FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026 **11:45 A.M.**

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The House will come to order.

(Applause)

Good morning and happy last day of Session, everyone.

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 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 Thursday, June 4th.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Madam Speaker, I move to dispense with the further reading of the Journal of Thursday, June the 4th and that the same stand approved.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Without objection, so ordered.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you so much. Colleagues and guests that are in the Chambers today, I would like to share a quote with you from James Baldwin. Most of you have heard from, he's an American writer, a civil rights activist who got a lot of acclaim for his work around novels, plays and poems. Unfortunately, he's no longer with us, but his words still remain. *Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it's faced*. Again, these words from James Baldwin.

Madam Speaker, members have on their desks a main Calendar, and before any housekeeping or introductions we probably will be calling for Rules after Ways and Means is done. These committees are going to produce an A- and a B-Calendar of which we will take up today. We'll begin our floor work today by taking up consent of Rules Report No. 530 from Mr. O'Pharrow, then we're going to take up the following bills on debate: Rules Report No. 506 by Mr. Bores. And if it's necessary, Madam Speaker, we will announce further floor activity at that time.

That's the general outline of where we're going.

Perhaps you can start with introductions and any housekeeping you may have.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you. We have no housekeeping this morning, but we do have an introduction.

Mr. Sayegh for the purpose of an introduction.

MR. SAYEGH: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Today is special because like the Majority Leader, this is my last day in Session. And I recall some eight years ago this young man was born and -- and celebrated. At that time my election and was sworn in. Took office in November 2018. At that time my family came up with me, and -- and today they're basically saying, Let's take him back home because now with Matthew Nshiewat being the first grandkids [sic] born, he's now turning eight in August, right? But there's seven others grandkids. So we've come a long way. We got involved here making political decisions, but at the same time expanded family, expanded our working community. And today it's really my pleasure to introduce not only Matthew Nshiewat, my oldest grandson, but a role model who among family events already takes the lead in introducing birthday greetings and other celebratory things. So, therefore, the same boy he's following the footsteps of Grandpa. So it makes me very proud. And I have with me two of my five daughters, you know, with my wife Sana. We raised five beautiful daughters, who's -- is one is a radiologist, Samia, who's here with me; Hana, who's an educator; Mary, who's a pediatric dentist; Lana, who's an educator; and Teresa, who's an attorney.

So it's really, for me, a success, a pleasure to have served here, to have initiated a lot of positive discussions and met a lot of wonderful people. So, Madam Speaker, please, if you can give the full the cordialities of the House to my wife Sana, Samia, Lana, and especially my grandson Matthew.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Yes, of course.

On behalf of Mr. Sayegh, the Speaker and all members, we welcome your beautiful family to the Assembly Chamber, to our People's House, extending to you the privileges of the floor. To your wife, thank you so very much for being gracious to allow your husband to spend eight years with us. I know it was many nights and days away from home, but he has truly been a valuable member of this Body. To your daughters, thank you again, as well. He speaks of you often on the floor and all of the successes. And to Matthew, you are very charming and you're going to go very, very far. You're here already. You look much older and wiser than you actually are. So we are looking for great things for you in the future. To all of you, we hope you enjoy the proceedings today. Thank you so very much for being here with us.

(Applause)

On consent, page 13, Rules Report No. 530, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11570, Rules Report No. 530, Committee on Rules (O'Pharrow). An act implementing an agreement between the State and an employee organization; providing

for the adjustment of salaries of certain incumbents in the professional service in the State University; and making an appropriation for the purpose of effectuating certain provisions thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. O'Pharrow, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Members, we are going to be on debate. Page 13, Rules Report No. 506, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Senate No. S09051-B, Rules Report No. 506, Senator Gonzalez (A10379-C, Bores, Shimsky, Lee, McMahon, Stirpe, Conrad, Hevesi, Lunsford, Burdick, Burroughs, Wright, Tapia, Simon, Kay, Clark, Steck, Norber, Lasher, Shrestha, Eichenstein, Levenberg, Davila, Simone, K. Brown, Smith, Jacobson). An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to prohibiting artificial intelligence companions from using features which are considered unsafe for minors.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: An explanation has

been requested.

Mr. Bores.

MR. BORES: In late 2024, Adam Raine was 16 years old and thinking of harming himself. Like many teenagers, Adam had been turning to ChatGPT for months for homework, for his driver's test prep, for everyday questions. So when the darkest thoughts came, he turned to ChatGPT for those, too. According to his parents' lawsuit, it told him that his suicidal feelings made sense and gave him specific instructions on how to end his life. It told him it would write the first draft of his suicide note. And when Adam said he wanted to leave evidence out so his family would find it and stop him, ChatGPT urged him not to.

We're here to make sure that no other parent has to go through the unthinkable, what Adam's parents went through. We're here to hold chatbot developers to the same standard that any responsible parent would. This bipartisan bill simply requires that if you cannot make a chatbot safe for children, you should not make it available for children. It does have substantial opposition from Tech: NYC, the Business Council, the IT Industry Council and companies like Anthropic. But we cannot look New York parents in the eyes any longer and tell them that we are not taking the safety of their children seriously.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. -- oh, excuse me. Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Madam Speaker, Ways

and Means has completed their work. Could you please call the Rules Committee to the Conference Room?

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

Mr. Durso.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. BORES: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. DURSO: Mr. Bores, thank you for explaining why this bill is so important. I just have some clarifying questions, if that would be okay with you.

MR. BORES: Please.

MR. DURSO: So, can you explain the difference between an AI companion and a general AI assistant?

MR. BORES: So an AI companion is already defined in New York law, and this bill references that definition. It adds a new definition of a covered AI companion, which definition 5 here, shall mean a generative AI system with natural language interface including via writing or sound that provides ongoing adaptive responses to user inputs. It includes, but is not limited to, the prior definition of an AI companion. I also note that later in the bill it

excludes certain use cases, such as in customer service direct responses from being covered by the provisions of the bill.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So to be a little bit more specific, so would, like, ChatGPT, things like Gemini, Claude or similar products fall within the bill's definition?

MR. BORES: Yes.

MR. DURSO: Okay. And then what specific products operating today would become illegal under this bill?

MR. BORES: No -- no product becomes illegal. But it -- certain features within those products cannot be made available to kids.

MR. DURSO: Okay. And then does this bill require companies to determine whether a user is a minor?

MR. BORES: Correct.

MR. DURSO: How would they go about doing that?

MR. BORES: So, there is already rulemaking underway from the Attorney General that this bill would rely upon. It also provides alternatives within the bill if that rulemaking is not in place by the time the bill comes into effect.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So will the companies that are required to do age verification, would the user then have to be -- show some type of identification, send that into the company?

MR. BORES: The -- the bill specifically says that at least one of the methods for identifying age cannot be reliant on government ID.

MR. DURSO: So it will not be reliant on a government --

MR. BORES: Yes. So it will not be a requirement that you have government ID or show a government ID.

MR. DURSO: Got it. So how do you foresee, then, these companies getting that age verification? And -- and I hope they do, I'm just trying to understand.

MR. BORES: Yeah, I know. And this -- this rulemaking is ongoing. Much like with social media products, these companies are already often estimating the age of their users in the engagement and interaction. They are learning a lot about us by everything that we type in. The specifics of exactly how they do and what best practices are, again, that's part of the rulemaking process I don't wanna get ahead of. But these companies already have a very good idea.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So within this bill -- or is it gonna be up to the each individual company as far as data protection for when it comes to those IDs or any information that's inputted, trying to make sure that age verification is done?

MR. BORES: It -- it -- it says within the bill that they need to hold that information for the least amount of time possible and just for the purpose of understanding the age of the users.

MR. DURSO: Okay. And now is there any penalties within this bill or -- or rules that may be promulgated by the AG's office if a minor falsely claims that they are of age?

MR. BORES: There -- there's no penalization on minors' action.

MR. DURSO: Right.

MR. BORES: This is about regulating the products themselves and the companies making the products.

MR. DURSO: So that's -- and that leads me to my next question. If a minor or anybody is to use false identification -- because obviously you're not requiring an ID -- and are able to get on to one of these programs but they are a minor. By using false identification, is the company then held liable?

MR. BORES: What -- what is said in the bill is that if they know it is a minor or if they go through the process and are establishing best practices to understand if it is a minor, that is when they have to take action on the features. Again, I don't wanna get ahead of the rulemaking. But if -- if there's a, like, complex fraud that is done to confuse the operators, I don't think they would be liable based on the text of the bill.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So just to get an idea of what would be covered. So educational AI tutors would be covered with this?

MR. BORES: Yeah. They would be covered in that they couldn't provide unsafe features, yes.

MR. DURSO: So if they were using it in, let's say a school setting, right, in a -- in an elementary school, middle school, even high school, because most of the time they're minors in high

school unless you're 18.

MR. BORES: Yup.

MR. DURSO: Is it gonna be the user that's using the program? So in other words, the teacher, the teacher's assistant, the school itself that has to be the -- the adult, or can the children in the school -- you know, my -- my kids have their own iPads for school. If that program's downloaded to their computer, are they allowed to have that even though they are minors?

MR. BORES: Again, this does not ban any product going to minors, it just bans certain features going. So it's not saying that you wouldn't be able to have a educational chatbot, it's saying that educational chatbot can't sext the kids.

MR. DURSO: Thank you. That's -- that's a good thing. But again -- but again, just making sure and just trying to understand this because I'm literally learning this as we're speaking about it. The -- those chatbots that are on certain programs that are gonna be asking for identification to make sure you're an adult would have to have separate features, you're saying, if a minor is using it, correct?

MR. BORES: Yes. The user matters, and it's based on who the user is. And so when a minor is using a product, there need to be restricted features. You could have the option to, when an adult uses the product, turn on other features. But it's about the interaction that a minor user has with the product.

MR. DURSO: Understood. So just so I understand,

and I apologize again, if that program is downloaded by the school, let's just say, or a tutoring service or anything, an adult has probably downloaded. Then that download is getting shared within whatever type of laptop, computer, all the students have throughout the school who are all minors. So does the original download of that program by an adult and then put on to each individual computer even though it's -- it's the same program, right, have to have individual features for each individual computer that it is downloaded on to? If I'm not making sense, you know, I'm trying to explain it --

MR. BORES: No, no, no. I -- I --

MR. DURSO: Again, my daughter has certain programs on her laptop that everybody in the school has. Obviously, she's a minor. She didn't download it, though. The school did or the teacher or whoever. It -- how does that work going from the teacher who's an adult downloading it to a child having it on a program on their computer?

MR. BORES: Yeah, it -- it's about who the user is. So by way of a slight analogy here, right, you can have an operating system that has multiple user accounts on it. You could have a, you know, a gaming system or a game that you download that has different user accounts on it that shows you different features based on if you are a user. And similarly with the chatbot, this regulation is about who the user is, not who downloads it or sets it up.

MR. DURSO: So it's individualized per --

MR. BORES: Yes.

MR. DURSO: -- computer or -- or laptop or --

MR. BORES: Per user. Per user.

MR. DURSO: -- tablet -- per user that it's on. Thank you. And then obviously, could this -- regardless of feelings on it, could this bill discourage companies from making AI tools available to New York minors all together?

MR. BORES: I don't believe so. I think there is a basic standard here, I would say, of decency. But -- but broadly, we've had no problem banning apps from, for example, making child sexual abuse material or doing other things that we think should not be allowed. We've already put restrictions on engagements with chatbots. I don't see -- there are other states that have passed bills restricting them. I don't see a risk of companies pulling out of New York because we're telling them that they can't send these kinds of messages to kids.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Mr. Bores. I appreciate you answering my questions. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Blumencranz.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. BORES: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So I just have some more questions surrounding some of the definitions. So in Section 1800(8)(d) you list unsafe features -- any output that engage in flattery or sychopathy [sic] with the user.

MR. BORES: Yes.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: How do you define sychopathy [sic] within the text of the bill?

MR. BORES: Yeah, sycophancy is relying on sort of common knowledge of the word. There's not a specific added definition here. What we're seeing from chatbots, especially some of the older versions, was a tendency to always affirm a user and always affirm the opinions, even if those opinions were ones that were clearly wrong or in some cases harmful. And what this is meant to target is, you know, when a teenager or -- or a child is saying actions that might lead them down a path towards self-harm that those aren't reaffirmed, that those aren't encouraged, and that, you know, the AI chatbot is actually acting as a check there.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: And we have seen that, and it is concerning to see the way that some chatbots have acted in the past. I'm concerned a little bit with some contradictory nature of some of these and I was curious if you could explain it to me. So in Section 1800(8)(i) it requires that a bot steer a kid away from self-harm, which means being typically supportive and kind, or maybe being very flatline and saying, *Don't do that*. Yet in 8-d of the same section it bans flattery, and (e) bans unprompted emotional check-ins. So if a

child signals distress, is that a prompted check-in and thus can it provide some form of emotional language?

MR. BORES: Sorry, I'm not sure I'm following. So (i) says that it cannot generate outputs that contain the endorsement or promotion of or which facilitates suicide, self-harm, disordered eating, unlawful drug or alcohol use or drug or alcohol abuse, and (d) says that it cannot engage in flattery or sycophancy. I -- I'm not exactly following how this conflicts (indiscernible/crosstalk) --

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So my point is if I'm navigating how to deal with this, if -- if the individual prompted by saying it's struggling with something, maybe self-harm in some capacity as defined in the bill, how and in what demeanor is it supposed to respond if it can't respond relatively emotionally if appealing to compassion or trying to change behaviors or at no point should it do anything but refer you to a mental health professional. What's the expectation of how this is supposed to go?

MR. BORES: Well, I -- I think you're right that it should be referring to mental health professional, generally. But it -- it's not saying that it can never engage with a user. It's saying it can't promote self-harm and these other aspects that are there.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So but let's say someone expresses -- a minor expresses some concern, and then within that concern -- in the response to that concern the chatbot responds, *I'm so sorry to hear that you feel that way. You know, your life is -- is worth something*, could that be defined as -- as -- as flattery under the

definitions or the broad nature of the definition of flattery?

MR. BORES: No. I -- I don't think it's flattery to reaffirm the basic value of human life. I think that's a -- a core thing that is not going beyond -- into -- into sycophancy.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So with regards to the application when it comes to the age verification, I know that's been a concern for many in the industry, I have an Alexa in my home. Many people, millions of Americans and -- and many New Yorkers have some form of -- of home device like Alexa or Apple Home with Siri and others. You said it's based on the user, correct, not necessarily based on the individual who's speaking to that Alexa in that moment?

MR. BORES: I -- I'm -- I'm unsure what the difference is between the user and (indiscernible/crosstalk) --

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: I have little sisters. They would -- they would fall under the category of this bill. They live in a -- a family home with parents who have set up the Alexa. They actively participate and talk to the Alexa on -- on different levels throughout the day. They're a child interacting with the platform, yet they're not the ones that set it up. So how is Amazon supposed to know that the interactions they're having with the user is with a child and not the actual user who signed up?

MR. BORES: Yeah, I -- I think it's about, again, who the person speaking is, the user is. I think we can leave it up to the company that if -- and I don't have an Alexa, but I'm not sure if the Alexa is now programmed to sext people or to -- to encourage

self-harm, but I -- I don't think these are features that are built-in to most of these products. If those are features that these companies want to build into the products, then yes, they should make sure that they have some way of ensuring that kids don't engage with that.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: I mean, your bill expands more than just the -- the negative feedback loops they can get it because it -- it bans certain ways that they can purely interact with the individual it's speaking to; A, because you require age verification for usage; and B, because it also makes the device delete memory if it is under the suspicion that it's talking to a minor. So how -- how -- enforcement seems difficult here, when typically, especially with family devices like that, you don't necessarily know who you're speaking with?

MR. BORES: Yeah. I -- this is a question that these companies already have to navigate with things like the Children's Data Privacy Law that we passed last year where there are certain requirements, there are certain protections that we, as a society, think should apply to protecting children. And if there's certain features that you want to introduce that -- that may not be appropriate, we expect companies to take action to segregate those. I -- you know, whether that's asking are there kids in the house when it's set up, whether that's through some other method that comes through the rulemaking process that will occur, I think ensuring that there's certain protections for kids is -- is a core State interest.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So you bring up a really

good point. So let's say I -- the setup would be, you know, I'm setting up my Alexa from my home. They ask a question, *Is [sic] there other family members within the home*, your memory requirement of after 12 hours of deletion and a -- a requirement that there can't be a memory basis for minors. Let's say I'm an adult in the home and I like that I use my Alexa to remind me to take my medications every day or to play my favorite music. Would it be unlawful for a device like an Alexa to do that for me if I have a child in my home in order to comply with this law?

MR. BORES: No, A, because you're a different user, but B, because the specific clause you're talking about, (f) is about a user's mental or physical health or well-being or matters personal to the user. It is based on many cases that we've seen where a child emphasizes some -- or expresses some amount of self-doubt or -- or depression, and then the chatbot continues to prod at those issues, time after time after time. Things that are not core to their mental health I don't think fall under that section.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Or -- or personal in nature, correct, is the second prong of that?

MR. BORES: Yes. In -- in totality --

(Indiscernible/crosstalk)

-- using information concerning the user's mental or physical health or well-being or matters personal to the user.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So a matter personal to a user. How do you define what is personal to a user?

MR. BORES: Again, I -- I think in the context of this bill and of that clause, what we are referring to are these instances where kids have expressed a certain thought that then the chatbots continue to bring up and to emphasize and -- into the very plastic brains the very, very -- you know, the -- kids' brains are not fully formed. Their very malleable brains continue to repeat that thought and take them further down that pathway. That's what this -- this clause (indiscernible/crosstalk).

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So I -- I do understand and I think the objective is laudable. Where I'm concerned is what if a child asks, *Alexa, play me sad songs. Alexa, I like X-type of music* that -- that could be interpreted as the sort of communication that might be banned in this legislation, no?

MR. BORES: I don't think so. I don't think that's about their -- their deep mental health.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: But your bill doesn't just say things related to mental health or personal issues. So that -- there seems to be a catchall there that is of concern.

MR. BORES: I -- I don't think asking for a specific genre of music is covered.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Even if there's an emotional connotation to the music?

MR. BORES: Again, if it's a specific genre, no. If a child were to say -- and I'm sorry to keep saying this word, and I should have said there's -- there's -- we should have a content warning

for this debate. But if they were to say something like, *Give me songs I can commit suicide to*, that would be a different thing. But if they were to say, *Play me this genre*, that -- that doesn't seem covered, no.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So if Alexa says -- if a child goes up to an Alexa in a family and that -- it's a device that's covered and would know it's a child, if they went up to Alexa and said, *Alexa, I'm sad today*. What is Alexa's response -- they're not allowed to be affirming at all, either, saying -- you know, say anything positive to the child anymore, or is it more --

MR. BORES: No. That -- there's nothing in the bill that says that. But -- but what it is meant to discourage is if a child says, *Oh, I'm sad today*, that the next day it doesn't bring up again, *Are you still feeling sad? This is what brought you down yesterday. How sad do you still feel*, and keep pushing them down that path.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: But if it's an expressed emotion by the Alexa, wouldn't it be engaged in an emotional interaction?

MR. BORES: No. Again, I think -- I think you're referring to earlier in the definitions where it's sort of taking on a persona, maybe is what you're referring to here, where it is pretending to be its own living thing, which is different than engaging in a conversation with the -- the child about how they're feeling at the moment.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So it can have a -- I don't think Alexa has reached a level of sophistication at this point where it

takes on a -- a personality, but it does engage. It's meant to engage almost in a human nature. So the response level is just -- it -- it can't be a through line, you're saying, of -- of consistently remembering what the child has said previously, but it can still be empathetic in some capacity to the user?

MR. BORES: I think that's fair.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So can you state for the record whether Alexa, Siri, Google or other assistants -- similar voice assistants are covered by this bill and whether or not you think that there should be an exception written for some of those home products that may have some concerns and issues in compliance?

MR. BORES: Obviously, the features of all these products are changing all the time. And so to say a declarative statement right now I think would perhaps be misleading. What is --

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: But under -- under the current --

MR. BORES: If I could just finish that answer.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Sure.

MR. BORES: What is said in the bill is that it does not apply when a covered AI companion is made available to covered users solely for the purpose of customer service or to strictly provide users with information about available commercial services or products provided by a business entity, customer service account information or other information strictly related to customer service or providing efficiency improvements or research or technical assistance

provided that the covered AI companion is not moving outside of that, or with respect to any system used by a business entity for internal purposes or employee productivity. So insofar as a device is being used just to order from Amazon and is not doing things outside of that, I don't think that would be covered. If it starts putting into it some generative AI to have a conversation to pretend to be a user, then it would likely be covered. I think it is -- is dependent on the features.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: So Amazon is a great example because Amazon has quite the umbrella. Amazon provides medical services and -- and pharmaceutical services now. As part of its future features maybe it would connect you to remote medical services. How would a company like that have to walk a fine line when it comes to connecting two services, which is exempt, but not necessarily engaging in the types of conversations that are explicitly not allowed any longer under the definition?

MR. BORES: I think these are lines these companies are used to walking. When you talk about health data, they have to follow HIPAA in some cases and in other cases not, based on the nature of the data. I mean, this is -- data is complex. These interactions are complex. We're trying to set a baseline of the kinds of really unsafe features that shouldn't be made available to kids.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: But don't you think given, like HIPAA data, it's -- there's pretty, clear set defined sets of guidelines and rules and regulations surrounding what the words on the page mean. I find that within the context of this bill -- again, I

think it's a -- a great concept, but in execution I find that there are some serious concern within the definitions surrounding how compliance is supposed to work. And is that up to the AG to determine whether or not that case --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Blumencranz, do you want to use your second 15?

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Okay.

MR. BORES: The bill is limited to AG enforcement, if that's your question, on how the pieces of this are determined. And there's rulemaking around two places, including how we define -- how they have to test what a minor is and the age verification.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Has the AG's office been in communication with you as far as equipping themselves with the expertise to deal with, like, the Child Safety AI Act [sic] and this Act --

MR. BORES: Yes.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: -- their ability to actually prosecute and participate in this process?

MR. BORES: Yes. The AG's office has been a -- a partner in moving this bill forward and bringing this protection to New Yorkers.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Okay. All right, thank you. I have no more questions.

MR. BORES: Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Norber.

MR. NORBER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. BORES: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. NORBER: Thank you very much for answering all the questions before. I just have a few more regarding enforcement and how it would look. So you just touched on that a little bit at the end of this debate with our colleague. So the AG will be involved specifically with enforcing violations against companies such as, let's say, ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok?

MR. BORES: Yes.

MR. NORBER: And how would that work? How would a complaint work? How would they know that something is going on which actually might be harmful to a minor somewhere in New York State?

MR. BORES: Yeah, so Section 1802 deals with enforcement, and the Attorney General can come upon this information from many ways. Obviously, the most -- the most tragic is after something occurs --

MR. NORBER: Right.

MR. BORES: -- and becomes a big news story, as we've seen far too frequently. But clause 2 of that section also says

the Attorney General shall maintain a website to receive complaints, information or referrals from members of the public. So it becomes a way of gathering that information as well.

MR. NORBER: Okay. Because the stories I usually see or we're hearing about after the fact, sadly, is that the parents are not usually involved sometimes, they don't know what's going on. They missed how quickly a situation deteriorated for -- for their child, for their minor. And so it's just something that I'm not sure a minor would be able to present to their parents. The parents would actually have to make the complaint, they would have to go to the AG and then they would receive a violation, which I'm not even sure a company such as Grok or ChatGPT would pay too much attention to with all this expansion and race towards AI that we're having and witnessing throughout the world. We have 4,000 databases in the -- in the country. So this enforcement -- I would love the enforcement. I would like to see these huge violations, but it's just I wanna see -- there has to be so many factors in place so that this actually takes place.

MR. BORES: I -- I agree. It would be great to see even additional monitoring or other ways of this coming about. Right now there's what's reported in the media, we're making a website so that it can be reported more directly. And we're also, honestly, by having debates like this and (indiscernible) spreading the news that parents should be looking out for this --

MR. NORBER: Right.

MR. BORES: -- and be aware of what's coming.

MR. NORBER: Have you considered in the bill any -- any other bill, maybe in the Department of Education, to help parents understand what AI even is? Because we're -- we still don't even know what AI is and we're just going with it. And it's very important that we have these enforcements in place and implement them. But --

MR. BORES: That -- that is a great idea. And any time someone has asked me a question like that before, I've been able to say, *I would love to work with you on that next year*, and unfortunately, this time I'm gonna to have to say I would love to support you from the outside on that.

MR. NORBER: All right. Understood. What are the violations? Let's say -- what are the penalties?

MR. BORES: The penalties are up to $25,000 for the violations.

MR. NORBER: Okay. And a violation actually would be in the case where, from what I understand from the previous questions being answered, if let's say a -- a minor is suffering through something through mental health, and specifically, the ChatGPT, let's say, is going to say something towards committing suicide or helping in that way?

MR. BORES: Yes. When you -- when you offer a feature to a minor or do not do the age verification that is required -- and I should say the enforcement is more than just the penalties; it

also empowers injunctive relief and restitution are in discord from any profits gained as part of it.

MR. NORBER: Okay. Very good. So let's say they're noticing -- because you touched upon that a little before on the sad songs, the depressed situation -- will ChatGPT even be able to recognize when somebody's going through some type of mental health issue? In general, not just minors, but a -- anybody, in any situation? Do we know --

MR. BORES: Yeah. The -- the bill we actually passed as part of the budget last year on AI companions put some standards on what AI companions -- which is a subset of what we're covering here -- have to do in terms of recognizing potential mental states and -- and potential harm in users. So I strongly believe that there should be some sort of standard here. This is mostly about ensuring that certain features that are risky are not made available to children.

MR. NORBER: Okay. Very good. All right. Thank you very much for answering my questions.

MR. BORES: Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. BORES: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MS. WALSH: Great. Thank you.

MR. BORES: Thank you.

MS. WALSH: So as expected the last day that we'll be here, I'm running around doing a lot of different things. And so I -- I apologize in advance if I'm duplicating some questions that you've already tackled. I tried to keep an ear open and -- and cut the list down, but --

MR. BORES: These are important issues and I'm happy to clarify.

MS. WALSH: Disclaimer right up front. Okay. All right. So the bill's justification cites harm from AI companion chatbots specifically designed for emotional relationships. But the bill's definition captures all generative AI with a natural language interface. Why didn't you just limit the bill to the systems causing the documented harms?

MR. BORES: Well, my apologies. I said this in my opening. But the -- the -- one of the cases that we -- this bill was really inspired by was that of Adam Raine, a 16-year-old that turned to ChatGPT for help with homework and then ChatGPT ended up within six months coaching him into -- into suicide, bringing up the topic itself something like 1,200 times, I believe, telling him to hide evidence of his distress. And so the harm is coming from broad AI chatbots, not just those that are designed to be a smaller subset of

companions. And so it's about the specific features that cause the risk versus specific designs of the chatbots themselves.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right. The bill exempts customer service chatbots only if they are, quote, "unable to respond on topics outside of the specified purpose." Do you believe that any modern AI system can be technically constrained to never respond outside of a specified topic?

MR. BORES: Yes, actually. There's certain architectures where that might not be true, but AI is a broad field and there certainly are some in there that can be much more deterministic. But I would also add that even systems that are purely probabilistic, we, as a society, are okay putting some of these hard requirements on. So we ban any of the AI systems from generating CSAM, child sexual abuse material. Certain models, it's tough to say that you can do 100 percent guarantee that it never would, but we still, as a society, say, *You have to figure it out and if that goes wrong you're gonna be liable for it*. It's a similar -- similar approach here.

MS. WALSH: Okay. I think from what I could hear that you already had quite a bit of conversation and debate already on the issues of, like, AI tutors and -- and that issue, so I will skip over that. But the bill prohibits using personal information acquired more than 12 hours prior. Does this mean that a tutoring AI cannot remember what chapter a student was studying yesterday?

MR. BORES: No. It's -- it's about chatbots referencing things of a deeply personal nature related to someone's

mental or -- or physical health. The idea is that we've seen chatbots, once a child or -- or someone of any age, references a particular insecurity or specific thoughts or ideas correlated with depression or with topics that bring them down that chat -- some chatbots will then continue to reference that idea and push people further and further along a path. And so this is meant as a -- a check and a stopgap on that, that if it's something of a deeply personal nature the chatbot shouldn't be continuing to remember it. If it's about what chapter you were on on a book, that's -- that's not of deeply personal nature.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right. I think I understand. So is part of what you're saying that part of the problem that you're hoping to correct is that idea that some of us can get into, like, a perseverative loop, you know, where we -- we think about something and we can't really stop thinking about it, and -- and this use of technology could inadvertently by -- reinforce it and perpetuate that loop and maybe a spiral as a result?

MR. BORES: Exactly right.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right. Can the sponsor -- could you define flattery or sycophancy with enough precision that an operator would know whether saying, "Great question" to a 16-year-old violates this law?

MR. BORES: I believe that they can. My belief is based on the fact that OpenAI has released models and users have responded, *Oh, this one's really sycophantic, oh, this one is not*, and they've clearly tuned it internally and responded in training. So this is

something they're already tracking quite well, and all of the operators are tracking quite well. And so I think there is enough sort of common understanding of what -- of what that means.

MS. WALSH: They're figuring it out, in other words, the industry is. Okay. Alrighty. All right.

The bill prohibits outputs, quote, "suggesting that the covered AI companion experiences human emotions." Would -- would an AI saying, "I'm happy to help" violate this provision?

MR. BORES: I -- I don't think so, in that that's sort of like a phrase that people say, "I'm happy to help." It's more, you know, "I'm feeling happy", "I have this emotion", "I'm feeling sad", where you're personifying the chatbot itself. That is -- is what this is aimed at avoiding. It's representing that it has its own feelings.

MS. WALSH: Okay. I can understand the distinction, okay.

The bill imposes penalties of up to $25,000 per violation. If a covered AI companion generates a prohibited output to 10,000 users in a single day due to a software bug, is the sponsor's intent that the operator faces $250 million in penalties for a single day's technical error?

MR. BORES: It's about making that feature available to a user. Like in any of these per-violation rules, often it's part of a settlement and a negotiation as opposed to something that's hard imposed. It's about what the statutory max would be. And I think it's -- it's per feature being made available. If it is sent out to every child

in the State of New York, yeah, that's a far bigger impact that should come with a far bigger fine.

MS. WALSH: So if I -- if I -- just -- just to summarize from what I heard you say, yes, the answer would be yes, the penalty could be under that -- that hypothetical $250 million, but that -- that these would be traditionally negotiated or settled down to some lower amount, but that you have to judge the impact of even -- even something like a technical error, you have to still judge the impact and penalize accordingly?

MR. BORES: Yeah, it's about what the statutory maximum is. Yes, it could go up to that.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right.

Now, New York has already enacted companion chatbot guardrails -- and you may have already covered this, I'm sorry -- in the fiscal year '25-'26 budget. How does this bill interact with that existing law and why is a second, broader bill necessary?

MR. BORES: It -- it builds off of that. So the companion chatbots are a subset of what is covered in this bill, per your -- your first question where ChatGPT probably wasn't perhaps covered by that and it explicitly is as part of this. And this is also much more focused on children and specific features that are being applied to children.

MS. WALSH: Okay. All right.

In terms of the possibilities for amendment -- and I -- I'm sure that would not be your preference -- but if -- if that is

something that maybe is in the mix as we move forward from today, would you be willing to accept an amendment narrowing the definition to systems designed to simulate an ongoing emotional or social relationship, which is what the justification actually describes, rather than all generative AI with a natural language interface?

MR. BORES: I -- I worry that that would exclude cases like Adam Raine's --

MS. WALSH: Like that -- the case (indiscernible/ crosstalk).

MR. BORES: -- and I want to ensure that the chatbots that are most frequently used are -- are covered by this bill.

MS. WALSH: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Bores. That's all I've got and I will let you go.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Yeger.

MR. YEGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I speak on the bill?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. YEGER: Thank you. This -- this appears to be one of the very rare occasions that we see a bill here that's so deeply thought out that -- that it really, for me at least, really begs no question. This is the kind of bill that finds the right mix. It doesn't get in the way of technological advancements. It simply establishes a burden on developers, don't let kids access dangerous stuff. It's easy.

