

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022

11:18 A.M.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The House will come to order.

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

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was observed.)

Visitors are invited to join the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, Acting Speaker Aubry led visitors and members in the Pledge of Allegiance.)

A quorum being present, the Clerk will the Journal of Tuesday, February 15th.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Mr. Speaker, I move

that we dispense with the further reading of the Journal of Tuesday, February the 15th and ask that the same stand approved.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Without objection, so ordered.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you so much.

Colleagues and Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share this quote today. This one comes from James Baldwin. I will admit that I have learned more about James in his absence, as he is deceased, than I did when he was living. But these words I think are appropriate today, it is, *To accept one's past, one's history, is not the same as drowning in it; it is learning how to use it. An infinite [sic] past can never be used; it cracks and it crumbles under the pressures of life like clay in a season of drought.* Mr. Speaker, again, that is James Baldwin.

Colleagues should be aware, those that are in the Chambers, that there is a main Calendar on your desk as well as an A-Calendar. At this time, Mr. Speaker, if you could please advance the A-Calendar.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On Mrs. Peoples-Stokes' motion, the A-Calendar is advanced.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, sir. After any housekeeping, we're going to take up resolutions on page 3 and then we're going to follow, for the long-term, consent that we're going to start with Calendar No. 26 which is on page 8, and then we're going

to go to Calendar No. 104, that's on page 19. And then we're going to go back to continuing to consent where we left off on the main Calendar on yesterday. That starts with Calendar No. 238, that's on page 36. We're going to go right through to Calendar No. 266. There are a few debates that we'll be taking up on the floor today, Mr. Speaker, they are from the A-Calendar. It's Rules Report, that's No. 61, that's by myself, Crystal Peoples-Stokes; then there's Calendar No. 368 by Mr. Englebright; and Calendars 26 -- 369 and 372, both of these by -- are by Mr. Dinowitz; and Calendar No. 396 by Mr. Epstein.

That's the general outline where we're going to start at, Mr. Speaker, today. There could be things added on in addition, but right now if there's any housekeeping, it would be an appropriate time.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Certainly. We do have some housekeeping.

At the request of Ms. Paulin, Calendar No. 207, Bill A-6259-A is recommitted back to the Committee on Corporations.

We will go to our resolutions. Page 3, Assembly No. 568, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 568, Mr. -- Mr. Gottfried.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 7-14, 2022 as Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Week in the State of New York.

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

THE CLERK: Assembly Resolution No. 569, Mr. Blankenbush.

Legislative Resolution memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim February 20-26, 2022 as Grain Bin Safety Week in the State of New York.

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

Page 8, Calendar No. 26, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A00355-A, Calendar No. 26, Braunstein, Eichenstein, Taylor, Carroll, Reilly, González-Rojas, Sayegh. An act to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York and the Public Authorities Law, in relation to requiring notice to members of the Legislature and certain local officials relating to certain construction and other projects affecting such members' and officials' districts.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 355-A. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously

provided.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 19, Calendar No. 104, the Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A02375-C, Calendar No. 104, Dinowitz, Cook, Gunther, Sillitti, Galef, Montesano, McDonough, Jean-Pierre, Brown, Pheffer Amato, L. Rosenthal, Griffin, Fernandez, Smith, Jackson. An act to amend the Domestic Relations Law and the Executive Law, in relation to court ordered forensic evaluations involving child custody and visitation.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 2375-C. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Ms. Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to explain my vote. I'm very much in support of this particular bill. Forensic custody evaluations are extremely important within the family court system. Within the last month or so, we had a report come out from

the Blue Ribbon Commission that was tasked with looking at the issue of forensic custody evaluations, whether they should continue to be done at all and how they should be treated in the future. My own belief is that forensic custody evaluations need to continue to assist the court, but I also believe -- and -- and the Blue Ribbon Commission also concluded that it's very important that the individuals doing these evaluations are well trained and well versed in the subject matter that they're offering such an important opinion that's going to have such a lasting impact on the family.

So I do support the idea of professionalizing and making sure that the individuals preparing these reports are trained both in domestic violence issues, but also have the correct credentials in order to render the reports. So I do -- I know we have supported this bill in the past, as I do today. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you. Ms. Walsh in the affirmative.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.
(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Page 36, Calendar No. 238 on consent.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07310-A, Calendar No. 238, Cusick, Griffin, Ashby, Byrne, Tannousis. An act to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to adding substances to the schedules of controlled substances.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7310-A. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07326, Calendar No. 239, Gottfried, Brabenec, Cymbrowitz, Dickens, Englebright, Gallagher, Hevesi, McDonald, Montesano, Otis, Paulin, Simon, Taylor, Thiele, Zinerman, Lavine, Davila, Forrest, Fernandez, González-Rojas, Goodell, Seawright. An act to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to protecting the confidentiality of vaccine information.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7326. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07356-A, Calendar No. 240, Woerner, Abinanti, Walsh. An act to amend the Mental Hygiene Law, in relation to establishing a public awareness campaign to combat the stigma and stereotyping of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07369-A, Calendar No. 241, Gottfried, Lupardo, Ashby, Byrne, González-Rojas, Sayegh. An act to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to telehealth delivery of services by physical therapy and occupational therapy assistants, chiropractors and mental health practitioners.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7369-A. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Mr. Goodell.

MR. GOODELL: Thank you, sir. Please record my

colleague, Mr. Friend, in the negative on this bill. Thank you, sir.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: So noted, thank you.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07466, Calendar No. 242, Englebright, Colton, L. Rosenthal, Santabarbara, Gunther, Zebrowski, Cook, DiPietro, Galef, Griffin, Norris, Sillitti, Sayegh. An act to amend the Real Property Tax Law, in relation to granting municipalities the authority to provide real property tax exemptions for certain Cold War veterans.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7466. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07479, Calendar No. 243, Walker. An act to amend Part CCC of Chapter 55 of the Laws of 2019 amending the Election Law, relating to enacting the Voter Enfranchisement Modernization Act of 2019, in relation to the

effectiveness thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print A-7479. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07480, Calendar No. 244, Walker. An act to amend the Election Law, in relation to the representation of newly formed political parties.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07487, Calendar No. 245, Fall, Rozic. An act to amend the General Business Law, in relation to debt collection procedures related to identity theft.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7487. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the

Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07488-A, Calendar No. 246, J. D. Rivera, Dinowitz, Hevesi, Meeks, Mamdani, Seawright, Jackson, Galef, Gottfried, Fahy, McMahon, Clark, Simon, Peoples-Stokes, Cruz, Sayegh. An act to amend the Insurance Law, in relation to prohibiting the exclusion of coverage for losses or damages caused by exposure to lead-based paint.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07489, Calendar No. 247, Wallace, Zebrowski, Otis, Griffin, Sayegh. An act to amend the Executive Law, in relation to victim compensation for unlawful surveillance crimes.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7489. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07502, Calendar No. 248, Rajkumar, Zebrowski, Griffin, Brabenec. An act to amend the Executive Law, in relation to awards to victims of certain crimes.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07508, Calendar No. 249, Pheffer Amato, Pretlow. An act to amend the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, in relation to improvement of operation in thoroughbred racing.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7508. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07518, Calendar No. 250, Zinerman, Sayegh. An act to amend the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, in relation to quorum of the Council of the Arts.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7518. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07531, Calendar No. 251, Gunther. An act to amend the Education Law, in relation to allowing a suspending authority to condition the early return of a student on such student's voluntary participation in counseling or certain classes.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7531. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07541, Calendar No. 252, Otis, Abinanti, Burdick, Galef, Paulin, Rozic, Sayegh, Seawright,

Thiele, Zebrowski, Simon. An act to amend the Public Service Law, in relation to the contents of emergency response plans required to be submitted to the Public Service Commission by electric corporations.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07582-A, Calendar No. 253, Hevesi, Thiele, Davila, Kelles, Lupardo, Simon, Englebright, Magnarelli, Paulin, Fernandez, Griffin, Dinowitz, McDonald, Seawright, Lunsford, Gottfried, O'Donnell, Sillitti, González-Rojas, Glick. An act to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to certain families' access to child care assistance.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07595, Calendar No. 254, Otis, Jacobson. An act to amend the Labor Law, in relation to requiring copies of certain documents physically posted in a workplace to be made available to employees electronically.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07597, Calendar No. 255, Cahill. An act to repeal paragraph f of subdivision 6 of Section 6506 of the Education Law relating to supervision by the Board of Regents; to repeal subdivision 6 of Section 6524 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a physician; to repeal subdivision 6 of Section 6554 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a chiropractor; to repeal subdivision 6 of Section 6604 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a dentist; to repeal subdivision 6 of Section 6609 of the

Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a dental hygienist; to repeal subdivision 6 of Section 6704 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a veterinarian; to repeal subdivision 6 of Section 6711 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a veterinary technician; to repeal paragraph 6 of subdivision 1 of Section 6805 of the Education Law relating to the requirements for a license as a pharmacist; to repeal subdivision 6 of Section 6955 of the Education Law relating to the requirements for a license as a midwife; to repeal paragraph 6 of subdivision 1 of Section 7206 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a professional engineer; to repeal paragraph 6 of subdivision 1 of Section 7206-a of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a professional land surveyor; to repeal paragraph 6 of subdivision 1 of Section 7324 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a landscape architect; to repeal paragraph 6 of subdivision 1 of Section 7504 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a certified shorthand reporter; and to repeal subdivision 5 of Section 7804 of the Education Law relating to requirements for a license as a massage therapist, masseur, or a masseuse.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07599, Calendar No. 256, Darling, Magnarelli, Galef, Zinerman, Fahy. An act to amend the Vehicle and Traffic Law, in relation to the secondary enforcement of certain motor vehicle equipment violations.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07602, Calendar No. 257, Fahy. An act to repeal certain provisions of the Criminal Procedure Law relating to persons who are police officers.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7602. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07603, Calendar No. 258, Sillitti. An act to repeal certain provisions of the Criminal Procedure Law relating to persons who are police officers.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7603. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07605-A, Calendar No. 259, Barrett, Norris. An act to amend the Tax Law, the Executive Law, the Economic Development Law, the Public Officers Law, the Real Property Tax Law and the Military Law, in relation to expanding the definition of veteran to include members of the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the United States Public Health Service.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No A07606-A, Calendar No. 260, Barrett, Norris. An act to amend the General Construction Law, the Executive Law, the Election Law, the Military Law, the Insurance Law, the Private Housing Finance Law, the Public Officers Law, the Tax Law, the Economic Development Law, the Civil Service Law, and the Real Property Tax Law, in relation to including members of the Space Force as being members of the Armed Forces or veterans eligible for certain credits and benefits.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7606. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07611-A, Calendar No. 261, Kelles, Englebright, Thiele, Septimo, Burdick, Epstein, Otis, Griffin, Glick, Colton, Gottfried, L. Rosenthal. An act to amend the Public Authorities Law, in relation to proceeds from the auction or sale of carbon dioxide emission allowances.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07623, Calendar No. 262, Cusick. An act to amend the Criminal Procedure Law, in relation to defendant's right to a supporting deposition.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect November 1st.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7623. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07649, Calendar No. 263, Davila, Hevesi. An act to amend the Family Court Act, in

relation to expiration dates of orders of protection and the duration of temporary orders of protection in juvenile delinquency cases.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7649. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(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. A07661, Calendar No. 264, Hevesi, Thiele, Davila, Kelles, Lupardo, Englebright, Simon, Magnarelli, Dinowitz, Seawright, Gottfried, González-Rojas, Forrest, Byrnes. An act to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to providing that public welfare officials shall not be required to limit authorized child care services strictly based on the work, training, or educational schedule of the parents and making technical changes.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The bill is laid aside.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07673, Calendar No. 265, Burdick, Jacobson, Byrne, Otis, Sayegh. An act to amend the General Municipal Law, in relation to utilizing community preservation funds.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect on the 180th day.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7673. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

The bill is passed.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A07683, Calendar No. 266, Lavine, Walsh. An act to amend the Family Court Act, in relation to authorizing adjournments in contemplation of dismissal in family offense cases in family court.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

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

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Assembly print 7683. This is a fast roll call. Any member who wishes to be recorded in the negative is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the numbers previously provided.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

On the A-Calendar, Rules Report No. 61, the Clerk

will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. A09283, Rules Report No. 61, Peoples-Stokes, Lupardo, Gottfried, Bronson, Walker, Woerner. An act to amend the Agricultural and Markets Law and the Cannabis Law, in relation to providing a conditional adult-use cultivator license and a conditional adult-use processor license; and providing for the repeal of certain provisions upon the expiration thereof.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On a motion by Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

An explanation is requested, Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Of course, Mr. Speaker. This bill would create two temporary licenses that -- both of which will end June 2024. One is for cultivation and one is for processing, outdoor and greenhouse growing. The cannabis license applicant has to be someone who already is licensed in the State of New York to grow and cultivate cannabinoid hemp. In addition, the amount of cannabis grown under these licenses will be limited, but growers who apply for the license will be able to continue using it as long they apply for a regular license in the future for a permanent license. Because outdoor and greenhouse growing kind of starts in March, this is New York, there is some urgency to approve this now. Being that OCM is expected to issue regulations for regular cannabis licenses to dispensaries sometime before the end of the year, it would make sense

to have available products for them should they do that.

