hearts do not have a national registry. So there are a number of folks out there who have received Purple Hearts that are out and unknown. And so I would encourage all of us, if we run into somebody who has received the Purple Heart, to encourage them to take their stories to the Purple Heart Hall of Honor. They are trying to put all of the folks who were given this -- this medal recognition. So I just wanted to let you know that. It's not like the Medal of Honor or anything else which there is a national listing for.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Bendett on the resolution.

MR. BENDETT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the sponsor of this resolution for bringing this to all of our attention. I think it's really important. I also want to thank my colleague John McDonald for last year passing the Purple Heart bill and making our State a Purple Heart bill [sic]. And I also want to say that I'm grateful that my grandfather, Technical Sergeant Julius Bendett, not only had a Combat Infantry Badge, a Bronze Star, a Good Conduct Medal, but he also earned a Purple Heart as well.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Angelino on the resolution.

MR. ANGELINO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the resolution. I rise to support Purple Heart Day in the State of New

York with my humble words and voice. As was said, the Purple Heart Medal is the oldest decoration in the United States military. Under the hand of General George Washington in 1782, the Purple Heart was first awarded in New Windsor, New York, much to the chagrin of Newburgh. Every military member is eligible to receive the Purple Heart Medal, but none want to receive it. It is not awarded for merit, for achievements, your rank or recognition of any good deeds you have done. It is awarded for sacrifice. Every volunteer member of the United States military raises their right hand, takes an oath. And those magic words are actually a blank check to the United States of America. And sometimes that blank check is cash. But sometimes it's a limb, sometime it's bloodshed, and sometimes it's a life. But behind every Purple Heart Medal awarded to a soldier, an airman, a Marine or a sailor, that's actually somebody's son or daughter, a neighbor, a nephew, a loved one. It's not just as abstract as that. Young men and women, all volunteers, have been awarded this medal. As legislatures -- as legislators here in this Chamber, that's a good reminder for us to -- to think back. And the people who are awarded this medal are the ones who allow us to come in here and debate bills for the people of the State of New York. Americans put themselves in harm's way so that we can do the jobs we do here. It's more than a medal; it's a symbol of solemn courage, of sacrifice. And to every Purple Heart recipient in New York State and on behalf of our Sergeant-at-Arms who doesn't have a microphone to say these things, on behalf of everybody in America who wears this award, thank you very much for

your selfless sacrifice.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Angelino.

(Applause)

Mr. Ari Brown on the resolution.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Speaker Heastie, who was so kind to arrange for tomorrow that we can donate blood -- and I -- I'm in the, I don't know, 50-gallon mark blood donor over the last 40 years. A couple years ago I got a call to get matched to someone for a kidney, and there's a lot of testing and everything like that. They said, *You made your decision so quickly*. They said, *Yes, it was anonymous*. They told me a little bit about the person. When they told me he was a Purple Heart veteran, I said, *Wow, I can finally give back to the real heroes*. Joe Angelino, certainly our Sergeant-at-Arms Wayne Jackson. It was the least we could all do. We thank them each and every day, whether it's a tax benefit or getting up and applauding during Veterans Day or Memorial Day. But to be able to give back in that way, I'm so grateful and blessed to have done so.

So I wanna thank all of our men in the service, whether they received the Purple Heart or not, but especially those that gave sometimes life and limb. So thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Tague on the resolution.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, too, just want to say thank you to people like Wayne Jackson and especially my good friend Joe Angelino. My grandfather was also a Purple Heart recipient during World War II. But most importantly, I just wanted to say, *Joe, please shave*.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Laughter)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

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

(Applause)

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1446, Rules at the request of Mr. Sayegh.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 25, 2026 as Jordanian-American 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.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1447, Rules at the request of Mr. Gandolfo.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 1, 2026 as Police Dog 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. 1448, Rules at the request of Mr. Lavine.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 2026, as Urological Health Awareness Month in the State of New York.

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

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1449, Rules at the request of Mr. Jensen.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 6, 2026, as Danish American 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.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1450, Rules at the request of Mr. Ra.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 8, 2026, as Sight Day in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Ra on the resolution.