We know that AI today really runs the gamut from everything as simple as, you know, looking at a product on Amazon and then the AI box pops up and you can ask questions about it. And it's a computer that's giving you the answers to a company that I toured a number of months ago. It was a start-up and -- and they have the ability to take a human picture, a face, and put it into AI and develop a human body and -- and voice like a customer service representative that they market to customers where you can actually talk to the computer and you see a person -- not a person -- talking back to you. And to the unindoctrinated, you may actually think you're talking to a person. The ban that we're talking about today is to make sure that kids don't find themselves in a place where through -- through the kind of circumstances that the gentleman spoke of in his opening statement -- the loneliness, the -- the despair that we know that children have from time to time -- and they find themselves turning to a computer for companionship. When some of us were younger AOL was just coming out, and you can go online and talk to anyone, anywhere and then over time we realized allowing kids to go online and talk to anyone, anywhere, via a computer with anonymity was really a bad idea and we needed to make sure that we're putting safeguards in to protect kids from that.

The key that when we pass these kinds of bills, in my view, is let's not lock New York back from the availability of technological advancements such that we're, A, denying our constituents things that are good for them to have, and B, that we're

denying our State the ability of business to do business here. We want people to do business here and we want people not to hate us and go somewhere else with their business. But this bill is so perfectly, in my mind at least, thought out in the way that it -- that it puts this burden on developers. And, look, if -- if you can't figure out a way to keep your product from being dangerous to kids, then don't put your product out in the marketplace. Keep it out, keep it safe, keep it down until it's ready. And -- and when these products, and in the case that the gentleman spoke of earlier, goes from a simple question about homework over a several-month period to the point where the product is -- is simply -- no -- there's no human watching it and the product is able to get to the place where it's encouraging this kind of dangerous behavior. And even if it's not life-threatening, even if it's just mentally dangerous to the point where it's teaching kids things that they ought not know at an age-inappropriate time. There -- this is a place that we can step in, stop it right now, and make sure that companies understand their responsibilities to society.

And the question -- I -- I don't like voting on bills that have fines and penalties and taxes and things like that. I hate those, and -- and I frequently find myself -- I look at a bill and it looks like a good idea and then I look at the penalty and it's like I don't wanna vote for this. But a penalty of, as -- as the gentlewoman spoke of earlier, $250 million, you know, to be honest, if you put out a product so irresponsibly that it takes a child's life, I don't know that $250 million is too high a price. It may -- it may be too low. I think we have to,

every once in a while, really step back from the mindset of that we don't wanna get in the way of industry -- for those of us who consider that to be a -- a guiding factor, and many of us do, or some of us do -- that we don't wanna get in the way of New York's ability to lead in this nation, and that we want people to do business here. We gotta take a step back every once in a while from that and say, But what are we doing to society? And is this the small place that we can insert ourselves -- I hate -- I hate when government inserts themselves in people's lives and starts telling them what to do. But when we're trying to protect children's lives, this is the right place to do it.

So I am very grateful to the sponsor for this bill. I intend to vote in favor of it. And I know that while this may be the last time that we get to hear the sponsor debate on this floor, I look forward to at some point turning on TV in January and seeing him debate somewhere else. And I'm very grateful for his service here on this floor.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for a question?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. BORES: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: How would this be enforced? When someone is found to be guilty of these actions, how will it be enforced?

MR. BORES: Enforcement is done by the Attorney General.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I'm sorry, say it again?

MR. BORES: The Attorney General has the right to bring action.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The Attorney General's office. And so is it attached to some civil penalties or crim -- criminal penalties?

MR. BORES: Yes. So, conjunctive relief, disgorgement of profits and a civil penalty of up to 25,000 per violation.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay. Well, thank you. And it's startling to me to think that one in -- one in three young people literally will allow chatbots to direct their lives, but they do. And so I -- I think I wanna thank you for sponsoring this legislation. It's important. I mean, if we had been ahead of the whole social media phenomenon when it came and -- and protected our children, we wouldn't be going backwards now with all these mental health resources, trying to help fix them. So if this allows us to not add anymore children, anymore young people to that pile of people who have been victims, unknowingly, of AI or social media or Facebook or whichever one you use, we need to stop hurting our children this way.

So thank you for introducing this legislation. And I hope it not only passes here today, but make its way to the Second Floor and gets signed and implemented as soon as possible. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Bores to explain his vote.

MR. BORES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This bill is just based on a simple idea: That if you cannot make chatbots safe for children, you should not make them available to children. But getting the details right took time and a lot of work, and I want to thank many people who were a part of that; my many co-sponsors on both sides of the aisle: My colleague from the 59th Senate District who shepherded it this through this year. The Attorney General and her entire office for helping work through some of the rulemaking and -- and speak to the urgency. And also those outside of New York government, Common Sense Media who helped bring so much attention to this issue. Secretary Clinton, who weighed in on the importance of protecting children. And most importantly, the parents of any child who's been affected, especially Matthew Raine and Maria Raine, who came to Albany -- Maria came to Albany to tell the story

of her son Adam and urge us into action.

Our Democratic institutions are facing a fundamental question, which is whether we are able to govern transformative technology before it governs us. Today, as a Body, we all get to say yes. I could not think of a more important or more appropriate bill to be my final bill in this Chamber. I proudly vote yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Bores in the affirmative.

Mr. Brown to explain his vote.

MR. K. BROWN: I rise in support of this piece of legislation, and I want to thank the sponsor for it. Artificial intelligence is advancing at an extraordinary pace. While these technologies offer tremendous opportunities, they also present serious risks when placed in the hands of children without appropriate safeguards. This bill recognizes simple reality: Children are still developing emotionally, socially and psychologically. They are particularly vulnerable to technologies that are designed to build trust, simulate companionship, and encourage ongoing engagement. No child should be placed in a position where an AI bot can present itself as a friend, counsel or authority figure or emotional companion while encouraging dependence, secrecy and harmful behaviors. This bill appropriately establishes guardrails to ensure AI systems that they do not promote self-harm, isolation, dangerous conduct or sexually-explicit interactions with minors.

I appreciate the sponsor's work on this bill, and I vote

in favor of it and encourage my colleagues to do the same. Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Brown in the affirmative.

Ms. González-Rojas to explain her vote.

MS. GONZÁLEZ-ROJAS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wanna thank the sponsors in both Houses for this powerful bill. In a moment where we are facing a mental health crisis amongst our young people, it's critical that we ensure that we have the protections necessary so that they don't pursue that harm to themselves. As a mom, this is a very emotional bill and something that I know will protect our young people across the State of New York.

So I am proud to vote in the affirmative, and we have to continue to do everything that we can to protect our young people from the harms of artificial intelligence. Thank you so much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. González-Rojas in the affirmative.

Mr. Jensen to explain his vote.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote. About a month-and-a-half ago, my wife and I were sitting in our living room and we heard our seven-year-old son in the kitchen start talking to the AI assistant in our kitchen, having a full-blown -- full-blown conversation with it. And for that reason I vote yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Jensen in the affirmative.

Mr. Yeger to explain his vote.

MR. YEGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Very briefly. I really am glad as I look at the board to see the anonymity that this topic gets from both sides of the aisle. And sometimes I find myself towing back-and-forth over that aisle and finding the right place to be for the people of New York. This is the kind of topic that really got our attention in a very real way. I'm so grateful to the sponsor for doing this, but it's also something that we have to remember as -- as he departs and -- and we take these conversations up, by the time we're back here in January there's gonna to be a whole new world of AI. This stuff is developing so fast, so quickly. Way faster than we're able to develop our responses to it. One of the things that this bill does is it asks the Attorney General's office to write regulations, and I'm very hopeful that that occurs on a speedy as possible manner of doing it. Because this really is something that's happening right now, and by the time we blink twice it's gonna be a whole new level of AI that we have to address.

So again, thank you very much to the gentleman for sponsoring this and I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Yeger in the affirmative.

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, as --

as a parent, as somebody who was a kid once, like a long, long time ago, it is -- it -- it's really frightening these days to see how much -- well, first, really, my two older boys as they were going -- going through school we really -- they -- they just had, like, flip phones. And the changes just in that versus what I saw with my younger kids, it was really shocking. And I think all of us saw and see routinely our -- our kids getting so deeply into their phones that they're really having difficulty connecting with real people. And I think that this is important legislation.

I'm very grateful to the sponsor for spending time with me, like in my office trying to explain this stuff ahead of time and letting me know what bills were coming up and why they were important. I appreciate your work in this area, and I know that I believe, I hope, that they'll be somebody to pick up the mantle after you leave because I absolutely agree with the previous speaker, and that's part of what scares me so much, is there's always gonna be the next thing and the next thing. And we, as a legislature, just inherently are -- are kind of slow and cloggy sometimes about getting work done and keeping up with technology, and I think that when we do come back in January we will have a whole new host of issues that we're gonna be dealing with.

So I'll be voting in the affirmative. I -- hey, listen. I mean, if -- if the Second Floor thinks that this needs a tweak here or there, that's fine. But I think when you look at the board and you see that unanimous vote you know that -- that there are a lot of people that

are significantly worried about this and are grateful for the initiative. So I'll be in the affirmative, and I thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Madam Speaker, members have on their desks an A-Calendar and a B-. Would you please now move to advance that one?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On Mrs. Peoples-Stokes' motion, the A- and B-Calendar are advanced.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you. Now if we could just go right to Rules Report No. 534 by Mr. Jacobson, please.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you. On debate, A-Calendar page 3, Rules Report No. 534, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A05036-C, Rules Report No. 534, Jacobson. Concurrent Resolution of the Senate and Assembly proposing amendments to Section 21 of Article 6, Article 13, and Section 6 of Article 4 of the Constitution, in relation to requiring certain elections be held in even-numbered years at the general election.

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

advanced.

An explanation has been requested.

Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This constitutional amendment will move to even-year elections the remaining offices outside of New York City which were not previously moved to even-year elections. This change will not apply to village elections. Previously, the constitutional offices of sheriff, county clerk, district attorney, family court judge, county court judge, surrogate court judge and district judge, and town judges -- justices, as well as cities could not be moved to even years by statute. This amendment means that outside of New York City, all judicial officers, city officers, county clerks, district attorneys and sheriffs will be elected in even-year elections. The result of these changes will mean less voter confusion and higher turnout, and counties will save a huge amount of money by not having to run annual elections.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Slater.

MR. SLATER: Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for some questions, please?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. SLATER: Thank you very much, Mr. Jacobson. Can you confirm that in 2023 we already moved a number of

substantial -- a substantial number of town and county elections to even-numbered years?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes, we did.

MR. SLATER: And have we taken the time to measure any of the metrics that come with that transition? Have we measured turnout changes? Have we measured voter engagement, voter knowledge? Have we measured any of those items in understanding how that transition has occurred?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I'm sure that if you compared the turnout in the recent even years, they'll be much higher than those in odd years.

MR. SLATER: And has that transition concluded of all those elections moved to the even-year cycles so that we can properly measure turnout, as you just said?

MR. JACOBSON: Sure. You can measure it.

MR. SLATER: My question is, have all the elections that are impacted, have they all transitioned to the even-year cycles?

MR. JACOBSON: No, because some of the town offices have not come up yet. But those that have, you can measure.

MR. SLATER: Well, but they're not all transitioned over, so I think -- is it fair to say that you really can't evaluate fully the impact of the last major reform that we're discussing?

MR. JACOBSON: No. I could tell you right now if -- if you compare the turnout in -- in your county in 2024, I guarantee you it was a lot higher than in 2023 or 2021.

MR. SLATER: But can you guarantee that the down-ballot candidates received as much attention as they did previously?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, they were elected.

MR. SLATER: Except this is the first year, this November, that those candidates are gonna be on an even-year ballot; is that accurate?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Well, we're confident that there will be greater turnout, and I -- and I'm sure that the voters will make the decisions.

MR. SLATER: Based on that answer, my interpretation is that you cannot actually use any metrics to prove the fact that there's greater engagement on the down-ballot offices because it hasn't actually occurred yet.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I didn't say that. I said that there's more turnout.

MR. SLATER: I said it was my interpretation of your answer.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, that's your interpretation. I'm just saying there's more turnout. And I'm sure that when you go door-to-door you can talk about voter engagement.

MR. SLATER: I can't wait to do it when I get home.

Can the sponsor confirm that New York City is exempt from the city election provisions of this amendment?

MR. JACOBSON: That's true.

MR. SLATER: Why are cities and counties throughout the rest of New York State treated differently than the City of New York?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, first of all, we -- we moved the town elections. And at the time there were complaints, some on your side of the aisle, some here on my side, saying, *Well, why aren't we moving all of it? It's gonna be terrible because we'll be having all these town and county elections, and yet the county clerk or the DA or the sheriff won't be in the same year.* And I would have to explain that we needed a constitutional amendment. And, in fact, I had somebody who was a town judge out of my district said, *Please change this or I might be the only race on the ballot in an odd year*. So that's what we're doing.

MR. SLATER: But that doesn't answer my question. My question, again, is why are our cities and counties throughout the rest of New York being treated differently than New York City?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Well, first of all, New York City is quite different. And it's -- if you look at the turnout outside of New York City, much lower. There's less media coverage, there's less daily newspapers than there used to be. And I -- and what happens in New York City gets covered nationally. So they have a different situation. But if in the future we want to do that, we can. And this is an incremental process.

MR. SLATER: We'll get to that in a second. So but

basically, my interpretation of your answer is because of the media that New York City gets, they're being treated differently. That's basically what I just heard.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, that's part of it.

MR. SLATER: Okay. So can the sponsor confirm that this exact proposal was already presented to the voters of New York City?

MR. JACOBSON: That this proposal what?

MR. SLATER: Was presented to the voters of New York City. Was there not a referendum in New York City to move their elections to even years?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, it's not relevant to this. If you're -- there was a -- there was a referendum, it was an opinion referendum.

MR. SLATER: And the result of that referendum was that New York City voters rejected that referendum.

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah.

MR. SLATER: So New York City voters --

MR. JACOBSON: They're -- they're not included in this, so it really doesn't make any difference.

MR. SLATER: Well, they are, in a sense, because New York City voters were allowed to reject this concept for themselves while simultaneously being allowed to vote on whether the rest of New York State should be subject to the exact thing that they rejected; is that true?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, first of all, we're not changing the Constitution to say that the entire State can't vote on a constitutional amendment. And it was -- it was only -- it wasn't a binding referendum in New York City. And I'm sure that if it was binding there would have been even more education of the voters and we don't know what the outcome would be.

MR. SLATER: Mr. Jacobson, the facts remain that New York City was presented with a referendum to move their elections to even years, they rejected it. But because of the referendum process in New York, they're still gonna be able to dictate that exact question for the rest of the State, even though they are exempt from the resolution before us.

MR. JACOBSON: They're not -- they're not dictating anything. Hopefully we'll pass this constitutional amendment this year and next year, and then the voters of the entire State will get to vote. That's the process.

MR. SLATER: Including the voters in the five boroughs of New York City who already said no to applying this to themselves.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, there's always -- in a constitutional amendment the entire State gets to vote.

MR. SLATER: And I'll say again, including those who already said no.

Is the sponsor aware that the New York State Conference of Mayors formally opposes this proposal?

MR. JACOBSON: I've -- I've heard -- I've heard some of that. But I also know that once -- I think once things get -- moves along it will be a lot better.

MR. SLATER: So you disagree with their concerns regarding voter fatigue that they raised in their formal opposition?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I think there's more voter fatigue when you have a lot of elections in one year, very few in another. And then it's just like when you -- voter fatigue is when you have a lot of elections. When you have school board elections and you have fire elections and you have all these different things, and that's voter fatigue. This way, it'll be in even years and there'll be less confusion from -- by the voters, which will also mean more turnout.

MR. SLATER: So do you, as the sponsor, then, disagree that local races may become over shadowed by federal or Statewide races?

MR. JACOBSON: I don't think so.

MR. SLATER: Is it your position that local elections receive too much attention since they are currently off-cycle?

MR. JACOBSON: I have no opinion on that and I -- and I think that it's irrelevant.

MR. SLATER: Well, I think it's very relevant when you're talking about local elections.

Your memo suggests that a town judgeship may be the only office on the ballot in some years. I was -- I was trying to understand why that would be. Could you explain that to me?

MR. JACOBSON: Sure. Because if we didn't change that, the judges' cycle would stay the same in the town, and if they were elected in an odd year for four years then they would have it again in another four years. They'd be the odd years while everything else would be in an even year in that town.

MR. SLATER: And so under the provisions of the resolution, that would in, in fact, change?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct.

MR. SLATER: So we're not looking at a situation where you're only having town judges on the ballot in odd-year elections?

MR. JACOBSON: That's right. You should like that.

MR. SLATER: Okay. I don't know if I really do.

During the implementation, will any elected officials serve longer than voters originally expected?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. SLATER: During the implementation, will any elected officials serve shorter than voters originally expected?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. SLATER: Will you have to adjust the terms for the offices to match up with the odd-year transition?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. SLATER: Did we have to adjust the terms of offices for those elections either on the ballot now or coming in the

future, to transition to this even-year -- this even-year cycle?

MR. JACOBSON: No. What will happen is, as I'm sure you read the amendment, is that if a judge -- judge's term expires in an odd year, they would serve that term. Then they would be considered a vacancy. And then that vacancy would be filled as it is now. So if it's a town judge, then the -- the supervisor or the counsel, whatever the local charter says, would get to make that appointment. That person would serve through the next general year, and there would be an election in November of that even year.

MR. SLATER: So then really you're taking away the ability for the people to choose, since it's gonna be a vacancy fill. And it's gonna be a select few that are gonna choose an extension of one's term.

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Well, when the election does happen there'll be more voters participating. And a -- a supervisor such as yourself, who was elected by the voters, would have a say in the appointment.

MR. SLATER: But aren't we facing a situation right now as we deal with the other local elections that we have, in fact, changed the terms so that they get on to even-year elections? For example, in my town there was a local election last year, and this year the town supervisor is running for election. So rather than a two-year term, he's having -- or she -- is having a one-year term. But in this instance you're saying we're gonna -- we're not gonna take that model

up, we're gonna do it differently, even though we're trying to accomplish the same thing, and we're going to allow for a vacancy committee to approve the either extension or a new person in a situation like that judge seat that you were describing.

MR. JACOBSON: I -- I disagree with the term "vacancy committee", because that's a very specific term when you're talking about elections. But it would be -- the vacancy would be appointed.

MR. SLATER: An appointment. So --

MR. JACOBSON: We're not going to reduce the term of any judges.

MR. SLATER: But it's still -- you're taking away the people's ability to choose that individual. Again, using the town judge as an example, they are -- the people are not gonna decide that that person should be able to serve for an additional year, they will be appointed by what -- the town council or city council or whoever it is.

MR. JACOBSON: That's -- that's true. That's who would do the appointment, and then more people would -- would choose the permanent replacement in that November of the even year.

MR. SLATER: And so is it the same model for every other constitutional office that we're changing? So for instance, a district attorney. So a district attorney runs for four years. So if a district attorney is running, has run last year, right, in 2025 --

MR. JACOBSON: Right.

MR. SLATER: They are -- their expiration is in

2029, they have a four-year term. So who's gonna be the DA for that one-year gap?

MR. JACOBSON: It's already in the Constitution that the Governor appoints with the advice and consent of the Senate.

MR. SLATER: So even if -- so even -- even if the people elect someone for four years, we are now setting up a trapdoor where they will not be able to hold office for a year, and now you're telling me that the Governor is gonna be able to appoint somebody else --

MR. JACOBSON: I'm not --

MR. SLATER: -- to hold that position for a year. I'm gonna continue -- I'm going to continue going, thanks -- to hold that position for a year and essentially -- and potentially run for reelection based off an incumbency situation then.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, we're not changing any of the appointment process for judges, county clerks, sheriffs. That's what it is now.

MR. SLATER: You're just creating a trapdoor for all those other elected officials so that the Governor can appoint somebody in those situations. That's what you're -- that's what you're creating here.

MR. JACOBSON: I -- I don't think it's a trapdoor. I think it's a -- I think it's a door when it's opened will lead to more participation.

MR. SLATER: By having one person, the Governor

of New York, one person decide who is going to hold a constitutionally-elected office for one year?

MR. JACOBSON: That's how it is now. If a person dies in a middle of the term, the Governor gets to appoint. That's how it is now.

MR. SLATER: Right. But -- but obviously, the Legislature isn't setting up a situation where you're going to actually cause someone's death in that -- in that role. So I think that's a bit of an extreme example that you provided. What you're doing here is you're creating a trapdoor because you're not either elongating or truncating the years of term like we have for those elections that are currently transitioning to an even-year cycle. So you've actually created two different standards.

MR. JACOBSON: No, we're -- we're not trunc -- first of all, we're not truncating, we're make -- we're putting it in the constitutional amendment. It says that the office of sheriff, county clerk and district attorney will be four years.

MR. SLATER: Right. But four is an even number, and so you're still gonna create this trapdoor situation. That -- that's fine. And it's also terrible.

I wanted to just, if we can, we actually recently talked about the texts -- the texts of these referendums. So will the ballot question explain that New York City is exempt from this referendum?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, it hasn't been prepared. I would say probably it would talk about that.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Well, I mean, we -- we talked about something similar in this realm --

MR. JACOBSON: And -- and because now --

MR. SLATER: -- (indiscernible/crosstalk) -- and this is the kind of collaboration that I think is important to have.

MR. JACOBSON: If the law that if -- the bill that we passed yesterday gets signed, the Legislature can make sure that it's an accurate portrayal of -- accurate description of the amendment.

MR. SLATER: Right. The same Legislature that's creating a trapdoor for our sheriffs, district attorneys and judges.

Will the ballot question explain that New York City voters previously rejected a similar proposal?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. SLATER: So we're not gonna be honest with the voters when they're voting on something like this?

MR. JACOBSON: That has -- that has nothing to do with the terms of the amendment.

MR. SLATER: I would disagree.

MR. JACOBSON: When you have an amendment you do not put an -- and by the way, we adopted a certain thing -- you don't put the bill history on that. You put a description of what it is, and -- and that's what we do.

MR. SLATER: Well, this is a very complicated matter because of some of the structural deficiencies that we've identified. And so if we're gonna be honest with the voters so they

understand at an eighth-grade level what this is going to do, I -- I just wanna make sure we're clear of what -- what we're telling them. Will the ballot question explain that the Legislature is granting itself future authority over the implementation of this transition?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

(Conferring)

MR. SLATER: I see -- I hear yes and no.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, the ballot question is -- is not an issue here.

MR. SLATER: But it's going to become an issue because we have to ask the voters to approve it. So I --

(Indiscernible/crosstalk)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Blumencranz, if we -- lack of sleep, I'm sorry. Mr. Slater, if we could make sure -- I understand we're trying to get to the understanding of the -- the bill, but the ballot questions are not part of this proposal. Thank you.

(Pause)

MR. SLATER: Is there a section, Mr. Jacobson, that grants the Legislature authority to make future transition adjustments by statute?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

MR. SLATER: Yes. Why is that authority necessary?

MR. JACOBSON: Because when -- whenever there is a constitutional amendment, the Legislature always enacts statutes

to implement it. We do that with the Executive Branch. We do that with the Judicial Branch. So that's just standard operating proceeding -- or procedure.

MR. SLATER: Is it -- is it that we're giving the Legislature to execute or make adjustments as needed?

MR. JACOBSON: This -- we will be carrying out the intent of the amendment.

MR. SLATER: I think if you look at Section 10 there's a question on the text there, then. And the way that some have interpreted it is that the Legislature is giving itself additional authority to make statutory changes following the passage of a constitutional amendment, which kind of in my mind counters the constitutional amendment. Because we're telling the voters, *We want you to approve A*, and if they approve A, we're giving ourselves the authority, then, to statutorily change A to A.1, A.2, A.3 without their approval and even without their knowledge. Is that -- is that -- am I reading this section correctly? I mean, if not, please give me your interpretation.

MR. JACOBSON: You're not. All it says that we can pass legislation to implement the amendment.

MR. SLATER: So we will not change statutorily anything that has to do with the transition of constitutional offices from odd to even years if this is passed. The Legislature will not pass a bill, a piece of legislation, do no changes whatsoever?

MR. JACOBSON: We will not pass any bill that

would not be effectuated this amendment.

MR. SLATER: And is that understanding going to be properly explained to the voters?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: When we have bills -- I would hope that when you submit a bill you explain it to your constituents, and when I have bills or we vote on bills we explain it to our constituents.

MR. SLATER: I would just make note that I hope that we're not gonna be submitting bills to make adjustments to a constitutional amendment because I think we are giving ourselves as a Legislature unwieldy, unchecked authority to do that.

MR. JACOBSON: I said we're not -- all we're gonna do is pass legislation to implement this amendment.

MR. SLATER: And if we have to make adjustments for that implementation we are giving ourselves the ability to do it without going back to the voters.

MR. JACOBSON: We are just gonna implement the amendment.

MR. SLATER: Understood. Mr. Jacobson, thank you very much for answering my questions.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Slater.

MR. SLATER: Madam Speaker, if I can go on the bill --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SLATER: -- with my remaining time. And I just -- a lot of questions that remain in my mind. Why are we in such a hurry? Just three years ago this Legislature enacted legislation that fundamentally changed how local elections are conducted in New York. Those changes are only now beginning to take effect. The transition has not been completed. The first cycle has not even occurred. The results are unknown. Yet before we have measured turnout, before we have measured voter engagement, before we have measured accountability, and before we've heard from the communities that are affected, we are being asked to amend the Constitution and move even more elections. I think that this is a premature step. We haven't even seen the results of the first step yet.

But there's another issue that should concern every member of this Chamber and, frankly, every New Yorker. New York City is exempt from these provisions, yet New York City voters will still participate in a Statewide referendum that could impose these changes on every other city and county in New York. Translation is, the voters of New York City will determine elections for my constituents in Putnam County, in Erie County, and so on and so forth. Yet it doesn't apply to them. And that's particularly striking, because New York City voters were previously given the opportunity to consider a similar proposal for themselves and they rejected it. Apparently, New York City voters were entitled to decide this question for themselves, the rest of New York is not.

Mr. -- Madam Speaker I had the privilege of serving

as town supervisor before coming here to this Chamber, and I can tell you there is something fundamentally different about local government. I think many of my colleagues who have served in local government acknowledge that. Local governments where residents show up to complain about potholes. It's where families ask for safer intersections. Where businessowners seek permits. Where parents advocate for their neighborhoods. It's where government is closest to the people. Local government is certainly not Washington, and it is not here in Albany. And it should not be treated as an afterthought.

Throughout this debate we heard concerns about elections where only local officials may appear on the ballot. Frankly, I don't -- I don't understand why that's actually a problem. If the only office on the ballot is sheriff, voters can focus on public safety. If the only office on the ballot is district attorney, voters can focus on justice. If the only office on the ballot is a judge, voters can focus on qualifications and temperament. Those are not -- those elections are not empty, they are focused. And there's real value in giving voters an opportunity to focus on the offices that most directly affect their daily -- daily lives.

We also heard concerns raised by NYCOM, which formally opposes this legislation and warns that longer ballots may reduce attention to local races and weaken accountability for local officials. Those concerns deserve consideration. Because democracy is not simply about how many people show up, it's about whether voters are informed about the choices before them. This debate is not

high turnout versus low turnout. It's informed participation versus informed decision-making.

And there's one final concern. This amendment grants the Legislature future authority to make transition decisions and adjustments. We can disagree in that interpretation, but that's how I read it. And as we identified, it also creates a trapdoor for many of these county elected individuals to be replaced by one person, the Governor of New York. Will the voters be told that? Will voters be told that terms may be adjusted? Will voters be told that New York City is exempt? If those facts are not clearly explained, we can honestly say voters are being asked to make -- can we honestly say that voters are being asked to make a fully-informed decision?

Madam Speaker, changing Election Law is significant. Changing the Constitution is even more significant. And changing the Constitution before we evaluated the last reform is not careful governance, it's purely speculation. First Albany changed the rules. Now Albany wants to change the Constitution -- by the way, the second time in less than 24 hours -- and all before we've ever even seen whether the first change works. Local government deserves better, the voters deserve better, and the Constitution certainly deserves better.

For these reasons, Madam Speaker, and many, many more, I will be voting no as many times as I possibly can and I urge everyone here to do the same.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Sempolinski.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So the process for this -- we've learned a lot about constitutional process this week. We would pass it this term, presumably it would come up again after an intervening election and then it would go before the electorate; is that correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. If we pass this amendment this year, it has to come up in a -- the next election -- next Session elected by different voters.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Would it be your intention to put this before the electorate in 2027 or 2028?

MR. JACOBSON: That hasn't been decided yet, and that's not in the amendment.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So -- because I know in the past, for instance when we did Prop 1 a little bit ago it got pushed to an even year for, you know, whatever reason you wanna think it got pushed to an even year. I think it would be profoundly ironic if this particular amendment came up in 2027, wouldn't you?

MR. JACOBSON: I haven't thought about that,

actually.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Oh. Because 27's an even -- is an odd number, just for the record.

Would anybody in their current term finish -- just to make it crystal clear -- would they finish the current term to which they're elected?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. Everybody would finish their current term.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: And then whenever they come up they would run in the year they were supposed to run in, an odd-numbered year, perhaps, and then they would run for one year less. That's how we handled the previous statute.

MR. JACOBSON: No. That isn't what's in this.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay. Well, how would it work, then?

MR. JACOBSON: There would be a vacancy, and then the vacancy would be filled. I'm assuming you're talking about a -- when somebody's term gets done in an odd year?

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Yes.

MR. JACOBSON: If they get -- if they get done in an odd year then there would be a vacancy at the end of the completion of the term. The vacancy would be filled according to law, and then there would be an election in the -- in the -- that even year.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So I don't want to put words

into Mr. Slater's mouth, but I think this is a trapdoor that he was referring to. So you're going to force there to be a period of time for all folks that are elected on odd numbered years where there would be a year where the electorate is not choosing who is holding that office? They would be appointed by the Governor or the local board or whatever?

MR. JACOBSON: They -- whatever the law is as we -- as we handle vacancies now. It's the same way that on your town board if there's a vacancy you get to appoint.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So you -- but you're potentially and almost inevitably creating some very long vacancies. In this case, if you do the transition, if it goes as you described it, you got a year where, you know, enormous numbers of offices as you're transitioning are going to be unelected people. That's a -- pretty dangerous for democracy, wouldn't you think?

MR. JACOBSON: I don't think -- I think that we have appointed people to all kind of offices. In your town, your town board appoints when there's vacancies. And we do that throughout and I don't think that it's --

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: But it happens occasionally. It happens in the case of some sort of tragic death or some sort of resignation. It doesn't happen wholesale across the board across the State.

MR. JACOBSON: But the solution is the same either way.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Well, what I'm saying is we had a different solution the last time we did this, but okay.

Also with vacancies, if you have somebody resign -- under this proposed amendment, if you had somebody resign or die early in an odd-numbered year, you might have an unelected replacement for almost two years.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, it would be from the time of the appointment until the general election in the next even year.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Yeah. So imagine somebody, heaven forbid, dies on January 1st of an odd-numbered year, you're not going to have anybody in the public having a say over that office until November of the following year.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, the office would be filled by people who have been elected.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay. But the people wouldn't be choosing that.

MR. JACOBSON: The process is that those appointing are people that have been elected.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: And we're using -- you keep saying we're using the same process which is correct, but that process was never intended to fill offices for multiple years. It was intended to fill until the next general election, in which case that would never be less than a year under our current system.

MR. JACOBSON: Is that a -- what -- what is the question? I'm sorry.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: All right. Did you catch everything? Are all offices included? Because I know this is sort of a mop up from things that couldn't be changed in the last statute.

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah. It's -- it's -- it's -- I -- I would not call it a mop up. I would say it would be dealing with those constitutional offices that could not have been done by statute.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So the intention is that there's no elections at all outside of the City of New York, which we'll get to in a minute, in an odd-numbered year?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: I have sort of a technical question: A lot of party positions, state party committee, county party committee, they're elected not at the general election, but they're elected in primary elections. If, you know, more than one person runs for a county committee slot or a state committee slot that is adjudicated in an open primary, oftentimes in an odd-numbered year. The Republican Party elects their state committee in an odd-numbered year. I know about half of the Republican County Committees do it in an odd-numbered year. Are they gonna be the only thing on the ballot in a primary in an odd-numbered year?