The bill specifics: Applicants would need to pass -- possess, rather, a valid industrial hemp growers issued license by the Department of Agriculture as of 12/31/2021 and have grown and harvested hemp for two out of the last four years. It would allow up to 20 artificial lights with Office of Cannabis Management authorized to allow additional lights should they be necessary. It permits to a minimal process and to distribute cannabis products, and it allows cultivation -- allows cultivation license to be valid until January 30th, 2024; however, the processing and distribution of cannabis products will only be valid -- will -- is only valid until June the 1st, 2023, at which time they will be required to apply for a separate regular processors and distributors license to continue the process of distribution.

Conditional adult-use processor license, applicant would need to have applied for a cannabinoid hemp processor license as of 12/31/2021. It also has -- allows for processing and distribution of this cannabis product, it allows to produce and extract only permitted to do so under their existing hemp processor licenses, and the license is valid, again, Mr. Speaker, until June the 30th, 2024. Conditional licensees will have the opportunity to apply for a regular license once regulations have been finalized by the Office of Cannabis Management. The Board will be required to report on such conditional cultivator and processor licenses by December the 1st of 2023 and again on January the 1st of 2024. All additional licensees

will be required to enter and maintain a labor peace agreement within six months of obtaining their license. All conditional licensees would be required to participate in an environmental sustainability program and in a social equity mentorship program.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Tague.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Madam Majority Leader please yield for some questions?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, of course I will.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The sponsor yields, sir.

MR. TAGUE: Thank you. Could you please explain the labor peace agreement, which is also known as a project labor agreement, that's in this plan?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Actually --

MR. TAGUE: I'm sorry.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I was going to say it's not the same as a project labor agreement.

MR. TAGUE: Well, we're going to agree to disagree on that one, Madam, but I --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay.

MR. TAGUE: -- I think it is. I'm somebody that's very familiar with project labor agreements, I worked with them for close to 25, 30 years, but anyways, I'd like to know if you could let us

know exactly what the -- a labor peace agreement is. And also, if you could define -- define what a bona fide labor organization is, please.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, first of all, let me just mention to you, Mr. Tague, that the labor peace agreement is something that was in the original Marihuana Tax and Regulation Act, so it is already in place.

MR. TAGUE: But the language is -- the language is different --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: But I would like to interrupt to just answer your question.

MR. TAGUE: Yup; yup, sure. Go ahead.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Anybody who gets access to a license in the State of New York, this is going to be a requirement because it's in the original piece of legislation. So this is not something new to this, this is just bringing clarity to the fact that it is still there.

MR. TAGUE: The only thing that I would argue is that the language in the original bill is different than the language that is in this one. And if I remember our discussion during the marihuana legislation, you and I had a wonderful, very respectful discussion and you kept using the word *distressed farmers*, and that this -- this plan was going to benefit distressed farmers. I really don't understand how that statement can be made if we are going to include labor peace agreements, how we are going to help distressed farmers.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, the way labor

peace agreements work, colleague, is that it simply says that should there be enough employees, in whatever business we're talking about, today we're actually talking about the farming business, that desires to organize themselves in the interest of their -- of their jobs, that the employer won't object. That's all it says.

MR. TAGUE: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: It doesn't say that they have to organize, it doesn't say that they will organize, it just says that the employer agrees that he won't object to them if they desire to do that.

MR. TAGUE: Okay. Well, I -- I read that differently than you, but could you also define for me what this bill means with regards to a bona fide labor organization? I don't know if I ever heard that term before.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, I guess you can describe it as an existing labor organization or a new organization that got started around the desire to organize people who work in that area. It could be, I guess an association that could be bona fide that works on farming issues and really knows how it could be the State Farmers Association that organizes in the interest of people who work on farmers -- on farms, so I don't think it's necessarily a union.

MR. TAGUE: It's not a union, is that what you said? I'm sorry.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I don't think it necessarily has to be that, I think it could be an organization that

works in the interest of the people who are employed.

MR. TAGUE: So Farm Bureau, if they were to decide to have an undertaking of a bona fide labor organization, they -- the Farm Bureau would qualify to represent these employers and their employees?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I think the Farm Bureau could actually do that if they were representing the workers as opposed to --

MR. TAGUE: I appreciate -- I appreciate the answers with that. Madam Majority Leader, can you please tell me, and I'm sure you may not have the answer to this, if you do it would be great, but I'm curious to know how many distressed farmers in our State hold a valid industrial hemp grower authorization that are in good standing with the Department of Agriculture.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, I want to say that there's about -- I would say anywhere between 200 and 400 people that may be considered that. There are at least that many or more who are already licensed to grow hemp.

MR. TAGUE: Now, would that number be consistent also for distressed farms that have harvested and grown hemp within the last two to four years?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. TAGUE: And could you also define exactly what environmental sustainability program, what it consists of and also the definition of the social equity membership program?

I would say if you want to start off with the environmental sustainability program, just wondering, you know, a brief definition of what that consists of.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So the Office of Cannabis Management is charged with coming up with the rules for how sustainability look, but if you understand the definition of the word, it means how are you going to sustain this as a business, how are you going to sustain it as a market, how are you going to sustain the product so there's always a good quality product that will meet whatever the needs are as it goes through the laboratory process. So it's sustainability of your business.

MR. TAGUE: Okay. I appreciate that. And lastly, the social equity membership program, and I did read through the bill and it looks like it has different requirements. But do we have people already in place that are qualified to go on the farm sites and teach people this program, or is this something -- because I'll be honest with you, looking through this, a lot of the regulations and requirements aren't even in place yet, so I'm kind of wondering how someone would be able to get qualified to do this if we don't have anything in place with regards to this program.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So the definition of social equity is in the law, and honestly the fact that distressed farmers is not in there, it was not in my definition, but it was in the definition of a lot of farmers in the State of New York who wanted to be included and so they are.

MR. TAGUE: Yeah, because I remember in our discussion back earlier, it kept being brought forth that this was going to be a great thing for distressed farmers, that word was used several, several times during the debate. So you know, that's why I'm using the word because that's what they were referred to as distressed farmers. It was said several times that this plan was going to help distressed farmers.

So I would lastly, how do we expect, and I'm going to use the term again, distressed family farms, to be able to comply with these requirements or to even begin to go in the business when we don't even have permit regulations, or we have what I'm going to call bad legislation like this which is going to put out bad precedent to promulgate these rules. I just, I don't understand how we can put the cart before the horse. Why would -- why would we bring legislation like this, so people can understand how they qualify after the regulations are in place.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So as you know when this law was passed in March 31st of last year, it would have been desirable if there had been a control board put in place prior to the new Governor coming in place, but that didn't happen. And so the control board that is in place have been doing a lot of work in looking at how things work for others states, as well as other countries, when they legalize and open dispensaries. And one of the biggest problems that they had when they did that is that they would open the doors for two weeks, two months, and then they would have to close because they

didn't have product. And so this is an attempt for New York to get ahead of that problem by using New York farmers.

MR. TAGUE: Well, Madam Majority Leader, I want to thank you as always for our little debate here. I'm going to speak on the bill, Mr. Speaker, but again, I want to say thank you, Madam Majority Leader, I always appreciate talking to you.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill, sir.

MR. TAGUE: I want to thank the sponsor, the Majority Leader, for answering my questions.

Mr. Speaker, while this bill is well-intentioned, it is not a good bill for distressed farmers. We were told time and time again last year while debating cannabis legislation that it was all about helping our distressed family farms, helping them diversify and give them opportunity in new areas of crop development. Just like the farm labor wage overtime issue, this bill does just the opposite. It actually hurts the people that it's intended to help.

This bill requires a PLA, which will devastate distressed family farms. Folks call it a labor peace agreement, but if it looks like a duck and it quacks like a duck, my friends, it's a duck. So a labor peace agreement is a project labor agreement. If you think for one minute there's a difference, you're awfully mistaken. My friends, the passage of this bill will set a bad precedent with long-term effects, the likes of which have never been seen before. It will destroy farms and agriculture in New York State forever.

I had asked several times in other debates with

regards to hemp and cannabis what this will do to benefit our farms. I was answered several times, this was going to be a big win for distressed farmers. Well, folks if you call this a big win, I would hate to see what you call a loss. I can't fathom how anyone could require that our family farms unionize to be able to grow and sell products in their home State of New York. This bill has special interest written all over it. What happened to my Democratic friends who prided themselves on standing up for the little folks, the hard-working blue-collared New Yorkers? Instead, you have chosen special interests and corporate farming over New York farm families. With all due respect, the folks pushing this bill don't know the first thing about farming or distressed farmers. You should be ashamed; in fact, the only thing these special interests have ever grown is a bloated State government. And the only thing they have ever milked are the taxpayers of the State of New York.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to stand up for our farmers, stand up for common sense and join me in voting no on this misguided legislation. Sir, no farms, no food. Stop fighting the hand that feeds us. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Friend.

MR. FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Madam Majority Leader, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The sponsor yields.

MR. FRIEND: Good afternoon. Could you tell me why the medical growers in our State were not considered to be participants in this process?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Could you repeat your question, sir?

MR. FRIEND: The current bill is only going to allow hemp growers to be part of the process, why not the medical growers that we currently have in our State being part of that process? Because part of growing medical marihuana -- well, growing marihuana, you're looking usually for specific strains of plants that you're going to need, and in most cases those are going to be cloned examples. And we already are growing medical marihuana in the State that could be cloned in conjunction with our hemp farmers who have the outdoor experience to grow that plant. I'm just wondering why the medical growers weren't allowed to be part of this process in the current bill.

(Pause)

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The Office of Cannabis Management has the authority to define terms including but not limited to greenhouse, immature plant and canopy as a part of the terms and conditions of adult-use cultivator license. If that's your question, that's the answer.

MR. FRIEND: So that would be for the official license, but these are for conditional licenses. Would they also be

able to do that for the conditional license we're currently putting forward in this bill?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That is -- I am reading from the conditional licensing legislation.

MR. FRIEND: Okay. And then, do you know how many hemp producers we currently have in this State?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That are in the hemp business? I don't have that number, but I want to say it's anywhere between -- (pause/sidebar) so it's about 2- to 400 of them who actually have a license, but those who have been growing for two years, that number is probably less.

MR. FRIEND: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: But there are significant numbers of people who have a hemp license in the State of New York. As you know, we legalized the growth of hemp in New York just right before the Federal government legalized it and so it has been an industry that people have been using in our State for a while.

MR. FRIEND: Correct, correct. And do you have current numbers for how much hemp --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Sir, if I can just correct that number, I just got this from the OCM, it's actually 100 to 200 hemp farmers.

MR. FRIEND: There are 100 to 200 producers?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Hemp farmers in the State of New York; yes, sir.

MR. FRIEND: Okay, and then there would probably be fewer that have the two to four years of experience then; is that correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. FRIEND: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: And by the way, they're organized in something called the New York State Growers Association.

MR. FRIEND: Okay. Would you know how much hemp may have been destroyed each year because it had a THC level that was too high?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: We don't have that number, but we do know that almost every retail spot you go into in New York, whether it's a supermarket or a drugstore, or corner store or bodega, you will find something that has CBD in it.