MR. RA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to speak quickly about this. This resolution came about a few years ago and we had the opportunity to pass it last year. And I just want to quickly mention, amongst the things that are mentioned in this resolution is a -- a congential eye condition called coloboma, which is where normal tissue in and around the eye is missing, which essentially creates a gap or a hole. It occurs during fetal development when a specialized fissure in the eye fails to close completely. It could lead to various levels of blindness from almost complete to, you know, people that are able to, you know, have -- have a little bit better vision. I have had the opportunity to -- to come to know about it over the last few years because my nephew Antonio was -- was born with this condition. And when he was about six months old during a, you know, routine doctor appointment they realized that he wasn't kind of reacting to things with his eyes and had him go get checked out. But he is going to be five years old this fall. He's in school, he's doing very well. He's the happiest kid you'd ever want to meet. But, you know, it's a challenge that he'll -- he'll carry with him throughout his life. And -- and I -- one of the great things about serving in this Chamber is us having the opportunity to bring stories of whether it's constituents or family members to create awareness for -- for these types of things.

I -- I do want to mention, if anybody is a fan of the Olympics, if you remember the pommel horse guy from the Summer Olympics last year, Stephen Nedoroscik, he actually has coloboma as

well. And he would take off his glasses and go do these world-class routines and helped, you know, the United States to a medal. So people can have very productive lives despite having vision impairments, and I'm -- I'm proud to have the opportunity to talk about my -- my nephew Antonio and spread awareness for this disease.

So thank you to my colleagues.

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. 1451, Rules at the request of Mr. Manktelow.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 21, 2026, as Pets for Veterans 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. 1452, Rules at the request of Mr. Lemondes.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 31, 2026, as Hug a Sheep Day in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Lemondes on the resolution.

MR. LEMONDES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I

know it's been a long day for everyone, myself included. Let me give everybody a reason to leave here with a smile today.

National Hug a Sheep Day is a unique celebration bringing people closer to these fluffy, loveable farm animals. Thank *The Sheep Detective* movie. If you haven't seen it, please see it.

This special day has grown into an international event with farms opening their gates for people to come and hug sheep, promoting kindness and compassion towards these gentle creatures. Celebrated since the mid-1990s, the day aims to appreciate the significant roles sheep play in our lives from providing wool for our clothes to contributing to excellent food and solar grazing, et cetera, and other uses across the domain of agriculture. It's a chance to learn more about sheep, their intelligence, and their ability to remember faces and voices for years. Engaging in activities such as farm visits, petting zoos and knitting classes are often done on this day. There's something for everyone, whether it's learning about their rectangular pupils or simply enjoying the warmth of a sheep hug.

National Hug a Sheep Day not only celebrates the bond between humans and sheep, but also highlights the importance of animal welfare and ethical treatment. It's a gentle reminder of these animals' joy and comfort in our lives and the need to treat them with love and respect. Embark on a farm adventure by finding a local farm that's open to visitors. This is your chance to get up close and personal with sheep and give them a gentle hug. It's an authentic way to experience the warmth of these woolly friends in their natural

setting. Gather your friends for a cozy get together, knitting or crocheting with sheep's wool while exchanging interesting sheep facts. It's both a creative and informative way to spend a family-friendly day with wonderful 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. 1453, Rules at the request of Mr. Maher.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 25-31, 2026, as Respiratory Care Week in the State of New York.

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

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1454, Rules at the request of Mr. Brabenec.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 2026, as German-American Heritage Month in the State of New York.

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

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1455, Rules

at the request of Mr. Bendett.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim November 17, 2026, as Young Entrepreneur 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. 1456. Rules at the request of Ms. Rosenthal.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim November 2026, as Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month in the State of New York.

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

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1460. Rules at the request of Mr. Ramos.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 27, 2026, as Taiwan 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.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1461, Rules at the request of Mr. Eachus.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 27, 2026, as Senior Health & Fitness Day in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Eachus on the resolution.