MR. JACOBSON: It's, you know, it --

(Conferring)

It -- it could be, but there is some -- but that's not what this is dealing with. This is dealing with elected public officials and so that they will be running in even years eventually.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: But the -- my -- my point is if you have -- if you miss something like that, a party official, which is handled through the Board of Elections, now you're not saving any money because they have to run an election.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I think that the cost of running a district committee race is a lot less than running countywide.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Quite possibly and quite probably.

MR. JACOBSON: No, I would say definitely because you're -- you're not -- you're not gonna have -- if you have 150 election districts, you're not gonna have 300 inspectors.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: You could. You could have a primary in every one of those election districts.

MR. JACOBSON: It's -- it's -- it's possible.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay.

New York City, the largest city in America, largest city in the State, is excluded from this. Your answer to Mr. Slater was because they have more intense media coverage.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I said -- yeah and they're different. And what we're doing is this is a piecemeal, this is a -- this is a process that we're taking incrementally I should say, it's an incremental process. And so now, we're dealing with the even-year elections outside of New York City.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: But all you would have to do

is just delete the words, you know, "New York City" and you could do the whole State all at once. Why does it need to be incremental? If this is so important that it has to change the entire electoral system of the part of the State that I'm from, why not -- why not do it for everybody all at once? It would just -- do it -- you could change it in two seconds.

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: We're -- we're not -- we're not doing New York City. The reason we're doing this now, as I mentioned before, is because there were constitutional offices that could not have been done by statute. So now all those positions will be the same as the others so that the county --

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Except for the City of New York.

MR. JACOBSON: -- so that the county court, the county clerk and the sheriff will be in the same year as the county executive and the county legislature.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Right, but I -- I still don't understand why New York City would be excluded other than you have an answer about media and just that it is excluded and -- and maybe you'll come back to it. I -- I think everybody in the State of New York should be treated the same. Do you not?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Just what I said to you prior, you know, we do treat New York City different. There are a lot of bills

that don't talk about how they only apply to a city over one million and -- and so --

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: This has nothing to do with the partisan makeup of the City of New York?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: Okay.

Well, I'm going to go on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. SEMPOLINSKI: So if I'm counting right, I'm a little punchy because we've -- it's been a rough week. I think this is blatant power grab number four, but I may be off one or two. I don't know. I think we should not be mixing local elections with State and federal elections. We have such a problem in this country of hyper-partisanship, hyperpolarization and one of the few areas of our political system that has avoided that is some of our local. I'm -- I -- I represent a lot of really small towns. Towns that where the number of people are measured in the hundreds and in some cases less than a hundred. And you don't have a lot of hyper-partisanship there. People just want to make sure the roads are plowed and services are provided and tax money's handled appropriately. And we're gonna inject the disease of hyper-partisanship and polarization into those local elections by tying them to what's further up the food chain.

And as I said, this has been a very disappointing and offensive week for what has happened here with the manipulation of our election system, and I -- I'll say the same thing I said with the last

silly amendment: Please stop messing with the State Constitution.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Palmesano.

MR. PALMESANO: Yes, Madam Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. JACOBSON: Good afternoon.

MR. PALMESANO: Good afternoon. I had to look -- so I'm kind of binding it together now. But I wanted to kind of get -- I'm gonna -- I might repeat some of the comments that were made, but I think it's important to talk about it. You believe this -- this is -- I've heard you speak about even-year elections. This is about you believe it will improve democracy. Is that your argument -- part of your argument? This -- this will improve the part -- the democracy, improve participation in our democracy, is that what you think?

MR. JACOBSON: I think there'll be -- there'll be greater turnout and when we have greater turnout, I think that's good for democracy.

MR. PALMESANO: And so you -- you trust the voters?

MR. JACOBSON: I trust the voters.

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: I think anybody that seeks the

voters trust should trust the voters.

MR. PALMESANO: I agree.

So about this turnout and about this trust. So now we're gonna pass this now and then we'd have to pass this resolution next year, right?

MR. JACOBSON: Either next year or the year after.

MR. PALMESANO: But don't you agree that -- would you agree if you want that participation, I mean, you said you haven't decided, shouldn't you guys just commit right now and say listen, we're gonna put -- if we're gonna do this, we're gonna do -- we're gonna bring it up for a vote in '28 so it goes to the '28 election. Shouldn't you just say, if you're [sic] that strongly believe in participation, you so strongly believe going to an even-year election, why don't you commit right now in front of this Body in the interest of full transparency of the voters that we're gonna put it on the ballot in 2028 instead of 2027? Don't you -- shouldn't you do that? Wouldn't you agree that's a good thing to do? You said it -- shouldn't we do that?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, that -- that's a very good suggestion and -- and I will pass that along.

MR. PALMESANO: Well, I -- I -- it's a great suggestion.

MR. JACOBSON: And I might like that idea.

MR. PALMESANO: Good, and I think that's -- I think that it's great, so let's make sure.

MR. JACOBSON: I'll -- I'll pass that along --

MR. PALMESANO: I think you will.

MR. JACOBSON: -- and make -- whoever makes that decision can consider that.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. So, have you heard any support -- now, obviously this is gonna have a wide -- far-reaching impact on our local villages, our towns -- our towns, our counties, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, villages are not included.

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah, I know. I -- I -- I corrected myself --

MR. JACOBSON: Okay.

MR. PALMESANO: -- after the fact, so. But it's gonna -- our DAs, our -- our sheriffs, our county clerks, our counties, our cities. This will have a far-reaching impact, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah, it --

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah.

MR. JACOBSON: -- it might have an impact. It also will save the Boards of Elections money.

MR. PALMESANO: Well, that -- that's -- that's another discuss -- debatable thing. But -- so have you got -- I mean, obviously you've heard that there's op -- opposition from the New York Conference of Mayors. Have you solicited input from the New York State Association of Counties, the District Attorneys Association, the County Clerks Association, the -- the Judges

Association, did you ask them for their input? Do they -- are they 100% on board with this? I mean, 'cause usually when we see bills come before this House, we get -- we get input from a lot of these organizations, especially when it impacts them. Obviously this legislation, this constitutional amendment we have in this House right now impacts those organizations. Did you reach out to these organizations and say, *hey, what do you think? What would you change to your liking?* Did you reach out to any of these organizations?

MR. JACOBSON: We did speak -- speak or the -- or they contacted us. I forgot how it happened. The Office of Court Administration and --

MR. PALMESANO: Right.

MR. JACOBSON: -- and -- no, I'm just saying and they thought that the prior process was not good because some judges would have longer than others and so they suggested that we do something that would not extend terms for some and not for others. So that was taken into account.

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah, and I'll get -- I'll get on the terms and extending terms in a minute.

MR. JACOBSON: Okay.

MR. PALMESANO: But outside the court -- Office of Court Administration, I mean that's one area that -- that might oversee the judges, but what about the towns? What about the counties, what about the sheriffs, what about the DAs, what about the

clerks? Did you reach out to them and ask them for their input on impactful legislation that is so far-reaching impact, did you ask them their opinion? And if so, what did they say?

MR. JACOBSON: No, we didn't. We didn't --

MR. PALMESANO: I'm sorry, you didn't ask them? Is that what you said?

MR. JACOBSON: No, we didn't. And we --

MR. PALMESANO: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: -- didn't reach out and the thing is, what this does, it puts all the other -- those few offices that were not previously moved to even years in alignment with the others. So we think that's make a lot of sense.

MR. PALMESANO: So I understand you believe it makes sense so you chose not to reach out to these groups. Now, I know the time you put this in came so quick so you couldn't get resolutions of support or opposition from local communities. But when we had the even-year election a couple years ago, legislation that we did, my office received a lot of memos of opposition from communities saying, *we want our local control. We want local control over these elections. We want to decide*. So taken -- was that considered in this argument at all knowing that there was widespread opposition to the previous one that was a statutory change, this being a constitution change. Did you get any feedback? Does that not play into the discussion here, or you just feel like we know best?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: If we pass this, then the groups you mentioned and people in general can make their voices heard before we take it up again for a vote.

MR. PALMESANO: I -- I hope they do and I'm sure they will.

I want to get on to the -- I want to get on to the -- the -- the counties in the town elections aside. I want to talk about the DAs, the sheriffs and the judges. My colleagues brought this up before. Those under the constitution if there's a vacancy, the Governor appoints that vacancy, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Correct.

MR. PALMESANO: And that was a -- it was for the remainder of the term or that calendar year?

MR. JACOBSON: They would appoint -- if there's a vacancy in an odd year, or if there's a vacancy anytime, the Governor appoints and then the election would be in the next -- at the next general election in an even year.

MR. PALMESANO: So the next general election, okay.

So you would agree, wouldn't you, if there is a vacancy that takes place and the Governor is able to amend -- appoint that vacancy, now there's -- there's a power of incumbency with -- comes with that position, that individual who the Governor appoints is gonna be off to a stronger advantage going into that general election, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: That could happen, or they could do a terrible job and have no chance of being reelected to the position.

MR. PALMESANO: No, I -- I - -I understand what you're saying, but you -- you would agree someone who's appointed by the Governor comes in and is -- is an incumbent in that position right from the start, right?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, like I said, some people who are in office take advan -- are -- are reelected because people like them and other people don't like what they're doing.

MR. PALMESANO: I -- I agree with that. And I know you said this doesn't change that appointment process the Governor appoints. That's been part of the constitution forever. So that doesn't change, it's just following that same process, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Correct.

MR. PALMESANO: But what is changing with this process -- because then we talked about, well maybe someone dies and then there's a vacancy, then the Governor would appoint. Or something else happens and someone moves out-of-state or whatever, then that's -- that's the process. But this legislation changes that significantly, doesn't it? Because now you're talking about every local election, every town board, county executive, sheriff and then the DA but, you know, on a -- on a DA, county clerk and others. Because this, it affects all of them. So there's widespread implications for these employments that the Governor would make across the 62 counties. So this is a significant --

MR. JACOBSON: Well, the appointments are not for town board, the --

MR. PALMESANO: I -- I --

MR. JACOBSON: -- appointments are just for these few offices.

MR. PALMESANO: -- Mr. Jacobson, I corrected myself. I know I misspoke. It's for the Governor -- it's for the DA, it's for the sheriff, it's for the county clerk, it's for the judges. I corrected myself, I just misspoke.

MR. JACOBSON: Okay. Sure.

MR. PALMESANO: I think I'm just a little jacked up on this bill, so -- if you haven't noticed.

So -- but this legislation changes that per -- dynamic now because now it goes through all this process, your wide-ranging impact and now the Governor's gonna have that appointment in all -- all these instances, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I understand where you're coming from and --

MR. PALMESANO: Well, I'm glad. All right.

And I want to talk about the -- the -- the language. So now you guys will control the language that gets put on that ballot, right?

MR. JACOBSON: Yup.

MR. PALMESANO: So instead of the -- the -- the County Board of Elections --

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I won't but the Legislature will.

MR. PALMESANO: Yeah, well -- and would you agree that should be a -- a full discussion of the Legislature, not just the -- the Majority Leader, the Speaker, the Minority Leader, or the Senate -- wouldn't that be all of us?

MR. JACOBSON: I can't really speak to that. That's not in this amendment.

MR. PALMESANO: I understand. But you could do the language -- you could -- if you wanted to name it, the "Voter Participation Protection and Fair -- Fair Access Act" you could name it that, couldn't you? You would have the power to name it that way, right? Yes or no?

MR. JACOBSON: I think that the ballot -- the -- as far as the explanation on the ballot, it's not part of it and I think it has to accurately and fairly describe --

MR. PALMESANO: I agree.

MR. JACOBSON: -- the amendment.

MR. PALMESANO: All right. Thank you, Mr. Jacobson, for your time.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, sir.

MR. PALMESANO: Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: On the bill.

MR. PALMESANO: Well, welcome to "We Know Best Week" in the Capitol. Welcome to "Political Party Grab Week"

in the Capitol. It started, my colleagues, at how many? I think I counted four, Joe. First, we started with the redistricting amendment that's gonna allow gerrymandering over a congressional districts [sic] despite the fact that voters overwhelmingly rejected that. First in 2014 with the creation of the Independent Redistricting Commission and then again in 2021 when you guys tried to overturn it. Then last night we had the -- the politicalization or the judicial district changes to create more democratic judges, which was followed up by the language bill which we were talking about here that you can write, despite the fact for over 100 years the bipartisan Board of Elections had been working together to put that language together, you can put whatever language you want in that bill. It is kind of really -- it's really atrocious.

Why for all these things? Because we know best? You think you know best and two, political party grab -- a political part -- power grab. And now we have this one, even-year elections for everyone. Well, except for New York City. Despite what the locals want, there's no talking to the locals, none of them. None of those organizations. So now you're gonna have more participation -- you say you're gonna have more participation. I think you guys should commit to say, *we're gonna put this on the ballot in '28, not '27.* But you know you're gonna put it on the ballot in '27 because you don't want as much participation in this. You want it more limited. Just like you're gonna do the redistricting amendment in '27 for '28, the judicial amendment and on. And New York City will have a say in

this despite the fact that they rejected this.

So now we're gonna create a situation -- you're creating a situation where you're gonna have vacancies of DAs, county clerks, sheriffs who will now when there's that vacancy takes place be appointed by the Governor of this State. I can tell you right now the people I represent in Steuben County, Yates County, Seneca County, Schuyler County, Chemung County, they do not want this Governor appointing the DA, the county clerk or sheriff of those counties. Emphatically yes.

This bill will allow for the political appointments for Governor in impactful positions. My colleague talked about this being a trapdoor. I would kind of emphasis it's a trapdoor and you drop into a bucket of you know what. And that's exactly what this bill is. It is total BS. You're hurting locals. You say you're all about protecting democracy. No, this hurts democracy. This is a blatant violation of local Home Rule. You know that, we know that. And you say you trust the voters, say time and time again, but as I said last night on some of these, the problem is the voters don't trust us. And why don't they trust us? Because time and time again you bring pieces of legislation like this that just thumbs your nose at the voters' wishes in what they want, what they've told us because why? You think you know best. Why? Because all you are looking for with these bills, these -- is pure political power grab. It's wrong. It's not fair. It's shameful. It's disgusting. And even an eighth-grader can understand that.

So for this, Madam Speaker, this, my colleagues, I will absolutely be -- be voting no on this ridiculous constitutional amendment just like I did on the ridiculous redistricting amendment, the judicial amendment and the -- the -- the -- the legislation to give you language to write it. All about political power grab, all about thinking you know what's best. Shame on you.

I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Palmesano.

Respectfully just reminding colleagues that impugning the motives of other members is not permitted in debate and remarks should be related to the proposal currently before the House.

Ms. Bailey.

MS. BAILEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield for a few questions?

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: The sponsor yields.

MS. BAILEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Jacobson. I have a -- a few different areas that I need to ask some questions on. First and foremost, I do want to go back to the timing of this and I believe you had indicated we couldn't do it all back in 2023 when we

did the local elections, moving those to even years because this required a constitutional amendment. Was that -- was I clear in hearing that?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct for those -- for these offices.

MS. BAILEY: Okay. Could we have moved forward in 2024 and -- and brought something before that Body?

MR. JACOBSON: Could -- could we have done a constitutional amendment then?

MS. BAILEY: Could we have started the process in 2024 knowing we couldn't do it in 2023?

MR. JACOBSON: Sure.

MS. BAILEY: Okay. So we could've brought it forward 2024. We would've had a new Body in here in '25, '26, which it could've gone through that Body at that time, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: You know, it was introduced in '25 so that's a new Legislature.

MS. BAILEY: Okay. But it could have been introduced in '24?

MR. JACOBSON: It could have been introduced, yeah.

MS. BAILEY: When we knew that it was a problem in '23?

MR. JACOBSON: Okay.

MS. BAILEY: I'm just asking.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, you get a chance to vote for it now.

MS. BAILEY: Okay. I would've anyways, but okay.

So the next piece I'm gonna go on to the vacancies. So we talk about the vacancies and I heard you say a few times and I just want to make sure I understand what you were saying correctly is that it's, you know, it's the same, that the town boards can appoint. I understand that as far as town justices go, the town boards can appoint. However, as we've discussed here, the Office of the Sheriff would be an appointment by the Governor. If Senate's in session it has to be confirmed or approved by them. The District Attorney and the County Clerk are -- are Governor appointments.

MR. JACOBSON: As they are now.

MS. BAILEY: As they are now, absolutely. I also heard you say that, you know, those positions, you know, as it is now, they're appointments by the Governor and that's what happens today.

So I did a bit of math here and in 2025, over 25% of those three positions were elected. So they were elected in an odd year, they would be running in '29 again. But if this passes, that's not going to be the case. Am I understanding that correct?

MR. JACOBSON: If this passes and then the voters approve, yes. It would be -- if this -- this would be in effect.

MS. BAILEY: Okay. So then the Governor would appoint those positions potentially --

MR. JACOBSON: Well -- well --

MS. BAILEY: -- she doesn't necessarily have to or he or whoever it may be.

MR. JACOBSON: That -- excuse me, sorry.

MS. BAILEY: Nope, that's fine.

MR. JACOBSON: That person that got elected in '25 would serve out the term which would be through the end of '29 and then there would be an appointment.

MS. BAILEY: There potentially could be a vacancy, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: There would --

MS. BAILEY: Come January 1st if that appointment has not taken place ahead of time?

MR. JACOBSON: There would be a vacancy at the end of the term and then the vacancy would be filled as it -- in law now and that's with the Governor.

MS. BAILEY: Okay. So that's 47 positions between district attorney, county clerk and sheriff in 2029 that this could potentially happen. And I heard you say vacancies right now if someone passes away, you know, if they retire, so on and so forth, we're gonna follow the same process. But that's -- I don't think we've ever had a year where 47 constitutional positions passed away or retired. So it's just a large number that we're -- that we are impacting here. I think there's ways in which we could change that. I'm not sure, you know, maybe, you know, in the Election Law right now it has the appointment to the Governor, but I hope this Body would take

that into account that 47 positions come the end of December, 2029 potentially could be vacant based off of this constitutional amendment that's before us today.

My next question is going to go into -- we had talked about voter fatigue, and part of the reason that the even-year was brought forward in 2023 was to get voter turnout. I hear, like some of my colleagues, in the counties that I represent, that they preferred to have their local elections on a ballot by themselves because then folks are coming out for those local elections. My question is in -- in the -- when I looked at your memo, it indicates that there is no fiscal implication for the State. Do we foresee fiscal implications to the counties?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes, there will be savings of money. I spoke, for example, to the Commissioner of Dutchess County, which is a medium-sized county --

MS. BAILEY: Very familiar with it, yeah.

MR. JACOBSON: -- 300,000 people, they have 169 election districts and she told me it would -- it costs generally around 450,000 a year. So I think in your county you will see savings.

MS. BAILEY: Okay. So let's think about this ballot and what it looks like. I know some counties have digital, you know, ballot polling locations. I -- I represent a town that that's what they vote on now based on what their county -- many county's have paper ballots that go into the -- the reader. What does this ballot look like? Is there -- is there a stop? Is it going to be 36 inches long that we're

gonna be sending through the machine? Is it gonna be multiple pages? Those are some of the concerns that are out there by folks in -- in the area that I represent that are true concerns for them because what does that mean for those town elections at the end of the ballot in even years moving forward?

MR. JACOBSON: So what is your -- so what is the question?

MS. BAILEY: I guess -- I guess my question is, have we thought about what the ballot looks like?

MR. JACOBSON: That's not part of this amendment. But if there are concerns, I'm sure we will work with the local commissioners and the State board to address those concerns.

MS. BAILEY: The concerns when -- when this was being worked on, you know, coming out of 2023, did the Board of Elections share any concerns with -- with that that you're aware of? Were they consulted when -- when we were looking at the language for this amendment?

MR. JACOBSON: It's not part of this. They didn't approach me, but it's not part of this. If that is a concern, we can address that by statute, but this is a constitutional amendment for -- with limited -- limited authority and we'll go from there.

MS. BAILEY: I appreciate it very much and that's what I wanted to hear because that is a concern that the Board of Elections has brought forward to me, so I wanted to have that on the record that we can take a look at that and because I think that we need

to -- we need to partner with them.

And I appreciate you answering my questions very much, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

MS. BAILEY: On the bill, Madam Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: On the bill.

MS. BAILEY: So, you know, I agree with many of my colleagues. My biggest concern at the end of the day is how these vacancies are going to be handled. You know, as it stands right now, potentially, you know, if -- if someone's in an elected office and they retire, they resign, you have a -- a deputy typically in those roles. So that deputy when that individual exits is the acting. So my question is, come 2029 when we have at least 47 positions that are going to be vacant across the counties between our sheriffs, our DA and our county clerk, how is that going to be handled? We have to think about that. Is the Governor in a position to appoint in all of those situations? Could we discuss just continuing that term until the even year? We need to seriously look at this because it has true implications based on the language in -- in the -- in the writing of this amendment that's before us today that I think we need to figure those out before it -- it moves forward because it's a true concern. And to have 47 constitutional positions open on January 1, 2030 is a concern of mine and it should be a concern of every New Yorker there is.

So for that reason, Madam Speaker, I cannot support

this and I thank you very much for your time.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Ms. Giglio.

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

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: The sponsor yields.

MS. GIGLIO: Thank you. So why are we doing this with law enforcement, with DAs and sheriffs? Why are we adding them to the national and state elections?

MR. JACOBSON: We're doing this to move those constitutional offices that couldn't -- that were not able to be moved by statute to even years with the rest of the elections.

MS. GIGLIO: Okay. And why do you think law enforcement's [sic] officers should be included in elections for policymakers?

MR. JACOBSON: Why should they be included in the even year?

MS. GIGLIO: Yeah. Like policymakers, they are advocating for local issues, for county issues, for State issues, for federal issues. Why do you think law enforcement officers should be put in the mix with policymakers?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, you have county -- you got

the county exec, you got the county legislature in an even year. So I think it makes sense.

MS. GIGLIO: Those are policymakers.

MR. JACOBSON: Mm-hmm.

MS. GIGLIO: Why do you think law enforcement should be included with policymakers?

MR. JACOBSON: Because I think it makes sense that they also be elected in even years when people are focused and they have the county issues there.

MS. GIGLIO: Okay.

So the President won twice as many counties in New York State in 2024. Do you think that adding district attorneys and sheriffs will dilute votes in county races for voters who only vote in national elections?

MR. JACOBSON: We want -- we want everybody to vote. I don't -- I don't understand your question.

MS. GIGLIO: I'm -- I'm just saying that -- that -- okay. I'll go to the next question.

So the last four elections were won by different parties, right? One year it was one party, the next year it was another party, one year it was another party, the next year it was another party.

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct.

MS. GIGLIO: Do you think these potential future swings may potentially disrupt law enforcement operations where ongoing investigations in areas like drug epidemics, cold case units

and gun violence where multiple years of strategy are required and vital in order for law enforcement to do their job?

MR. JACOBSON: Absolutely not.

MS. GIGLIO: You don't?

MR. JACOBSON: No, because most of the -- well, a lot of the work is done by civil servants and people there all the time and you also have different law and sheriffs getting elected, and yet investigations and the process takes place. We had a transition in Dutchess County and there was a new DA and things continued. So I -- I don't -- I don't see that as a problem at all.

MS. GIGLIO: Okay. Well, my concern is that if there had been a landslide in 2024 and my District Attorney, Ray Tierney, was voted out of office during the prosecution of the Gilgo Beach murders, those cases may never been -- have been solved and prosecuted. So should -- do you think that there needs to be -- that we should have consistency and importance and objectives that they are working on that are known by locals to not be -- get diluted on the ballot, actually? Because I think that with all of these elections and the more elections that we keep piling on, do you think that the media, the advertisement, the text messages, the phone messages, the -- the -- we see at the local post offices things just dumped in the mailbox. Do you think that all of these positions on the ballot and all of this media attention and all of this advertising that it's going to disenfranchise voters and they're just gonna say --

MR. JACOBSON: No, It's gonna --

MS. GIGLIO: -- *I'm sick of hearing from everybody and I'm just not gonna show up.*

MR. JACOBSON: No. It's actually going to enfranchise voters because they're more engaged about other things. They're gonna be turning out to vote. They will then look at what's on the ballot and you're gonna have more people voting.

MS. GIGLIO: Do you know what the position for the district attorneys and sheriffs will be on the ballot?

MR. JACOBSON: Not off the top of my head. It'll be in -- no. I am not going to answer that because I'm -- I don't want to guess.

MS. GIGLIO: Okay. Well, I -- I just think, you know, we made the switch to move State offices up to the top of the ballot and I think that people as it -- they start looking for people individually on the ballot, I think that they're gonna bullet vote. I don't think that they're going to vote the bottom of the ballot and then go maybe -- then maybe they'll vote at the bottom of the ballot and go to the top ballot and everyone in the middle will be forgotten about. What do you think about that?

MR. JACOBSON: I trust the voters.

MS. GIGLIO: You trust the voters. Okay.

Thank you --

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

MS. GIGLIO: -- to the sponsor.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: On the bill.

MS. GIGLIO: This bill will relegate local issues and elections behind state and national issues. It will create crowded ballots that will be dominated by national races and issues. And in my opinion, adding more people to the ballot will disenfranchise the voters and I think that we will have a low voter turnout in some areas of the ballot and high voter -- high voting results in other parts of the ballot. I -- I think that just crowding the ballot is wrong, not only for the state and national races, but also the local races where people are really paying attention to the local issues. The local issues that are important to them and I -- I just think that it's a complete disservice to the residents of New York State to pile everybody onto the ballot and expect all the voters to know all the issues and everything that the candidate stand for. And I -- and I hope that it doesn't backfire.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Thank you.

Ms. Shresna [sic].

MS. SHRESTHA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: On the bill.

MS. SHRESTHA: So I represent a majority of Ulster County as well as Northern Dutchess in Dutchess County. And the experience I've had so far with county legislators having to be on the same ballot as me this year is already proving to be much more collaborative, much more democratic and also more excitement for

the upcoming election.

For example, we have been able to discuss what kind of platform we want to run on together, which brings together all of the issues we are basically facing at every level of government which is, you know, how to bring down housing costs, how to address the affordability crisis, what are we going to do about Medicaid, what are we going to do about property taxes. These are all the common issues we are trying to tackle at every level of government and being on the same ballot has allowed us to connect and talk about how we're gonna address these issues as we run for election.

The other thing I want to say is that it's also been much easier to petition. We've just had more campaigns going out to petition, you know, more candidates being able to do events together which really, really helps with what is definitely an -- a -- a challenging issue in democracy which is election fatigue. There is such a thing of election fatigue that I have noticed when we go knock doors, when we're talking about, you know, soliciting donations from small donors. A lot of us depend on donations from our constituents, small donors and it is much easier for these folks as well, the people who are going to the ballot to -- to the, you know, to vote to have to put their energy into these elections all at once, as much as possible, instead of being, to be honest, stressed out every year about different offices.

And you know, I really have found that voters when they go to vote, they know exactly what they want to do. My district

is very independent-minded. There are Democrats who don't vote the party line who go by who they know, the individual. But there are also people who just vote down the -- the slate just based on what line who is running on. These are both types of voters that exist and I think that they will continue to do so no matter how many offices we add to the ballot.

So that has been my experience so far with the offices that did not need a constitution change. But when we passed that bill and it became law, the first, you know, request I got from my constituents is -- was actually, *can you also move the other offices to the same year so that there isn't a split of, you know, some offices being even year, some offices being odd year.* And I had to explain to them that that would be good, but you get to decide it because that's gonna be a constitutional amendment and people will have to vote on that. So that is exactly the option we are providing to New Yorkers. Do they think all of these should be in the even year election, or do they want to keep it split and they're going to decide.

I have also had experience running with all kinds of different positions, you know, when things lined up differently. I know that in my county, the sheriff has run with the county executive, for example. But even in those instances there were opportunities for alignment in terms of what issues we are talking about. All of the issues we experience are interconnected: Public safety, affordability, roads, housing. There is no such thing as -- as anything we're doing that is purely apolitical no matter which office you are running for and

that is exactly why all of these offices are part of our democracy.

So I am very glad that we are giving voters the option to do this. I think it will make our democracy much more collaborative, much more exciting and this is a time where we do want people to remain interested in this great experiment that we are all involved in which is a system of governance where people have a voice in who represents them.

So I will be supporting this bill and I will be voting yes when we start voting.

Thank you so much.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh.

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

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: The sponsor yields.

MS. WALSH: Thank you. And again, I will apologize in advance if you've gone through this. I for my own clarity want to understand a particular hypothetical that I'm gonna throw out. Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: Ask -- ask away.

MS. WALSH: Thank you. So imagine, if you will, a

Supreme Court -- New York State Supreme Court Judge that was elected in 2019, okay? Fourteen-year term. That person would be up in 2033. I want to just run through how that would work. So you've -- I understood you from previous questioning to say that that incumbent judge would not need to run again in 2032 because that shortening the term for which that person was elected. So that we know is not going to happen, right?

MR. JACOBSON: Correct.

MS. WALSH: Okay. Now we get to 2034. So if -- would that -- would that person be running in 2034 if they -- if they choose to -- to run?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, their -- that person's term expires in 2033.

MS. WALSH: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: Right?

MS. WALSH: Yes.

MR. JACOBSON: So there we -- there's a vacancy --

MS. WALSH: Yes.

MR. JACOBSON: -- and then there would be an appointment. And then that that following November in 2034, that position would be up for a full term.

MS. WALSH: And -- and -- and as far as filling that vacancy that occurs in 2030 --

MR. JACOBSON: At the end of 2033, right.

MS. WALSH: -- 2033 -- 2033, my understanding is

that that is permissive with the Governor and it's not mandatory to fill that vacancy; is that correct?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct, and if you -- the Senate is in session, maybe that's gonna be a problem. You know, they -- they would have -- it's with advise and consent.

MS. WALSH: I'm so sorry, and -- and bless you, Mr. Fitzpatrick. I didn't hear -- I didn't hear the answer to that, though. Would you please -- would you mind repeating that?

MR. JACOBSON: No. The -- the appointment is with the advise and consent of the Senate unless the Senate is not in session.

MS. WALSH: And is that specifically necessary to fill Judicial -- Judicial vacancies?

MR. JACOBSON: For Supreme -- yes. For -- yes.

MS. WALSH: For Supreme. Now that would not be --

MR. JACOBSON: For those -- for those -- yes. For the con -- not -- not for the local, but for the others.

MS. WALSH: Okay. So that's what I -- and that -- you anticipated my next question which is that is a unique situation that would be faced for the Supreme Court Judge positions.

MR. JACOBSON: Yes, and also Surrogate, Surrogate and, um...

MS. WALSH: Family Court?

MR. JACOBSON: Hmm?

MS. WALSH: Family Court as well?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

MS. WALSH: Okay. So any Judicial --

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

MS. WALSH: -- vacancies follow that method that we just talked about where the Governor may, and it was -- it's with the advice, consent of the --

MR. JACOBSON: Senate.

MS. WALSH: -- Senate, very good.

MR. JACOBSON: Any of those judges where the caption says, Family Court of the State of New York, County of --

MS. WALSH: Yes.

MR. JACOBSON: -- so you know that's a state office.

MS. WALSH: Yes. And could you refresh my recollection because I'm not clear at how is that procedure initiated? Does that come as a request from the Governor to the Senate for approval of a slate of vacancies that she wishes, or he, wishes to fill? Or is that something that is initiated through the Senate or something else?

MR. JACOBSON: I -- I think it could be anything. It could be a local person saying, *hey, we need another -- we want another judge here because we're out a judge and please make an appointment.* So it could be any -- any reason, right? The-- the -- the Office of Court, you know, the other judges, the presiding judge in

that district could say, *we need another judge.*

MS. WALSH: Right. Well, and -- and you're again, anticipating kind of where I'm going next.

So if the Governor, for whatever reason, chooses not to fill a particular vacancy, then what happens?

MR. JACOBSON: Then it's vacant.

MS. WALSH: Okay. And -- and then the impact on the remaining judges in that area could be, would be that they would need to cover that caseload, presumably, that that judge that's leaving has left.

MR. JACOBSON: You know, I mean, it does happen sometimes when you -- a judge has to go outside their district and, you know, and -- and they cover. So, you know, it -- it'll be dealt with, but I am sure that whoever the Governor is - and I'd like to remind people that the Governor's election hasn't been done yet - so whoever the Governor is, would want to -- would want to fill it.