MR. FRIEND: Right, but right now we are going through and we have people that are regulating the industry just for hemp who have to go through and test the crops and they are finding that some of this hemp that is grown already has THC levels that are beyond what is allowed for -- for the hemp. And I think once we start doing that with the marihuana, we're going to have to expand yet even more people to go out and regulate to make sure that, again, the marihuana that's being produced is of the quality and the strain that they say they're producing.

I would like to go on. This bill, how many

conditional licenses will this allow for? So how many hemp producers will be shifting over to marihuana?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: In the legislation that's before us today, there's only two potential licenses, cultivation and processing.

MR. FRIEND: But how many -- how many people could participate in it? So of the 100, say that there's 100 to 200 hemp producers, let's say 50 of those actually have the two to four years of experience, how many of them do you think would this allow -- to shift?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Anywhere from 1- to 200. It depends on what the Office of Cannabis Management -- who they select.

MR. FRIEND: Okay. And then does this bill give any other security considerations for the growers?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The existing marihuana legislation provides for that and -- because it also set up the Office of Cannabis Management, they will be the people who would administer that security.

MR. FRIEND: Okay. So we're going to rely on the Office of Cannabis Management to make care of that. And then I have seen numerous calls for our poison centers that they've been going up since we passed the law, that people are calling the poison centers concerned about their kids having ingestibles and severe reactions to those ingestibles. Are we doing anything to take care of

that to make sure these ingestibles aren't getting into the hands of kids?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, I know -- I don't know how you -- once you make a product legal how you hold people -- and you don't put your regulations in place right away how you hold people down from not taking advantage of that, but I do know that the Office of Cannabis Management has recently sent out communication to several people who have already been gifting, or however they do this trade for this product, to let them know that it's illegal, you should stop doing it and, quite frankly, it would inhibit your potential to end up being a license holder if you continue to do so. So -- and I also know that a part of their requirement as an organization of management is to work with both the Health Department and the Agriculture Department to ensure that the right amounts of content is going into edibles and if they are edibles, they're not in packages that look like they're for children, and all the things that protect people is what we're looking to do with this legislation.

MR. FRIEND: Okay. Yeah, and I would definitely agree with doing more enforcement to protect our -- our kids from getting their hands on these ingestibles. Again, any time that you outlaw something, it always becomes more attractive and you put regulations on it, it becomes more attractive, but we need to get that message out there that, again, this is not appropriate for kids under 24 because it can affect the brain development, and 24 may not be that cutoff age, it may be older. So again, we need to do more about

promoting that, again, kids should not be ingesting articles that have THC in them and we need to do more on that.

But you go right into the gifting which is what I was going to talk about next. It's a big, big issue in my community. We have one seller who has seven locations across not only my district, but neighboring districts, three within my location. The sheriff and the DAs and Tioga County recently went ahead and raided three of those locations and they had police cars out on the street, they had police officers inside the building. And while they were there, they still had people coming in with cash in hand to buy stickers in hopes of receiving marihuana as they left the shop. That's pretty brazen I think to go ahead as an individual. So we haven't made that apparent to people that gifting is illegal. I realize that OCM has delivered this message, but we need to do something more. So does this bill address gifting and make more stringent penalties for those who are doing that?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Could you repeat your question? Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to ask folks who want me to respond to your questions to make them precise. If you make a statement, a long statement and then ask a question, then I kind of lost the question. So could you repeat the question, please?

MR. FRIEND: I definitely will. Does this bill that we're currently considering make more stringent laws for gifting to make it illegal?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: What this bill does is

providing for conditional licensing of people who already have a license to deal hemp, to grow hemp in the State of New York, and it will allow them to both cultivate and process adult-use cannabis.

MR. FRIEND: Okay. Thank you, Majority Leader --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You're welcome, sir.

MR. FRIEND: -- Peoples-Stokes, and I will go on the bill, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill, Mr. Friend.

MR. FRIEND: I believe that before we take up any more bills to allow more marijuana to be grown in the State, to give people an idea that marijuana is a drug that is just as benign as alcohol or tobacco smoke, which in my opinion, neither are benign. They both have serious health implications. For us before that we're considering making this even more acceptable use within our communities, we should be taking care of the issues that we already see. I realize that OCM has issued cease and desist orders to the people within the State who are operating gifting locations. It's not working. They're not ceasing and desisting, they're not closing down their shops. One location will make, in my community, \$6- to \$7,000 a day. I have that one business that has several locations across my community and neighboring Assembly districts. You add that up, \$100 fine, \$1,000 fine per day is not going to shut them down. And the fact that we're considering more legislation before we address that issue I think is the wrong approach. We should not be doing that.

Gifted is something that I have been asked about from my DAs, my sheriffs, since the summer. My local town supervisors have been asking about it and this bill does not address that issue. When they initially called the OCM this summer, those town supervisors, the DAs, the sheriffs called OCM this summer, they said that they were working on it and that it was illegal. But, yet, what's illegal about it? I mean, yeah, they can go in, they raid it, they take out some of the products. In this one case, across three locations, they found 50 pounds of marihuana. As they were leaving, they took another nine pounds off of a carrier bringing in marihuana to the location. They took \$24,000 in cash. They saw a check made out to an attorney in New Jersey for over \$54,000. This is a cash operation and, yet, this piece of legislation that we're addressing today is not making this less acceptable within New York. It's brought forward to say that we need to have a source ready to sell when we make this legal. I say there is no issue with source, we already have source for an illegal substance miraculously appearing under our doorstep in New York at this moment. We need to be addressing that illegal substance and how is it getting here now before it makes our communities even worse. And unfortunately, this bill is not doing that.

For those reasons, I cannot support making this a more acceptable use policy for product that is not benign and should not be -- we should not be telling our kids that this is an acceptable way to behave or to be tolerated in our State. I urge a no vote on this

bill before we address more serious issues on this -- on this -- on this drug. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Jensen.

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

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, Mr. Speaker, of course I will.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes yields, sir.

MR. JENSEN: Thank you, Madam Majority Leader. For industrial hemp farmers who will be applying or have applied for this conditional cultivator license, is there any mechanism in the -- in the legislation that would clarify where they're receiving their starting material from for moving to cannabis from hemp?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So you're asking if there is anything in this legislation that says where they will receive their product from?

MR. JENSEN: Their starting material.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I don't believe so, but I think it's up to the Office of Cannabis Management to make that determination.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: By the way, I have some suggestions for them if they ask.

MR. JENSEN: I'm sure. Sort of in that same vein, or strain, if you will, no pun intended -- well, pun intended, is there any mechanism in the legislation to ensure that by issuing these temporary licenses that we're not grandfathering in bad operators who may already have legal grow operations under their hemp license?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes. Yes, there is and because this is a conditional two-year license, it will be evaluated constantly during the course of that two years. And when there is an opportunity to apply for a permanent license, if you have had violations, it will not be available to you.

MR. JENSEN: So in that respect, has the Cannabis Control Board or Office of Cannabis Management established any regulations for the inspection process to ensure that once they receive these conditional licenses, that there are inspectors in place to ensure that there wasn't illegal operations taking place prior to the issuance of the temporary license?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: They have -- okay. Has the Cannabis Control Board finalized any regulations in relation to the actual cultivation operations? Will they be under code enforcement for agricultural production, commercial production, will that fall under State inspection or local county or municipality?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That's going to fall

under the inspections of the Office of Cannabis Management and not only are they working on the regulations, but they're feverishly hiring staff.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So if you look online, you will see a place for -- should you know people in your community that have any interest in doing this kind of work, they should apply.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. I think certainly I wouldn't be surprised if I get the same answer for the next couple questions, but with -- with both hemp and marihuana or cannabis being a human consumable product, is there any mechanism for third-party testing, especially if we're using commercial agricultural to ensure that there's not microbes or pesticides that are making their way into the -- the farm product?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, those are included in the original MRTA bill.

MR. JENSEN: Okay, okay. In the original legislation, there's a clause, and correct me if I'm incorrect in saying this, that OCM and CCB, they may have some regulations for seed-to-sale tracking. Is there any development that you're aware of that has now made this a mandatory provision of the regulations that are in place to ensure that we're keeping legally grown product off the black market?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, my understanding from the Board members and my understanding of the business is that

you absolutely must have a seed-to-seal tracking system in order to be able to maintain the legality of the business, as well as the quality of the product.

MR. JENSEN: Is there any update that you would be able to provide, the -- the status of if they've selected a vendor for that seed-to-sale tracking and not necessarily starting it from scratch?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: No, I can't but I can tell you I have talked to a number of people who would like to provide that service, but I can't tell you who they're selecting or who they're even thinking of selecting.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. You mentioned, I believe it was in your explanation or one of my colleagues, when talking about these conditional licenses are going to be issued before a lot of the other third-party processors. What are the cultivators going to do with the product, especially if it's an indoor grow operation that provides a quicker life cycle, what are they going to do with that product while they have it onsite before the other licenses are issued to process and make its way to the commercial point of sale?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So your question is what -- how is the Office of Cannabis Management going to monitor the grow process?

MR. JENSEN: No; no, ma'am.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The processing process?

MR. JENSEN: So I'm a hemp farmer, I've now got a conditional license to grow cannabis.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: I have an indoor grow facility that's abiding by the number of plants and lights.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: I farm, I harvest, I have -- I have marihuana, but I don't have a -- the next line in the commercial cycle. What am I doing with that product if there's nobody in my community that is licensed to yet to process and/or sell?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, the purpose for setting up these conditional licenses is that the Office of Cannabis Management fully intends to have, by the end of the year, I won't say the number of businesses because I'm not sure of that, but they anticipate opening dispensaries by the end of the year. And they want these farmers to prepare that product for them to put into those stores, both as a flower and as other products that are sold in dispensaries.

MR. JENSEN: So is the effective date of this legislation effective once the Governor signs it into law?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, so that they can be (inaudible).

MR. JENSEN: So I guess my question means that because you have, you know, we're in the middle of winter, an indoor grow cycle is quicker than an outdoor grow, obviously in New York. So one of the concerns I have if we have product sitting on a farm and I think Mr. -- or my earlier colleague brought the idea up of security. Is there anything that we're doing to ensure the security of the product

and the workers on that farm to ensure that we don't have product just sitting there while we wait for the next -- place in the supply chain?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Good question, and I think my understanding from communicating with the Board director -- Board -- Office of Cannabis Management is that when they select a person to get the license, they work through a time frame on when they need to have stuff available. We don't want you to go into a greenhouse and have everything ready by September because we're not going to have any stores open by then.

MR. JENSEN: Right.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So there will be a time frame that they will work within these -- both the farmers as well as the Office of Cannabis Management so that the two things meet -- when the dispensaries open, the product is ready.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The product is not ready before the dispensaries open.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: And they're the ones who have the capacity to work through both of those items, and I'm confident that they will.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. If I remember correctly back to last year and the debate on the original legislation, I believe some of my colleagues brought up because of the Federal nature of how it's treated, of marihuana being treated, one of the tougher needles to

thread was the question of the revenue, the dollars that are coming in and New York State receiving the tax dollars from this enterprise. Has there been any movement on how that will work, especially if we have farmers and processors getting conditional licenses and now potentially having to pay tax to New York State in advance of the full industry being 100 percent ready to go.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The tax issues are going to be effective April 1st.

MR. JENSEN: April 1st of this year?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: As it relates to this business.

MR. JENSEN: And is that through Office of Cannabis Management or the Cannabis Control Board, through regulation of their determining?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The New York State Tax Office, as well as the Office of Cannabis Management.

MR. JENSEN: Through Tax and Finance.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. JENSEN: Okay. Madam Majority Leader, I thank you for answering my questions, and thank you.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You're welcome, sir.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Lawler.

MR. LAWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the

sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes yields, sir.

MR. LAWLER: Thank you, Madam Majority Leader. I just want to start by clarifying from a previous debate with one of my colleagues, I believe I heard you say that an entity that gets a conditional license may enter into an agreement with a labor union but it was not necessarily required, and I just want to read Section 8 of the bill language and just get more clarification on that. So Section 8 says, "The Office shall set out specific terms and conditions setting out requirements necessary to be awarded and maintain a conditional adult-use cultivator license including, but not limited to the requirement that a licensee agrees to participate in an environmental sustainability program and a social equity mentorship program. Such mentorship program shall be directed to train individuals interested in becoming licensed cultivators and shall leverage remote and in-person mentees with experience in agriculture business management, sustainable cannabis cultivation and best practices. Candidates for the mentorship program must be at least 18 years of age, must be a New York State resident, and must be individuals that would be considered social equity applicants as defined by Section 87 of this article. The license terms and conditions set out by the Office shall include

requirements that a licensee enter into a labor peace agreement with a bona fide labor organization that is actively engaged in representing or attempting to represent the applicant's employees within six months of licensure, that the maintenance of such labor peace agreement shall be ongoing material condition of licensure and that licensee shall meet any other eligibility requirements established by the Office."