MR. EACHUS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today in support of this resolution being a super senior myself and constantly need reminding about my health and my fitness. So I proclaim that today, May 27, 2026 is Senior Health and Fitness Day in the State of New York. On the last Wednesday in May we celebrate and recognize the efforts to increase health awareness and promote involvement and physical activity amongst our seniors citizens. Participating in Senior Health and Fitness Day has numerous health benefits. Being active can decrease a fall risk, reduce blood pressure and help maintain healthy bones and muscles. Our senior citizens have a vast wealth of experience and knowledge that they pass on to the next generations. It's important that we support the activity for people to be happy and healthy. Senior Health and Fitness Day is an opportunity to boost the health and wellness of our aging population and to provide necessary educational resources to promote the benefits of being active.

I hope my colleagues will join me in voting for this resolution. Thank you.

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. 1462, Rules at the request of Ms. Simon.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month in the State of New York.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Simon on the resolution.

MS. SIMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in support of this resolution. May is Mental Health Awareness Month. And as Chair of the Mental Health Committee, I have been inundated with information about the way our State provides services, the good work that our State does to help people with mental illness, and the work that we still need to do.

I'm -- I know that you join me in recognizing that mental illness affects all of us. It affects all of our communities. It is a crying need that is becoming a greater need every day in our society. And I am just very grateful to have the support for an issue that I know is truly bipartisan. In my committee we have very few questions about the votes because everybody cares about mental health. And we need to do more. I'm very happy that we're doing more on youth mental health this year in the budget, and all the work that we've done to help people with mental illness with community-based services, which are so much more effective than the more institutional-based services.

So I want to thank all of you again for your work and for your help and your support, and I encourage you all to vote yea on this resolution. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Chandler-Waterman on the resolution.

MS. CHANDLER-WATERMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I rise to recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month, and we wear green. As a member of the Mental Health Committee and the Co-Chair of the Anti-Gun Violence Subcommittee of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic Asian Caucus [sic], the -- the work the State carries out to support communities is crucial. We need -- we need to make sure we underscore the strong need for real investment in holistic mental health solutions for our communities as we work to destigmatize and decriminalize mental health. We need to ensure we are person-centered in our approach, peer-led, and culturally responsive, increasing the very effective clubhouse model around the State. We have taken steps for, as a State, by dedicating a three-digit number, 988, a crisis and suicide prevention hotline, in an effort to remove a police response and have mental health professionals to support.

We also changed the term "emotionally disturbed person", EDP, to "a person experiencing an emotional crisis", PEC. Language is very important. How you talk about a person is how you treat them. We also took great steps in strengthening oversight like incident review panels to ensure mental health incidents are

thoroughly investigated and results are transparent so we can learn from these situations to improve. So individuals living with mental health conditions, mental health professionals and caretakers are all protected and supported. This year, along with our amazing Chair Simon of Mental Health, the sponsor of this resolution, we requested the Office of Mental Health to activate the Incident Review Panel to look into Lieutenant Michael Lynch, a retired FDN [sic] and NYPD officer that died in a police-involved shooting at the hospital while displaying signs of acute mental health crisis. We need to understand what happened in this instance to prevent other individuals, families and health professionals and hospital staff from experiencing traumatic experiences like this. A hospital is supposed to be a safe space, and we have a tool to access and restore hope.

We also make great strides by investing $8 million in Daniel's Law this Session, a pilot program to ensure we have peers and community stakeholders leading the conversation on what mental health services, resources and programs should look like in our communities. The trauma of gun violence and domestic violence have a severe impact on families and communities. We have to ensure we support survivors in a real way. We must also focus on survivors of violence who deal with the trauma long after their loved one is buried. This Session we need to take significant steps to ensure that there is expansion of support of the Office of Victim Services to assist survivors who are recovering from trauma and rebuild their lives. Barriers have prevented the families of the victims of violence from

receiving necessary claims and support. It's not just burial reimbursement, but mental health support, victim compensation, programs to help survivors pay for costs, medical bills, mental health and family counseling, crime scene cleanup and so much more. No family after dealing with the tragedy of losing a loved one should further -- be further traumatized by having to figure out funds to bury their loved one or being denied because they are told their loved ones contributed to their death, or being denied because GoFundMe accounts that help cover funeral costs.