MS. WALSH: Right, but we've seen a -- we've seen different things happen. We've seen sometimes that the vacancies are not filled. I'm specifically thinking about when the previous Governor was in office we had that situation in my area and he elected not to fill vacancies. And -- but I believe, if I'm remembering correctly, in that case as a previous questioner had mentioned, there were -- there was a situation where there was a deputy and so the deputy was able to step into the role and be the acting and -- and it was smoother than -- than if you had say a Supreme Court judge whose -- you're done.

And -- and also the other thing that occurred to me is that in my example, I was using the example of one judge, one State Supreme Court judge that was impacted, but if you consider that in an odd -- previous odd election year, you could've had and often do have several judge positions. I think the -- the -- the year that I'm thinking of in 2019, I think that there -- there were at least three but I want to say that there were five judgeships that were open. So that -- that could be playing this out in the hypothetical. There could be a number of judge vacancies.

MR. JACOBSON: True, but if it's that great a number, there would be more of an impetus for the -- for the Governor to make that selection. So --

MS. WALSH: I would --

MR. JACOBSON: -- I think -- I think then there would be more pressure on the Governor to act and there'd be a lot of local interest, the Court Administration, a lot of people saying, *hey, we need -- we need appointments.*

MS. WALSH: Right. I -- I do agree with you. I think that there would -- there would be, but there's nothing constitutionally or statutorily that mandates that she or he, the Governor, do the -- fill that vacancy. It -- it's -- it's just -- it's permissive.

MR. JACOBSON: I don't -- I don't think -- I don't think we can write it that the Governor "shall", you know, about -- that gets very strange.

MS. WALSH: Heaven forbid we should do something that -- that strong, right? I understand.

I -- I -- I appreciate your answers to that.

So, another kind of like an overarching thing that I've been thinking about through this debate is do you, I'm gonna ask you as the sponsor, do you perceive staggered terms overall as being kind of a problem? Is that part of the justification for moving to the point where they will not be staggered anymore but will be all on -- or most, except for, you know, instead of New York City?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah, but it's -- but some of the terms say we'll start, just to use a number, some will start in '32 and others will start in '34. So it's not gonna be everybody up at the same time.

MS. WALSH: Yeah, you'll still have -- it'll -- you'd still have staggering in the sense that you'll -- it'll always be, or generally speaking, will be on an even year, but it might not be the same even year is what you're saying. I understand that.

MR. JACOBSON: Right. So there will -- there'll always be judges up for election.

MS. WALSH: No, I understand what you're saying there. Okay.

I -- I think you've answered my questions. I appreciate your time.

And Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: On the bill.

MS. WALSH: So I do think in -- in -- and in listening to all of this and thinking about it, I do think that there is a history and rationale that has always existed in New York behind staggered terms and in American government, generally, rooted in stability, continuity, independence and -- and where I think it's very important here, preventing sudden political swings from capturing all levels of government at once. That's really the rationale behind having staggered terms to begin with.

When New York adopted and revised its constitutions throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, lawmakers deliberately established different election cycles and term lengths for different offices. The idea was that first, federal offices would be elected on one cycle, statewide offices would be elected on another, local offices would very often be elected separately and that judges would serve long terms that insulated them from immediate political pressures. This reflected a broader American constitutional principle that government should not be entirely subject to the passions of a single election year. The framers of New York's judicial article were -- were particularly concerned about judicial independence. Supreme Court Judges were given 14-year terms -- and can I just say parenthetically, wouldn't we all kill for one of those with us having to stand every two years -- among the longest elected judicial terms in the country, to ensure judges could decide cases without constantly campaigning for reelection.

So continuity of government. One of the reasons for

staggering terms is to ensure that institutional knowledge is retained. If every county official, judge, legislator and executive were elected simultaneously, a single election could replace nearly everyone at once. Staggering ensures that experienced officials remain in office, that government functions continue smoothly and that new officials get to learn from experienced colleagues. This principle is reflected nationally and the staggered terms of the United States Senate were only about one-third of seats are up every two years.

Judicial independence would be the second point; this is particularly important for judges. Judges are expected to decide on popular cases, protect constitutional rights, rule against powerful interests when it's necessary. Long and staggered judicial terms reduce the pressure to align judicial decisions with the political mood of a particular election cycle. A Supreme Court justice elected in one political environment may continue serving through several Governors, Presidents and Legislative Majorities.

The third thing I really want to mention and I think this is so important to prevent wave elections from sweeping every office. Historically, one concern has been that a presidential election or major political movement could dominate every race on the ballot. Staggered elections force voters to focus on different levels of government at different times. For example, a voter might support a presidential candidate but in a separate local election, evaluated judge, a district attorney or a sheriff on their own merits without staggering local races can become proxies for national politics. And I think that

is so important especially as someone else coined the term but we've heard it before of a hyper -- a hyper-political environment and I think we find ourselves in it now, we are hyperpolarized.

So checks and balances. Staggered terms act as a structural check on concentrated political power. If all offices were elected simultaneously, one party could capture every level of government in a single election, policy changes could be more abrupt, institutional independence could weaken.

So all of that being said, for more than a century New York has deliberately staggered elections in terms of office and that was not by accident. It reflected a belief that local government, the judiciary and statewide offices often and each deserve their own measure of independence from national political waves. This -- this bill, this legislation, this -- yeah. This constitutional amendment that's being proposed treats staggered terms as a problem to be solved. In reality, staggered terms are a safeguard; one that promotes stability, continuity, judicial independence and focused voter consideration of local offices. Before we dismantle that structure, we should ask whether maximizing turnout is worth sacrificing the very protections that staggered terms were designed to provide.

A previous speaker, my colleague mentioned voter fatigue, right, as -- as a reason for trying to put everything on -- or more on even years. But voting, my friends, has never been more convenient and that's due to a number of changes that we've seen in the Election Law over the last few years. We have early voting now --

early voting periods, we have no excuse absentee voting or whatever it is that we ended up calling it because when we called it no excuse absentee voting I think the voters rejected it, then we just called it something else. But in any event, they can certainly vote with -- without excuse on the absentee ballot.

The last thing, I see my time is limited, but the last thing I want to ask is where are the good government groups here? Where -- I -- I don't have any positions from the League of Women Voters, I don't see any positions from other good government groups that are so anxious to weigh in on absolutely tangential policy issues that this Body has taken up. Where are they? If the League of Women Voters is interested primarily in voting issues, why are we hearing crickets here? I'm so disappointed. I'm not surprised, but I'm very disappointed at the complete absence of weighing in on this.

I will be voting no on this and I will be working as hard as I possibly can to make sure that no matter how this proposed constitutional amendment gets worded by the Democrats, that the people that I represent and beyond understand what this is really about and I -- I will urge them as I urge my colleagues to vote no.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Thank you.

Mr. Lavine.

MR. LAVINE: Thank you, Ms. Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Will the sponsor

yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: The sponsor yields.

MR. LAVINE: So Mr. Jacobson, I've heard the word disenfranchisement referred to several times during this debate. What does that mean? What is disenfranchisement?

MR. JACOBSON: Nobody is being disenfranchised.

MR. LAVINE: Mr. Jacobson, I know that you're a lawyer and I also know from my own experience as a lawyer cross-examining other lawyers, that lawyers generally make the best -- the worst witnesses. So I'm gonna ask you again, can you define what is disenfranchisement?

MR. JACOBSON: Oh, to define it?

MR. LAVINE: Pardon me?

MR. JACOBSON: You want me to define it?

MR. LAVINE: Yes, but I'd ask you to speak into your microphone. I don't -- I don't mind looking at the back of your shoulder.

MR. JACOBSON: Disenfranchisement is actions that discourage, or in the extreme, prohibit people from voting, to do things that would make it more difficult for people to vote.

MR. LAVINE: Is there anything at all in your bill that evens -- even at the slightest hints at disenfranchising people who are entitled to vote?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. LAVINE: So, there have been some expressions of concern over this bill. Those expressions of concern with respect to even-year voting were the subject of a lawsuit, were they not, in New York State?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

MR. LAVINE: And how did the people who claimed that even-year election voting was a corruption of American democracy? How did they fare? How did they do at our highest court, the Court of Appeals of the State of New York?

MR. JACOBSON: The Court of Appeals upheld the 19 -- the 2023 law.

MR. LAVINE: So they didn't do too good there, did they?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct.

MR. LAVINE: And after that, in March of this year, they appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, didn't they?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct.

MR. LAVINE: And while some of us, including myself, have been concerned that some of the rulings of this present Supreme Court when it comes to voting rights -- and it's not just me -- how did those people who had such problem -- problems with even-year election voting, how did they manage at the Supreme Court of the United States? They won, didn't they?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

MR. LAVINE: No, they actually lost.

MR. JACOBSON: No, I --

(Indiscernible/crosstalk)

MR. LAVINE: And maybe I made the question a unduly complicated.

MR. JACOBSON: I'm sorry.

MS. WALSH: Point of order. Madam Speaker, I'm so sorry to interrupt, but this does not seem at all germane to the -- the bill that we're taking up right now. So I -- I know that we've been talking a lot about germaneness, but talking about what's going on at the Supreme Court or several years ago does not appear to be germane to this discussion.

MR. LAVINE: It was 2026.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Give me one second.

(Pause/conferring)

MS. WALSH: Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: While the point is not sustained, I will continue to remind my colleagues that the -- the outcome of a court decision may be relevant, but critic -- but criticism of a federal administration is in court is beyond the scope.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER JACKSON: Please proceed.

MR. LAVINE: I -- I stand corrected. Now, you were asked, Mr. Jacobson -- I'm not done yet -- Mr. Jacobson, you were

asked wouldn't this -- the implementation of this particular measure, wouldn't it cause great damage to the public in the sense that if you had these even-year elections there are some law enforcement officers who might not get reelected, and would, therefore, not continue their investigations?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, the investigations would continue at the discretion of whoever got elected.

MR. LAVINE: So, Mr. -- Mr. Jacobson -- and I'm not speaking now about recent developments at the United States Department of Justice. I want to make that clear to everybody in this room. I'm not talking about that. I'm not even thinking about that. But have you ever heard of a professional prosecutor or a professional sheriff or investigator who gets elected and decides they don't wanna honor their professional obligation about continuing the investigations that their predecessors had begun?

MR. JACOBSON: No, I haven't heard about that.

MR. LAVINE: Okay. Now, a question was asked of you, or a statement was made with respect to this proposal -- oh, and by the way, this proposal -- who gets to eventually decide this -- this proposal?

MR. JACOBSON: The voters.

MR. LAVINE: So a question was asked of you with respect to the fact that the bill does not cover New York City elections, right? You were asked that question?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct. And I was asked

and that's correct.

MR. LAVINE: And the -- the question was asked, how is it fair that this gets to be decided by all the people of the State of New York, this constitutional amendment, when the people who live in the five boroughs or a majority of them, have already decided they don't want this within the boundaries of the City of New York?

MR. JACOBSON: All constitutional amendments, after passed in two successive legislatures that are elected separately, are -- are presented to the voters of the entire State. So all voters have a chance to express their opinion.

MR. LAVINE: So when you drafted this language, did you consider denying the people of the City of New York who have already expressed their view with respect to this within the five boundaries [sic], did you think about denying them the right to vote on this Statewide constitutional amendment?

MR. JACOBSON: No. And I don't believe in disenfranchisement, and that all the voters in the State have the right to vote on every constitutional amendment that is presented for a vote.

MR. LAVINE: And I take it that this proposal was at some point submitted to the Office of the Attorney General, given that it's a constitutional amendment.

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. And there was a positive opinion that it was -- that it met the standards.

MR. LAVINE: And had you included language in the proposal that would have denied the right of the people who vote

in the City of New York to vote on this referendum, what do you think the Attorney General's attitude would have been with respect to the constitutionality?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I don't want to guess, but I would assume that that would be unconstitutional and would not work. So this -- this bill does not disenfranchise any voters from making their voices heard when -- when and if this amendment is presented to the voters of the State -- of the entire State.

MR. LAVINE: And Mr. Jacobson, you were -- you were questioned as to whether this proposal, if constitutionally enacted, wouldn't cause undue confusion to the voters of the State of New York at our elections. And do you think this would cause undue confusion?

MR. JACOBSON: No, I --I don't think so at all. The voters make their decisions based on the information they're given, and they will be able to vote on every position before them.

MR. LAVINE: So, Mr. Jacobson, are you aware that the National Conference of State Legislatures -- which is impartial, it's not Republican, it's not Democratic -- Democrats, it's impartial, non-political -- advises that there are only four states left in the entire United States of America that don't have even-year elections? And those states are West Virginia, Mississippi and a couple of the -- a couple of the others, and Louisiana. And New Jersey had that same system. Are you aware that there are only four states that don't have what you're advocating?

MR. JACOBSON: No, I -- I wasn't aware of that, and I'm glad that you're enlightening me and this Body.

MR. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. And I just have I think one last question for you.

Mr. Jacobson, have any of the good government groups contacted you to tell you that this is just a terrible idea?

MR. JACOBSON: No. Nobody has contacted us on that.

MR. LAVINE: And why would you think that good government groups are not standing up with their hair on fire over the prospect of this constitutional amendment?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, usually people speak up when they're against something, and if they're for something they're usually quiet. So that's -- that would be my assumption.

MR. LAVINE: Thank you very much, Mr. Jacobson.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Ari Brown.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. A. BROWN: I wasn't gonna debate this bill. I was very fascinated by the first debate you had with our esteemed colleague Assemblyman Slater. I have just one question for

clarification. When you were asked, Assemblyman, you stated, I think, that New York City is exempt because voters there receive greater, was it media attention or exposure and therefore already had sufficient voter engagement? Did I get that right or am I misrepresenting your statement?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, that's part of it. I mean, New York City, as you know, is unique and has different circumstances.

MR. A. BROWN: All right. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: And then if later on we decide -- or if we decide based on what we know we can present that. But at this point we just have a limited constitutional amendment.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you. You know -- you know, the borough of the Bronx I was looking at and Nassau County each have a very similar population of about 1.4 million people. In 2021, Nassau County's executive election generated more than 283,000 votes while the entire borough of the Bronx cast approximately only 126,000 votes in the mayoral election. If the greater media exposure, as you had stated, leads to greater voter participation, how do you explain Nassau County generating more than twice the voter engagement of the Bronx despite having a similar population? And that -- for that matter, if New York City does not already demonstrate a higher voter participation, why exempt it from the very reform being posed on the rest of the State, or even from all the great ideas we heard from our esteemed colleague Assemblyman

Lavine? Like, why not let them do it? What -- what could be the harm is my question?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Lavine, why do you rise?

MR. LAVINE: We're not supposed to refer to other people by name who have spoken.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Your point is sustained. We will refrain from using other members' names while we ask questions and speak on bills. Thank you.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you. I apologize. So why can't we just implement the great ideas that our esteemed -- nameless esteemed colleague had proposed?

MR. JACOBSON: I'll take that in consideration and maybe we will.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you so much.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson.

You know, what strikes me most is that Albany seems to have developed a very simple answer to every election question: Change the rules. If turnout is lower than some people would like, let's just change the rules. If one election cycle produces different results than another election cycle, of course, change the rules. If the electorate does not believe the way political experts are expected to behave, once again, let's change the rules. At some point

we should just ask this very simple question: Why is it always the voters who need to be adjusted? Why is it never that the politicians who need to do a better job persuading them?

This proposal is being presented as a good government reform. Maybe it is, and maybe it isn't. But what it unquestionably does is change who shows up, when they show up, and when [sic] elections they are participating in. That's not a modern administrative change, that goes to the heart of our electoral system. And before we amend the Constitution I think the burden should be much higher than simply saying more people might vote.

For that reason, I'll be voting in the negative. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Levenberg.

MS. LEVENBERG: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. LEVENBERG: I just wanted to thank my colleague on the other side of the Chamber for putting this constitutional amendment forward. As a former town supervisor, I know that it was always very, very difficult to get voter turnout in the off years. And as much as it could be said that it's not about turnout, but about engagement, I think that we all know, even if just anecdotally and not by the numbers themselves, that people really don't pay attention in those -- in the odd years. They pay attention in

even-year elections because of the folks who are at the top of the ballot. And as much as I wish that -- and I don't really wanna throw them under the bus -- my in-laws, who I spend time with up here when I'm in Albany, actually knew when their school board election was or when the election was for town supervisor or when the election was for a village trustee. They just don't. They're not engaged. But they are paying attention to congressional votes, they are paying attention to gubernatorial votes, and clearly paying attention to presidential votes. So when we talk about people actually being engaged in elections, it makes a lot more sense for us to have people running in those even years. Again, as much as we'd love that people were paying attention to the sheriff's election or -- or the judges, it's very difficult to actually get people to pay attention to those other -- other elections because they aren't advertised as much, whether in the media or otherwise. And again, as much as we can do a better job knocking on doors and engaging with voters and sending out mailers, they're just -- they're just not attuned to these types of things. Those folks who are engaged voters and are coming out to vote in those off-year elections are gonna continue to come out in the even-year elections, and we will have much more -- again, much -- much more robust turnout and much more -- hopefully much more robust voters who are really seeking to find out what -- who's on the ballot, what it's all about.

So as much as I wish people were tuned into these off years and that it made so much sense when it was first constructed to

-- to balance everything out, we know it's just not the case. And again, knowing -- having seen that firsthand running in those off years I know this to be true. And I hope that with the even-year elections that much more people are going to pay attention to who's on the ballot at every level of government and come out to vote.

So thank you again. And when we get to the point of voting, which I hope will be soon, I will be voting in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Durso.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Just to get some -- some clarity. You had said earlier -- so I just want to understand this -- that obviously this is moving those DAs, sheriffs, other judges' races to those even years to match up with an amendment we did a couple years ago that brought those elections to even years, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Right. To match up with the statute that did it.

MR. DURSO: What -- in your opinion, why didn't we do them all at one time then?

MR. JACOBSON: I don't know. But -- but we -- we did -- we passed that and now we're gonna hopefully pass this so that everybody's there in the same year.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So you're saying it's a fix, essentially? Maybe they missed out on it the last time?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: No. What I'm saying is we can only do it by statute so much, and now with the constitutional amendment we're completing the process.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So when we did that constitutional amendment it was set that if someone was -- term would have been up in an odd year, right, if they had a four-year term and because of that constitutional amendment being passed they would only maybe do a three-year term just so it would match up on an even year, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, what you're describing is the statute we passed.

MR. DURSO: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: And it wasn't a constitutional amendment.

MR. DURSO: Well, but that was part of it, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. We --

MR. DURSO: Okay.

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. DURSO: No? You said yes then no. Which one?

MR. JACOBSON: No, in 2023 it was a statute --

MR. DURSO: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: -- and that it did pass about how to get the different offices in even years by -- by the different election years.

MR. DURSO: So -- and then maybe I don't know the answer and I probably don't -- why are we not following the same with this, to where now we're going to have vacancies? Why wouldn't we make it in this amendment or change the statute so that there is [sic] no vacancies and maybe just do shorter terms so that there is [sic] no vacancies so people could be elected by the person that they voted for?

MR. JACOBSON: It was a choice that was made in consideration about the judges being able to serve out their full term.

MR. DURSO: So this was made more for the judges so they could fill -- serve their full term, not the DAs, sheriffs, so on and so forth?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, it's just part of that. They're all constitutional officers, so we treat them all the same.

MR. DURSO: But the judges have -- how -- how long is the term, 14 years?

MR. JACOBSON: Fourteen years. That's not changing.

MR. DURSO: Understood. But the term that you would normally be elected for, which for a DA is four years, would be changed, correct, depending upon --

MR. JACOBSON: No. In fact, we're mandating that it's a four-year term.

MR. DURSO: You're mandating it's a four-year term if you're elected in an even year.

MR. JACOBSON: Going forward it will be a four-year term once you're elected under the provisions of this constitutional amendment.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So again, could we have changed the statute so that it would have followed the same way that the last constitutional amendment when it was put into place was done where someone may have a shorter term but could fill out a term when they were elected by the people of their county, town, wherever it may be?

MR. JACOBSON: We -- it could have been done as we did the statute before, not the constitute -- we didn't do a constitutional amendment.

MR. DURSO: Understood. So could we have changed the statute is what I'm saying.

MR. JACOBSON: But we didn't, so this is what we have.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So we're not changing the statute. So we, again, can have vacancies in a DA's position, sheriff's

position, so on and so forth?

MR. JACOBSON: Correct.

MR. DURSO: And the Governor, as you said earlier, can appoint to fill the rest of the term?

MR. JACOBSON: Right.

MR. DURSO: So let me ask you this, since we -- we talked about democracy and voter suppression and all these other words that we talked about. How is that democracy when we're specifically making this -- possibly making this new law and we'll leave it up to the voters and we'll get to that in a minute -- but then saying, *Well, these people that you are now electing will not fill out their full term, and we're just going to have another elected official put someone else into place*?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, the whole purpose of this is to have greater turnout when people vote directly for this, and the people that are making the appointment are chosen by the voters.

MR. DURSO: So basically what you're saying is this is all about voter turnout, getting people out to vote?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes, because we believe that it's best when more people vote in elections.

MR. DURSO: So why not include villages, school board elections, fire election districts -- district elections in this? Because they have some of the lowest turnout in local elections by far. So why are we leaving them out if this is about getting people out to vote in their local elections?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, we can change that by statute, and maybe in the future we will.

MR. DURSO: Well, why do we have to keep piecemealing it together? Why didn't we just do it at once? It doesn't -- it's just not a lot of confidence in the process.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, they're not in the Constitution, so they would have to be done by statute.

MR. DURSO: Understood.

MR. JACOBSON: And then we'll see if we want to make changes and we'll go from there.

MR. DURSO: Okay. So just touching back on something else. You had spoke about New York City obviously did their own charter, correct, and put it to a vote for --

MR. JACOBSON: No, it was a nonbinding referendum that -- that I heard about.

MR. DURSO: That we heard about or did it happen?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah, it was a ballot measure.

MR. DURSO: So we didn't just hear about it, it happened. So now because they did that we're not including them in this, correct, because they -- the people of New York City already spoke is essentially what you said, correct, and decided they did not want it on even years?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Well, that's probably part of it.

But the main thing is New York City is different, and --

MR. DURSO: How?

MR. JACOBSON: Hmm?

MR. DURSO: How are they different?

MR. JACOBSON: It's different. Things are just different.

MR. DURSO: Oh, okay.

MR. JACOBSON: So -- but we'll see what happens in the future.

MR. DURSO: Can you explain why they're different? Is there a definition to New York City's different?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Well, it's the largest city in America.

MR. DURSO: Right, about roughly 8 million people, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah.

MR. DURSO: There's roughly 12 million people in the rest of the State. So the rest of the State's not different or as important? Is that what you're saying?

MR. JACOBSON: I think that we just decided this is -- this is what we're doing in the --

MR. DURSO: So we're just -- so it wasn't because they did their own referendum is what you're saying? It had nothing to do with that? Because earlier you said it was because they did their

own referendum.

MR. JACOBSON: No, I said in part --

MR. DURSO: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: -- that was considered.

MR. DURSO: So that was considered. They're a larger media market, correct? That was part of the consideration?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, the larger media market is how -- how their elections get focused.

MR. DURSO: Sure.

MR. JACOBSON: I think everybody throughout the country knew that the --

MR. DURSO: You put all those things together and came to that conclusion, correct? You said you put all those things together. So -- so somewhere like Long Island has the same media market as New York City. So that's one checkmark. If a --

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. Yes. But that -- but the problem is they don't cover the local races.

MR. DURSO: I'm sorry?

MR. JACOBSON: You don't get the same coverage of the local --

MR. DURSO: Oh, so it's about what the media covers?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah.

MR. DURSO: Well, how is that scientific? How is that political? How is that --

MR. JACOBSON: All -- all I'm saying is that the -- New York City is different. The size is different. How people get their information is different. And we -- we can always do this another time for New York City.

MR. DURSO: So because they're different, the size is different, the media coverage is different even though we have the same media market, if Nassau County or Suffolk County or a city within one of those like Long Beach did their own referendum, would they be excluded from this? If their voters decided in the county or the town or the City of Long Beach or the City of Glen Cove put a referendum on the ballot and said, *Do we want this*, would they be excluded? Because you're excluding New York City because the voters already spoke. So if the voters in another town, county, city said, *We spoke*, are -- are we gonna tell the voters they're wrong in that instance and tell them that just New York City's different?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Well, we're getting into hypotheticals here.

MR. DURSO: Well, it's not hypothetical. We could -- we could --

MR. JACOBSON: Well, look, it's not in there. We're -- we -- we're doing this to -- so that the constitutional offices and where we moved everything to an even year is -- are gonna be on the same ballot.

MR. DURSO: What -- what if I told you, Mr.

Jacobson, that there were two cities -- actually, one city, one town on Long Island that did do this? Would they be excluded?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. DURSO: No. So it's -- we're just doing this for New York City blanketly because, like you said, they're special.

MR. JACOBSON: We -- we have a lot of things that only -- we pass laws all the time that --

MR. DURSO: Yes, we do. And they usually -- as you said, they're cities of more than one million, right? But it doesn't say that here. It doesn't say cities of more than one million, it just says New York City. And your -- your answer as to why, amongst others, was that the voters spoke, which this is all about the voter's voice and we trust the voters. The voters spoke, they have a different media market, and they're different. There's 8 million people there. So again, if the City of Yonkers did their own referendum they're not New York City, so they're not special. If Westchester County did it, they're different.

MR. JACOBSON: The -- the voters will get a chance, if we pass this next year -- pass it now, pass it next year, the voters gets a chance. If they don't want to have it, they can vote against it.

MR. DURSO: I -- I completely understand. I'm not -- I'm not disagreeing with how the process is gonna go working forward. I'm just trying to understand is you've excluded 8 million people, right, the five boroughs and New York City, roughly a million

people, from this yet they get to vote on it, which I understand is -- is part of the Constitution. I understand that. But the reasons why they are excluded are a different media market, they've already voted, and they're special. So I just want to understand if another town, county, anything -- I mean, we could all shake our head about it, right? We could. But it's the truth. Because the fact of the matter is is you have no answer. So what I'm gonna question is, what is the real answer? You said they did a referendum. So if another town or county on Long Island or anywhere else has already done this, will they be excluded?

MR. JACOBSON: No. We -- we have this amendment, and the process is that eventually it'll go before the voters.

MR. DURSO: I -- Mr. Jacobson, I appreciate that. I really do. And I understand that you have a job to do, as do I, and we're both doing them now. But I'm just trying to understand, again, now -- now going past the City portion of it, we've talked about greater voter turnout, right? And we can't force people to do things. We force people in -- in this Chamber all the time throughout the State to do things, or exclude people. You said because villages and towns and -- are not part of the Constitution, we can't force them.

MR. JACOBSON: We pass by statute concerning towns and county legislatures and county executives, and we're doing it by constitutional -- by a constitutional amendment, the constitutional officers, and villages can be addressed next year. And

maybe you'll have some suggestions on that.

MR. DURSO: I have plenty of suggestions, Mr. Jacobson. I'm just -- we talk about fairness all the time here, right? We talk about fairness, equity, making sure that the voters have a voice. It's just that the voters' voice in New York City -- because they already did a referendum, we think -- spoke. But if they spoke in my county or the two counties I represent or somewhere, like I said, in Westchester or Erie County, their voices don't matter. If they did their own referendum, they wouldn't be included in this. This is just because New York City is special. I'm just talking about fairness. Listen, the voters are gonna vote on this referendum and we will trust the voters, right? And I'm 100 percent fine with that. But the DA in Manhattan and the position is just as important as the DA in Erie County. The DA in the Bronx is just as important, the position, as the DA in Suffolk County. So why are they being treated differently? Their job is to represent people that elected them. We're just not giving them the same due as we will for New York City.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, we'll see what happens when the voters decide.

MR. DURSO: Thank you, Mr. -- I appreciate you answering that for me. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Lunsford.

MS. LUNSFORD: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MS. LUNSFORD: You know, I approach this, I think, from a different perspective than some of my other colleagues here, because I have actually had the privilege of running with a village that has local elections on the evens in November. I have run my entire career with this -- with the Village of Fairport, and I've seen the impact on voter turnout of local elections, which is, I think, surprisingly outsized to what you might expect. You know, we all see -- we -- we're all the same kind of nerd in this room. We all look at voter data. There's actually a study out of the MIT Election Lab from, I think it was 2018, pre-COVID -- which I think is relevant to a lot of our election discussions -- that showed that when you add local elections to even-year larger state and federal elections, the combined vote total is five percent more than what you might expect if you just added the two together because more people come out to vote overall. I have seen as I walk through the village with people who are running for local offices that voters are engaged in what they care about. And some voters really care about the president. Some voters really care about the corner store. Some voters really care about potholes. Some voters really care about sidewalks. And it's just kind of what motivates you. But what's been really interesting for me as a political science major who just finds this stuff interesting, is the ability to educate those voters about all of the things their government does and the way they interact. Because when I get to walk around with a village trustee, we get to talk about the fact that there is an intersection

between State and local offices. The Village of Fairport has amongst the highest voter turnout in every race we run, even when they run in the odds, because they also have odd-year elections. I think it's just because they're more informed voters. We also -- for whatever it's worth, we're also one of the top census-returning areas. I think people just like to have their opinion known in my district. But the impact that I see on voter engagement, on interest and issues and turnout overall says to me that when you combine these races, you're going to create a more informed, engaged electorate that participates in government. And I don't think that that is a partisan issue. Because I can tell you that the Village of Fairport having these even-year elections has been controlled by both parties on and off over the years. You see it flip. So it's, for me, an overall good government in addition to good government efficiency issue to combine these races. I -- when we talked about this several years ago in relation to moving the seats we've already moved, I raised some concerns about including everyone at once because some of our villages are complicated. I know I have villages that run in March. I know I have villages that run a January primary for a June election. Well, I will say there's actually nothing in this constitutional amendment that I am aware of that requires a date. It just says what year. So I think if a local government really felt like they needed to segregate themselves out to highlight their candidates or highlight their race, they could do so by their own town rules or own county rules. I know there might be some complicating factors in other places where there are three-year

terms. This -- these were things we were considering, which is why we were doing it piecemeal. This is why we were taking our time and not doing in one fell swoop. But I think what we've seen as we transferred to two-year elections in this last cycle, more voter engagement. Exactly what we were looking for. More people voting. More people caring. And it's not taking focus away. I can tell you one of the hottest issues in races that were happening around me in '24 were some local things, things that had nothing to do. True zoning issues in one of our towns, using a property for a particular location. This is -- these were the things people were talking about at the doors. The Town of Penfield, no matter what I do every year they just want to talk to me about leaf pickup. I keep saying to them, *I am not the leaf pickup lady.* But that's what they care about, even though I am running for a State seat.

When I think about concerns around voter confusion, I think this makes things less confusing. I'm sure all of you have run into the same problem where half of the job we do when we run for office is explaining that an Assembly exists. Explaining that our job is a thing we do. The amount of times I have to explain that there are different levels of government, that your village and your town operate together, that there's a county and a state. This will allow people to see all those races at once. And when we talk about concerns around falloff, that people won't get to the end of the ballot, is that falloff gonna be more on a ballot line than we see year to year when people just don't show up? We're looking at odd-year elections

with 30 percent turnout. We had 27 percent in an odd-year in Monroe not too long ago. That's abysmal. And I think you're gonna see more people stay on the lines than turnout over the course of odd years versus even years.

If our guiding principle is an engaged and informed electorate, I think combining elections into as few voting instances as possible is the best thing we can do. I care tremendously about making sure that the voters' voices are heard. And I think this really gives us an opportunity to amplify that to ensure that our voters know about what all of their elected offices do, about how they can be helped, about how they can be impactful. Because I'll also tell you that when I'm walking around with my village candidates, we find people who want to be on boards. We have a tree board where they talk about the trees in the town. And we got people to know the tree board existed and run for the tree board and ask for an appointment. This is how you engage people. Door knocking is one of my favorite activities. And when we get to talk to voters together as teams, people know more and they do better, and our government works overall better for the people. That's why I support this legislation and I look forward to voting in the affirmative when the opportunity arises.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Bologna.

MR. BOLOGNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. BOLOGNA: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. I want to go back to -- to some of the stuff that you were talking about with my colleague from Long Island, Massapequa, in terms of New York City being different, and I wanna hone in on the media portion of that. You said that -- that New York City is different because their media market is different. Is that an accurate statement?

MR. JACOBSON: That's part of it.