So I just wanted to get clarity. Are they required based on that reading to enter into a labor peace agreement with a bona fide organization, or is it something where they may do that?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: If they are selected as a licensee to cultivate or process on this conditional basis or on any basis under the original MRTA law, they should understand that there's a labor peace agreement in place. That means you can't wait until you get 100 employees and decide you don't want to be organized -- you don't want them organized. You've already accepted the fact that that could happen, not that it will, but that it could. And if it does, you won't oppose it. Basically what a labor peace agreement is.

MR. LAWLER: Okay. So labor peace agreement under your definition or under the bill's definition is simply stating that if the employees choose to organize, they will not oppose it under the conditional license, correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That's it.

MR. LAWLER: Okay, thank you for that clarity.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You're welcome.

MR. LAWLER: Currently today is any entity in the State of New York growing and/or selling recreational marihuana?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Ask that question again?

MR. LAWLER: I'm sorry. Currently today, as of this moment, is any organization or entity growing and/or selling recreational marihuana?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, according to an article to that I recently saw in the newspaper, there are some people that are gifting marihuana and whether or not they're purchasing that from somebody that grew it -- grow -- grew it in New York State, I don't know that because I didn't realize people were violating the law like that.

MR. LAWLER: And maybe I'll make it a finer point. Has the Office of Cannabis Management authorized any organization or entity at this moment the ability to grow or sell recreational marihuana in the State of New York?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The Office of Cannabis Management has not authorized anyone in the State of New York to grow adult-use cannabis.

MR. LAWLER: Okay, thank you. I heard the response to my colleague, but just to reiterate, this bill will take effect immediately upon the Governor's signature and allow the Office of Cannabis Management to move forward with issuing conditional licenses, correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Exactly.

MR. LAWLER: Okay. So immediately upon getting that conditional license, legally speaking, they could start growing once they got that conditional license.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, as long as they're working in conjunction with the Office of Cannabis Management and its investigators.

MR. LAWLER: Okay. Has -- at this moment, has the Office of Cannabis Management published or approved or authorized any regulations with respect to growing adult-use cannabis?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They have not.

MR. LAWLER: They have?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: If they have, it's not public.

MR. LAWLER: It's not public at this moment, okay. Last year when you and I debated the original bill, I specifically focused in on the issue of potency --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Potency.

MR. LAWLER: -- and I was focused on whether or not the Cannabis Board, Office of Cannabis Management and the Cannabis Control Board would put a cap on potency. And your response, what I'm going to read from the transcript, "I would defer to the Cannabis Control Board. I think they will be the right people in the right space. And why I say 18 months to two years is because that's actually how long it took every other state and/or country; in

fact, it took longer than two years for Canada to come up with a regulatory process, and so I believe it's going to take New York that much time at a minimum." Do you still believe it's going to take 18 months to two years at a minimum to come up with the regulations?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Some of them, but not all.

MR. LAWLER: Okay. What is the urgency if there are no published regulations at this point, if the Cannabis Control Board and the Office of Cannabis Management have not finalized their regulations, what is the real urgency in trying to rush the grow at this moment?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, there is a desire by the Office to have dispensaries opened by the end of the year so sometimes I guess it's just like for any business, you set goals for yourself and that's the goal that the Board has set for itself to be able to open dispensaries by the end of the year. And understanding that, you know you need to have a product that would be available to open a dispensary by the end of the year and in their mind, it made sense to try and engage New York farmers to create that product for them.

Now, on the other hand, these are people who have monitored and watched everything that's gone -- that's happened in every other state and every other country, as well, and so you learn lessons from that. And some of those lessons say it may take you longer than the 18 months, and some of those messages may -- lessons may say it takes you less time to do that. And so they figure out the

way to use less time, by the way, because they just got started this fall, although there were a team of people who were left on the Second Floor who negotiated the marihuana legislation in its original state that were still working on moving forward the agenda because the legislation had been approved, although there has -- there was not a Board in place until the new Governor came on board. And so I think it's commendable that they've moved things this fast, and I will not hold it against them that I projected it would take longer.

MR. LAWLER: To your knowledge, I know there are not regulations that have been published, to your knowledge has the Cannabis Control Board made any determination with respect to potency?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: To my knowledge, I don't know. I could not answer that.

MR. LAWLER: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: But it's a good question and I will ask the next time I see one of them.

MR. LAWLER: Thank you. My concern is that, because -- as of my understanding and public knowledge they have not made a determination on potency, if the product is grown now prior to a determination made on potency, what happens to that product if it is put into dispensaries against what a potential cap may be on potency?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So if the Governor signs this bill -- well, we pass the bill and then the Governor signs the bill, I

don't think that it's going to take eight months to figure out what the potency should look like. It has to take less time than that because they're asking the hemp farmers to put a seed in the ground in this grow season, so you need to know what the potency is before it happens, right. (Inaudible)

MR. LAWLER: I would -- I would agree with you, and --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, I don't have any real farming skills, but I think that you need to know that before you start farming the product.

MR. LAWLER: I would agree, and I would hope that before any seed is put into the ground that there are published regulations as to the potency of marihuana and --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I would hope so as well, sir.

MR. LAWLER: I -- I would hope that we can get that from the Cannabis Control Board should this bill take effect.

Okay. Madam Speaker -- Madam Majority Leader, thank you very much for your time and answering my questions.

On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: On the bill.

MR. LAWLER: Thank you. My biggest concern last year when we debated the original bill was with respect to potency. And the reason that I raised that concern was because potency back in 1995 was about 3.96 percent. In 2018 it was 15.61 percent. In

Colorado, some of the most popular strains had THC levels ranging from 17 to 28 percent, and in products such as edibles, THC potency was upwards of 95 percent. When I asked Madam Majority Leader about that last year, we were told that it would take 18 to 24 months to come up with those regulations and that the Cannabis Control Board would be making a determination on that. We have not seen such determination. It's only been ten months, roughly, since that bill took effect so as Madam Majority Leader pointed out, there's another eight months or more to go to try and come up with these regulations. And I'm concerned that we are unnecessarily rushing this grow to get product on the shelves before all of the regulations can be determined. And we haven't even touched on enforcement with respect to law enforcement and once the product is actually out on the streets and how we are going to address those concerns that were raised in a previous debate on this matter.

I would also note there's a great irony in the fact that just a little while ago, we passed a bill that relates to Schedule I and Schedule II drugs and adding a number of drugs to those lists classifying them as illegal. And it is ironic because when you talk to those who are in the trenches dealing with the opioid epidemic, dealing with the concerns of substance use disorders, nearly every one of them will tell you that marihuana is a gateway drug and marihuana plays a significant role in how people get to a point where they have a substance use disorder, especially when you're talking about heroin, fentanyl, and opioids.

And so at a time when on the one hand we are saying this is a problem and we need to address this by strengthening the law with respect to Schedule I and Schedule II drugs, yet on the other hand we're saying how fast can we get this product into the hands of people in New York State. And it is deeply concerning and I just -- I find it remarkable that we are trying to ensure that this product gets into the hands of New Yorkers before the regulations have even been set by the Cannabis Control Board and the Office of Cannabis Management.

So I strongly encourage all of my colleagues that we need to slow down, we need to let the Office of Cannabis Management do its work, get the regulations set, and then authorize people to grow. And I think that is an important distinction that we all need to take into consideration. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: Mr. Walczyk.

MR. WALCZYK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Would the sponsor yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, Madam Speaker, I will.

MR. WALCZYK: Wonderful to --

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: On the bill.

MR. WALCZYK: Thank you. Wonderful to converse with you today, appreciate your answers to many of my colleagues. To be eligible for and maintain a conditional license under this bill, you'll have to have a valid industrial hemp grower authorization form, be in good standing with the Department of

Agriculture and Markets as of December 31st, 2021. Was it -- what was the number of industrial hemp growers that would have the good standing and license in New York State?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: It's between 100 and 200.

MR. WALCZYK: Okay, between 100 and 200. And then additionally under this bill, you have to grow and harvest hemp for at least two of the past four years pursuant to that license and show proof thereof including how much hemp was produced. If that requirement is added in, what is that number reduced to?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I'm sorry, sir, if you could repeat that? I was trying to get the specific number of the hemp businesses that are licensed and eligible to get a conditional license, just so when the next time I'm asked I can say it specifically instead of between 100 and 200.

MR. WALCZYK: Okay, so the -- thank you. The follow-up question through you, Madam Speaker, would be how many of those 200 also have met the requirement of growing for the last two out of four years? So all 200. Then additionally, you have to have a 51 percent ownership interest under this bill. How many of those 200 growers have a 51 percent interest?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That I do not know. But they will all have to have it in order to get access to the conditional license.

MR. WALCZYK: Perhaps also under specifications

in this -- in this bill you can help me understand the numbers. It says, *Cultivation shall only be permitted within the same or adjacent county*. How many growers straddle adjacent counties, have farms on their adjacent counties? I'm just curious about the numbers on that.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I am actually not sure about that number, but that is something that I could ask through the Office of Cannabis Management or the Agriculture Department.

MR. WALCZYK: Through you, Madam Speaker, I wonder if you would tell me why that provision was included?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, the desire was -- is to allow as many New York farmers to have access to be an early grower as possible and not to set something up that will allow one person to go across multiple lines, in terms of counties, and leaving other people out. So in or -- in other words, share the wealth.

MR. WALCZYK: I notice there was another requirement here that cultivation can only occur outdoors or in a greenhouse which has no more than 20 artificial lights; is that correct? Is that in this bill?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. WALCZYK: How did we arrive at the numbers of 20 lights in a greenhouse?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, it's actually recommended by the Association of Growers and based on their understanding of environmental negative impacts should you use too many, and the opportunity for it to grow well if you don't use enough.

MR. WALCZYK: And of the 200 industrial hemp growers currently that would fall under this bill, how many of them are using less than 20 lights in a greenhouse, how many are using more than 20 lights in a greenhouse?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I cannot answer that either, sir.

MR. WALCZYK: And then finally, I saw a provision here that a licensee may cultivate up to 43,560 square feet of flowering canopy outdoors. That seems very specific and I was wondering if the sponsor could tell me why 43,560 square feet was chosen.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That is the number that they asked for, the Office of Cannabis Management, the amount of canopy that should be grown and I think that they think that would fit the needs of the number of dispensaries that they'd like to open.

MR. WALCZYK: Through you, Madam Speaker, I wondered with all of these specifications and qualifications in place, before we move on to the future requirements, how many of those 200 industrial hemp growers will be disqualified from moving forward under this with all of these in place?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I'm not sure how I'm able to answer that question, one, because they haven't been selected yet; two, because we don't know who's going to violate what; and three, because how can I tell that somebody is going to be excluded before they even got started.

MR. WALCZYK: I guess another way of asking, through you, Madam Speaker, would be how many -- how many growers are going to be excluded, how many current industrial hemp growers are going to be excluded based on their current business?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Sir, can I ask you why you think somebody is going to be excluded?

MR. WALCZYK: Well, I mean, I will yield to that question. Someone may perceivably have 21 lights in their greenhouse, which would exclude them.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Then they shouldn't apply.

MR. WALCZYK: I'm sorry?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Then maybe they shouldn't apply if they're not eligible for what is laid out in the legislation. And this is a conversation that will go on between them and the Office of Cannabis Management. If you meet the requirements of the law, then you can apply.

MR. WALCZYK: I would agree, Madam -- Madam Speaker, I'll go on the bill. Thank you. Thank you for --

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: On the bill.

MR. WALCZYK: -- the answers. I would agree they probably wouldn't apply if they don't meet a lot of these qualifications.

So we voted on the Taxation and Regulation Act for this emerging business and it's becoming to look a little bit more like some crony capitalism that we've seen in the past in New York State

paired with some special interests and wired for some very specific individuals. We've seen what happens when, in the Legislature or driven by the Executive, or whether it's a management board, language comes in that, you know, is really drilled down to be very specific for some individuals, or some individuals who are looking for a competitive edge in an industry, especially a new one.