Millions of Americans struggle with mental health challenges every day, and are subject to stigma, systematic barriers to care, insurance issues, a shortage of providers, discrimination, expensive treatment and so much more issues we don't even know about because these individuals feel they do not have a voice. And this is the reality of many New Yorkers in communities of color.

I vote in the affirmative. And we have so much work to do, but we have done so much great steps in the State. So I encourage my colleagues to do the same. Thank you to the sponsor on this resolution. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

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

Ms. Lunsford.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: We have both.

On a motion by Mr. Bores, page 30, Calendar No. 163, Bill No. A06540-D, the amendments are received and adopted.

On a motion by Ms. Paulin, page 39, Calendar No. 379, Bill No. A10307, the amendments are received and adopted.

A resolution by Mr. Fitzpatrick, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1457, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Legislative Resolution mourning the untimely death and paying tribute to the life and heroic service of Nassau County Police Officer Patricia Espinosa, who died on Saturday, January 31, 2026.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Fitzpatrick on the resolution.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This legislative resolution mourns the untimely death and pays tribute to the life and heroic service of Nassau Police Officer -- Nassau County Police Officer Patricia Espinosa, who died on Saturday, January 31, 2026.

Police Officer Espinosa tragically died in a car accident on her way to work that morning when she was struck by a truck driven by a young man who was later arrested and charged with drunk driving. Though I did not know Police Officer Espinosa personally, she and her family lived around the block from me. At her funeral mass held at Saint Patrick's Church in Smithtown, community

support was overwhelming. The outpouring of the law enforcement family and friends who came to honor her life and mourn her death was a tribute to the respect they had for her. A tragedy that never should have happened, by a reckless individual who cut her life short in an instant.

Police Officer Espinosa was the wife of Nassau County Police Officer Francisco Malaga, and the mother of their two-year-old daughter Mia. Police Officer Espinosa immigrated from Quito, Ecuador when she was 21 years of age. She previously served as a New York State correction officer prior to becoming a police officer in 2017. Police Officer Espinosa -- Patricia Espinosa worked in the 5th Precinct of the Nassau County Police Department, was actively involved with the Nassau County Police Hispanic Society, served as a training officer and participated in youth mentorship initiatives and community outreach.

May this resolution express the sincere condolences of this legislative Body to the family of Police Officer Patricia Espinosa, who served the community and this State with integrity and courage. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Solages on the resolution.

MS. SOLAGES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I rise with a heavy heart to honor Nassau County Police Officer Patricia Espinosa and recognize a life of service that ended far too soon.

For me, this resolution is especially personal because Patricia served in the 5th Precinct that cover the communities that I know and represent, including Elmont, South Borough Park, Franklin Square and Valley Stream. In so many ways, she personified what community policing was. She showed up consistently to community members. And for them they never saw a uniform, they saw a person who cared. Who came to community events. Who came to school events. Who talked to young people in such a beautiful way. She was a mother, a wife, a colleague, a neighbor in spirit to so many families in the 5th Precinct and beyond.

She was an active member of the Nassau County Police Hispanic Society, and did so much work with the Make a Wish Foundation, where she really made a difference in so many people's lives. Her work reflected a powerful idea that communities are strongest when people feel seen, respected and protected. And every day she put on that uniform, she made a decision to serve our community in such a special way. This is why this loss feels so profound.

To her family, thank you for sharing her with our community. Public service is something that you never carry alone, and families make a sacrifice, too, and we recognize that today. Today's resolution cannot erase the loss, but I want to ensure that Officer Espinosa's legacy endures. May we remember her as someone who embodied service, strengthened community trust, and remind us that behind the badge is a human committed to making sure that we

are all protected in a way that we deserve.

May her memory be a blessing to us all, and thank you so much. We will miss you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

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

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

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

(Whereupon, Assembly Resolution Nos. 1462-1472 were unanimously adopted.)

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: I now move that the Assembly stand adjourned and that we reconvene at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, May 28th, tomorrow being a Session day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: 10:00 a.m. tomorrow. On Ms. Lunsford's motion, the House stands adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 8:29 p.m., the House stood adjourned until Thursday, May 28th at 10:00 a.m., that being a Session day.)