MR. BOLOGNA: That's part of it. And I think you also said that elections get focused. It's just different because, quote, "The coverage of local issues matters in New York City." Is that --

MR. JACOBSON: No, I didn't quite say that. But go ahead.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. Is that an acknowledgement that an informed electorate is an important thing? We want an informed electorate?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: And to your point, wouldn't you agree that media coverage, media buys, helps inform that electorate?

MR. JACOBSON: That's part of it, yes.

MR. BOLOGNA: That's part of it.

So I wanna talk a little bit about, like, finances here,

and -- and money. So in the 2022 election cycle in New York State alone -- again, this is a difficult number to aggregate, I had to do a lot of math -- but it's well over $1 billion that was spent between federal congressional races, gubernatorial races, federal Senate races, State Senate races, State Assembly races. Everything that was in -- that was on the ballot in 2022, over $1 billion was spent throughout this State. So I guess the question is, if you're a local dog catcher and are running for office for the first time, how are you supposed to compete? Because we've acknowledged now that an informed electorate matters. And when you have Governor candidates, and Senate candidates flooding mailboxes, on the airwaves and you're a local dog catcher running for a town board and you only have five minutes -- or sorry, $5,000 to spend on a campaign, how are you supposed to break through, and how is that helping inform the electorate?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, that's not the purpose of this amendment is to instruct people how to run a better campaign.

MR. BOLOGNA: Oh, no, we're adding more people onto the ballot.

MR. JACOBSON: And I'm sure you find your ways to break through the campaign. And if having it an odd year was -- was so good to get through to voters, they would have the same type of turnout as we do in even years. So that doesn't work as far as turnout.

MR. BOLOGNA: I still think this is a First Amendment issue, Mr. Jacobson, where we are -- we are flooding --

because again, you acknowledged that -- that the media market matters. That the media that people are consuming and the way they consume it matters. And that's why New York City was carved out because they're just different. So again, my -- my point is is that how is someone that may not have the resources supposed to compete with presidential, gubernatorial and congressional races. I mean, look, some congressional races spend over $40 million. How is someone on a local ballot supposed to compete with that? Because now we're adding even more to the ballot.

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Well, this -- this constitutional amendment is not to help people or help people figure out their strategy.

MR. BOLOGNA: So we don't care about an informed electorate.

MR. JACOBSON: Let me finish. But when people engage with voters, when they go door-to-door, when they work with other candidates, they're able to get their message across.

MR. BOLOGNA: Got it. So -- so we don't care about the informed electorate, then.

MR. JACOBSON: I don't care about what?

MR. BOLOGNA: The informed electorate. We don't care about making sure that people are informed --

MR. JACOBSON: No, that's an absolute false statement. I said of course I care about it.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: You wanted to know how people can get their message across --

MR. BOLOGNA: Got it.

MR. JACOBSON: -- and I explained that to you. They can go door-to-door, they can work with other candidates. They can do different small media on their own. They can do that.

MR. BOLOGNA: But they may not have the access to the media market like New York City because New York City is just different. So I just want to clarify that.

So I've also heard you say throughout the course of this debate that this is a cost-savings measure, correct? That consolidating elections saves taxpayers money. Is that -- is that -- that's your classification of this, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: It will save money for the Board of Elections.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. So the bill memo says "none" under fiscal imp -- implications to the State. So I guess I'm asking you directly, on the record, what is the actual dollar figure being saved?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: It's -- it depends on the county. I can just tell you, I got one example what it would cost in Dutchess County not to have an election for the year, and that's 450,000. So every county will be different.

MR. BOLOGNA: All right. So you can't produce an actual tangible number of any cost savings to anyone? An individual county analysis has been done on this?

MR. JACOBSON: Every county will be different, and if they don't have to run an election they will save money.

MR. BOLOGNA: Okay. And then I guess I have one more question. One of our colleagues brought up earlier that no good government groups were -- had their hair on fire about this. Can you tell me, when did the most recent version of this bill, the C-print, when did that come into existence?

MR. JACOBSON: That no -- that they didn't say anything?

MR. BOLOGNA: No, no, no. When did the C version of this bill that I'm looking at right now that's on my screen, when did -- when did that come about? When did that get printed?

MR. JACOBSON: The bill was first introduced last year.

MR. BOLOGNA: No, no. I'm asking when did the C version of this print -- bill get printed, please?

MR. JACOBSON: That was just -- that was recently.

MR. BOLOGNA: Like 36 hours ago recently?

Thank you very much, Mr. Jacobson.

On the bill, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. BOLOGNA: I want to be direct about what this

bill actually does. The memo calls this a logical step, but I call it doubling down on a policy that we have not had a single chance to look at or whether or not this thing actually works. And now we're here, less than two full years and election cycles later, the proposed constitutional amendment to expand, before we've seen one shred of data, one municipal report, one Board of Elections' analysis telling us that it's working. That's not governance, that's assumption. And when you're amending the Constitution of a state, assumptions are not good enough, ladies and gentlemen.

So let's talk about money, because that's really the heart of the issue here. The 2022 election cycle, as I said, over $1 billion was spent on campaigns. Let me give you a census scale. Gubernatorial races alone can cost tens of millions of dollars, congressional races. When you add up Statewide offices, every State Assembly race, you get a number approaching well over a billion. Now, I want you to picture a candidate in a town council in like Sullivan County. Or a candidate for Surrogate Court in Schoharie. Or a local sheriff running for the first time. They're going to share a ballot with congressional races and candidates that are going to drown them out. And as I said earlier, that is not an informed electorate. How does that person compete? How does their voice carry? How does a voter that just waded through federal races and two Statewide contests get to the bottom of the ballot with any real acknowledgement of who those candidates are?

I -- I also wanna talk about the cost-saving measure

here. I read the bill, and as I said earlier, it says that there's no fiscal impact. Not a projection, not a county-by-county analysis. None. So either this bill saves money, in which case the sponsor is unable to tell us what that is, or the savings are real. But -- I'm sorry, in which the sponsor's been saying something false on the floor, or these savings are real and we just can't produce what that is, multiple times.

Let's talk about (indiscernible) there are some administrative savings at the Board of Elections, at the county Board of Elections. Again, I still don't -- that number is not being produced. That money, if it exists, does not come back to the State. It doesn't reduce your property tax bill. It doesn't show up in anyone's energy costs, and it doesn't lower single health insurance premium, and that's what matters.

We just passed a $268 billion budget. $268 billion. And at the closing hours of this Session, the last 36 hours, we spent our time on congressional redistricting, ballot engineering, and now a constitutional amendment to restructure the way people vote. Not whether they can vote, not how to make their lives better, but just when they vote, and the way that happens to be very convenient for one party. The word of this Legislative Session, the word of every member of this House has been saying all year is affordability. Affordability. But yet we still can't produce numbers on how this is making people's lives more affordable. This bill does not lower energy costs, yet we did give people a $200 rebate check last week that they're gonna look at and laugh. We banned data centers, we

raised taxes. We're taxing tobacco cessation products. We're driving emerging businesses out of the State --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Bologna, I need you to speak on this bill, please. Thank you.

On the bill.

MR. BOLOGNA: I'm getting there. I want to take a second to talk about something a little personal. We spoke about a number -- I -- we've had a number of election bills come up, including this one and the constitutional amendment. And I've had a number of Democrats and Republicans reach out and say that the subject feels very heavy. The conversations feel serious. People say that they have heard in the past couple days that we talked about the fall of democracy in this building, in this room, and I don't think that we're being dramatic when we say that. I think they mean it. And here's what's sad to me. I'm gonna have a lot of practice at these types of speeches in this Chamber. And that's sad, because every time I look at this Body I really do believe that we should be making people's lives tangibly better. But yet we're here kind of talking about the erosion of democratic norms.

I mentioned my kids on the floor of the Assembly the other day, and I'm really excited I'm going to get home to see them tonight, maybe early tomorrow morning. But I'm leaving with a heavy heart. Because I can't look at them in the eye and tell them that we've made much better this Session, or we've enhanced or improved the democratic process or democracy in this State this Session. Actually,

it's quite the opposite. I can't tell them that we made it easier for them to start a business. I can't tell them that we protected the integrity of the local elections. What I can tell them is that we spent the final hours of the 2025-2026 Legislative Session engineering the ballot to protect political power. I can tell them that the Legislature that talks constantly about democracy in its closing days is making democracy smaller, quieter, and more convenient for those who are already in power. My kids are growing up in this State, and so are yours. And to be perfectly honest with you, they deserve better than what we've produced in the past 48 hours.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I yield back my time.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield for a couple of questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So -- and when you looked at the data across the State you noticed that every time there was an election in an even year, the exact same areas turned out more than they did in the year that was not even?

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So the effort here is to

try and get a more consistent voter at a more efficient rate. Because if the Board of Elections is putting out these machines every year, yet they have a lower turnout, it's more cost-effective to have it in 08 -- just in eight so they have more people and they only put the machines one time instead of twice in two years.

MR. JACOBSON: That's correct.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So I think there's real clarity around where the cost savings can come from. And I think I've heard at lot of the debate here today that talked a lot about the commonality of the candidates as they go out to seek the vote from the electorate. And I actually think that that saves a lot of resources as well because we all have to spend money on a campaign.

So if -- if we're working with somebody at another level, granted it won't be at this one -- if I'm working with someone's who's running for a different office and we have the same sort of kind of ideas for our constituency, look what kind of value that adds at the door for the constituent to have two elected officials for different offices coming to speak to them directly. Come in to sit down and have a glass of lemonade with them, see how their family is doing and how things are going. That's a positive way to get the voter reengaged and reenergized about being engaged in this. So I -- I -- I actually want to thank you for putting this forward.

The other thing I will say is that, I -- I do have some data. Some staff is pretty quick in putting this together. In '22, the number of people who turned out in the gubernatorial race was

63,000. In '23, the county -- this is in Erie County. The county executive ran in '23 and he only got 34,000 people that turned out for him. In '24, the presidential election, same county, 94,000 people turned out.

I mean, it is clear that you have found the data and it is right. And sometimes it's -- it's hard to understand that, you know, dealing with efficiency is not always about looking for fraud. There's nothing fraudulent about having an election every year. But there is something cost saving about not having an election every year. And so, I think that this is something that, you know, folks should consider earnestly, not as an opportunity to oppose it because it wasn't your idea. It was an opportunity to kind of figure out how do we begin to engage the voter more, as well as bring down the cost of running our Board of Elections, which they can get kind of pricey and actually bring down the cost of government while doing so.

So I'm all set with you, sir. Thank you very much for your legislation. I trust things --

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: -- will go well for you as a vote comes up.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam -- Madam Leader.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Tannousis.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Madam Speaker, will the

sponsor yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Mr. Jacobson, I'm not gonna -- I don't want to bewilder the point, but I just wanted to ask you some very brief questions, okay? I noticed during the debate today you were asked about the gap years that could potentially occur when there is an election, for example, this year and should this pass going forward and it's implemented, that there will be a gap of time between the end of that term, for example, and when they will run again in some races; is that -- is that correct? Is that a fair assessment?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah. We could -- we'll, if necessary to implement the amendment, we'll pass legislation.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Okay. And -- and what is the proposal -- you mentioned before that the Governor would pick -- it would be -- it would be a vacancy that the government would pick the -- sorry. Let me rephrase that. You mentioned earlier, correct me if I'm wrong, that there are situations -- in those situations the Governor potentially would pick someone, for example, in a DA's -- to service a district attorney of that county, until that even year came up; is that correct?

MR. JACOBSON: And -- and that's what it is now.

MR. TANNOUSIS: No. That's what it is now if

there's a death. What would it be in this situation if somebody were, for example, up this year would win -- or next year, rather, not this year, next year because it's an odd year and then there was a gap, for example, of -- of a year. What exactly would happen in that situation?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: The person elected in the odd year would serve their full term. At the end of the term --

MR. TANNOUSIS: Yup.

MR. JACOBSON: -- it would -- there would be a vacancy and then there would be an -- there may -- could be an appointment.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Okay. So there could be an appointment by the Governor of the State, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Correct. Whoever that might be.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Who -- whoever it might be and that's completely up to the Governor, right? Is that correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Say that again?

MR. TANNOUSIS: That would be completely up to the Governor who she chooses to appoint for that position, right?

MR. JACOBSON: Upon the advice and consent of the Senate.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Upon the advice and consent of the Senate.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, with the -- with the advice and consent of the Senate.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Okay. Okay.

So that leads me to another question. Let's say that there's a race next year between two candidates and one of those candidates is supported by the Governor and that candidate loses. And we go through the full four-year term and then that candidate that was supported by the Governor wants to run again. Nothing stops the Governor from appointing the candidate that she supports for that one year to get a head start, correct?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: There's nothing in the statute that restricts who the Governor could appoint or are subject to the advise and consent of the Senate.

MR. TANNOUSIS: So the scenario I just gave you is a possibility, then, correct?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah. A lot of possibly. But I -- you know, now we're getting into all kinds of what ifs, but go ahead.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Well, we're getting into what ifs because I don't think this bill accounted for certain things.

I want to ask you another question. Is there anything in this bill that would prevent an individual that is appointed for that position from actually running for that position?

MR. JACOBSON: No.

MR. TANNOUSIS: No. Okay. So the person appointed can actually run for that position when that position is up?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah. Just like we do now. Just

like when there's a vacancy on your town board and somebody gets appointed, they can -- they can run.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: Same thing.

MR. TANNOUSIS: So -- and I want to be clear. I know I mentioned district attorney offices, but what you're suggesting today is that it would happen for mayors' offices as well? The Governor would be able to appoint the mayor of a town or a city?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: You mean a mayor in a city, an Upstate city you're talking about?

MR. TANNOUSIS: Correct.

MR. JACOBSON: The appointment would be made according to the charter of that city. So --

MR. TANNOUSIS: Okay.

MR. JACOBSON: -- however the city --

MR. TANNOUSIS: That's what I'm asking --

MR. JACOBSON: -- does it, usually it's with the -- by the remaining members of the council. But however it's done, it -- it -- that doesn't change.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Okay. So the appointments by the Governor, then, according to what you're saying, would be for judicial posts and district attorneys' offices, potentially --

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. For the state constitutional offices, as it is now.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Got it.

MR. JACOBSON: Supreme Court, County -- Family Court, the judges and sheriff and DA.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Okay. Thank you very much.

On the bill, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. TANNOUSIS: Thank you. This, I guess, is just one more part of the power grab that we saw start the other day. And the part to me that is most appalling, besides the fact that, obviously, we're trying to change the order that we have these elections, is the fact that this bill apparently gives the Governor the ability to fill posts maybe for a year, for a certain amount of time until whoever was duly elected to that position is done. Because that person is elected, their term will finish in an odd year, because they were elected in an odd year and then there will be a gap of at least a year, where the Governor will appoint someone to that position until fair elections can happen again.

I persee [sic] a potential here for an issue where the Governor may actually appoint her allies to certain positions; perhaps even people that may have lost that election to begin with and now they're going to serve those positions not because someone passed away or there was some kind of circumstance where it necessitate -- necessitated an appointment by the Governor, but because of a bill that our House and the Senate has passed which gave the Governor that ability to fill that vacancy for a year and maybe, potentially, even

give that potential losing opponent a head start by being in that office for -- for -- for that year.

I know we had some conversations in regards to government groups. The sponsor was asked what government groups he was contacted by. The sponsor stated that he wasn't contacted by any, so he takes that to mean that they're in support. As the ranking member of the Judiciary, the first time I actually saw anything substantive on this bill was yesterday. So I highly doubt any good government groups even know this bill exists and maybe even be finding out about it now.

Madam Speaker, I am opposed, adamantly opposed to this bill and I encourage all my colleagues to vote no as well.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Tague.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield, please?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. TAGUE: Probably my last time debating a bill here in this Chamber, Mr. Jacobson. And it's -- you and I have always gotten along quite well. And -- so I'm glad that it's you and I for the last time.

I just -- a few brief questions. First of all, why are we changing the law that's already in place? What -- what -- what is the big problem with how we do it -- how we do it now?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, what we're doing is putting those positions that could not have been transferred by statute to even years, we're putting them in even years. And that -- that's why we're doing that. So they'll -- they'll all be on the ballot at the same time, less confusion, less chance of a town judge being the only candidate, and -- and so forth.

MR. TAGUE: Well, one other issue that I have with this and maybe you can explain it, maybe you cannot. But why did the Majority put a date for an electoral vote on an even year for the ERA even though we passed the legislation for the second time in 2023 but it didn't come up until the 2024 election?

MR. JACOBSON: On what? I'm sorry, I -- I -- I don't understand your question.

MR. TAGUE: I'm wondering why, when we passed this bill, okay and then we turn it around and pass it again next year, how come it's gonna be on the ballot in 2027 when we know turnout is gonna be low? We're talking about moving elections to even year, but we're gonna vote on this constitutional amendment on an odd year. But I want to know why the ERA, we passed it 2023, but it wasn't on the ballot 'till 2024.

And, listen, we're big folks here. We know the reason why, because we knew turnout was gonna be high in a

presidential election for the Majority party. And to me, that's wrong. That's absolutely wrong.

So do you have a different answer than what I -- how I just answered your own question?

MR. JACOBSON: My only answer is, I don't know what year we're gonna put it on the ballot. I do know that if we put it later than sooner, it would stall the implementation of this. But we'll have to -- that's a decision that's above my pay grade.

MR. TAGUE: Well, but this -- this is what I'm trying to talk about. When you have something that's gonna be the constitution -- in the Constitution of the State of New York, don't we want all the voters and all the residents in the State of New York to really know what's in it? When you go out and buy a tractor or a new car, they give you an operator's manual, right?

MR. JACOBSON: Go ahead.

MR. TAGUE: Yes or no? I'm sorry. I didn't hear you.

MR. JACOBSON: I'm sorry. They get to vote and what -- I'm sorry. I didn't hear --

MR. TAGUE: No, no. I asked you, it's no different than when you go and buy something new whether it be a car or a tractor, you get an owner's manual from the dealership. It tells -- not only does it tell you what type of oil to use in the vehicle, but it tells you what type of filter you need to use, how much you have -- how many times you have to change it and how to do it. But that's not

what we're doing here. This is not what we're doing here and this is supposed to be part of the constitution.

So let me ask you another question. Is there anything in this bill that has anything to do -- have anything to do with the size of ballots? Or how big -- or what type of ballots? How many ballots we're gonna be able to use?

MR. JACOBSON: No. I --

MR. TAGUE: I mean, you take some of these areas, you might have 30, 40 candidates per party.

MR. JACOBSON: The answer to your question is no. But if we -- if -- if next year or the year after we think there's a need to pass a statute, after consultation with the local and State Board of Elections, then we will.

MR. TAGUE: But you talked about saving money by this. So what happens if we have to go out now across the State and we have to change voting machines across the State because the ballots that we're using right now doesn't work?

(Conferring)

I mean, there's a lot of thought that needs to go into something when you're making a constitutional amendment; am I right?

MR. JACOBSON: I think that the savings will -- will outweigh any cost of implementing this.

MR. TAGUE: And what are we gonna do with our Boards of Elections? You know, I don't know about anybody else, but

I've actually went when the Board of Elections meets here in Albany when they have their annual meeting. I actually was their speaker a couple of years ago. I went and I asked questions. When it was my turn to be the speaker, instead of going up there and giving them a har ra ra, I asked them what we could do in this Body and the Body over there to actually help them do their jobs better and to make them more efficient. A lot of them, on both sides of the aisle, were not in favor of moving elections all to one time. They're having a tough time now finding poll watchers. Having a tough time to have people that even work in the Boards of Elections. So now we're gonna make their hard -- their work harder. And then let's throw in primaries and school board elections. I just do not understand why we always got to touch something -- well, I do understand because it's always about having control and power. And it's -- it's -- it's -- it's upsetting.

One other question that I wanted to -- to -- or, well, one other question I wanted to ask. You and my -- two of my colleagues and you had answered that there was no good government groups that came out in opposition or in favor of this bill and I want to go one step further. Why did we not have this discussion or take this bill up in Election Law Committee?

MR. JACOBSON: I can't -- I -- I don't know. That's -- I -- I don't think --

MR. TAGUE: See, that's -- that's what --

MR. JACOBSON: -- I don't decide the Calendar. If I did, I'd be voting on more of my bills this year.

MR. TAGUE: Well, Mr. Jacobson, between you and I, that is why I get frustrated because I have sat on the Election Law Committee since the day I got in this Assembly. And you know what, I might not agree with every piece of legislation that's brought up in that committee, but I can tell you that there has been some discussion, especially when Mr. Lavine was the Chairman, there were discussions that were brought up in that Body that sometimes amendments were made before the bills came to the floor to make them better and more efficient. And I think that we do a big disservice to the people of the State of New York when we bypass committees, because in most of those committees, sir, we have people that are actual professionals or know what they're doing. And that's -- that's very -- and -- and take Republican/Democrat politics out of it, it's troubling to me as a taxpayer and a New York State resident. I want fair and honest elections no matter whether I'm on the winning team or the losing team. It's my right to go vote. And when it seems like things are being shrouded one way or the other, I think that's a serious problem.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. TAGUE: You know, like I said, it's -- it's -- this is probably my last time to stand up and debate a bill and -- I -- the problem is, nothing's changed around here. It's very, very disappointing that we don't follow the rules or follow the way, you know, we talk about democracy. Well, democracy would have been bringing this -- this amendment up or this bill up in the actual

committee. That's what we're all tasked to do. We come here, we go to session and on certain days of the week we go to committees. And I can tell you that just not Election Law Committee, but Ag Committee, all the committees that I have sat on, EnCon, there has been times where discussion is brought up during the committee and amendments have made -- amendments have been made to those bills prior to them getting to the floor. It's not going to happen here. We're gonna rush this. We're gonna we're -- you know, we're going to stuff it down the throat of the people like -- like we always do. And it has nothing to really do with the best interest of the people. It has to do with the best interest of one political party that already controls the Governor's Mansion, the Judicial Branch and both Houses in the Legislature. I mean, it's -- it's laughable. It's laughable that -- that people don't get it.

I was hoping that we'd be fair and honest. That's why I came here. I came here to be fair and honest and represent the best I could for the people in my district. And I've tried my hardest to always have the best interest of the majority of the people in my district. They're gonna be angry about this. Even some Democrats because some of them have voted against legislation like this as far back as 2014. We always do everything in the heat. We always do everything in the dark of night or when -- nobody else knows what's going on. I didn't know about this bill until yesterday. Didn't know about it at all. Didn't really have time -- have that much time to prepare to even what I was gonna talk about. There's probably other

stuff in this bill that I haven't even had an opportunity to look at or see that I can bring up in this debate, but I didn't have the time be it we didn't -- I didn't home 'till 3 -- 3:15 this morning and then had to be back here at 9:00. I hope we find a different way of doing business and we find a different way of doing things for the people of New York.

Madam Speaker, I'll be voting no on this. And I hope that my colleagues that have common sense and really care about democracy and care about people no matter what party affiliation, will do the same.

God bless you and thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Gandolfo.

MR. GANDOLFO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor please yield?

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

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. GANDOLFO: Appreciate it. So just sitting here listening to the debate, it sounds like we're moving this constitutional amendment forward for two reasons: Cost savings and voter turnout --

MR. JACOBSON: Correct.

MR. GANDOLFO: -- is that correct? Okay. What's

the estimated cost savings that the State will see or that a local Board of Elections might see?

MR. JACOBSON: I -- I don't -- I don't have figures throughout the whole State. I can tell you I checked with one commissioner in Dutchess County, which has about a 300,000 population, 169 election districts and she told me it's about $450,000. That's what it costs to put on an election.

MR. GANDOLFO: $450,000?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah.

MR. GANDOLFO: Okay. So that's why we're advancing this. Okay.

So, as we've discussed, New York City is not included in this constinal [sic] amend -- constitutional amendment because they're different. But given the whole discussion around the budget, the financial situation of New York City, why wouldn't we include them to help save them some money and help with their dire financial situation?

MR. JACOBSON: There might be something to consider in the future, but it's not part of this amendment.

MR. GANDOLFO: If the purpose is cost savings and we have to keep sending money and doing financial hi-jinks to help New York City, was it considered to add them to this amendment?

MR. JACOBSON: We'll -- we'll -- we'll consider it in the future. It's -- it's not in the amendment. May -- if it was, I don't know if you'd be voting for it. But, I mean, that's besides the point.

MR. GANDOLFO: May -- maybe I would have. I don't know.

Now on the voter turnout side, in even years, I happened to look it up, voter turnout is higher in New York City. So why wouldn't we want to move all of New York City's elections as well just like we're doing for the rest of the State to even years to increase their voter turnout?

MR. JACOBSON: As I said, New York City is unique, but it's something we can consider in the future.

MR. GANDOLFO: Are they unique in regard to voter turnout? Because it seems like their voter turnout trends between even and odd years track very similar to pretty much the rest of the State. So they're even in regard to voter turnout they're unique? Because I didn't see that in the -- the data.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, we can do that in future years. It's not part of this amendment.

MR. GANDOLFO: Okay. All right.

So the people of New York City, the -- the referendum they voted on was nonbinding? Or was it binding.

MR. JACOBSON: It's -- I thought it was nine -- nonbinding, nonbinding.

MR. GANDOLFO: Okay. So -- and just to be clear, because there was some back and forth about this before, another county, let's say Suffolk County, can't put forth a nonbinding resolution express -- if they put that forth and the voters approved to

say, we don't want to touch our elections just like New York City didn't want to change theirs, they would not have the opportunity to exempt themselves from this amendment?

MR. JACOBSON: No. We -- we just -- we -- it's one amendment. It's for all of New York State outside of New York City. And then the voters then, if this passes this year and -- and in the next term, the voters throughout the State get a chance to decide.

MR. GANDOLFO: Okay. And just to be clear, we spend -- just back to cost savings. The only actual figure we have is that Dutchess County may save $450,000?

MR. JACOBSON: No. I'm sure it would be much more. It's much larger. You could tell me how many election districts you have.

MR. GANDOLFO: We have a lot.

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah. So the savings in the larger counties are gonna be much larger. I mean, there's only about 200,000 voters, not even that much, but there's 300,000 people and 169 districts. So I am sure that Suffolk will -- and Nassau, each, will have huge savings.

MR. GANDOLFO: How many election districts are in New York City?

(Conferring)

MR. JACOBSON: Around 5,300.

MR. GANDOLFO: Wow! Imagine the money they can save if they were also included in this amendment. That would

incredible. It would really help them out.

But just moving on. So moving of all these elections to even years, by me, a ballot could potentially have a candidate for U.S. President, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, State Senate, State Assembly, County Executive, County Clerk, District Attorney, County Legislator, Town Supervisor, Town Counsel, Town Clerk, Town Tax Receiver, potentially a highway superintendent and a dozen judges. So that's a pretty large ballot; would you agree?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. It's a -- it's a -- it's a large ballot. But, you know, I -- I think we'll deal with it and we'll have a larger turnout and that'll be better.

MR. GANDOLFO: Where do we expect the average person to find the time to do the research on 25 different candidates each -- each time they have to go and vote on top of their everyday responsibilities? You might be a parent like I am of the non-gestating variety, exhausted by the end of the day. Come home from work, take care of the kids, tidy up the house, put the kids to the bed and now I have sit down and research 25 candidates? Do you think I'm going to be able to do that? Where am I gonna find the time?

MR. JACOBSON: Well, I have confidence in the voters and I have confidence in candidates reaching the voters.

MR. GANDOLFO: And on that topic, as another colleague brought up before, there's -- could be 25, 30 candidates on the ballot. Is there enough ad space in some regions, some media markets to even buy ads if there's this many candidates fighting for

that ad time? Is there any concern that some candidates might be frozen out from actually getting advertising space?

MR. JACOBSON: That's -- look, that's always a concern in every election and I'm sure your political consultant will tell you how to navigate it.

MR. GANDOLFO: I don't have one.

MR. JACOBSON: Well, then you'll figure it out yourself.

MR. GANDOLFO: Okay. All right.

Well, I thank you for answering my questions.

Madam Speaker, on the bill, please.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. GANDOLFO: So, again, this bill is moving even more elections to even years to the point where now you can have 25 candidates on your ballot when you go to vote. And we expect that voters are going to have enough time and energy to research this many people on top of their daily lives, their jobs, their family obligations and we're going to pretend that they're going to be even more informed somehow by asking them to research 25 people each election cycle. I don't see how that's the case.

On the topic of voter turnout, voter turnout is up in even years across the State. So what's good for voter turnout in Suffolk County, Nassau County, Dutchess County, Orange County should be good for New York City. But as the sponsor said, unfortunately, New York City is special and does not get included in

something like this.

Even on the cost savings side, New York City, apparently, has 5,300 election districts. Imagine the cost savings that could be realized if they were included in this and maybe we would stop having to send them so much extra money.

I will be voting no.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Fitzpatrick.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the sponsor yield just for a --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. FITZPATRICK: -- couple of questions?

MR. JACOBSON: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Yeah. I -- I just -- I want -- I was gonna speak on the bill and I will, but I -- where -- the savings at the Board of Elections, what will these employees be doing in the odd years? They'll be very busy in the even years, but what -- are we going to furlough them? Are we gonna lay them off and bring them back in -- in -- in an elect -- you know, in an even year because we really won't need them in an off year? Or maybe a smaller staff just to, you know, to, you know, administer or get people registered to vote. But what are -- what are all of these employees going to do in

the off year, in an odd year?

MR. JACOBSON: I'm sure each board will make its own decisions. I mean, they --

MR. FITZPATRICK: I -- I don't -- that's not a good answer. We need -- can you give me specifics? Because if we're gonna do all of this work in an even year with a tremendously long ballot, we haven't even figured out how we're going to adjust the ballot, are we looking at mail-in voting next year, maybe passing a statute to put in mail-in voting to make it easier? Is that what the goal is here?

MR. JACOBSON: What was that?

MR. FITZPATRICK: How are we going to deal with this very large ballot in even years? What -- what arrangements are going to be made?

MR. JACOBSON: As I -- as I've said a -- a number of times, if that concern comes up next year, I'm sure I will be talking and others will be talking to the local boards and the State Board and we'll see what's the best way to deal if there is a concern.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Okay. Very good. But -- thank you, Mr. Jacobson.

Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Just -- the -- the sponsor has said many times this afternoon that, "I trust the voters." "I have confidence in the voters." I -- I think what he's really saying is, I only

trust the voters in even numbered years. I don't trust, at least by base voters, to come out and vote in odd numbered years.

You know, we're all elected officials, which means we all practice the game of politics. And some of us are very good at the game of politics. And I enjoy political theater as much as anybody else. You know, to the viewers, all three of them watching us this afternoon, what's really happening here is just the raw execution of political power to gain advantage. I think the Majority's goal is to make the Minority party a permanent Minority party in the State of New York and that's okay. That's their prerogative. And they're putting that into practice this week. This is, what, the fourth bill designed to give them that permanent Majority.

So, you know, as I said the other day, I'm not mad at what they're doing. I don't like it, but I'm not mad. Look, we're gonna have to have this debate again next year and then the voters -- we'll trust the voters to make that decision; do they want to put this proposal into practice or not? I'm hopeful that they -- you know, I'm hopeful that they don't because, you know, no voter is going to be disenfranchised. Everyone will have an opportunity to vote. But what I do think we're doing here is we're disrespecting the voters. Because, as my Floor Leader said very eloquently before, there's a reason we stagger these terms. There's a reason why we don't put everything in one basket. You shouldn't put all your eggs in one basket and that's exactly what we're doing with our elections here.

If you have a ballot of 20 to 30 candidates, you know,

it's -- you're really disrespecting the voters. They deserve the opportunity to vote for local officials in one year and Statewide officials in another.

Now, the gentlelady from Fairport made reference to how their local elections were held in an even year. And -- but I think the reason it was successful there is because you only had a State Senate candidate, a Congressional candidate and an Assembly candidate, maybe a federal Senate candidate and the local official. So you did not have an overloaded ballot in Fairport that year. So, yes, it's a lot easier. But when you have 25 -- 20, 25, 30 candidates on a ballot, that's a different story. It's a different issue.