So a new industry, here's how we welcome you to New York. You are welcome to New York if you have a 51 -- specifically 51 percent interest in your new company, have grown for two out of the last four years, have already licensed in a retroactive date back to last year, you straddle two counties, you have less than 20 lights in your greenhouse, and your farm is very specifically 43,560 square feet, plus there's a bunch of new rules that nobody in agriculture has had to follow at any point in New York's history that you will then have to follow. And, Madam Speaker, I would laugh at the strangulation that this Body is bringing this new industry if it didn't set such a dangerous precedent for New York State farmers.

So for the farmers past, for the farmers present, and for the farmers future in New York State, I will be voting no and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: Mr. Lemondes.

MR. LEMONDES: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Will the sponsor yield?

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: Will the sponsor yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, of course I will.

MR. LEMONDES: Thank you Madam Majority Leader. I appreciate your yielding. Would you agree that PLA's raise the cost to do business?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Project labor agreements?

MR. LEMONDES: Yes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, but there -- this legislation that we speak of today does not have a PLA agreement attached to it.

MR. LEMONDES: We disagree on that, but that's okay, thank you.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay.

MR. LEMONDES: Would you agree that every acre taken out of food production will ultimately result in higher food and feed prices?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Would I agree that -- say the question again?

MR. LEMONDES: Every acre taken out of food production will ultimately result in less food being available.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I guess I could agree with that analogy, but I could also agree with the point that some people are not producing farm or -- food or anything else on their farms and would like an opportunity to be engaged in a business that allows them to help send their kids to college.

MR. LEMONDES: I couldn't agree more, I agree with farmers having the opportunity and choice to grow what they want. It was just simply a question with respect to loss of land allocated to food when coupled with the CLCPA initiatives to put massive solar farms and solar rays all over our farmland. So there's less and less land available for food production.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay. Well, I do know that New York's -- one of our largest industries is agriculture. I would hope that doesn't change because if there's no farm to produce some food, there is no food. So I don't think that this legislation is intended to diminish that, and I don't think that the CLC [sic] legislation is intended to diminish the language that's necessary for farming.

MR. LEMONDES: I don't think it's intended to either, but it will. Every acre taken out of food production, regardless of what the reason is, development or allocation to other things, will result in less land available for food and feed production. Thank you for answering my questions, though, I really appreciate it.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You're welcome, sir.

MR. LEMONDES: Madam Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: On the bill.

MR. LEMONDES: Thank you. This disastrous legislation is like so many others recently voted into existence to great detriment of our State, its people, our businesses, and it's a disingenuous attempt to hijack agriculture at the individual farm level, and will act as an additional forcing function to shudder our farms.

Let's not forget, farms are price takers not price makers. And in the Farm Labor Wage Board ruling, if implemented, and the minimum wage increases just by themselves will raise cost on New York State farms 42 percent. I hope this is recognized as bad. And then, we're coupled with additional labor challenges. More harm will ensue.

So I'll end that piece with a question, what happens when you jeopardize our food base? I urge you to take this seriously as every acre taken out of food production does inevitably make it harder to sustain our food base. I wouldn't want to be responsible for doing something so shortsightedly detrimental to our existence. And I think we can agree, we all eat three times per day, but how many connect the dots with where that food comes from and who produces it. I vote no and urge all colleagues to do so because of the PLA attachment to this bill. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: Mr. Brown.

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

ACTING SPEAKER RAJKUMAR: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, Madam Speaker, I will yield.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Majority Leader. How are you?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I'm doing very well, thank you, sir. Thank you for asking.

MR. BROWN: May I ask what prompted this legislation?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The Office of Cannabis Management.

MR. BROWN: Okay. And what about the Office of Cannabis Management, did they come to you and ask you if you could add this legislation to --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, through -- via Senator Hinchey.

MR. BROWN: And I'm just curious about some of the sections of the law, one of them in particular, Section 3-a which talks about the quantity of artificial lights, sets limits on the amount of square footage that can be used for both canopies and in-house growing. Where did these designations come from?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Sir, I can tell you that in the original composition of this legislation, there was no mention of lights.

MR. BROWN: But specifically, there's --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: But now it's there because the Office of Cannabis Management as well as the New York Hemp Growers Association said it was something that was needed. As they are going to be the ones growing the product, it makes sense to listen to them.

MR. BROWN: So was the parameters that were placed on it designed to keep cultivation to a minimum for hemp

growing?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, it provides an advantage in the growth process.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Then certainly you're aware that in states of legalized marihuana, cultivation and smoking, that there's a lot of illegal production that happens, correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yeah, actually there's a lot of illegal production that probably happens in New York State or else otherwise how do we get these articles that were in the paper today? Yes.

MR. BROWN: Any portion of this bill, does it talk about, or the prior bill, the MRTA that we passed and we discussed last year, does any of the tax revenue generated go towards the enforcement of legal cultivation in the State?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Do we know how much --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The original legislation.

MR. BROWN: Do we know how much percentage-wise what it was?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I don't know what a number is, but I will say it's 20 percent of whatever the revenues that are collected.

MR. BROWN: And is there anything specific in this year's budget that talks about enforcement, money for enforcement of illegal cultivation of marihuana?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I'm not sure I can purview the part of the budget that deals with security, homeland security or police departments.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Well, certainly you know that, since you're very well-versed, we talked about this bill Assembly District nauseam last year. In terms of the illegal production, you're aware of the environmental, the drastic environmental impacts that marihuana production has on the environment, correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Aware of the impact that marihuana has on what?

MR. BROWN: On the environment.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: On the environment?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Actually I'm not aware of that, sir.

MR. BROWN: Okay. So if I may --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Sure.

MR. BROWN: -- I would like to just read a portion of an article that was in a California newspaper last year just to point out to my colleagues that may not be aware.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Madam Speaker, if I could ask the colleague who asked me to yield if he wants to go on the bill or would he still like me to yield?

MR. BROWN: Madam Speaker, I would like her to yield, please.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay, well I'm willing to yield if I have an opportunity to respond to a question.

MR. BROWN: I will ask a question.

It says, "Four years after we became legal in California for adult recreational use, State law enforcement officials have doubled the amount of illicit marihuana plants seized and eradicated in an annual campaign. California Attorney General on Monday announced that the campaign against marihuana planting program, also known as CAMP, has eradicated nearly 1.2 million illegally cultivated cannabis plants this year alone, that's 2021. That's up from 600,000 plants seized in 2018, the first year that marihuana was legal in California, and that the CAMP program has increased in terms of the amount of spending that the State has to do with respect to policing illicit marihuana cultivation."

So I ask you, Madam Majority Leader, with respect, don't you think we're putting the cart before the horse where we're pushing, and I agree with my colleagues, we're rushing to get weed on the counters for people to smoke in this State, but are we really looking at the impacts overall of legalization of marihuana in New York?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Sir, I do not agree with your position today; I did not agree with your position March 31st of last year, either.

MR. BROWN: So how are we going to police the illegal cultivation of marihuana under this law that's before us right

now that limits cultivation to 20 artificial plants [sic] and 43,000-some-odd square feet of flowering canopy and additional square footage, 20,000 for other growing. Who is going to police it? The DEC? The Cannabis Control Board, the State Police? How are we going to do that?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The Office of Cannabis Management.

MR. BROWN: They have police powers under New York State law? Do they have police powers under New York State law?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, sir; in fact they are, at this moment, are investigators. You can go on their website if you're interested or know someone who is interested in applying.

MR. BROWN: And I know we don't have rules and regulations set forth by the Office of Cannabis Management yet, but have you heard whether or not they're even in draft form at this point, because I know that the appointments were just made a short while ago.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I fully expect the regs will be out momentarily. I'm sure it's not as fast as you -- we would all like to see them. By the way, the Board wasn't in place as fast as I would have liked to see it, but I think that they are making progress and I think this legislation before us today is the right way to go and I think we should move forward with it.

MR. BROWN: And just as a side, how does this law

dovetail with the Federal law which contradicts New York State law with respect to marihuana?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: What was your question again, sir?

MR. BROWN: How does the law we're discussing today dovetail with Federal law when it's with respect --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Actually it doesn't, because as you know at the Federal level of government, marihuana is still -- adult-use is still considered a Schedule I drug. Hemp is not, adult-use is, but there are people in our State, farmers who have been growing hemp for the last two years, some of them have had a license for at least the last four years and as a result, their experience and expertise in the ability to grow this level of the plant, they're going to be offered an opportunity for a conditional license to grow adult-use.

MR. BROWN: So does this law in any way -- my colleague before asked about potency levels, so I don't need to cover that, but how about underage vaping and smoking of marihuana. Does this law address the increase that's going to be felt after --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: It's still illegal for underage use of this product. You must be 21 years of age and older.

MR. BROWN: And does any portion of this bill deal with an increase in minors smoking pot that was seen in Colorado and California when marihuana was legalized?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, your research shows you that the young -- youth adult increased under states that

legalized, my research says just the opposite.

MR. BROWN: Well, Madam Majority Leader, with all due respect, we are not the first state in the Union to legalize marihuana, correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You can answer that yourself.

MR. BROWN: So why don't we look to other states for comparative analysis and learn the lessons that they have learned so far? There was a whole group of State legislators in Colorado that went -- went as far as voted for legalization of marihuana only to later on reverse course and realize that we had to regulate legalized marihuana because the effect it was having on our young people and our motorists. Why aren't we doing that as part of this legislation, or the MRTA?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: By the way sir, maybe I didn't hear some of the things you said earlier, but you really don't have to yell. I will say that the Office of Cannabis Management, as well as many people in the State of New York, have researched this product for a long time, have seen what has happened in some other states. And the numbers of young people increasing their usage that you keep insisting happened, we do not see the same data. The number of traffic accidents that you are concerned is going to happen, no one else sees all of this data that says that.

And so on one hand, there are people who agree and on the other hand, there are people who disagree.

MR. BROWN: No, this is --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: And at the end of the day --

MR. BROWN: This is, with all due respect --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: -- this is the same argument we had last year when the marihuana law was passed.

MR. BROWN: Madam Majority Leader --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Now they're asking to implement the law that was passed and we're having a repeated argument again. But I'm still willing to answer any question that you may have. I don't want to be lectured, but I will answer a question if you have one.

MR. BROWN: And I don't mean to lecture, I'm simply pointing out the facts that we know statistically from other states what has been the effect of legalization. You look no further than the Rocky Mountain Study that was done in Colorado last year. You look no further than the NTSB statistics on fatal accidents caused by marihuana usage. So are you -- are you telling the members of this House today that the other states that have legalized have not seen a spike in minors using or in motor vehicle accidents or fatalities due to marihuana use?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Not in the research that I've seen, sir.

MR. BROWN: Okay. What about any potential increase in children that develop marihuana use disorder with the

legalization of marihuana? Is there any -- I asked at the budget hearing the other day for Mental Hygiene whether there was any money put aside in the budget for any increases in minors using marihuana and developing marihuana use disorder.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I have not seen that research item, sir.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I've seen just the opposite.

MR. BROWN: So out of the \$350 million that is potentially going to come from tax revenue developed by the sales of marihuana, there -- is there any portion that's there to protect young people who are suffering from mental illness as a result of marihuana use disorder?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, there is.

MR. BROWN: And what percentage is that?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Twenty percent -- actually, 40 percent I think.

MR. BROWN: So just with respect to paragraph 8 which some of my colleagues pointed out, the language was read and I -- I read the language a little differently and interpret it a little differently because it -- the word "shall" include requirements for the licensure to enter into the labor peace agreement. And do I understand -- with your interpretation, "shall" means they may or may not as opposed to "shall" meaning must do so?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, before you answer that question.

Ms. Solages, why do you rise?

MS. SOLAGES: Is this -- is this topic germane to the bill-at-chief [sic]?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Say it again. I'm sorry.

MS. SOLAGES: Because we're not debating the MRTA, we're debating this piece of legislation before the House.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: I don't understand.

MS. SOLAGES: Is the questioning at hand germane this bill-at-chief [sic] because this -- it's not germane to the topic of the bill-at-chief [sic]?