So I think it's -- look, this is going to pass. We're gonna do it again next year, early next year and then we're gonna have a battle for the mind of the voter. And that's what we're in every single day; a battle for the mind of the voter. And we're gonna have a good discussion, some great debates, I think, on whether this is a good thing or a bad thing. I don't think it's a good thing. I don't think it's good for the voters. I don't think it's good for the candidates. Good luck trying to get radio time or ad space or TV time when you're competing with, you know, federal election -- you know, federal races and all these other races. It's gonna be very expensive to run these campaigns because the increased demand for media time and media space.

So we're really doing the voters, I think, a disservice here. But, you know, it's -- it's all about power. This game's about

power. You know, we like to -- we like to think we have a level playing field. Neither side wants a level playing field. We've seen -- we saw that this week with the redistricting bills. You know, it's about tilting that playing field in your direction and that's what the Majority is doing. It's plain and simple for all to see. And that's -- you know, that's okay. Go ahead and do it. If the -- if the shoe were on the other foot, we might be doing the same thing.

That's why, you know, we're in a deep blue state. We need to become a purple state. Because I remember, years ago, sitting next to Mr. Vito Lopez, God rest his soul. And he said something very prophetic. He said, *You know, Mike, things were better here when there was fewer of us*, meaning Democrats, *and more of you*, meaning Republicans. He said, *now our votes are taken for granted.*

So when you have absolute power you can do things like this. And that's what we're witnessing here today and what we witnessed early this week. I'm not going to say it's wrong, that's for the voters to decide. Is it fair? No. If we trust -- you know, I hope the voters are paying attention this year. I'll do my very best to express my point of view and I'm sure the other side will do the same. But doing this is, I think, disrespectful to the voters. It's not fair to the issues. We have a lot of local issues that occupy a lot of time. We have plenty of issues here at the State level and the federal level, that occupy a lot of time. We are cramming five pounds of stuff into a two pound bag in the even years by doing this. And we all know it.

So I'm going to be voting no. I think everyone should

vote no. The system isn't broken. And if it ain't broken, there's no need to fix it.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: A Party vote has been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Republican Conference will not be supporting this constitutional amendment that's being proposed. But if there are any exceptions, they could be noted now at members' desks.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference is going be in favor of this proposed constitutional amendment. And voters who would -- folks who would decide to be an exception, they should feel free to do so at theirs seats.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Bailey to explain her vote.

MS. BAILEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I raise [sic] because I really feel that this is a -- a -- a large concern that -- that needs to be addressed on the record again. I took 2029 just thinking if this passes today, we pass it again next year, it goes on the ballot, the first election or the first even term that we're going to see impacted are those whose terms are going to end at 11:59 on December 31, 2029. So what happens then?

Under this amendment, the terms of the office of many local officials would expire at midnight. At that moment, vacancies would exist across multiple offices throughout New York State. Deputy clerks, assistant district attorneys, undersheriffs all exercise the duties of the elected officer in their absence, unable to act or if a vacancy occurs in the office and serve at the pleasure of said elected official. When that elected official's term expires, so too does the authority under which those apart -- appointments exist. Compounding the issue, a vacancy cannot be filled until the vacancy actually exists.

I understand that under current law, the Governor has the authority to fill many of these vacancies. However, this amendment raises significant concerns about the practical and functional ability to address what could be an unprecedented number of vacancies occurring simultaneously across the State. The amendment does not adequate -- adequately account for the magnitude of that challenge. These are not theoretical concerns, they are fundamental questions of governance that could impact counties

and local governments across New York State.

My concern is not about policy -- or politics, it's about ensuring continue --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you, Ms. Bailey. How do you vote?

MS. BAILEY: I vote in the negative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Bailey in the negative. Thank you.

Mr. Smullen to explain his vote.

MR. SMULLEN: I rise to explain my vote. Here we are again with another constitutional amendment changing the fundamentals of our system of elections here in New York State. And here we are again, the rural communities of Upstate New York on the short end of a stick. We're being dictated to by New York City as to when we can hold our elections, when, in fact, they are saying they can hold their elections as they choose. This is fundamentally antidemocratic. We the people of Upstate New York should have the right to choose when we hold our elections and not to be outvoted by one-party rule in this Assembly. This is fundamentally wrong. We will be here again next year to discuss this. And we are going to make sure that all of the voters of all of the parts of this State know that this fundamental injustice is being done to them in the name of one-party rule.

I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Smullen in the

negative.

Mr. Jacobson to explain his vote.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues for a spirited debate.

This constitutional amendment will move to even year elections, the remaining offices outside of New York City which were not previously moved to even year elections. It will not apply to village elections. The revolt -- the results of these changes will mean less voter confusion and higher turnout and counties will save a huge amount of money by not having to run these elections every year.

I proudly vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Jacobson in the affirmative.

Mr. Norber to explain his vote.

MR. NORBER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In my district we have an immense amount of county legislators and town supervisors and there's so many people who are running for these elections that it doesn't make any sense in one way or form that we have so many people on one ballot every two years. This is not about what's good for them, this is good about what's -- what's good for one party. And it's pretty clear. And what we need to be doing here is just doing really what's right for the voters and not -- and not just for one party just trying to hold, keep, maintain and grow their one-party rule.

I'll be voting in the negative.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Norber in the negative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Madam Speaker, if we can now begin consenting the A- and B- Calendars that we have, beginning on page 3 of the A-Calendar?

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Yes.

On the A-Calendar, page 4, Rules Report -- on the A-Calendar, page 3, Rules Report No. 531, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A00509-B, Rules Report No. 531, Paulin, R. Carroll, Hevesi, Steck, McDonald, Kay, Wieder, Yeger, Eichenstein, Berger, Levenberg, Otis, Rozic, Rosenthal, Lavine, Lunsford, Stern, Jensen, Dinowitz, Burroughs, Schiavoni. An act to amend the Public Health Law and the Education Law, in relation to authorizing certain camp employees to administer medications and treatment to children under certain circumstances.

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

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A01942, Rules Report No. 532, Paulin, Kelles, Lunsford, Reyes, Jacobson, Ramos, Wieder, McDonald, Steck, Burroughs, Brabenec, Kassay, DeStefano, Shimsky. An act to amend the Public Health Law, the Education Law, the Vehicle and Traffic Law, and the Judiciary Law, in relation to making conforming changes reflecting the previously authorized scope of practice of nurse practitioners.

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

Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A04007-A, Rules Report No. 533, E. Brown. An act authorizing the Congregation Khal Mevakshei Hashem, Inc. to receive retroactive real property tax exempt status.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Brown, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A05113-B, Rules Report No. 535, Anderson, Burdick, Bores, Bichotte Hermelyn, Colton, Chandler-Waterman, Davila, Dais, Fitzpatrick, Lee, Otis, Seawright, Steck, Shrestha, Taylor, Weprin, Zinerman, Hyndman, Reyes, Mitaynes, O'Pharrow, Wright. An act to amend the Insurance Law, in relation to captive insurance for commuter vans, black cars, ambulettes and paratransit vehicles, and small school buses.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: This bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A06194-C, Rules

Report No. 536, Hevesi, Clark, Hunter, Lavine, Simon, Jackson, K. Brown, Stirpe, González-Rojas, Durso, Otis, Brabenec, Manktelow, Angelino, Cook, Stern, Blankenbush, Ra, Pheffer Amato, Rosenthal, Lupardo, Simpson, Kelles, Jensen, Steck, Cruz, Cunningham, Hawley, Paulin, Barrett, Gibbs, Dinowitz, Giglio, Bores, Gandolfo, Shimsky, Bronson, De Los Santos, Woerner, Williams, Alvarez, Meeks, Simone, Tapia, Levenberg, Raga, Colton, Lee, Gallahan, Weprin, Sayegh, Bichotte Hermelyn, Taylor, Slater, Novakhov, DeStefano, McDonough, Morinello, Palmesano, Norber, Kay, Maher, Miller, Davila, Beephan, Seawright, McDonald, Burdick, Solages, Fitzpatrick, Conrad, Septimo, Buttenschon, Eachus, Rivera, Lunsford, Blumencranz, Zinerman, Chang, Mikulin, Lemondes, P. Carroll, Glick, Sempolinski, Zaccaro, Burroughs, Griffin, Smith, Schiavoni, Lasher, Rajkumar, Bailey, Chludzinski, Bologna, Romero, Reyes, Bendett, Benedetto, Brook-Krasny, Cashman, Hooks, Kassay, McMahon, Walker. An act to amend the Domestic Relation Law and the Family Court Act, in relation to establishing "Kyra's Law".

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

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 270th day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today in support of this legislation, while also recognizing that this legislation raises important questions that deserve continued attention from this Body and from the courts that will be responsible for implementing it. At its heart, this bill is about protecting children. It seeks to ensure that when allegations of domestic violence, child abuse, coercive control or other serious threats to a child's safety are raised, that courts give those concerns the careful consideration that they deserve. The bill reflects the Legislature's belief that child safety must remain the paramount concern in custody proceedings and that judges should have clear guidance when confronted with these very difficult cases.

At the same time, supporters of the bill should acknowledge the legitimate concerns that had been raised by judges, practitioners and family law experts. Our family courts are already facing significant caseload pressures. Requiring additional hearings, findings and procedural steps may increase the time and resources necessary to resolve custody disputes. We must be vigilant to ensure that well-intentioned reforms do not unintentionally contribute to delays that leave families and children in prolonged uncertainty.

There is also a concern that in highly contentious custody battles some parties may attempt to weaponize allegations to gain a strategic advantage over the other parent. Every allegation of

abuse or danger must be taken seriously, but courts must also retain the ability to distinguish between substantiated claims and claims made in the heat of a custody dispute. These are not reasons in my view to reject the bill, rather, they are reasons to closely monitor its implementation and remain open to future adjustments if unintended consequences emerge.

I would like to particularly thank the sponsor of this legislation because we were are in a C- print and it was really through his determination to get it into a form that would be acceptable. It was important. So I want to thank him --

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

MS. WALSH: -- and I do vote in the affirmative.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh in the affirmative.

Mr. Lavine to explain his vote.

MR. LAVINE: Thank you very much. Aeschylus wrote long ago, with great insight, that from grief comes knowledge. The genesis of this measure lies in the darkest of tragedy. But I do want to commend the sponsor and I also want to commend the advocates. Because from that darkness something good is going to happen. And it -- that is the nature of this bill.

I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Lavine in the affirmative.

Mr. Norber to explain his vote.

MR. NORBER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a few words I'd like to say. Kyra was a 28-month-old toddler who was murdered by her father during an unsupervised court-approved visit. Before this devastating murder, those who knew her father were fully aware of his dangerous behavior and have been sounding the alarms, but these warnings were left unheard. And Kyra's death could have been avoided.

This bill will prevent -- put the tools in place so that families can protect their children from a parent who is exhibiting dangerous tendencies. And I want to thank Kyra's mother, Jacquelyn, for her ongoing tireless fight to protect the families of New York from the threat of losing a child in such a tragic way.

I also want to thank the sponsor for putting this forward. We've been speaking about this for about a year. I'm very glad that this happened and that we're at this point today.

Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. --

MR. NORBER: And I'll be in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: -- Mr. Norber in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07250-A, Rules

Report No. 537, Sempolinski. An act to amend the Town Law and the Public Officers Law, in relation to authorizing the Town Justice of the Town of Rushford, County of Allegany, to be a nonresident of such town.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Sempolinski, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07893-A, Rules Report No. 538, Gallahan. An act in relation to authorizing Lt. Thomas Cleere to receive certain service credit under a 20 year retirement plan.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Gallahan, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will

record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07960, Rules Report No. 539, Miller. An act to amend the Tax Law, in relation to authorizing an occupancy tax in the City of Oneonta; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon the expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Miller, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08340-C, Rules Report No. 540, Hawley. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State Highway System to Lt. Gary A. Scott.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by

Mr. Hawley, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08579-A, Rules Report No. 541, Tannousis. An act granting Retroactive Tier IV membership in the New York City Teachers' Retirement System to certain employees.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Tannousis, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08814-A, Rules Report No. 542, McDonald, Woerner, Steck, Otis. An act to amend the Education Law, in relation to expanding opioid overdose prevention measures in certain settings.

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

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect July 1st.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. McDonald to explain the his.

MR. MCDONALD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just to explain my vote. I want to thank our colleagues. I also want to thank our partners in education, the Teachers' Union [sic] and -- and the School Board Associations [sic].

As we know, unfortunately, opioids still are permeating all -- all different aspects of society and unfortunately, it's sad to say it happens in schools as well. This legislation, which has been thoughtful, require -- provides the opportunity for schools to have a lock zone in schools. Unfortunately, when kids come even to marijuana, opioids are infiltrated one way or the other. This provides an option, with no mandate to the schools in regards to cost to make sure that in the unfortunate circumstance that a child is struggling with

an overdose, the lock zone will be available.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. McDonald in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09074-A, Rules Report No. 543, Gray. An act to amend the Public Officers Law, in relation to waiving the residency requirement for the St. Lawrence County Public Health Director and Community Services Director.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Gray, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09199-A, Rules Report No. 544, Barclay. An act to amend the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law, in relation to exempting the Caughdenoy Volunteer

Fire Department, Inc. from the forty-five percent limit on non-resident members.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Barclay, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09396-B, Rules Report No. 545, Solages, Zinerman, R. Carroll, Lasher, Davila, Bronson, Forrest, Bores, Cruz, Dinowitz, Gallagher, Raga, Ramos, Cunningham, Lee, Rivera, Moreno, Simon, Clark, Torres, González-Rojas, Rajkumar, Reyes, Hevesi, Benedetto, Stirpe, Septimo, Rosenthal, Cook, McMahon, Buttenschon, Shimsky, Seawright, Lunsford, Bichotte Hermelyn, Shrestha, Jacobson, Burke. An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to establishing the Protecting Consumers and Jobs From Discriminatory Pricing Act.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Solage, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. This bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10280, Rules Report No. 546, Friend. An act to amend the Retirement and Social Security Law, in relation to the retirement of traffic officers with the Town of Elmira.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Friend, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect January 1st.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10450-B, Rules Report No. 547, Simpson, Slater, DeStefano. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State Highway System to Officer Stephen L. Raymond.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Simpson, 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: The Clerk will

record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10706, Rules Report No. 548, Chandler-Waterman, Dilan, Yeger, Cruz. An act to amend the Public Authorities Law, in relation to requiring the New York City Transit Authority to have at least one conductor on board.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Chandler-Waterman, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Chandler-Waterman to explain her vote.

MS. CHANDLER-WATERMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is the third year that the Legislature have shown resilience and making sure we stand with transit workers. We are living through the rapid rise of automation and artifical intelligence. And while innovation can bring progress, it cannot come at the cost of people. We cannot excuse the need for efficiency to be elimination of good, stable union jobs. We cannot build a future

where technology advances while working family [sic] are pushed backwards. Without working families, we have no future.

Once again, three years of making sure that we keep our conductors on the MTA trains. However, this is not just about jobs. This is about making sure trained professionals can respond in emergencies, assist riders in moments of need and provide human -- a human presence in a system that millions depend on every day, with thousands of passengers on a single train having only one operator limits the ability to effectively manage crisis. Removing them is not modernization -- modernization, it is a dangerous game with our public safety.

During the pandemic, MTA-trained conductors went to work every single day to keep New York City moving. This -- this -- the massive scale and density of New York City's subway system makes it uniquely vulnerable during emergency. This moment is where we must draw the line and say, not here. Not on the backs of transit workers. Not at the expense of safety. Not in a state or city that claims to provide opportunities. I stand with transit workers because my commitment has always and will always be the residents of this State.

I urge my colleagues, once again, to stand with us and pass this bill, and hopefully get sent -- signed finally into law.

Thank you so much.

I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms.

Chandler-Waterman in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10739-A, Rules Report No. 549, Durso. An act in relation to authorizing the assessor of the Town of Babylon to accept an application for exemption from real property taxes from Tiegerman Community Service, Inc..

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Durso, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10902, Rules Report No. 550, Smullen. An act to amend the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, in relation to exempting the East Herkimer Volunteer Fire Department No. 1, Inc. from the requirement that the percentage of non-resident fire department members not exceed 45 percent of the membership.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Smullen, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Smullen to explain his vote.

MR. SMULLEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to explain my vote.

Recruitment and retention in our volunteer fire service is of critical importance to the communities in the area that I represent. And this bill will allow the East Herkimer Volunteer Fire Department to recruit more volunteers to answer the call when the community needs. It's a great bill.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Smullen in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11061-A, Rules Report No. 551, K. Brown. An act to amend Chapter 63 of the Laws of 1971 incorporating the "Centerport Volunteer Exempt Firemen's

Benevolent Association" and providing for its powers and duties, in relation to the collection and use of foreign fire insurance premium taxes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. K. Brown, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. 11085-A, Rules Report No. 552, Jensen. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State highway system to Donald Roy McAnn.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Jensen, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. 11179, Rules Report No. 553, Paulin, Hevesi, Shimsky, Simon, Otis. An act to amend the State Finance Law, in relation to requirements associated with contracts between State agencies and not-for-profit organizations.

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

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11246, Rules Report No. 554, McDonough. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State highway system to William Cornell.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr.

McDonough, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, I rise in support of this bill which dedicates a portion of the State highway sytem to William Cornell. And as a point of personal privilege and on behalf of our members, I wanted to note that this is the last bill that will be passed from our colleague Dave McDonough. So I wanted to just talk about him and his service.

He was elected in 2002 and served 24 years. He's a U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Air Force Veteran. He served for all that time in the 14th Assembly District. He was known for his dedication to public safety, support for veterans, and transportation issues. He's been a strong advocate. He has been a community leader, a long-term public servant. His commitment to service, leadership and civic engagement has last -- left an lasting impact on countless New Yorkers.

It's been a privilege to serve alongside David and benefit from his experience, his wisdom and his friendship. We all thank him for his service and we wish him continued health in the

years ahead.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh in the affirmative.

Thank you, Mr. McDonough, for his service.

(Applause)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11562, Rules Report No. 555, Committee on Rules (Bronson). An act to amend the Cannabis Law and the Labor Law, in relation to labor peace agreements and the Cannabis Wage Industry Board; and repealing certain provisions of the Cannabis Law relating thereto.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Bronson, 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 has been requested.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Republican Conference will not be supporting, generally, this

legislation, but if there are exceptions they may be noted now at members' seats.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Fall.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

On the B-Calendar, page 3, Rules Report No. 556, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11564, Rules Report No. 556, Committee on Rules (Stirpe, Romero). An act to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, in relation to authorizing licensees to remain open for extended hours of operation Statewide for a specific period of time; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

Oh. On a motion by Mr. Stirpe, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Madam Speaker, can you please call on the Rules Committee to meet in the Speaker's Conference Room?

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

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could we now turn our attention to several bills? We'll start off with one bill on consent, followed by the rest on debate, starting with Rules Report No. 408 by Mr. Steck, Rules Report No. 392 by Ms. Simon, Rules Report No. 483 by Mr. McDonald, Rules Report No. 470 by Ms. Rosenthal, and Rules Report No. 291 by Ms. Forrest.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

On the main Calendar, page 9, Rules Report No. 408,

the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Senate No. S08925-A, Rules Report No. 408, Senator C. Ryan (A09156-B, Steck, Walsh, Griffin, Hevesi, Buttenschon, Simon, Glick, Hyndman, Ra, McDonald, Novakhov, Simpson, Brook-Krasny, Durso, Woerner, Blumencranz, Otis.) An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to prohibiting the sale of 7-hydroxymitragynine products.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

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

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Steck to explain his vote.

MR. STECK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This bill bans synthetic kratom, also known by an abbreviation of its chemical name 7-OH or as gas station heroin because of where it is often sold in packaging resembling children's bubble gum. Kratom is a leaf that grows in Southeast Asia. Chewing it produces a mild sedative effect. However, chemists have isolated the active ingredient in kratom and multiplied it 100 times so that it is the same as other opioids such as heroin. People get addicted, have rapidly declining health, and go through withdrawal the same as any other opioid. Indeed, it takes the maximum dose of Suboxone to address withdrawal from synthetic kratom. Synthetic kratom can be fatal like any other opioid overdose;

therefore, it presents a clear and present danger to the people of New York.

I thank my colleagues, especially Members Blumencranz and Walsh, for their bipartisan support and vote in the affirmative. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Steck in the affirmative.

Mr. Blumencranz to explain his vote.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to take this time to thank the sponsor for his diligent work on this topic, as well as my many other partners in this Body. A piece of legislation like this is going to save lives from what could be the fourth wave of the opioid crisis. Synthesized forms of kratom are being utilized and are targeting our children and our youth, and ending the sale of these horrible synthesized drugs will make our communities safer.

Getting this done in a bipartisan fashion shows how this building can work effectively, and I appreciate the support of many of the members who joined us on this cause. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to rise briefly and thank the sponsor for the work that he has done in this important area, along with Assemblymember McDonald and my -- my -- and other colleagues. I mean, this is the latest bill in a

series of bills to really try to take a hard look at this substance that provides benefit for some, but is extremely harmful to many, including a former neighbor of mine who became a very strong advocate following her son's death from aspirating following the use of kratom.

So I think that this is very important. I think that this will definitely save lives. And this is the type of regulation in New York State that I think we need to do, and that I can certainly get behind. So -- and I'm very grateful to see that it appears to be a unanimous vote and -- and has support from this entire Body.

So I'm proud to cast my vote in the affirmative. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Walsh in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

On the main Calendar, page 8, Rules Report No. 392, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A05567-B, Rules Report No. 392, Simon. An act to amend the Criminal Procedure Law and the Mental Hygiene Law, in relation to determining the capacity of a defendant to stand trial.

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

(Pause)

On a motion by Ms. Simon, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Molitor.

MR. MOLITOR: Thank you.

On the bill, please.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On the bill.

MR. MOLITOR: So this bill will create a sea -- a sea change in our incompetency law in the Criminal Procedure Law, and not for the better.

So, under the current Criminal Procedure framework, if someone came into court and was experiencing hallucinations or something, the court, with the defense counsel, could ask for a competency evaluation and two psych -- two independent psychiatric experts would evaluate that individual and determine whether they were competent to stand trial or not. If the individual was found to be incompetent, that individual would go to a psychiatric center. And while that individual was in the psychiatric center, that individual would have an attorney from the Department of Mental Hygiene representing them. There's a finite amount of time that individual can stay in a psychiatric facility before they have to be reevaluated, and there has to be a new retention order from the court. And if that

individual over time is found to be competent, they're brought back for their criminal proceeding and the criminal proceeding can continue. And it doesn't matter what the charge is; it could be murder, arson, kidnapping. Whatever it may be, that individual is brought back to be tried and, you know, if found guilty will -- will suffer the repercussions. This bill changes all of that.

First of all, this bill will remove judicial discretion for judges when setting bail; an issue that we've had a problem with, I think, in this Legislature before. But so when a court is trying to get somebody evaluated for competency and they can't do it because that individual's not in their right mind and is maybe out in the community committing crimes or -- or is just, you know, not acting in a reasonable manner, this -- a court will no longer be able to set bail in order to have that person properly evaluated. It changes the legal standard of what competency is. This -- under this law it will require the court to predict the future to determine whether it was store -- whether the person will ever be restored to competency, something no one is capable of doing.

There's a clause within this -- within this particular bill that prevents medical evidence from being used against the individual at trial. Right now, if someone is found incompetent, all of those privileged communications that exist between the provider and the defendant can be used against the defendant if the defendant asserts a -- a mental disease or defect defense. This eliminates it.

But probably the biggest problem with this law is it

gives judges the ability to dismiss cases, what we would call unilaterally, without really any input from the prosecution, which it's no wonder why the DAs Association, every one of the DAs in all of your counties is against this. Not only that, but if a court finds that someone cannot be restored, it moves the case from a criminal case to a civil case without any really mechanism or explanation for how that will be done.

So this bill I think is fatally flawed. Not only is it a bad idea, but it doesn't work in practicality. And if that's not enough, I think what it does is it -- it unfortunately sacrifices public safety for money. Because the big reason for this bill is that it's costing counties too much money to keep individuals in psychiatric facilities because they have been found incompetent to stand trial. And I sympathize with our counties, I do, which is why I think the State should pick up the tab. But this is not the way to fix that issue. This is only going to compromise safety in the State of New York.

So I would encourage all my colleagues to vote no on this bill. I certainly will be. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Read the last section.

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

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

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Republican Conference will not be supporting this piece of legislation, but if there are exceptions, members may vote differently at their desks now.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will support this piece of legislation. For those that would like to be an exception, they can do so at their desks.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Simon to explain her vote.

MS. SIMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for permission to explain my vote. This bill addresses an ongoing crisis in our courts and jails across the State where people accused of crimes who are not fit to stand trial, but languish for months in our jails awaiting both evaluation and then treatment. They have not been convicted of anything. And misdemeanor cases, for example, when the defendant is not competent are always dismissed.

Mental illness is not a crime, and court involvement is often the result of a lack of appropriate support. This bill will both relieve the burden on our counties while also creating more opportunity for people to receive the treatment they need outside of a

jail setting. When we open up access and support to treatment in communities -- in the communities where people live, we're supporting access and a commitment to long-term behavioral healthcare that creates better outcomes for all New Yorkers. And that includes, let me just say, that once a person is restored to competence, that person can stand trial. That will also protect the public's safety and give assurances to the public. This bill is actually a faster path to restoration, and usually retention orders, for example, are for a year at a time. And I just also want to say that a bail decision is made first. Bail has nothing to do with this.

So I appreciate the opportunity to share my reasons for voting, and I will be voting in the affirmative. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Simon in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 12, Rules Report No. 483, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Senate No. S05939-C, Rules Report No. 483, Senator Skoufis (A05882-C, McDonald, Woerner, Bologna, Dais, Griffin, Hevesi, Stirpe, Lee, Kay, Brabenec, Buttenschon, Shimsky, Glick, McMahon, Manktelow, Angelino, K. Brown, Blankenbush, Romero, Otis, Paulin, Dinowitz, Solages, Sayegh, Gallahan, Simone, Alvarez, Rajkumar, Reyes, Burdick, Lasher, Lupardo, Barrett, Ra, Rosenthal, Simon, McDonough, Benedetto,

Zaccaro, DeStefano, Blumencranz, Miller, Sempolinski, Chludzinski, Palmesano, Lemondes, Beephan, Maher, Lavine, Weprin, Pheffer Amato, Simpson, Hunter, Fitzpatrick, Burroughs, Novakhov, Slater, Stern, Steck, Bailey, De Los Santos, Clark, Shrestha, Wieder, Magnarelli, Seawright, Conrad, Jacobson, Eachus, Gray, Cruz, Williams, Schiavoni, Bendett, Jensen, Lunsford, Kelles, Bronson, Tapia, Davila, Meeks, González-Rojas, Bores, Rivera, Mikulin, Santabarbara, Kassay, Hyndman, Gallagher, Rozic, Braunstein, Burke, P. Carroll, Lucas, Peoples-Stokes, Yeger, Taylor, Forrest, Anderson, Bichotte Hermelyn, R. Carroll, Cashman, Chandler-Waterman, Colton, Cook, Cunningham, Dilan, Fall, Gibbs, Giglio, Hawley, Hooks, Jackson, Kim, Morinello, O'Pharrow, Ramos, Septimo, Walker, Wright, Zinerman). An act to amend the Public Health Law and the Insurance Law, in relation to payments by pharmacy benefit managers to participating pharmacies.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: An explanation has been requested.

Mr. McDonald.

MR. MCDONALD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Quite simply, this bill is actually relatively straightforward. A couple years ago we approved in the budget a new payment philosophy using a cost-plus formula for the New York State Medicaid Program. This bill takes that formula and applies it to commercial health plans in New York State.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Jensen.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Will the sponsor yield?

MR. MCDONALD: Of course I'll yield.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The sponsor yields.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Why is this bill necessary?

MR. MCDONALD: Why is this bill necessary? Well, first of all, I think it's what I call fairness. Without getting into a very lengthy conversation, as you know in healthcare we have vertically-integrated networks. We have health insurers who own PBMs, who own health systems. Who own a variety of different entities. And sadly enough, what we've seen with some, not all, of these PBMs is that they have what I call preferential reimbursement. You have pharmacy A, B and C, and they'll pay pharmacy A, which they happen to own, more than pharmacy B or C. And quite honestly, that's not fair. At the end of the day -- many people may not realize this -- as much as pharmacies are abundant throughout this State, pharmacies do not set the prices for prescription drugs, the PBMs do. And the reality is more than enough evidence, particularly in states like West Virginia and Oklahoma where Attorney Generals [sic] are extremely active, they have identified thousands of cases and instances where the PBMs have been paying their own pharmacies more than others. And quite honestly, it's predatory reimbursement,

it's unfair. It's why we're seeing pharmacies lost in urban areas, in rural areas, and sadly enough, the people who are most impacted are the patients.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Thank you for -- for that enhanced explanation. I do appreciate it.

Is there language in this legislation that would exempt collective bargaining -- collective bargaining agreements?

MR. MCDONALD: There is -- there is language in this to exempt those self-insured trusts who have agreements with their -- their employer.

MR. JENSEN: What's the -- the reasoning for --

MR. MCDONALD: It was a request of the labor groups. They feel that they just didn't want to be a part of this, for whatever reason, and both Senator Skoufis and I listened to them and -- and agreed that we would do that. So what we're really focusing on is those plans -- commercial plans which are actually overseen by the Department of Financial Services.

MR. JENSEN: All right. I know you -- you mentioned in the original explanation when asked by our Floor Leader that this was a -- we -- we had done something in the budget previously. And I know in 2023 DFS had rolled out proposed regulations that were never adopted. How does this align or not align with what DFS had originally proposed through regulations?

MR. MCDONALD: This actually follows through on what DFS had proposed. I think at the time there were concerns

raised by some labor groups and, therefore, they decided to hold off on that. This just follows through on that original proposal. This is something that has been accepted in many other states throughout the country. And by the way, as evidenced by both the Biden and Trump FTC, is the direction of where pharmacy reimbursement is headed in the future.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. I know there is some estimate that there could be a cost both to the Essential Plan and to insurers on the commercial market. Because of the potential for expense to both of those entities, why are -- why didn't we do this during the budget?

MR. MCDONALD: So, I don't know where that estimate comes from. I'm a little bit surprised to even hear that being mentioned. You know, the reality is, pharmacy reimbursement is, one, very complex. It is a very huge black box. The reality is, the prescription benefit managers, who actually do do a very good job in regards to managing the plan, negotiate fees, negotiate rebates, have GPO agreements. They have a whole list of items that goes into determining what the patient is gonna be charged. What we're doing is we're changing the reimbursement methodology. Instead of the old-fashioned program where there was a discount off the AWP -- which is average wholesale price plus a small fee -- we're actually putting in a standard fee. But what people don't realize is we're putting in a federally-required cost reimbursement called NADAC, the national average drug acquisition cost. For information purposes, pharmacies are required monthly to submit their invoices to a consolidator for the

federal government to see what the true cost of the drugs is. Because there's always been a question of what true cost of the drugs is. NADAC, at this time, is the best estimate that I can speak of, but I've only been doing pharmacy for 40 years. So the idea was we're gonna get a lower cost, a net cost, and but yes, we're gonna have a stabilizing fee which is being adopted at much higher rates, I will say, in other states throughout this country. So I have to be honest with you. I know who is saying this is gonna raise costs. It's the people who've had the luxury of managing the benefit for the last 20 years in this giant black box. I don't blame them. They don't wanna give up the puck, I get it. That being said, we're here worried about patients, we're worried about payers, and yes, we want stability in the pharmacy community. But to say it's gonna to raise costs is bunk.

MR. JENSEN: All right. Not to get bunk (indiscernible). But depending on when if this passes, which my guess is based on the number of cosponsors it will, if -- if and when this is adopted, the requirements would take effect halfway through the commercial rate year. And DFS is halfway through its rate-setting process for 2027 with the final rates for 2027 to come out in August of this year. What would be the impact on their determination of rates should this become adopted?

MR. MCDONALD: Yeah, I personally don't believe there will be a negative impact on rates. What people might not be aware of -- and we approved this last year in the budget -- is that for the first time in this State's history we are actually requiring the PBMs

and the health plans and actually the manufacturers to actually provide what rebates they've been receiving all these last 20, 30 years. Our healthcare premiums have been calculated on some kind of a drug spend, but no one has been monitoring the rebates that these PBMs have been negotiating. No one is monitoring where those rebates are going. I'm not saying they're doing anything wrong with it; on the other hand, I don't know anybody that would tell me that prescription drug costs where their premiums have gone down. We will now have full transparency on those numbers to really get a better idea of what the true cost of medications are. Does that answer your question?

MR. JENSEN: I want to thank the -- the honorable gentleman from Cohoes for his answers. And Madam Speaker, I do wanna say it has been a pleasure to serve with you these past six years and I wish you the best of luck as you continue to serve your community in whatever way, shape, or form it happens.

So with that, thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. McDonald to explain his vote.

MR. MCDONALD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I

want to thank all of my colleagues for their support. They have been remarkable. The number of sponsors on this bill I haven't seen so high in such a long period of time. And I just want to reiterate a couple of things. PBMs do play a critical role in the healthcare system. But at the same token, many of them have enjoyed this black box, this lack of transparency, this opaque environment for a long period of time. At the end of the day, this is about taxpayer money. It's about our constituents' money, what they pay in premiums, what they pay in co-pays. The claim that this will raise prescription drug costs is a very feeble attempt to maintain their control over a several-hundred-billion-dollar-a-year industry. The reality is, we want them to do their job properly. We want them to negotiate with the pharmaceutical companies. This does not interrupt that negotiation for rebates by any stretch of the imagine. But at the same token, we should actually know where that benefit's going. It's very easy to blame rising drug prices for the costs and blame Pharma -- and they do share some responsibility -- but at the same token, the rebate, sometimes approaching almost 50 percent, and the GPO agreements as well gives us the question, *Where is the money?* And this is one large step in that transparency.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Mr. Miller to explain his vote.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to explain my vote. I rise today in support of A5882 [sic], and want to

begin by thanking the sponsor, Assemblyman McDonald, for his work on this important legislation. I've been a proud cosponsor of this bill early on, because I understand just how important local pharmacies are to our communities.

In many of our rural areas, access to healthcare services can already be limited, and for many constituents that local -- that local pharmacy is often the most accessible healthcare resource they have. These pharmacies do far more than fill prescriptions; they provide trusted advice, vaccinations and critical healthcare services close to home. When a local pharmacy closes, it can mean residents, especially seniors and those with limited transportation must travel long distances just to access medications and the care they need.

This bill is also important because many of these pharmacies are small businesses. I have worked with pharm -- pharmacies throughout my district, and have had firsthand -- and have heard firsthand about the challenges they face. They are employers, community partners, and an essential part of our local economies. By supporting our independent pharmacies, we are helping preserve access to healthcare while also supporting the small businesses that keep our communities strong.

For those reasons, I proudly vote yes and encourage my colleagues to do the same. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Mr. Novakhov to explain his vote.

MR. NOVAKHOV: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And first of all, thank you to the sponsor of the bill, Mr. McDonald. Thank you very much. I'm proud to support this bill, proud to vote yes on this bill. And I'm a big supporter of local pharmacists. I want to thank my -- my pharmacy that I shop at, Pharmacy at the Wave. Thank you, great service. And I just want to say that independent pharmacies are unfortunately closing across New York because they're too often reimbursed below the actual cost of the medications they dispense. When a local pharmacy closes, seniors, working families and entire communities lose access to essential healthcare services. So this bill helps ensure pharmacists are paid fairly for the medications they provide and can continue serving our neighborhoods.

For this reason, I vote yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Mr. Cashman to explain his vote.

MR. CASHMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote. Let me first say thank you, Mr. Sponsor, for the incredible work that you've done in this arena. You and I have engaged in many different conversations and I've talked with all of my constituents in the area. And there was a lot of conversations that we need to make sure that we all get on the same page. But what we arrived on is the thing that this Chamber knows, is that Rural America, Rural America is having a tough time with healthcare, and that we need to open the aperture to the entire system of our

healthcare to really be able to lean in and to make sure that we're protecting our community. Our pharmacists are at the very center of it. From the newborn to the senior, they are caring for our community. This bill helps protect small businesses, and it also helps to protect our community.

And for that, I vote in the affirmative. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Ms. Griffin to explain her vote.

MS. GRIFFIN: Thank you for allowing me to explain my vote, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the sponsor for bringing this measure forward. I was proud to cosponsor and advocate for this bill because this legislation is about lowering prescription drug costs for patients, keeping neighborhood pharmacies open, and adding transparency to drug pricing practices. Our small neighborhood pharmacies are disappearing, and access to high-quality affordable care is diminished every time a local pharmacy is forced to close their doors. Local pharmacies are the front lines of our healthcare system. We know the benefits, services and informed personal touches that our local pharmacies provide in our communities, and we must ensure that they are given the tools and the resources they need to keep their doors open.

Thank you. I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Ms. Glick to explain her vote.

MS. GLICK: Thank you very much. To explain my

vote briefly. I have an independent pharmacy that I've been going to for a very long time, and they are vitally important to our community. And so I want to thank the sponsor for this measure. And I also want to thank the sponsor for his friendship through the years and the way in which he has helped me navigate some particular issues relative to healthcare. And so I want to thank him.

And on a point of personal privilege, I want to thank my colleagues for their friendship and for sharing their lives with me because we spend so much of our time here.

I withdraw my vote and vote in the affirmative.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 11, Rules Report No. 470, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Senate No. S02667-C, Rules Report No. 470, Senator Salazar (A01670-B, Rosenthal, Forrest, Cruz, Glick, Seawright, Reyes, Davila, Lucas, Simon, Shimsky, Levenberg, Tapia, Simone, Raga, Burdick, Weprin, Lavine, Kelles, Paulin, Sayegh, Meeks, Hevesi, Otis, Gibbs, Solages, Taylor, González-Rojas, Valdez). An act to amend the Correction Law and the Executive Law, in relation to prohibiting the use of restraints on incarcerated individuals during labor, absent extraordinary circumstances, and on pregnant persons during a custodial interrogation.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll just go on the bill.

So this -- this bill -- well, let me back up. The Correction Law currently prohibits the use of restraints on incarcerated pregnant women during labor, delivery and post-partum recovery except in limited extraordinary circumstances. There's also existing notice of these protections and training for correctional personnel. What this bill does is it expands it. I would say greatly expands existing restrictions. And it broadens current protections to apply not only during labor and delivery, but also during transport and medical care related to pregnancy outcomes and for up to 12 weeks following birth, abortion, miscarriage or stillbirth. The bill generally prohibits the use of restraints during these periods except in limited emergency circumstances involving an immediate risk of serious injury that cannot be reasonably addressed by other means. So that's the essence of why there will be no votes on this bill. It raises operational and public safety concerns. It substantially limits the discretion of correctional and law enforcement personnel, and it also imposes extensive documentation, reporting and training requirements on correctional facilities and law enforcement agencies which some may contend would create significant administrative burdens and increase compliance costs, particularly for smaller, local jurisdictions. For those reasons, it is opposed by the New York State Sheriffs'

Association. They oppose the bill's expansion of anti-shackling restrictions and limits on the use of force involving pregnant individuals in custody. And they argue that the proposal is operationally unworkable and could undermine officers' ability to safely maintain custody and prevent escape.

So for those reasons I will be voting in the negative. I would encourage my colleagues to do the same. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Rosenthal to explain her vote.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote. Last month Samantha Randazzo gave birth while in law enforcement custody in a Brooklyn courtroom. She was there on a low-level charge, but because she was in police custody and not incarcerated, our anti-shackling laws did not protect her from this horrific experience. Her water broke as she was seated on a courtroom bench with her hands still cuffed behind her back. The charges were dismissed two days later.

Over the years we've protected incarcerated women from this barbaric practice. I'm proud that we will soon offer women

in law enforcement custody the same protections. These are vital protections that will help ensure these women can give birth with dignity and receive the humane and respectful care that they're entitled to.

I must thank Chair Dilan, Jen Ashley and her team at Program and Counsel, and the many advocates who have offered their knowledge and expertise, including Dory Lewis, Sophie Gebreselassie of the Legal Aid Society, Jenna Lauder of New York -- NYCLU, Serena Martin of New Hour, Planned Parenthood, and so many more, and of course the Speaker for getting this bill to the finish line.

I cast my vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Ms. Rosenthal in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 7, Rules Report No. 291, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A04018-A, Rules Report No. 291, Forrest, Levenberg, Lunsford, Gibbs, Shrestha, González-Rojas, Bichotte Hermelyn, Gallagher, Meeks, Simone, Raga, Tapia, Cruz, Otis, Rosenthal, Shimsky, Solages, R. Carroll, Valdez, Mitaynes, Moreno. An act to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to requiring hospitals and other facilities that provide perinatal care to implement an evidence-based implicit bias program and requiring the Department of Health to publish reports on maternal

morbidity and pregnancy-related deaths.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll just go on the bill. Thank you. So this bill requires --

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Excuse me. I'm sorry, Ms. Walsh. One second, please.

MS. WALSH: Oh, of course. Yes. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Ms. Forrest, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill has [sic] advanced.

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Thank you.

MS. WALSH: So this bill would require hospitals and clinical staff that provide perinatal care to implement an evidence-based implicit bias program. So this bias -- implicit bias program would be placed to address racial and systemic bias in the healthcare system through staff education and training. It would require that clinical staff at every hospital providing perinatal care to certify completion of an evidence-based implicit bias training program that would need to be done annually and include instruction on a number of items which -- time is wasting here, so I won't read them all -- all out there, it's a lot. The bill would also require the New York State

Department of Health to track data and statistics related to maternal morbidity, including information on obstetric hemorrhage, hypertension, preeclampsia, and veinous thromboembolisms, sepsis, cerebrovascular accident and amniotic fluid embolism. The DOH has got to publish the data at least once every two years after compiling the information.

So currently, New York State law already requires hospital staff and healthcare professionals to undergo various training programs on issues ranging from infection control practices and sepsis awareness to the identification of reporting of child abuse. Right now there is not a statutory requirement that hospitals provide the training that I just described. So it is true, and we -- we do not dispute that minority patients, specifically African-American patients, are more than three times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes when compared to White patients. But we would say -- at least I would say -- that the development of an implicit bias training program such as the one identified in this bill is not necessary to raise awareness to that unfortunate statistic. I believe that it is yet another government mandate, the cost of which will be shouldered by the hospitals and not the State. I think that there is already awareness that this is a problem. I think that care providers are doing what they can, and that an annual implicit bias program is not really going to adequately address this issue or really result in anything meaningful.

So there will likely be costs incurred to DOH as a result of these requirements, and for that reason there will be some of

us who will be opposing this legislation. I would ask that folks consider it, and I thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: A Party vote has been requested.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I said, the Republican Conference is generally going to be in the negative on this piece of legislation, but if there are exceptions they can be noted at their desks.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Majority Conference will be in the affirmative on this piece of legislation. For those that would like to be an exception, they can do so here in the Chamber.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Forrest to explain her vote.

MS. FORREST: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to explain my vote. As I nurse, I've seen what it looks like when a patient's pain is not believed. When a Black woman's pain is

dismissed. When her concerns are minimized and her autonomy is ignored. This is bias with a stethoscope. And as we clearly see the results, Black women are three times more as likely to experience a pregnant-related death as White women, but less likely to receive treatment for the conditions that lead to those deaths. We cannot claim to be progressive leaders while mothers of color are dying at disproportionate rates. Maternal mortality is preventable and what is missing is action.

And that's why I introduced the Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act. It requires hospitals and other birthing centers to inform expecting mothers of their rights, how to file complaints. It also mandates evidence-based implicit bias training for all facilities providing pre -- perinatal care. And in -- in undergoing implicit bias training, healthcare providers can become aware of their aware -- of biases and learn strategies to mitigate their impact. This can foster open communications with patients and their colleagues, leading to improved patient satisfaction and trust. And in the long run, addressing these biases can contribute to health equity, ensuring that every woman regardless of her racial and ethnic background receives high quality, respectful care during pregnancy and childbirth. And, in turn, this can then save mothers.

So every pregnant person deserves dignity and respect as they navigate their pregnancy, delivery and postpartum experience. The quality of care they receive should never suffer because of the patient's unique racial. Thank you.

I vote in the affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Thank you, Ms. Forrest. How do you vote?

MS. FORREST: Affirmative.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Mr. Fall for -- Mr. Fall.

MR. FALL: Madam Speaker, members have on their desk the C-Calendar. I now move to advance the C-Calendar and I ask that we take it up immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Page 4, Rules Report No. 557, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A01755-A, Rules Report No. 557, Reyes, Hevesi, Simon, Meeks, González-Rojas, Simone, Otis, Cunningham, Raga, Clark, Dinowitz, Shimsky, Shrestha, Seawright, Stirpe, Jackson, Lunsford, Rivera, Gallagher, Zaccaro, Taylor, De Los Santos, Gibbs, Forrest, Tapia, Bichotte Hermelyn, Levenberg, Davila, Kim, Mitaynes, Glick, Romero, Colton, Anderson, Bronson, Hooks, Wright, Valdez, Cook, Moreno, Lee, Kelles. An act to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to providing internet access to all individuals residing in temporary housing; and to amend the New York State Urban Development Corporation Act, in relation to the ConnectAll Digital Equity grant

program.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by -- the Senate Bill -- on the motion by Ms. Reyes, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Cerk [sic] -- the Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A02612, Rules Report No. 558, Bendett. An act to amend the Criminal Procedure Law, in relation to designating the animal control officer in the Town of Sand Lake as a peace officer.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A05456-B, Rules Report No. 559, E. Brown. An act to amend the Tax Law, in relation to authorizing the Village of Atlantic Beach to impose a hotel, motel and beach club tax; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Brown, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A05574, Rules Report No. 560, Barclay. An act to amend the County Law, in relation to reestablishing the office of coroner in the County of Oswego and removing the powers and duties of coroners from the district attorney in such county and allowing Oswego County to appoint a coroner.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Home Room -- Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A06405, Rules Report No. 561, Palmesano. An act to amend the Criminal Procedure Law, in relation to granting peace officer status to animal control officers of the County of Schuyler.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07267, Rules Report No. 562, Sempolinski. An act in relation to authorizing the City of Olean assessor to accept an application for a real property tax exemption from Olean Community Theatre, Inc.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07386-A, Rules Report No. 563, Gallagher. An act in relation to authorizing Sgt. Bethany Kidd to receive certain service credit under a twenty-year retirement plan.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: 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 rise to support this bill on behalf of seeing that Sergeant Bethany Kidd will receive some service credit under a 20-year retirement plan. And I'd also like to note that this is Mr. Gallahan's last bill. He's ending his service in the New York State Assembly, representing the 131st District, elected in 2020.

Jeff has brought a wealth of real world experience to public office. He's always advocating for working families and small businesses. But I will always think of him as just -- as Chef Jeff. He always had the best food. He fed more of us here during his time in Albany than anybody else I can think of. He -- he and his wife have a catering business and I will always think of him as being in the lineup at Maple Day back in the lounge and taking care of all of us there, too.

So we want to all wish Jeff the very best as he moves from the Assembly and we just want to thank him for his service to -- to our conference and to -- to his district.

So, thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07884-B, Rules Report No. 564, Fitzpatrick. An act in relation to authorizing the Town of Smithtown assessor to accept an application for a real property tax exemption from Tiegerman Community Services, Inc.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Fitzpatrick, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07986-A, Rules Report No. 565, K. Brown. An act in relation to authorizing the Centerport Fire District to file an application for exemption from school taxes and real property taxes.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to support this bill and also to note the milestone that this is Keith Brown's last bill here serving in the New York State Assembly on behalf of Assembly District 12.

Keith has been one of my good friends and a friend to many of us. He's been a strong advocate. I -- I especially think about the important work that he's been doing and probably will continue to do as a -- a person on the Alcoholism Committee and particularly, the

work that he's been doing shining a light on co-occurring disorders with alcoholism and mental health issues.

As an attorney, he's brought some real expertise to the Body and I know that -- as he continues in his practice, he'll continue to probably reflect well, hopefully, on his time here in -- in the Assembly. It's been a privilege to serve with Keith and it's been a real privilege to travel with him, too, on the -- the offseason. We -- we had -- we had a great trip together to -- to Ireland.

So we thank him for his leadership and his dedication. We wish him the best as he moves ahead.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08514, Rules Report No. 566, Berger, Santabarbara, Hevesi, Tapia. An act to amend the Surrogate's Court Procedure Act, in relation to authorizing certified school psychologists to participate in the certification of certain persons as intellectually disabled or developmentally disabled.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Berger, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08577-A, Rules Report No. 567, Reilly. An act to authorize Frank R. Smith to receive performance of duty disability retirement benefits.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Senate bill is -- on a motion by Mr. Reilly, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08805-A, Rules Report No. 568, Bendett, Magnarelli, Brabenec. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the state highway

system to Robert Bornt.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Bendett, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08809-B, Rules Report No. 569, Giglio. An act to amend Chapter 495 of the Laws of 2011 relating to the conveyance of land formerly used as an armory to the Town of Riverhead, County of Suffolk, in relation to the use of such property.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Ms. Giglio -- the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08894-A, Rules Report No. 570, Blumencranz. An act to authorize -- an act authorizing the County of Nassau assessor to accept an application for a real property tax exemption from Powell House.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Blumencranz, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08903-C, Rules Report No. 571, Slater. An act in relation to authorizing the County of Putnam to lease certain lands used as parklands.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Slater, the bill -- the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A08962-B, Rules Report No. 572, Rozic, Kelles, Lasher, P. Carroll, González-Rojas, R. Carroll, Bores, Kay, Shimsky, Steck, Shrestha, Cruz, Simone, Hevesi, Kassay, DeStefano, Schiavoni, McMahon, Rivera, Lee, Moreno, O'Pharrow, Colton, Slater, Simon, Barrett, Gallagher, Gandolfo, Smith, Alvarez, Burdick, Durso, Burke. An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to enacting the "New York Fundamental Artificial Intelligence Requirements in (FAIR) News Act".

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Ms. Rozic, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09200, Rules Report No. 573, Barclay. An act to amend the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, in relation to exempting the Cody Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. From the requirement that the percentage of non-resident fire department members not exceed forty-five percent of the membership.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Barclay, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09214-A, Rules Report No. 574, Paulin, Dinowitz, Hevesi, Rozic, Lavine, Reyes, Solages, Rosenthal, Cruz, Glick, Magnarelli. An act to amend the Penal Law, in relation to enacting the "Victims Protection and Child Sex Buyer Accountability Act".

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a

motion by Ms. Paulin, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09408, Rules Report No. 575, Jensen. An act to amend the Executive Law, in relation to adding Salmon Creek in Monroe County to the definition of inland waterways.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Jensen, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10051, Rules Report No. 576, Bologna. An act in relation to establishing the Clarence Center Volunteer Exempt Firefighter's Benevolent Association.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Bologna, 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 PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10092, Rules Report No. 577, Sempolinski. An act to amend the Tax Law, in relation to authorizing the Village of Ellicottville to impose a hotel and motel tax; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Sempolinski, the motion -- on a -- sorry. The Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Read the last section -- oh, sorry. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk -- the Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10373, Rules Report No. 578, Simpson. An act in relation to authorizing the County of Warren to offer an optional twenty-year retirement plan to Bradley Murphy, a patrol officer employed by such county.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Simpson, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10382, Rules Report No. 579, Ra. An act in -- an act relating to a death benefit option for the beneficiary of Justice Jerry Garguilo.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: On a motion by Mr. Ra, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate Rule [sic] is advanced.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER PHEFFER AMATO: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10454-A, Rules Report No. 580, Kelles. An act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law and Public Officers Law, in relation to establishing a school speed zone camera demonstration program in the City of Ithaca; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Kelles, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10480, Rules Report No. 581, Bologna. An act to amend Chapter 389 of the Laws of 2024 amending the Environmental Conservation Law relating to authorizing hunting big game by rifle in the County of Niagara, in relation to the effectiveness thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Bologna, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10573, Rules Report No. 582, DiPietro. An act to amend the General Municipal Law, in relation to authorizing the Holland Central School District to establish an insurance reserve fund.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by

Mr. DiPietro, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10596-A, Rules Report No. 583, Tague. An act to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, in relation to a license to sell liquor at retail for consumption on certain premises.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Tague, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10636, Rules Report No. 584, Ramos. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the state highway system to Sergeant Gregory L. Wahl.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Ramos, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10636, Rules Report No. 584 -- oops -- Assembly No. A10666, Rules Report No. 585, Blankenbush. An act to repeal Title 5 of Article 10-C of the Public Authorities Law relating to the Clifton-Fine Health Care Corporation; and to transfer any books, records and remaining rights of such dissolved corporation.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Not only do I support this fine piece of legislation dissolving the Clifton-Fine Health Care Corporation, but I wanted to take advantage of -- of the last bill that Mr. Blankenbush is passing as a member of the Assembly, to recognize his service to this Body and to the 117th Assembly District. He's been our Ranker on the Insurance Committee. He has a deep background in the insurance industry, have -- is a real wealth of knowledge and just a huge proponent for the North Country, that is just so much a part of his heart. He and his wife, Sheila, are hopefully going to enjoy many, many happy years of retirement together.

And I know that the -- the crew that goes to Ralph's will definitely miss Mr. Blankenbush. But we're very -- we're -- we'll be sad to see him go, but want to just take a moment to thank him for his years of service.

Thank you.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10689, Rules Report No. 586, Slater. An act to amend the Executive Law, in relation to adding Lake Oscawana and Roaring Brook Lake in Putnam County to the definition of inland waterways.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Slater, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10693, Rules Report No. 587, Smullen. An act to amend the Tax Law, in relation to the deposit of additional sales and compensating use taxes by the County of Herkimer.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10704, Rules Report No. 588, Shrestha. An act to allow Steven Kobie Jackson to be eligible to take the civil service exam for the position of police officer for the Town of Woodstock Police Department.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Shrestha, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10741, Rules Report No. 589, Paulin, Cashman, Simon, Lupardo, Clark, Rosenthal, Kelles, Stirpe, Hevesi, McMahon, Shimsky, Otis. An act to amend the State Finance Law, in relation to contracting between state agencies and not-for-profit organizations.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by

Ms. Paulin, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10792-A, Rules Report No. 590, Bailey. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the state highway system to Clara H. Barton.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Bailey, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10813, Rules Report No. 591, Blumencranz. An act to -- authorizing the County of Nassau assessor to accept an application for a real property tax exemption from the Consulate General of El Salvador.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Blumencranz to explain his vote.

MR. BLUMENCRANZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am really proud today to be standing before this piece of legislation in the House, creating connections and building bridges between communities and different nations who are constantly trying to reach out to our constituents is imperative.

It's a pleasure to see this on the board today and see this great work getting done.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Mr. Blumencranz in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the result.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10898-B, Rules Report No. 592, Blumencranz. An act authorizing the Hicksville Water District to receive retroactive real property tax exempt status.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Blumencranz, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So I'd like to say that this is Jake Blumencranz's last bill that he's passing here in the New York State Assembly. Jake is more of a relative newcomer here, right? He was elected in 2022. He's always been such a dependable person to handle some of the really tough debates that we've had with some of the most complex tech issues that we've had and pretty -- pretty much anything else that we threw at him.

So I also remember a really great trip to Ireland that we had together. So that was a great time.

He probably will be somebody that we'll continue to see in the coming years, but we wanted to just take a moment to say thank you for serving here in the People's House on behalf of the 15th, right, 15th Assembly District and wish you the very best as -- as you

go forward.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10906-A, Rules Report No. 593, Chludzinski. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the state highway system to PFC Travis C. Krege.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Chludzinski, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10933, Rules Report No. 594, Sempolinski. An act in relation to authorizing the City to Olean assessor to accept an application for a real property tax exemption from OWH Properties, Inc. (Operation Warm Hearts).

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Sempolinski, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10949-A, Rules Report No. 595, Levenberg. An act to amend Subpart H of Part C of Chapter 20 of the Laws of 2015, relation to appropriating money for certain municipal corporations and school districts, in relation to authorizing funding to local government entities from the Urban Development Corporation, and in relation to the effectiveness thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Levenberg, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Levenberg to explain her vote.

MS. LEVENBERG: I am very grateful to all of those who are supporting this to make sure that communities who have been negatively impacted by shutdowns of utilities will have access to the Sustation Fund for another five years.

So, thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms. Levenberg in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10952, Rules Report No. 596, Ra. An act to amend the Nassau County Civil Divisions Act, in relation to the Volunteer and Exempt Firefighter's Benevolent Association of Albertson.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10961, Rules Report

No. 597, Smullen. An act to amend the Public Officers Law, in relation to qualifications for holding the Office of Correction Officer in the County of Montgomery.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Smullen, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A10962, Rules Report No. 598, Smullen, Santabarbara. An act to amend the Public Officers Law, in relation to qualifications for holding the Office of Deputy Sheriff in the County of Montgomery.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Smullen, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11012, Rules Report No. 599, Sempolinski. An act in relation to authorizing Joseph Fredrick to take the competitive civil service examination for the position of police officer and be placed on the eligible list for employment as a full-time police officer with the Village of Allegany.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Sempolinski, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A011058, Rules Report No. 600, Bologna. An act in relation to establishing the Harris Hill Volunteer Fire Company Benevolent Association.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Bologna, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? The Clerk will announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11068-A, Rules Report No. 601, Walsh. An act in relation to authorizing Kurt Nolan to receive certain credit under Sections 384-d and 34-e of the Retirement and Social Security Law.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Walsh, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm -- I'll tell you a secret. I'm not really explaining my vote on this bill,

although I'm really, really glad it got done. But I did want to -- we know that yesterday we had Angelo Morinello here, and it was his last -- it was his last bill and we weren't able to pull it together to really adequately thank him for his service and I wanted to. He's one of my classmates from 20 -- God, 2016, started in 2017.

And Brian Manktelow is here. He has represented Wayne County and the Town of Webster since 2018 for Assembly District 130. He -- he's just such a fantastic guy. I'll miss not being able to cheat off of his WAM memos anymore. He's just such a great guy.

And Danny Norber from AD 16. Just -- what a -- what an interesting, interesting person. And the time that we got to spend in D.C. -- on my birthday, no less -- was just a -- is a time I'll always remember.

So I just want to say thanks to these three members that maybe didn't have a bill to celebrate over but -- today, you know, but I wanted to say thank you to all three of them. You know, they're such a big part of the -- we're losing so many members from our side of the aisle, it's like -- it's really hurting me. But I just want to say thank you all for your service to the People's House, to your districts, and just most of all, thank you being such great colleagues and friends.

Thank you.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other

votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11098, Rules Report No. 602, Slater. An act to amend the General Municipal Law, in relation to permitting the Town of Southeast, Putnam County, to lease certain sports field fences for advertisement.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Slater, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11115-A, Rules Report No. 603, Brabenec. An act to amend the Tax Law, in relation to the imposition of a hotel and motel tax in the Town of Monroe; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Brabenec, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11124, Rules Report No. 604, Brabenec. An act to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, in relation to providing for a license to sell liquor at retail for consumption on certain premises.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Brabenec, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11126-B, Rules Report No. 605, Brabenec. An act to amend the Tax Law, in relation

to authorizing the Town of Minisink to impose a hotel and motel tax; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Brabenec, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11129, Rules Report No. 606, DiPietro. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State highway system to Specialist Thomas Edwin Beglinger.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11133-A, Rules Report No. 607, Gandolfo. An act to amend Chapter 10 of the Laws of 1958, relating to incorporating the Islip Terrace Volunteer Exempt Firemen's Benevolent Association, and providing for its powers and duties, in relation to making technical amendments thereto.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Gandolfo, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11134, Rules Report No. 608, Brabenec. An act authorizing the Congregation Atzei Chaim to receive retroactive real property tax-exemption [sic] status.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Brabenec, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11163, Rules Report No. 609, Gray, Blankenbush. An act to amend the Tax Law, in relation to increasing the occupancy tax in the County of St. Lawrence.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Gray, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11181, Rules Report No. 610, Durso. An act to amend Chapter 459 of the Laws of 1962 incorporating the West Babylon Volunteer Firemen's Benevolent Association, and providing for its powers and duties, in relation to the

use of certain moneys received by such benevolent association and modernization of certain language.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Durso, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11185, Rules Report No. 611, Palmesano. An act to amend the Town Law and the Public Officers Law, in relation to authorizing the town justice of the Town of Dix, County of Schuyler, to be a nonresident of such town.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Palmesano, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11213-A, Rules Report No. 612, Pheffer Amato, Griffin. An act to amend the Retirement and Social Security Law, the Education Law, the Military Law, the General Municipal Law and the Administrative Code of the City of New York, in relation to extending the 25-year presumptive eligibility period for certain retirement benefits for injuries or illnesses related to World Trade Center rescue, recovery and cleanup operations.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Pheffer Amato, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes to explain her vote.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Actually, Madam Speaker, I am explaining my vote because it gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to yet again vote for a bill in support of my colleague, who like I, will no longer be here next Session. As many of us already know, you know, Stacey came here after her mom

worked so many years in the Assembly doing stellar work. She got a promotion to stay home and not take the road here. And Stacey came to fit in in her seat and she did an amazing job. You can almost say ditto when -- when you look at her and you look at her mom and her commitment to the work that she put in. Particularly the work that she did with the Government [sic] Employees Committee. That will always be respected. I'm sure there's not an employee across the State of New York that did not respect the work that you did with that Committee, and I certainly do respect the work that you did.

So, congratulations on your retirement. All the work -- I know you're not gonna go and do what your mother did, but she had that title already. You might have to wait for a while for that one. But it's been a true pleasure, and nothing but the best for you and your family. God bless you.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11220, Rules Report No. 613, Hyndman, Kelles, Griffin, Zinerman. An act to amend the Education Law, in relation to physical therapist assistants.

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

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 365th day.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11240, Rules Report No. 614, Brabenec. An act authorizing the Tovas Dovid Community Kollel, Inc. to receive retroactive real property tax-exemption [sic] status.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Brabenec, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11248, Rules Report

No. 615, Brabenec. An act authorizing the Congregation Divrei Chaim to receive retroactive real property tax-exemption [sic] status.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Brabenec, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11267, Rules Report No. 616, Ra. An act authorizing the assessor of the County of Nassau to accept from the town of Hempstead an application for exemption from real property taxes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Ra, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11268-A, Rules Report No. 617, Ra. An act in relation to authorizing the Village of New Hyde Park to file an application for exemption from real property taxes.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Ra, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11274, Rules Report No. 618, Mikulin. An act to amend the Nassau County Civil Divisions Act, in relation to the Volunteer and Exempt Firefighter's Benevolent Association of Bethpage, Nassau County, New York, Inc.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Mikulin, 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: The Clerk will

record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. 11275-A, Rules Report No. 619, Maher. An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State highway system to Jason T. McGlone.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11290, Rules Report No. 620, Committee on Rules (Smullen, Buttenschon). An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State highway system to War Dogs.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Smullen, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So this is Robert Smullen's last bill that he's passing in the New York State Assembly. He's been serving for Assembly District 118, and -- but he -- before -- way before that he has already dedicated his life to service both in uniform and in public office. He's been a strong advocate for Upstate, working to support our veterans, strengthen rural equity, and improve the lives of the people that he represents. He's been very involved in ALEC, the organization ALEC, talking about fiscal responsibility as well. He's brought a unique perspective, really, of leadership, duty and sacrifice to the Legislature. His commitment to serving others and defending the values that he believes in has earned him the respect of colleagues and his constituents.

It's been a privilege to serve with Robert. I wish him the very best going forward, and much love to his wife Megan and his family. And -- and I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Robert's work in transforming what really was an incredible personal tragedy into really meaningful work for Donate Life and the Donor Registry has really been inspiring.

So we wish him the very, very best as he moves

forward and thank him for his service.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11318, Rules Report No. 621, Committee on Rules (DiPietro). An act to amend the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, in relation to exempting the East Concord Fire Department, Inc. from the requirement that the percentage of non-resident fire department members not exceed 45 percent of the membership.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. DiPietro, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11322-B, Rules Report No. 622, Committee on Rules (Levenberg). An act to amend

the Vehicle and Traffic Law and the Public Officers Law, in relation to establishing a school speed zone camera demonstration program in the Village of Croton-on-Hudson; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Levenberg, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. Home Rule Message is at the desk.

Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11391, Rules Report No. 623, Committee on Rules (Barclay). An act to amend the General Municipal Law, in relation to permitting the Oswego City School District to create an insurance reserve fund.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Barclay, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, I don't know, I feel like in Wizard of Oz where we say, *Scarecrow, you're the one I'm gonna miss the most*. This is -- this is Will Barclay's last bill in the New York State Assembly, which is hard to believe. Few individuals have had a greater impact on the Assembly Minority Conference than Leader Will Barclay. Since his election in 2002, and especially during his tenure as Minority Leader, Will has really provided exceptional leadership, steady guidance, and an unwavering commitment to both his Conference and the people of New York. He's drawn from his expertise as an attorney, a businessman and a lifelong Central New Yorker. He's been a strong advocate for Upstate, working families, policies that promote economic growth and opportunity. I mean, it's been such a privilege to serve with Will and travel with Will and Margaret. And I know that he's leaving to go back to his beautiful Central New York and -- and the -- and the waters, so I want to leave it by just saying, you know, may your fish be bigger than your excuses.

(Laughter)

And I want to wish him good health and -- and all the best in the years forward. I really value our friendship. Thank you.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11395, Rules Report No. 624, Committee on Rules (Palmesano). An act to amend the Public Officers Law, in relation to permitting Yates County assistant district attorneys and assistant public defenders to reside in Monroe County.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Palmesano, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11449, Rules Report No. 625, Committee on Rules (Bendett). An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State highway system to Patrick LaFortune, Jr.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr.

Bendett, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11475, Rules Report No. 626, Committee on Rules (Gandolfo). An act to authorize the Church of Pentecost, USA, Inc. to receive retroactive real property tax-exemption [sic] status.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Gandolfo, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So it's not really goodbye so much as so long for my very favorite Assistant

Minority Leader Pro Tem, Jarett Gandolfo. This is his last bill. I mean, when I think about Jarett I -- I think about the expertise. I don't know how I'm gonna understand the Insurance Law after this year, honestly. Somebody's -- I'm gonna have to call you. But the work that he's done on the Insurance Committee, his work here running operations is unbelievable. He's so unflappable. And his dry sense of humor that took me quite a while to figure out really is -- is really special, as are your expressions, too. But you're moving on to better things, bigger and better things, and I hope you remember us here in the People's House. And I just -- I thank Natalia, Lenny and Ben for loaning you to us for the time that you spent with us, and thank you. You know, thank you. We're gonna miss you a lot here.

(Applause/Cheers)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11483, Rules Report No. 627, Committee on Rules (Molitor). An act to authorize the Towns of Ellington and Charlotte in in Chautauqua County to elect a single town justice to preside in the town courts of such towns.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will

record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11528, Rules Report No. 628, Committee on Rules (Durso). An act to amend the Highway Law, in relation to dedicating a portion of the State highway system to Trooper Gerard B. Kane.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Durso, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11543, Rules Report No. 629, Committee on Rules (Pretlow). An act in relation to correcting a misclassification property tax error on behalf of Tanya Hairston.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last

section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11566, Rules Report No. 630, Committee on Rules (Tague). An act to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, in relation to a license to sell liquor at retail for consumption on certain premises.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh to explain her vote.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, last, but certainly not least, we have the departure from the People's House of America's Assemblyman, Chris Tague. This is his last bill. Chris has been -- is possibly the most quotable member of the Chamber.

(Laughter)

He is certainly one of the most vocal voices, but

certainly cares deeply about the area that he represents in Schoharie County and -- and other areas there. And, I mean, there's been many mic drop moments with -- with Chris during debate and otherwise. I think his tag line that he's used, "No farms, no food" is something that we all can really relate to. He -- he really brought in just a real sense of who he is and where he came from, and he's never forgotten. And I'm gonna miss him a lot. And I would just say, Chris, really with -- with -- I think you learned a valuable lesson from Wayne Jackson just the other day that when you start to get upset, eat a Snickers.

(Laughter)

Eat a Snickers, right? We're gonna miss Chris. Thank you.

(Applause)

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11571, Rules Report No. 631, Committee on Rules (Moreno). An act to amend Chapter 801 of the Laws of 2021 amending the State Administrative Procedure Act relating to public hearings on proposed rules, in relation to the effectiveness thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Ms. Moreno, 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: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11576, Rules Report No. 632, Committee on Rules (Conrad). An act to amend the Civil Service Law, in relation to compensation, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment of certain State officers and employees; and in relation to implementing agreements between the State and an employee organization; to repeal certain provisions of the Civil Service Law relating thereto; and making an appropriation for the purpose of effectuating certain provisions therefor.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: On a motion by Mr. Conrad, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced. 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: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will

record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A11292, Rules Report No. 633, Committee on Rules (Otis, Bores). An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to prohibiting the use of stealth crawlers.

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

Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER HUNTER: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

SPEAKER HEASTIE: Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

(Applause)

Okay. Resolutions, page 3, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1625, Mr. Heastie.

Legislative Resolution establishing a plan setting forth an itemized list of grantees for a certain appropriation for the 2026-27 State Fiscal Year for grants in aid for services and expenses of the Education Department, human services organizations, criminal justice organizations and municipal entities, health and mental health programs and providers, public parks and recreational programs, veterans' organizations services, older adults programs, various not-for-profit entities, Edward Byrne Memorial Grants; and Mitchell-Lama properties or properties owned by public housing authorities; amending Assembly Resolution E820 of 2025 establishing a plan setting forth an itemized list of grantees for health and mental health programs and providers; certain municipalities and not-for-profit institutions; aid to certain school districts, public libraries and not-for-profit institutions; human services organizations; certain municipalities and community violence intervention organizations services; and Mitchell-Lama properties or properties by public housing authorities; amending Assembly Resolution E446 of 2021 establishing a plan setting forth an itemized list of grantees for criminal justice organizations and municipal entities; and human services or organizations; amending Assembly Resolution E1075 of 2022 establishing a plan setting forth an itemized list of grantees for services and expenses of criminal justice organizations and municipal entities; and amending Assembly Resolution E2449 of 2024 establishing a plan setting forth an itemized list of grantees for certain municipalities, not-for-profit institutions, public parks, historical

preservation and recreational organizations; and human services organizations.

SPEAKER HEASTIE: On the resolution, all those in favor signify by saying aye --

Oh, okay.

The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The resolution is adopted.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 1626, Mr. Heastie.

Assembly Resolution amending Assembly Resolution R2002 of 2008 establishing a plan setting forth an itemized list of grantees for the New York State Capital Assistance Program established pursuant to an appropriation in the 2008-09 State Fiscal Year and in Part QQ of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2008.

SPEAKER HEASTIE: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The resolution is adopted.

Well, well, well. So, friends and colleagues, we began this Session -- when we began this Session I laid out a plan to

make our State more affordable a place for all our families. Over the last few months we have worked to deliver on that promise. We put money back into New Yorkers' pockets with 1 billion in relief with POWER checks, ensured our cities have the funding they need to meet the needs of their communities, and invest in our schools and higher education so every young person in this State is set up for a bright future. We codified protections for immigrant New Yorkers, safeguarded access to lifesaving vaccines, and strengthened regulations on 3D-printed ghost guns.

We can all be proud of what we accomplished for our communities. But none of what we have done this year could be possible without the dedication of our staff. The Governor took up about 90 percent of the Session with her budget, but we -- where's Deb? Deb's not here? Oh. How many did we get, like 940-something. How many? So we only ended up 46 bills less than we were last year. So I would like --

(Applause)

So of course I would like to -- to thank our amazing, amazing staff and I know the Minority will do the same on their side.

So of course, Deb Miller, Mary-Anne Dandles, John Knight and the Legislative Services Team.

(Applause)

Dan Salvin, the Bill Drafting Commission and Assembly Revision Staff. Clap for them.

"Big Money Phil" Fields and the Ways and Means

staff.

(Applause)

And, you know, I have to say, you know, Jen Best has the hardest job in this place. To put up with us, the constant text messages, the calls from me at any time. And Jen, I just want to tell you, you've done an amazing job.

(Applause)

And her running mate, Aubree Heydrick.

(Applause)

And to Alana Sivin, who kind of ran and jumped on the train after Session started, my counsel, she did an amazing job, and the rest of the entire Program and Counsel Staff and the Ways and Means staff. I mean, really, for almost six months they've had to do double duty, and we should really show our appreciation for both staffs.

(Applause)

So I also want to thank Becca Mudie and Bri Smead, who are the -- work on the -- in the office of the Counsel to the Majority. To Howard Vargas and Dave DeCancio. I call them the "Special Ops Team." Katie Bender, Lauren Keating and the entire CIS Team. Amy Metcalfe, Ed Harris and the Assembly Support Team.

(Applause)

Josiel Estrella and the Intergovernmental Team, (indiscernible/applause) and Alex.

(Applause)

Wendy Gallegos, who we welcome back. "Hop Along" is back.

(Applause)

And of course my own staff at 250 Broadway and my district office in the Bronx, and the rest of the, I'd say the Administrative Support Team, Anita, Variatu (phonetic) Natalia (indiscernible/applause).

(Applause)

And I'm about tired of him always getting the biggest round of applause, but Mr. Wayne Jackson and our Chamber Sergeant-of-Arms.

(Applause)

And I don't want to forget to mention, if you see this quiet, unassuming gentleman who's been following me around I just want to thank Greg Mosley for joining the team, also.

(Applause)

All right. Now is the hard part. This might be the hardest end of Session speech I've ever had to give, because when I look at the list of people who are retiring -- and they deserve it, they worked hard -- but it's over 150 years combined of them being my colleague and my friend and my family.

And I have to start with Crystal. I met Crystal even before I was elected to the Assembly. I was dating a young lady in Buffalo and I got invited up to Juneteenth. I had no idea what

Juneteenth was, if you can believe that. But Crystal taught me what Juneteenth was, and she's been a friend and a sister. And I'm gonna tell y'all some private things, but I think it's okay. When -- when Joe Morelle left -- and I've been honored to have two incredible Number 2s in Joe Morelle and now Crystal Peoples-Stokes. But when Joe Morelle was elected to Congress, somebody actually said to me, *There's no way you can pick another Black person to be the Majority Leader*. And I said, *Why the hell can't I?* And I said, *I'm not picking Crystal because she's Black*. Now, she is a -- a serious tough Black sister, but --

(Applause)

-- but I -- but I -- I picked Crystal more because of the trust, the relationship. And, you know, when I was attempting to come and try to be Speaker, there was a lot of people who doubted me, there was a lot of people who didn't want me. I remember the *New York Times* did an article that said "The flawed Speaker." But I remember when I called Crystal and I asked her for her support, she said to me, *Go call everybody else. I'm with you*. That, Crystal, you don't know what that did to me and for me when you told me you would support me for Speaker. I love you dearly. You have been a big sister, my protector, and I am so much, so much gonna miss you. I love you so much, Crystal.

(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS JACKSON: One more time!

(Applause)

Now this next young lady, the story is gonna start a little tough but I promise you it ends well. Also when I was trying to become Speaker, my good friend Deborah Glick, I don't know --

(AUDIO CUTS OFF)

Hello? Okay. So I always felt like I had to earn Deborah's respect. I always felt like --

(AUDIO CUTS OFF)

And one my favorite political books was *Team of Rivals*, and as tough as Deborah was on me in the beginning, I have to tell you I don't think I have a more trusted person that I could go and get advice from. Charles [sic] Seward, who was Abraham Lincoln's rival when he died, he was Abraham Lincoln's -- when Abraham Lincoln passed away and was shot and killed, Charles [sic] Seward turned out to be the most trusted advisor to Abraham Lincoln. So Deborah, thank you for being my Charles [sic] Seward.

(Applause)

I'm doing a little better than I thought I would. And also -- I know she's not watching, but Vivian Cook I also knew way before I was elected. You know, Vivian adopted me as a son. She adopted Taylor as her -- as her granddaughter. And Vivian, the two things I will always remember about Vivian, as soon as she would see me she would always say to me, *Are you all right?* Because she said, *I'll get somebody if you want me to get them*. And I would say, *No, Vivian, you know, I'm -- I'm okay*. And the other thing I always

remember about Vivian, when people would call her and ask her where is she in terms of a bill she would say, *I'm wherever the Speaker is*. So take that as a lesson to all of you.

(Laughter)

That's always the best place to be. Even the Minority.

All right. Next up, Donna Lupardo. You know, when Prince passed away, of course y'all know that was devastating to me. It was like losing a member of my family. But Donna did something for me when we had the -- the tour in her area, she brought me to -- it was a tribute concert for Prince and that just lifted my -- always thank you --

(AUDIO CUTS OUT)

Hello?

(Testing mic)

This quiet but serious, amazing representative. And, you know, there was a time that, you know, Donna was kind of on her own out there in Western New York in terms of -- and I know we're not trying to get political here, but she was alone a lot of the times but she hung tough and she represented her area very well.

And so Donna, I have to tell you, too, you've been an amazing, amazing colleague, even sometimes things were always tough but I always knew I could count on you. So Donna, love you, too.

(Applause)

Next up is Stacey Pheffer Amato. You know, I was the -- you know, I had two older sisters and, you know, when I would get picked on when I was younger before I learned martial arts, my sister would always go and fight my battles for me. And Stacey, as I said, she's somebody that will always tell you how she feels, when she feels, what she feels, and she's never shy about it. But I always know if I gotta get into a foxhole with somebody and fight, I don't know if there's a better person than you, Stacey. And you are -- you know, sometimes people always don't want to be compared to their parent or parents, but I have to tell you Stacey, I know your mother's proud of the representation, and you picked up right where she left off -- I know there was somebody in between. But you have been an amazing, amazing advocate in really what is a tough district. But you always, always stood to your convictions and that's what really matters most in this business. I love you, too.

(Applause)

I only got two more people retiring. So, Nader Sayegh, another one. Another quiet and very unassuming but serious person. He always wanted to make sure that Yonkers was taken care of. From the moment that he -- he's another one. Sometimes on these tough votes, you know, Nader seemed to always trust and be supportive even when I asked him to take some very, very, very tough votes. And like I said, he's another one. He got used to the texting. I don't know if Nader ever picked up the phone and called me. He always knew, you know, to text me. And so Nader, I can just say --

only say thank you for your support and friendship, and you also will be sorely missed. And I love you, too, my friend.

(Applause)

Where is he?

Oh. In absentia.

And then last, but certainly not least, is Marianne Buttenschon. Another one who is kind of on an island where she is in Central New York. Always stood to her convictions. Always represented her area. Always represented small businesses. And always, always, always had open arms for colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come visit her beautiful farm and small business. And I said this at the retirement breakfast, Marianne gave me a tree to plant in my yard. People laughed when I said I haven't planted it yet. But she didn't give me a tree without being in a pot, so I just have to get a chance to -- to plant that -- that tree. But Marianne, every time I look at that tree I'll always think of you. You've also been a very good person, a very supportive person even when things are tough.

So Marianne, love you, too.

(Applause)

Also -- oh, Marianne's on Zoom, that's right. She had to get home to deal with her grandchild that wasn't feeling well. So I hope you hear me, Marianne. Love you.

So I want to say to the colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you know, I always try to -- these personal wars about Democrats and Republicans, you know, I think you are all good

people, you just have your politics wrong.

(Laughter)

But -- but I always try to continue to be a friend because no matter what, I know from each and every one of you, you're just trying to represent your communities the best way that you know how. So I want to say to all of you who are leaving or those of you who are trying to be demoted, I wish you well. But I -- I do wanna point out two people and I also wanna thank Mr. Ra for his -- we kind of picked up like we were good friends. Our communication is great. And I joked with him that, you know, if our communication was half as good as it was with me and Mr. Barclay we would be okay.

But I also want to say, you know, saying so long to Mr. Barclay, Will, you've always been good to me. You've been such a good friend. I could trust you. You and I probably talked about things that we never shared with our members. That's how much of a friend I consider you. And I'm gonna miss those text messages. And as much as whenever Will would call me, I --

(AUDIO CUTS OUT)

-- good about a Republican, so --

Hello? Hello?

(Testing mic)

But no matter what -- no matter what I would say to Will when he would reach out to me, I always used to say, *Will, just call me Carl.*

(AUDIO CUTS OUT)

-- always, always called me Speaker. But Will, I hope now that you are gone when you text me you will call me by my name and check in with me as Carl. So thank you, my brother. I love you.

(Applause)

(AUDIO CUTS OUT)

I'll project. But y'all know I'm not really a yeller in public, just only in private, but...

(Laughter)

I know he's not here, and to our colleague Mr. -- you know, Mr. Morinello, I always -- when he got elected I always called him Your Honor. Because even though we're elected and we're all honorable, he was just always such a good guy. I just always wanted to say to him when I saw him, "Your Honor." Because he was an incredible person. I thanked him last night, because oftentimes people who are experts in their area -- and he was a -- a judge, you know, for a very long time before he ran for the Assembly -- and sometimes when people say things on expert in their field you always want to listen. So I'm glad I got to say so long to him before he left, you know, last night. And as I said to him and to you and to all of our colleagues, you know, once a member, always a member. You guys are always welcome back here in this Chamber.

(Applause)

I'm -- I'm almost done. We have some colleagues on

our side of the aisle that have decided to be demoted. So I just want to say to the great colleagues who served with us, whether they're trying to run for Congress or they're trying to run for the State Senate, I don't know why y'all want to do those things because this is the best place in the world to be. So I want to say good luck, Godspeed to Alex Bores, Jessica González-Rojas, Micah Lasher, Grace Lee, Steven Raga, Jonathan Rivera and Claire "You were here for a minute" Valdez.

(Laughter)

But -- but all of these colleagues were great. Always showed me a tremendous amount of cooperation and respect. And I -- I feel privileged -- even though this is my 12th Session, I always feel privileged for the opportunity that all of you have given to me. So I want to say to all of you, thank you for your years of hard work and dedication. We will miss you. But as I said, once an Assemblymember, always an Assemblymember, and you're always welcome here in the People's House.

(Applause)

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

I'm sorry, Crystal. We're gonna go to Mr. Ra first.

MR. RA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for your kind words for our departing members. And thank you for -- and to you and your staff for your cooperation. Obviously it's been a little bit of a crazy Session for all of us, I would say me in particular. But having the opportunity to begin working more closely with you, I

can't thank you enough for -- for your communication and your working with us on behalf of our members to make sure that we were able to do the things that we needed to do for -- for our districts. So thank you.

I have to thank the Majority Leader. I had the opportunity, I don't know how many years ago it was now, I was in Jarett's job, your first Session as Majority Leader and I had the opportunity to work closely with you as you were starting that job and watch you run the floor each and every day, and I wish you all the best in your retirement. I thank you for your friendship. And I don't know if the next person is gonna pick up on -- on the quote of the day, but I don't think it will be as meaningful not being delivered by you before we start Session each -- each day. So thank you, and all the best to you, Crystal.

(Applause)

So it's tough to be overly upbeat at the end of this week. I think we all have felt the weight of this Session, the prolonged budget schedule, the chaotic end that we've had here. And we've talked a lot about the highlights of Session, of the budget. Let's be honest. Our calendar this year was hijacked by a Governor who I don't think properly respects the role of this House, of this Legislature as a co-equal branch of government.

(Applause)

So and -- and I think the disruption that has caused really impacted us in our ability to do the things we needed to do for --

for our constituents, for the people of this -- of this State. But I don't wanna get too much into that. We've heard a lot this evening. What I really wanna to do is just recognize the work of people and the contributions who have made this House what it is. They've earned those accolades.

So let me start with our Floor Team. Mary Beth Walsh, our Floor Leader, who has done a tremendous job this Session. Steady at the helm, leading our debate with -- with class, with intelligence, making sure our members knew what was to be expected each and every day to the extent that we're aware, and -- and just making sure that through a change in leadership there was not a blip in the road. We just kept moving forward. So thank you, Mary Beth, for your tremendous work.

(Applause)

Her -- her assistant, who I -- I'm gonna talk a little bit more later because he's also departing. It's hard to believe that -- that this duo is breaking up because they really have done a tremendous job the last two years. But Jarett Gandolfo, who I've known since he was Congressman Garbarino's intern -- don't hold that against him -- but he really -- watching him go from intern to member Chief-of-Staff to member to being our Assistant Floor Leader is something I am incredibly proud to have had the opportunity to watch. I don't know why he's demoting himself to the title of Senator, but I -- but I wish him well down the hall and I hope he won't be a stranger in our Chamber.

(Applause)

And they are ably assisted and really guided each and every day by our wonderful Floor Counsel, Michelle Pellegri, who --

(AUDIO CUTS OUT)

All right. Who just makes sure things keep moving forward, make sure our members have everything they need, and -- and just -- we always say the job is like part kindergarten teacher, part lawyer, part probably a lot of other things, but she does it all capably and -- and I'm proud to -- to -- to call her a friend and of the work she does on behalf of our Conference. So thank you, Michelle.

(Applause)

To our Ways and Means Ranker. Phil Palmesano picked a hell of a year to take on his first State budget. He handled it, really an enormous job, very time-consuming, complicated. All the extenders, the actual budget itself. He did it with incredible ability. Again, I am so proud of the work he did stepping in midstream in a budget. I just would have one piece of advice that I hope you and Mr. Pretlow can speed things up next year and not be going into late May. So Phil, thank you.

(Applause)

And I wanna thank the members of our Conference. My sincere thanks and gratitude to all of you. Thank you for your confidence, your unwavering hard work and your patience during a Legislative Session that had more than its fair share of twists and turns. Through every challenge you have stood firm, remained

committed to our shared principles and goals and, most importantly, you have fought to improve the lives of the New Yorkers we represent. Your energy, passion and determination have been an inspiration to me as I do my job. And we know it's been challenging with the unpredictable schedule, the shifting calendar. And that impacts us as members, but we all know that that impacts our staff more than anybody. So I wanna thank all of the incredible Assembly staff from both sides of the aisle who make this place run, for their work this Session.

(Applause)

And -- and let me personally recognize my team who have helped me take over this role and -- and made sure that I had everything I needed to do the job on behalf of our members. Tom Kraus, Jason Kehoe, Dan Cairns who is celebrating both his 60th birthday and his retirement after 35 years in the Legislature.

(Applause)

Our -- our Counsel, Adam Fusco; our Legislative units, Josh Risler, Ways and Means; Paige Nestler, running Counsel's office; as well as Chris Slater and Gideon Lamb in -- in Research and Policy Development. And last, but certainly not least -- I love that I get to call her this -- my Chief-of-Staff, Lauren O'Hare, who runs our Conference with incredible skill, intelligence, a little bit of humor when I need it, and is just somebody that I fully trust with everything that needs to be done on behalf of our Conference. So Lauren, thank you for your tireless efforts.

(Applause)

And I -- and I really do wanna thank all of the dedicated professionals who support our Conference throughout our Central Staff. They truly are the ones that make our members be able to do our jobs with the best of our ability.

So I just wanna, as the Speaker mentioned about the departing members, I think we're losing about 25 members total on both sides of the aisle, which is pretty hard to wrap your head around. And there's a tremendous amount of institutional memory, expertise that we're losing in them, and I just wanna quickly run through our departing members.

Ken Blankenbush, who was a classmate of mine from the 2010 election. There were 17 of us then, there'll be three of us left next year. But Ken, throughout his time here, has brought a perspective and reliability that is just a true constant to our members of the Conference. And I think it is something that is valued for each and every one of our members to have somebody with that steady personality of -- of Ken Blankenbush. So Ken, thank you.

(Applause)

Jake Blumencranz came in with youth, energy, fresh ideas, a great camera presence that I'm jealous of, and always a determination to do what's right on behalf of your constituents; pushing for cutting costs, public safety, responsible budgets. So I know our Conference loss will be the Senate's gain next year. Jake, thank you and congratulations to you on a successful tenure here in

the Assembly.

(Applause)

Keith Brown, who's been a reliable, thoughtful and passionate advocate for Suffolk County and for Long Island. He's always focused on helping families and impacting communities in a positive way. He will certainly be missed in this Chamber.

Jeff Gallahan, who has been a strong and principled voice for his constituents and has just brought a -- a blue-collar mentality that just never changed during his time in Albany. He's also truly one of the nicest human beings you'll -- you'll ever meet, and I will miss serving with Jeff.

Jarett Gandolfo, who I mentioned a minute ago, but truly has become a -- a very valuable friend, and we wish him well down the hall.

Brian Manktelow, a guy who brought so many perspectives as a farmer, a businessman, an Army veteran representing the 130th District and always brought commonsense values to this Chamber and a very strong work ethic. And I will miss his friendship here each and every day.

Dave McDonough, who is the most senior member of our Conference in tenure, part of my own county delegation who has been here from the beginning with me as a mentor, as a friend, and somebody that I will always greatly look up to and respect. Truly an institution on Long Island, the gold -- the gold standard for what public service means. So thank you to Dave.

Judge Morinello. One of the greatest voices we have had here for reason and integrity in this business, and his counsel to me is something that I can't replace. I will certainly continue to go to him for advice.

Dan Norber, another Nassau County neighbor. It's been a pleasure to serve with you, Dan. You brought a perspective as a small businessowner and -- and really jumped in with both feet with -- with heart and integrity. And I think your character and the contributions you have made to this institution and our Conference have certainly left a mark on us. So thank you, Dan, and all the best to you and your family.

(Applause)

Just a couple more.

Colonel Robert Smullen. You know, the journey you've walked from your military career, coming here in the Assembly and, most importantly, with your family really has been something of unparalleled perseverance and internal resolve. And we have all watched you and tried to lend whatever support we could. But you've carried yourself with just incredible dignity and purpose, and we will never forget you in this Chamber and we will make sure we continue to do the initiatives that you have started to carry on AJ's name. So thank you for your service and your courage and your determination to be an inspiration to us all, Colonel.

(Applause)

So Chris -- Chris Tague, America's Assemblyman

who has been a fighter all the way to the end. And I think after this week Pam Hunter might become his biggest campaign donor if it means getting him out of here.

(Laughter)

But that fighting spirit is -- is what we will all remember about Chris. So all the best to you, Chris.

And lastly, Will Barclay. My friend that I have had the opportunity to, from my very first days in this Chamber, to get the opportunity to kind of get brought into a -- a circle with you and some of our other senior members that you really didn't feel like you belonged but were never made to feel like you didn't belong. And he served here for more than 20 years, but the most important thing I think all of us in our Conference value is -- is your friendship. And we could not really measure the contributions you have made to this Assembly, to our Conference. But I think we all believe that if we leave this place better than we found it, we will have been a success. And by that measure, you have been an incredible success here, Leader Barclay. So thank you for your friendship. I will miss having you here terribly.

(Applause)

So I -- I just wanna to conclude -- not to steal Crystal's thing -- but with a quote. *How lucky I'm -- how lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard*. It feels very fitting today. So thank you to all of our departing members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your leadership of this House and -- and your

friendship. And I wish you, the members and all the staff a very happy and hopefully relaxful summer. Thank you.

(Applause)

SPEAKER HEASTIE: Before I turn it over to our wonderful Majority Leader, I was remiss -- and you've got to forgive me, I'm really not feeling well. I took a test. I'm not contagious. But I -- I didn't thank Gary Pretlow for his incredible job --

(Applause/Cheers)

But -- but I also want to --

(Applause)

But I also wanna thank his counterpart, and he knows I gave him the nickname "2 by 15 Palmesano."

(Laughter)

Even though, Mr. Slater, you stole it from him a couple of times. But thank you, Mr. Palmesano. You've always kept the discussions on the subject, never taking anything personal. So I want to thank you for your representation on the Ways and Means.

(Applause)

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, let me just first of all say to God be the Glory for all the great things He has allowed me to experience in my life. And one of them is knowing you, Mr. Speaker. I -- I'm truly grateful for that. By the way, you're probably one of the few people who can get me do things that I don't want to do.

(Laughter)

But I do want to honor the opportunity you gave me to serve as your Majority Leader. I certainly want to thank your entire staff, everybody standing over there. And I don't wanna name names because they all played a very significant role in trying to help us pull together the work that we need to do for the People's House. So thank you to your entire staff.

I also want to thank John Knight. And I wanna say, some of y'all owe John Knight some money. Y'all been over here a lot.

(Laughter)

And he's here. But he is truly diligent to the work. Does not miss a beat. Crosses every t and dots every i, and stops everybody who is trying to prevent him from doing that. So please join me in celebrating this young man for the (indiscernible/applause).

(Applause/cheers)

By the way, Michelle tolerates him just like I do, so let's give her another round of applause, too.

(Applause)

It's been really great -- it's been really great working with you all. And I don't wanna name names because I would have to read off the entire list of the amazing people that I've had the opportunity to get to know and develop relationships with. But I will just say thank you. And so if you saw me sitting down a lot while everybody else was standing clapping, don't take it as disrespect.

Take it as I'm trying to preserve my health. Not long ago I went through a very serious procedure, and when it was over I lost the ability to use some of my body. I am regaining that, and so I have to protect it as we go.

(Applause)

So I -- I do want to mention, you know, just one of the things that the Speaker forced me to do that I didn't wanna do. It was during the pandemic, and our then-Ways and Means Chair Helene Weinstein had COVID. She had to stay home. But there weren't many of us here. Mr. Goodell was here. Ed Ra was here. And a few people on this side of the aisle were here. But he said to me, *Crystal, you have to debate the budget*. *What? How am I going to debate the budget? I haven't gone to any of the hearings, I have no idea what has been said. How am I gonna -- I don't know, but you're gonna have to do it*. So I said, *No, no, no, wait a minute. Let's just think this through, Mr. Speaker. Why don't we just ask Deborah Glick to do it?*

(Laughter)

She's been here longer, she's heard how they've been done. She can do this in a heartbeat. And he said, *No, Crystal. You're the Majority Leader and you have to do it.* So just like he forced me to become the Majority Leader, he forced me to negotiate a budget that I was able to do. And by the way, I was only able to do that because of the people in the Ways and Means team who sat around with all the information that I needed.

(Applause)

So I often called them the A-Team because I think they are. And that doesn't mean that the Program and Counsel crew is not the A-Team as well. But there's one for each section of the work that we have to do here.

I also want to commend Deb Miller who takes a lot of grief from a lot of people.

(Applause)

By the way, how do I know she takes a lot of grief from a lot of people? Because for one, I give her a lot of grief, and I know everybody else does as well. But thank you so much, Deborah, for the work that you do running around between here and your little office and the Speaker's office and making sure that everything is on target. It is on target. And as hard as it may seem, when we're in the middle of the debate we still are people who represent people. And we still are people who wanna do the best that we can for the folks that we represent. I feel some kind of way on a regular basis when at the national level my whole being is being reconsidered, whether I should even be here. Not just for a vote, but to have a job. I mean, people who look like me got put out of their job in the last couple of years just because they look like me. It hurts sometimes coming in here and hearing the debate that we have to go through when there's no regard for people like me who suffer what is going on at the national level. And -- and in my opinion, silence is complacency. And so if we're friends, let's be friends all the time. And let's be friends when we can get to the place where we can say to those other

folks who are in our party that are our friends, *You can't say that about my people. Even though they don't look like me, you can't say that about them. You have to be fair*. I think we always have to be fair. So I hope that we will move forward as people who don't think of ourselves as Italian or African-American or Irish or White or Black, but think of us as the people who God created. And the reason that He created us was for us so we can help other people. So if we excluding people and by not saying anything when DOGE goes in and puts 350,000 Black women out of a job out of D.C., we can't keep doing that. Don't be with me in here and then leave me with people who are abusing me in the public. That's all I ask.

(Applause)

That's all I ask.

So with that -- because I can't stand long and I do need to be able to walk to my office to start cleaning it out -- whoever takes this seat, whoever the Speaker assigns to be the next Majority Leader, I just want you to know I'm gonna be watching you.

(Laughter)

I'm gonna still be at his ready and at his defense and at his back. And so please know that. And I got friends, too. So I can send some other people to get you.

(Laughter)

So with that, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ra, colleagues, Mr. Barclay, who -- him and I came in at the same time. I think there's only two left, Fitzpatrick and Ramos. God bless you all. Stay safe

and stay healthy. Peace.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, do you have any further housekeeping or resolutions?

SPEAKER HEASTIE: We have none.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Awesome. I now move that Assembly stand adjourned until Saturday, June the 6th, tomorrow being a legislative day, and that we reconvene at the call of the Speaker.

Thank you.

SPEAKER HEASTIE: On --

(Applause)

On Mrs. Peoples-Stokes' motion -- to my friend and departing Majority Leader, I'd just like to say to you my sister, live long and prosper.

(Applause)

The House stands adjourned.

(Applause/cheers)

(Whereupon, at 8:17 p.m., the House stood adjourned until Saturday, June 6th, that being a legislative day, and to reconvene at the call of the Speaker.