MR. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I'm asking a question of paragraph 8 of the piece of legislation that's before the House right at this moment.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: It appears that it is relevant to the --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: (Inaudible) I don't have them.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: I appreciate that. You've stopped the comment.

Why don't you repeat that question --

MR. BROWN: Sure.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: -- and then give the

Majority Leader time to answer. I did notice watching you guys on the screen that there's a little bit too much cut back and forth. Let's extend the question, allow an answer and again extend a question.

Thank you.

MR. BROWN: Section 69-a, subparagraph 8 includes language that says, *shall include requirements that a licensee enter into a labor peace agreement*. And your answer to my colleague was that "shall" means may or may not. Do I understand that correctly --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: No, sir.

MR. BROWN: -- as opposed to "shall" meaning "must."

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: No, sir. That's not what I said. What I said if the person who applies for this license understands that there will be a labor peace agreement here, there will be a labor peace agreement. Now, that person should also understand that should they decide sometime in the future that the workers want to organize, they're not in a position where they can stop them because they agreed that there's peace around labor issues. That's all that this is saying.

MR. BROWN: Okay. The record is clear.

On the bill, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill, sir.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I -- I'm very concerned about this legislation put before the House and that we're about to vote

on. I -- I feel that, once again, we're -- we're rushing to put weed on the shelves without proper regulatory framework to protect our kids, our motorists and the growers because of the -- the increase that we're going to see. And we know that these increases are coming because we don't have to look no further than the other states that have legalized marihuana in the United States of America. I don't understand how we can sit here and not do a comparative analysis and lookback. I've done it myself by reading the studies, looking at the statistics and -- and seeing what the impacts have been in other states and talking to the experts. Yet here we are, we're debating a bill that's going to open and PAVE the way for conditional licenses for people to cultivate which will -- and by April. Two months from now. And yet at the same time we're not doing anything relative to protecting the people that I already described.

And for those reasons and many, many more, I urge my colleagues to vote no on this piece of legislation until we do things the right way in this State. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, sir.

Ms. Byrnes.

MS. BYRNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could be heard on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: You certainly may be heard on the bill, Ms. Byrnes. And Mrs. Peoples-Stokes --

MS. BYRNES: Well --

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: And Mrs.

Peoples-Stokes is gracious of you.

MS. BYRNES: I was going to say, we'll save you on this one, ma'am.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: It would be my pleasure, ma'am.

MS. BYRNES: On the bill, sir.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill.

MS. BYRNES: All right. This bill, which basically is expediting the temporary licensure to sell marihuana, you know, I look at it and it seems at this point like there's inappropriate regulations in place. I've listened to all of the arguments that were raised by everybody here this afternoon, and I think it boils down to exactly what we were told on the floor. The purpose of this bill is -- the express purpose is to get a crop growing to open sales by the end of the year. The purpose is to collect tax money. The State just wants money. This bill prioritizes money over people. It ignores the environmental concerns that have been discussed. It ignores the public safety concerns that have been discussed. And just or more importantly, it ignores and pushes away farmers who may have wanted to grow this crop in the future because it prioritizes current hemp growers and it creates a new burden of labor agreements being mandated and required.

In my humble opinion these priorities are wrong and I'm voting no.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, Ms.

Byrnes.

Mr. Reilly.

MR. REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question I had, the Majority Leader answered prior so she won't have to yield. I'd like to go on the bill please, Mr. Speaker.

Looking at this, all I keep thinking about is we're always rushing to be first, as I often say in this Chamber, and we fail to be the best. You know, the question that was asked that was answered had to do about the Office of Cannabis Management, if the rules were in place and where we are if they're not, how long until they're in place. And prior conversation indicated that we don't know. Well, that's the problem here. We don't have the regulations in place that can stop the black market sales on the street, the public safety aspect, because this stuff is going to be grown. And if you don't think it's going to be make it to the streets illegally, I have a bridge to sell you. Seventeen percent of New York City shooting victims are related to drugs. Twenty percent of New York City homicides by shooting are related to drugs. These are the stats. This is the data. And that is people. Those victims of those incidents are our neighbors, are our friends, are our loved ones. All I ask is that we slow down and we get it right. Let's stop rushing to be the first and let's truly be the best.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Manktelow.

MR. MANKTELOW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the Madam Floor Leader yield for a couple of questions, please?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Of course I will, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes yields, sir.

MR. MANKTELOW: Good afternoon, Madam Floor Leader.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Hi.

MR. MANKTELOW: Just a few questions. I -- I want to follow up on a couple of them that was asked by my colleagues earlier.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay.

MR. MANKTELOW: First of all, is this -- would this be considered a pilot program just doing it for two more years? Is that -- is that --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Would it be considered what?

MR. MANKTELOW: Would this be considered a pilot program? You know, we're just going to do this for two years?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: It's conditional licensing.

MR. MANKTELOW: So, at -- at the end of that two years if I was to do it I could extend that possibly?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I wouldn't consider it a pilot. We've already made to the people of the State of New York to them that we were going to set up this process. That is just the start of it.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. I was just wondering how -- how we came up with two years. Do you know how that happened by any chance?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: How it came up? Well, last March the 31st we passed legislation that would allow marihuana to be sold, tax and regulated in the State of New York. There was a control board put in place when Kathy Hochul was sworn in as Governor back in the fall of this year, and that control board, along with the previous legal counsel that was working with the previous Governor, began to work previously on putting some things together to start the initiative and this is what they came up with.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. I appreciate that -- that answer. Earlier, one of my colleagues had also asked, you know, how many hemp growers there are right now and I believe you said 1- to 200 and you still --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yeah.

MR. MANKTELOW: That's the right number?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: In that -- that area.

MR. MANKTELOW: So -- so one of the questions I

was -- that came to my mind when I heard that question asked was, I know in this Chamber we talk about groups and minorities all the time, Black and Brown communities, young farmers, people with disadvantages, disadvantaged farmers. Of those 100 to 200 growers, how many of those are people of color or low-income farmers? Do we know any of that?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, I do know that there is an organization of Black farmers in the State of New York that has about 200 people in it. Whether or not any of them are hemp farmers, I don't know that.

MR. MANKTELOW: Do -- do you know if any of them are already hemp growers by any chance?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Do I know if any farmers --

MR. MANKTELOW: Do you know if any of those members are already hemp growers?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I'll repeat it. I do know that there is an organization of Black farmers in the State New York, somewhere around 200 of them or so. Of that number I have no idea how many of them actually grow hemp.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. I appreciate that answer. The reason I was going in that direction was, you know, this really is very defined to having done production, hemp production, two years prior. Two to four years prior I believe the bill says. And so how would we get these new farmers involved into this if they're

not already hemp growers? How do we get those -- those individuals involved into this?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, the folks who end up with the conditional license, the two-year conditional license, they are going to be required to do mentorships so they can maybe work with people who never farmed in their life that have the interest in one day being a cultivator. Or they work with people who are farming today and have an interest in wanting to cultivate hemp and/or adult-use marihuana. Or they can maybe work with people -- young people who have an interest in learning how --

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: -- to (inaudible) this product.

MR. MANKTELOW: So -- so maybe one thing I could do is reach out to the group of -- the organization we just talked about a little bit ago, the Black farmer organization. You know, I think it's important to give everybody a chance to -- to do this, and I think we as New Yorkers would be better to do so. And I'm not just talking Black and Brown communities, I'm talking about all communities, whether -- no matter what color you are. It doesn't really matter to me, it's just we need to help young people, new farmers move into this.

So, I want the other question --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: (Inaudible), sir. I -- I appreciate your support.

MR. MANKTELOW: Oh, absolutely. I -- I'm glad to support you in that. Not -- not just you, all of us. Absolutely. And one of the blessings I have is I'm colorblind, so I don't see the colors everybody else sees. So that's a blessing.

Another quick question. Earlier one of my colleagues had asked about the 43,560 square food. Do you know how big of an area that is?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Can you say that again?

MR. MANKTELOW: I'm sorry. Earlier my colleague had asked how did you come up with the number 43,560 square food? That -- that's an acre.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: It's an acre, sir. I mean, I -- I don't know how they came up with the number for an acre, but they came up with an acre.

MR. MANKTELOW: Who is "they"?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Excuse me?

MR. MANKTELOW: Who is "they"?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The Office of Cannabis Management.

MR. MANKTELOW: They came up with that?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The Office of Cannabis Management.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. Thank you. And -- and I'm assuming also they came up with the -- the 25,000 square-foot indoor greenhouse as well?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. MANKTELOW: So one of my other concerns, and maybe you can help me with this as well. I did the numbers. I looked into a greenhouse. To -- to build a greenhouse house, a 25,000 square-foot greenhouse it's going to cost somebody about \$625,000 of an investment. My concern is, how would a grower do that if they're not sure that they can do it for more than just two years?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I think greenhouses may be included because they already have them. They're hemp growers, they've been growing for a while.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. Well, I -- I know several hemp growers in my area and I actually talked with one of them this morning on the phone. And that one hemp grower grew hemp for two years and is now not growing it this year just because he could not make any money doing it. And he's a professional farmer, they work a lot of acres and they tried this. My concern is, how are we going to get these individuals to do what we want them to do? If -- if my farmer that I talked with this morning couldn't do it -- and I consider him one of the best farmers I know -- how are we going to get these other farmers to do this? Because one acre is not a lot of property. And when you -- when you're talking about investments like this, we need to let it be bigger. If we truly want to get the stuff to market quickly, then let's let our farmers do what they do best and grow. Let's -- let's not keep it down to -- to one acre. And maybe that's the conversation I need to have with the -- with the group that

came up with the 43,000.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Is that a question?

MR. MANKTELOW: I'm sorry?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Is -- was that a question?

MR. MANKTELOW: Kind of, sort of, not really. How does that sound?

(Laughter)

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay, well.

MR. MANKTELOW: It started as one but it kind of went the other way.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Do you want to go on the bill, sir?

(Laughter)

MR. MANKTELOW: So I -- I apologize. I apologize for that. Sometimes my mind just goes and goes. And I'm a farmer and I -- I love growing --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, even though it wasn't a question, I will say business is a risk. And everybody who went into the hemp business is not already still in. And by the way, everybody who went into the restaurant business is not in either. So, I mean, you take a chance and go in and some people are successful and others are not.

MR. MANKTELOW: All right. I -- I appreciate those answers. And again, just like my colleague had asked about the

light bulbs and who came up with 20 of them, I -- I was just wondering where those numbers came from, how they got to 20 -- to 20 light bulbs or 20 fixtures.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That was a recommendation from the Hemp Growers Association.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. In my district I have a -- a five-acre greenhouse that grows tomatoes all the time, and 20 -- 20 lights aren't going to do it. It was just a -- a clarification.

So, Madam Speaker, I appreciate you bringing this --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Is this the gent -- is this the farmer that's no longer in hemp business?

MR. MANKTELOW: I'm sorry?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Is this the farmer that's no longer in the hemp business?

MR. MANKTELOW: Oh, no. He's a corn farmer like me, so --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Oh, okay.

MR. MANKTELOW: But.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: This -- this is a conditional license for two years.

MR. MANKTELOW: Mm-hmm.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: And most people understand that New York is the largest underground market of marihuana not just in the country, but in the world. And so if you're talking about a conditional two-year license that could maybe set up a

100 or so dispensaries, look at what the capacity has left that are -- that's an opportunity for the guy who's not -- no longer in business, for those who may choose to be in business, including some of the farmers that you mentioned that you'd like to see engaged. So I think this -- this is not a begin -- the end of opportunities for people, this is the beginning of opportunities for folks. And so I hope we will begin to see it as what it is, is we're starting something that we passed last year around this time.

MR. MANKTELOW: Okay. I -- I appreciate you taking the time to answer my questions, Madam Floor Leader.

Mr. Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill, sir.

MR. MANKTELOW: Thank you, sir. I just want to again reiterate that my concern with this bill is if we're going to -- if we're going to do this, much like my colleague said just a little while ago, if -- if we're going to lead and we're going to do it right, let's do it right. And we have a lot of experts that we talk to all the time. But we have a lot of farmers that are experts as well. They know how to grow things, they know how to harvest, they know how to make money and know how to make things work. Let's rely on them to do to the legwork. Let's rely on them to come up with the process and ways of making it work, and let's keep us out of their business.

So I -- I'm going to plan on meeting with this group, Mr. Speaker, who set up all these guidelines. And again, I just -- I'm concerned about the cost in the short-term -- the long-term cost for a

short-term commitment of two years. So, if we could change that and get that part out of it and just let our farmers be farmers, I could support this. But until we make that change I can't. But again, thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker. Madam Floor Leader, thank you for your answers as well. And I -- I will be voting no.

Thank you, sir.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, sir.

Ms. Woerner.

MS. WOERNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the sponsor yield for a few questions?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, of course, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The sponsor yields.

MS. WOERNER: Thank you, Madam Majority Leader. So, am I correct in saying that this bill allows hemp farmers who have made an investment in learning how to grow a hemp crop to give them access to an early market for can -- for adult use cannabis if they switch from a -- from growing the hemp varietal to the cannabis varietal?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes. Yes, it does.

MS. WOERNER: So that would take the risk out of making that shift; is that correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MS. WOERNER: Thank you very much. I would assume that that would be a great benefit to those farmers.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I would think it would be a benefit to them as well.

MS. WOERNER: Yes. So I want -- I want to delve into this question of labor peace agreements. So, the original MRTA legislation defined labor peace agreement; is that correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes. The original marihuana bill had an agreement for a labor peace agreement in it contained in the law.

MS. WOERNER: Terrific. And so am I correct in reading this that it means an agreement between an entity and a labor organization that at a minimum protects the State's proprietary interests by prohibiting labor organizations and its members from engaging in picketing, work stoppage, boycotts and any other economic interference with the entity -- and by entity they mean the farm; is that correct?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That's right. That's right.

MS. WOERNER: Great. And -- and so I just want to distinguish that with -- with project labor agreements which are defined in Labor Law. It's because they're different. Yes?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, they are different.

MS. WOERNER: Okay. So, project labor

agreements, if you'll -- if you don't mind, are defined as pre-hire collective bargaining agreement between a contractor and a bona fide building and construction trade labor organization establishing the labor organization as the collective bargaining representative for all persons who will perform work on a public work project and which provides the -- that only contractors and subcontractors who sign this agreement with the labor organization can perform such work. Are these -- are these marihuana farms defined as project -- as public work projects?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They are not.

MS. WOERNER: And -- and do we anticipate that building and construction trade workers are going to be staffing these farms?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I do not.

MS. WOERNER: So, would it be fair to say that project labor agreements are not what is intended in your -- in this current legislation when we've --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They absolutely --

MS. WOERNER: -- project labor -- or labor peace agreements?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They absolutely are not. Project labor agreements have no role here.

MS. WOERNER: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill, Ms. Woerner.

MS. WOERNER: So I had the great pleasure of meeting with several of my licensed hemp farmers in Saratoga and Washington Counties over the last few weeks when word got out long before I even knew this bill was under consideration that they wanted to make sure I was watching it and that I knew how important this piece of legislation was to sustaining their businesses. The CBD market, which is what most of the licensed hemp providers are -- producers are in, is, frankly, a waiting market. It's gotten way too crowded and fewer and fewer hemp growers can actually sustain their business by growing hemp. So for them, the ability to access an early market for adult use cannabis is the lifeline that they need.

So I want to commend the sponsor on this legislation, to thank her on behalf of all of the licensed hemp growers who are interested in shifting their business to growing adult-use cannabis and who value getting into the market early as a way to minimize the risk associated with their business. I will be voting yes on this bill and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, Ms. Woerner.

Mr. Smullen.

MR. SMULLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the sponsor yield for just a couple of brief questions?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, I will, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SMULLEN: Thank -- thank you very much, Madam Majority Leader.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You're welcome, sir.

MR. SMULLEN: I -- I appreciate your answering questions here. I just wanted to go back to two points. Currently, the hemp market is regulated by the Department of Ag and Markets.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, sir.

MR. SMULLEN: And that's -- that's one Commissioner.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, just a point of clarification. Under the Marihuana Tax and Regulation Act, the Agriculture Department that deals with hemp is shifted over to the Office of Cannabis Management, as will the medical operation under the Health Department will shift to the Office of Cannabis Management as well.

MR. SMULLEN: And thank you for anticipating the second half of my question. The medical marihuana industry in New York currently regulated by the Department of Health will also shift to the Office of Cannabis Management.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes, sir, that's right.

MR. SMULLEN: And that's the -- that's the migratory scheme that we have of two departments with two very

distinct missions; one is public health and one is regulating the -- the food or the agriculture industry in New York. They have different focuses and different -- we're going to merge them in the Office of Cannabis Management in this list?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. SMULLEN: Which -- right now, is the Office of Cannabis Management, is its board fully filled by all of the appointees?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: All five board members have been appointed, yes.

MR. SMULLEN: So, they were recently appointed but they are up and running as a board at this point.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They are up and running as a board. In fact, there is a website. I will grab their website for you and repeat it momentarily. But they have regular meetings which can be viewed. They're public meetings, and much like ours they have to be transparent.

MR. SMULLEN: Now -- and -- and I appreciate that. Their ability to do work right now, I just looked on their -- on their website and they have 34 openings for State employees and they have 24 openings with multiple listings under each of those. It doesn't look to me like they're fully staffed. Is that a fair generality?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They are not fully staffed. They're anticipated to have offices both in the City of New York as well as in the City of Buffalo. They haven't even identified

locations for them yet.

MR. SMULLEN: And they'll be a Statewide regulatory agency --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes.

MR. SMULLEN: -- once they're up and running. And that's actually one of the concerns that I have is while we're caught right now in the transition period that we're in between the MRTA, the Marihuana Regulation and Taxation Act, and this -- this act today which is going to, I would characterize it as jump-starting the -- the marihuana industry in New York. Is that a fair -- fair statement?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, I guess you can call it that if you like, sir.

MR. SMULLEN: Okay. And the reason I say that is because the Office of Cannabis Management is not fully staffed at this point and they have -- have recently missed several of their gates for their regulatory requirements because of the passage of the bill and the COVID pandemic and whatnot. You know, I think they're a little bit behind the power curve.

One question I wanted to follow up is, we -- we said that there's maybe a couple of hundred hemp growers out there. Has that changed? I -- I went to the Department of Ag and Markets. There's -- there's 66 licensees that I was able to find off of their website, 61 of which are CBD, which my colleague mentioned is a -- is a over-subscribed industry at this point, two of which are for

recreational growing and three of which are research purposes. One of my other colleagues had questioned because of the various requirements under this act, how many of those would actually be eligible to -- to apply for this conditional licensure?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: All of them that fit the requirements that are listed in this piece of legislation will be qualified to apply.

MR. SMULLEN: Okay. And how many medical marihuana growers are there in the State of New York?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Ten.

MR. SMULLEN: Ten. Right. So, ten of them, one of them which happens to be in my district. So I'm actually --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They're not included in this because they don't grow hemp.

MR. SMULLEN: I'm sorry?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The registered organizations that grow medical marihuana would not be included in this legislation because they do not grow hemp.

MR. SMULLEN: And why not?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: They don't grow hemp.

MR. SMULLEN: Well, so we're picking a winner and a loser. We're picking one area of industry to grow this recreational when another area would be just as qualified?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: So, it would be perfect if we could pick everybody all at the same time. As a matter of fact,

there are a number of companies from California that would like to be chosen right now as well. But the Office of Cannabis Management has made a quick recommendation to start with our existing licensed hemp farmers, and I agree with that and I think we should move forward with this legislation.

MR. SMULLEN: Wouldn't -- in the interim wouldn't we want to pick maybe even an out-of-State vendor that has the high standards that are certifiable as opposed to trying to on the fly create growers?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: We -- sir, I hear your position and it's not a position that I would necessarily agree with except in this instance we're focused on licensed hemp growers who are New Yorkers. You might know them. Most of the people who own -- own the registered organizations in our State are not New Yorkers. They're mega farms from across the country and across the world. And so, we thought it smart to focus on New Yorkers first.

MR. SMULLEN: Well, thank you very much, Madam Majority Leader.

Mr. Speaker, on the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill, Mr. Smullen.

MR. SMULLEN: My-- my concern with this bill that came up very quickly is that we are rushing to failure in New York State to grow this industry. I think it's very important that we have very high standards for the actual ingredients that go into these drugs

that we're going to be selling to our citizens. And because of that, I -- I think that there are certain gates that we should make, including having the regulatory structure completely set up before we permit and license people that have been doing it in another industry when we already have some people in another part of the industry in New York that grow very high standard products. And -- and that -- that concern goes to what I think are one of the big things that we ought to keep our eye on going forward, which is the medical effects of marihuana usage on our citizens, whether it's adults, whether it's young people or -- or youth and -- and their development and how this is actually going to affect them going forward. I say we should be very cautious in how we set up this industry. Do not do it on the fly. Do not do it without due diligence and having our structure in place and having all of the -- all of the regulatory framework set up.

And for that reason I'm -- I'm certainly not going to vote in favor of this bill and urge all of my fellow legislators who -- who look at this from a -- a cautionary viewpoint to do the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, Mr. Smullen.

Mr. Goodell.

MR. GOODELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Majority Leader yield?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, will you yield?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: For Mr. Goodell, absolutely.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. -- Mr. Goodell, the sponsor yields.

MR. GOODELL: Thanks very much, Crystal. Of course I could just lean across the aisle and ask you these questions, but --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You could have.

MR. GOODELL: It seemed that my colleagues would be --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: We can always talk.

MR. GOODELL: Yeah. It seemed like my colleagues were busy and so I gave you that break. A lot of talk today about the labor peace agreement.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Okay.

MR. GOODELL: And am I correct to assume that if a grower, an existing industrial hemp grower, already is unionized, already has a collective bargaining agreement, that this provision -- that that collective bargaining agreement would meet the provisions in this law?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: This is a labor peace agreement that was included in the original Marihuana Tax and Regulation Act, and it just suggests that whether you are unionized now or your employees decide to organize later, you can't do things to prevent that.

MR. GOODELL: So, would you envision that if you're already a unionized industrial hemp grower that you would have to enter into a second agreement, a new agreement, to meet this law, or would your existing collective bargaining agreement suffice?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I actually don't think you would have to have a new agreement. If you get selected to be a conditional adult use grower under this legislation, you have to adhere to this. So there's -- there's nothing new there, even if you already have organized labor on your side.

MR. GOODELL: And on the same corollary question, am I correct that if there was a union that attempted within the last six months to unionize and the employees voted down that attempt, that the employer would still have to enter into a labor peace agreement even with a union even though all the employees within the last six months had voted it down?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Yes. So they can vote it down again if they like, but the employer can't interfere.

MR. GOODELL: Are -- are you aware of any other examples in New York State where an employer must have a contract with a union after that union has been rejected by the employees?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That's not what this says.

MR. GOODELL: Well, you have to have a labor agreement under this --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Not -- not a labor

agreement --

MR. GOODELL: Well, you have to have a labor peace agreement -- -

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Peace agreement, yes.

MR. GOODELL: So, to be more precise, do you have any other examples in the State of New York where an employer must have a labor peace agreement with a union that has been rejected by the employees in order to do business in the State of New York? Do you have any other examples of that?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I don't have any other examples of that, sir.

MR. GOODELL: Okay.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Do you have any?

MR. GOODELL: No. I've never heard of it before. This is the first time I've ever seen something like that.

We have other situations where by law we grant a monopoly. Utilities are a prime example. But when we grant a monopoly we also have regulatory oversight like the Public Service Commission. And that Public Service Commission makes sure that the terms and conditions and the rates and everything else of that statutory monopoly are fair and reasonable. Is there any provisions in this bill or elsewhere that would require the union - and there'd likely only be one - that is now granted a monopoly to decide whether the private company can be in business or not in this area? Is there any oversight to ensure that the negotiations are fair and reasonable?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The negotiations between the employees and the owner of the hemp farm?

MR. GOODELL: No. The negotiations between the employer and a labor organization that had attempted to represent the employees in the past.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: The employer doesn't have a responsibility to talk to a labor organization because this agreement doesn't require that he does so. This agreement just requires that he doesn't prohibit his employees from ever deciding to organize for the purposes of being in the collective --

MR. GOODELL: But -- but to be clear, the employer cannot get a license to go into this business unless he has a labor peace agreement with a union, and that means that particular union has a statutory monopoly. Is there any oversight by any third party or the State itself to make sure that those negotiations are fair and reasonable?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Well, I -- I think, you know, what -- however labor unions are provided oversight will come through the same method that they do now, through the Department of Labor as well as through the organization like the Office of Cannabis Management in which they're organizing.

MR. GOODELL: Now, we've mentioned a great deal about how the only ones that would be eligible for this conditional license are those who are already engaged in growing industrial hemp. And the statute that authorized industrial hemp growth which we

adopted back in 2019 required that the grower be a person of good character, and expressly authorized a criminal background check. And it was clear from the original legislation as it related to industrial hemp that if you had a criminal background that would affect your good character, you would be ineligible for an industrial license. But I note in this draft, one of the requirements is that the industrial hemp grower, in order to get a license, had to have a social equity program that focused on individuals who were, quote, "social equity applicants" who are defined in earlier legislation as, among other things, having a priority if they've been previously convicted of a marihuana-related offense. So my question is --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: That's not the main theme of social equity, by the way. There are a lot of people who could fit social equity that's never been convicted. I would -- let's don't put them all in the same --

MR. GOODELL: Well, looking at Section 87 of the original marihuana law, subparagraph 3 said, *The social equity plan shall require consideration of additional criteria and extra priority shall be given to applications that demonstrate that the applicant is a member of a community disproportionately impact, has a lower income and, C, was convicted of a marihuana-related offense.* And so my question is, if the original marihuana legislation that we passed last year requires as a definition or -- I shouldn't say requires, gives special priority --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you for saying it

shouldn't say it --

MR. GOODELL: Yeah.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you.

MR. GOODELL: But gives special priority to individuals who have been previously convicted of a marihuana offense, does that then create -- how is a -- a hemp grower who is required to maintain good character and is subject to criminal investigations, how are they supposed to comply with a social equity program if there's a priority for people who've been arrested for violating the marihuana laws?

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I mean, I don't know -- I'm not sure why you're suggesting that they're required to give anything to a person that's been arrested for marihuana. And by the way, you know, I live in an impacted community. I've never been arrested, I could be a social equity person, okay? There are many people who live in communities that have been impacted by the war on drugs that have never been arrested. So, to put those two things together as if they have to -- one has to be both, is not correct. As a matter of fact, there are MWBE businesses that are listed under social equity and a lot of these people have never been arrested for anything either. So, I think it's a little disingenuous to assume that social equity means you must have been arrested.

MR. GOODELL: I -- I was just quoting the statute, that's all. But again, Majority Leader, thank you very much and thank you for your patience --

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: You're very welcome.

MR. GOODELL: -- in answering questions all morning and part of the afternoon.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: It's my pleasure.

MR. GOODELL: On the bill.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On the bill, Mr. Goodell.

MR. GOODELL: Thank you, sir. We should be clear right up front that this legislation is not designed or intended in any way to help any of our traditional farmers. First, this bill is really clear that the only way you can get a conditional license is if you farm less than 43,500-some acres [sic]. Which is one acre. Now, most real farmers -- when I say real farmers, I should say most commercial farmers would tell you that a one-acre plot is like a vegetable garden. In my district that's a vegetable garden. It's not a farm. If you're cultivating one acre you can use a hand-held rototiller. You don't need a tractor or a tiller or anything else. And so, anyone who has any conception that this is going to help out our family farms is sadly mistaken. It's limited to one acre. But even there, this bill has something that I have never seen anywhere else in the State of New York. This bill requires that as a condition of getting a license from the State of New York for a private company to go into business, they have to have an agreement with a union. Must have an agreement with a union. And it's not a collective bargaining union -- union that represents their employees, because this language is very clear. You

have to have an agreement with either the union that represents your employees or a union that was attempting to represent your employees. Which means that a union could have come and tried to unionize your employees, your employees could turn down that unionization effort unanimously, and this bill says to the employer, *You still must have an agreement with that union or we will not let you go into private sector business in this area.* Lawyers sometimes talk about contracts of adhesion. An ex-contract with a negotiating party is not on a fair and level playing field where they must sign a contract. And this creates exactly that situation. Because if you're a private-sector employer and you are not unionized and your employees do not want to be unionized, you cannot go into this business and you cannot get a conditional license unless you negotiate an agreement with a union. Now, imagine you're the grower and I represent the union. And so when we sit down my first question to you would be, *Do you want to be in business?* And if you do, my next question is, *Let's talk money. Because unless you reach an agreement with me, you're not in business.* It's a monopoly. And the union under this monopoly holds every single card. *Did I tell you I wanted 25 percent of your profit in order to give you that license? Ah, I was mistaken. I meant 50 percent. Did I say 50? Maybe it should be 75.* There's no restriction whatsoever. They are the gatekeepers and they and only the union, including unions that have been rejected by the employees who have the key.

As noted by my colleagues, do we have any

regulations about what kind of marihuana plants can be planted, what the potency is? Answer. No. Do we have any regulations on how the dispensaries are to be operated once this crop is harvested? Answer. No. Are we allowing new people, new potential farmers who want to convert their -- apparently their vegetable garden into marihuana operations -- can new farmers enter this field? Answer. Well, no. You to have an industrial license for at least two out of the last four years. It's closed. Well, if you've been successfully growing marihuana, this particular type of plant, if you're been successfully growing it in New York State under tight regulations under existing regulations, can you grow it here? Answer. No. If you've been growing medical marihuana and meet all those tight stringent requirements, you're ineligible.

This is a strange bill. And we should be absolutely clear, it crosses a lot of lines that we have never seen before in terms of creating a monopoly, requiring employers, perhaps over the objections of their employees, that enter into a contract with unions. We know that virtually no farms in the State are currently unionized. Nationally it's only like 2 or 3 percent. So we automatically off the top exclude anyone who's nonunion unless they want to enter into a negotiation with the union. And we're moving forward without any of the regulations in play with the rest of the process.

For those reasons and others, I recommend against this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, thank you to the Majority Leader who has been very kind and helpful all day.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, Mr.

Speaker. I want to actually applaud my colleagues for what I think in some cases were really good thoughtful questions that there are some follow up and I can commit to having that follow up. But in some cases it's the same arguments we had a year ago because people just simply don't agree that adult use has -- has a place in New York society. Well, the vast majority of us in the State of New York do believe that, and so I think this moves us forward with making that process real.

I do also want to say that because we're offering a conditional license for people who are already growing hemp does not mean that a person who's never grown anything can't get a license at some point in the State of New York. I think what it does mean is that not only can that person at some point get a license, but there will be more room for them to have a piece of the market because we're limiting it to New Yorkers who grow hemp. I heard my colleague say that, you know, this should be open to anybody who is growing right now. This should be open to the existing registered organizations, \$200-, \$300-, \$400 million companies. We'd open that market up to them. Nobody else ever gets in, and I think that it makes sense. I like the way the Office of Cannabis Management is starting so that they can provide an opportunity for New York's -- New Yorkers to get access to the market before it goes off the handle. I know that this is

challenging for a lot of people. I know that there are some people who think that there will be no social equity or no people of color who have access to these conditional licenses. I don't agree with that. I don't know all the people, but I believe that there are people on that list who have been growing hemp who will have the same availability to these conditional licenses as everyone else.

I am grateful to the New York Growers Association for their input in this legislation because, quite honestly, a lot of the things that are here would not have been here had we not weighed in their opinion.

And I also want to, you know, just speak to the whole labor peace issue. This would not have been my preference. But again, when you're in the -- in the business where the costs are compromised, you want to get things done. You've got to move forward with getting it done. A labor peace agreement does not require anybody to pay dues. Its employees that are not members of a union. And there's nothing that enforces the employers or the employees to create a union. All it says is that you can't do things to prevent it. Now, we recently just saw Starbucks in my community unionize. And by the way, Starbucks did everything in their power to keep those people from doing that. Everything legally in their power. A labor peace agreement would not have allowed them to hold them up for six months and have these young people celebrating like they had really won the lottery just when they got the ability to get decent work hours and all sorts of things that add value to their life on the

job.

And so I -- I appreciate the Farmers Bureau for writing the memo of support on this legislation because they do support it. But I also honor their opinion, just like I honor my colleagues' opinion about the labor peace agreement and how -- if it could be detrimental. It will not be detrimental, one. And two, it's already legal and required in this industry in the State of New York as a result of legislation that was passed March 31st of last year.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleagues' patience for this conversation that we've had today. I can only tell you that this is another part of the beginning. It's not nearly the end. And I would encourage everyone who can see the vision for not just the Office of Cannabis Management, but the opportunities to build wealth in communities that don't have access to wealth, as well as the opportunity to bring healing and wellness to our community. I would encourage people to vote yes on this one.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote on Senate print 8084-A. This is a Party vote. Any member who wishes to be recorded as an exception to their Conference position is reminded to contact the Majority or Minority Leader at the

numbers previously provided.

Mr. Goodell.

MR. GOODELL: Thank you, sir. The Republican Conference is generally opposed to this legislation. But those who would like to support it are welcome to call the Minority Leader's Office and we will record your vote accordingly.

Thank you, sir.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Majority colleagues will generally be in favor of this piece of legislation. However, there are a few who may not, and if that is so they should contact the Majority Leader's Office and we will be honored to properly record their vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Thank you, Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

Mr. Friend to explain his vote.

MR. FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to explain my vote.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Proceed.

MR. FRIEND: You only need to look to our own communities to see that both illegal use of marihuana and underage use of marihuana have increased in our State since we've allowed the MRTA to move forward. Unfortunately, individuals have taken

advantage of the gifting law in the MRTA by opening sticker stores across our communities. Even though the Office of Cannabis Management has come forward and said that these are illegal and they need a cease and desist, there aren't laws in the books from stopping these operations from occurring. Locally in my own district, the DA and Sheriff's Office have gone into some of these stores only to temporarily shut them down for them to reopen immediately the next day with customers waiting in hand as the Sheriffs and DAs were on the property. If you reach out to our poison control centers you can find out that our underage -- our kids who are underage have increased their use of ingestibles. I cannot support a law that will allow this to continue without first taking care of our -- the people in our community and especially our kids. We need to look out for their future. We need to tell them that this is not okay, and we need to take care of that first before we start growing more potent forms of marihuana within our own districts.

For those reasons, I vote no.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Goodell.

MR. GOODELL: Thank you, sir. Although I'm not up on this (inaudible), I'm not high on it, please record my colleagues Mr. Durso, Mr. DeStefano, Mr. Gandolfo and Mr. Ra in the affirmative.

Thank you, sir.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: So noted.

Are there any other votes? Announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: Mr. Speaker, do you have any further housekeeping or resolutions?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: We have no housekeeping, but we do have a privileged resolution on page -- Resolution 565 by Mr. Lawler.

Mr. Lawler on the resolution.

The Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Assembly No. 565, Mr. Lawler.

Legislative Resolution celebrating the life and accomplishments of Dr. Robert Schelin, revered educator, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: And now Mr. Lawler on the resolution.

MR. LAWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Robert "Doc" Schelin passed away on February 6, 2022 at the age of 76. He was a longtime member of the Tappan community in the Town of Orangetown. He was an educator, a volunteer firefighter and dedicated member of our community. He will be deeply missed by all those who knew him and the many lives that he impacted. During his time at St. Thomas Aquinas College in Sparkill, he served as the Dean of Students. He was also a professor of history and political science, and really impacted so many students along the way in getting them to

focus on civic engagement and the importance of it. He was involved in our community, a 50-year life member of the Tappan Fire Department and served as a past-President and Secretary of the Commissioners of the fire district. But most noticeably -- notably, he served as Santa Claus during their annual Christmas celebrations.

As I said, he will be missed by our community and so I appreciate the indulgence of my colleagues to recognize him and recognize his life's achievements and wish him Godspeed and his family. Thank you.

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

We have one other privileged resolution which we will take up on (inaudible) vote.

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

(Whereupon, Assembly Resolution No. 571 was unanimously adopted.)

Mrs. Peoples-Stokes.

MRS. PEOPLES-STOKES: I now move that the Assembly stand adjourned until that we will reconvene at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February the 17th, tomorrow being a Session day.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Assembly stands adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 2:43 p.m., the House stood adjourned

until Thursday, February 17th at 9:30 a.m., that being a Session day.)