

THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

(The House of Representatives was called to order at 10:00 o'clock a.m., Speaker Aresimowicz of the 30th District in the Chair.)

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives will convene immediately, members to the Chamber.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

(Gavel) Will the House please come to order? I have to make sure I gaveled in right at 10:00 a.m., so we're keeping on time. That's important for us. [Applause] Will the House please come to order? Will members, staff and guests please rise, direct your attention to the Dias where Chaplain Rabbi Alan

Lefkowitz will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN RABBI ALAN LEFKOWITZ:

Dear God, Creator of us all, what do you require of us? Let us be open to what You want from us, and may we struggle to hear Your call. May we answer: Here I am we as we desire without ego to be heard. May we be reminded that our prayer is not about ourselves, but to be responsible for all those who have given us this blessing to serve you selflessly.

As we devote ourselves to Your service, by confronting our differences remember our commonalities, and may each of us be eager to make this, our world, a better place. As we say Amen.

On a personal note, I am again, honored to be serving as Chaplain, bringing us each closer to our highest power, to the one who created us all with special blessing.

We bless you now, Lord our God, living spirit of the World who gave us life sustains our being and

enabling us to reach this very moment, this time and season as we thank you for Your love and all of our blessings. We say Amen. Amen.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, Rabbi. Will the esteemed Minority Leader, Representative Klarides, the Majority Leader Representative Ritter please come to the Dias and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance?

REP. KLARIDES (114TH):

REP. RITTER (1ST):

(All) I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you both very much. Again, I would like to welcome everybody to our Chamber for our opening day. As is the custom we give the leaders of each caucus an opportunity to address the Chamber. It's

a little awkward, I don't get to use these teleprompters, but they're blocking my view of each. So, I think Representative Ritter, you're over there. Representative Ritter, you have the floor sir.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Take no offense, but you look great through that glass by the way. Well, good morning everybody. To everybody on both sides of the aisle, to my friends on the Republican side and to Democrats on this side. It's nice to be back here for opening day, it's always an exciting day. You get to welcome your family, your friends, constituents.

In my case, the day got a little crazy like many of you who have children, today is a snow day. So, I said to my son, Jack, you got to come to the Capitol. Jack is in my office watching Sports Center with no desire to come out here on the House floor to join his father.

So, maybe we'll have a non-politician yet. I also want to welcome my father, Tom, who is up there. Dad, it's nice to see you. [Applause] He was a little reluctant to come, but less reluctant than Jack today. But in all seriousness, I also want to make a particular -- I met a lot of new First Selectman and Mayors, Mr. Speaker in our caucus room. Already asking questions about the budget. I'm glad your anxious to talk about that. We're still getting our breath from last year, but it always nice to new local elected officials and thank you for being here today as well.

So, with that, not a lot to say other than it's going to be a quick session with a lot to do. It's great to be with so many friends and family. I hope you enjoy this special day and you drive safe this afternoon and we'll see you around soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. [Applause] Now our distinguished Minority Leader, Representative

Klarides. You have the floor, Madam.

REP. KLARIDES (114TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in the sea of pink, I rise as the only women's leader in the building in the caucus with the most women.

[Applause]

Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Majority Leader, I welcome everyone today. I know we have a limited group of guests because of the weather.

We call this opening day, but it's really month fourteen of the last session. Since we haven't really ended this year. We've had a very difficult year. I expect a difficult one coming up, but I expect as we did last year everybody vehemently and passionately arguing for their positions and all of us doing the best we can to come together for the best of the State of Connecticut. Congratulations, opening day. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Typically, the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader set the tone for the session, so if that's the case, we're going to have very brief debates. Thank you both very very much. [Applause]

As is also tradition where we're joined by the Former Speakers up here on the Dias, I'd like to go through and introduce them.

I do have a bone to pick with all of them, they said this Speaker job was great and it wouldn't be that much work and you know I think we just left the building about a week ago and we're already back.

So, to my left we have our latest Speaker right before me, my Speaker, Speaker Sharkey. [Applause]

Speaker Donovan right next to him. [Applause]

Speaker Mora Lyons. [Applause]

Speaker Tom Ritter. [Applause]

And the other football coach that was a speaker, Speaker DelDucci. [Applause]

And Speaker Collins down at the end.

Thank you for coming. [Applause]

Joking aside, we all know the amount of work that goes in to being a Representative, to being a committee chair, to being a leader on both sides of the aisle. It feels as though I've been Speaker a few terms already, but it really has only been one year.

I want to thank you all for the dedicated service you've brought to the State of Connecticut, the difficult decisions you wrangled with over the years. Making sure the State of Connecticut was moving forward. I thank you very very much for all your service to the State of Connecticut.

[Applause]

Elected leaders, honored guests, I welcome you to the opening day of the 2018 Legislative Session. It seems like just last week as I've said a few times already that we're all in this Chamber wrapping up the 2017 Session. Today surrounded by friends and family, we begin to take on the additional work of moving the State forward.

This session is going to be a challenging one. I refer to it as there's no more off season. That the budget is a living document that needs to be adjusted almost weekly. I'm honored to continue on as your Speaker.

As Speaker, I try to bring common sense leadership to this Chamber that we all hear from our District. Starting with starting on time. Why don't you start work on time? That's what we tell our kids. Get to school on time. We tell people we work with to come to work on time. I really appreciate all the dedication you all did last year to ensure we were able to keep up to the timeframes and we will continue that this year. [Applause]

I enjoy my relationship with all the members of the House, but especially my Majority Leader, I can say it's a difficult job. I held that seat and I still think he's the best Majority Leader we ever had. Matt Ritter I'm thankful for your friendship. This Caucus is thankful for your leadership and I look forward to working with you for the entire 2018

Session. [Applause]

Minority Leader Klarides, again, we came in as friends. Sometimes our positions are in conflict with one another, but we've maintained that friendship. We don't always agree on the issues, but Madam, you're a woman of her word, you have honor, you fight for what you believe in and I also look forward to serving with you this Session.

[Applause]

Over the past few years we've been working on many difficult issues. Obviously, the budget is at the forefront. Our Caucus's did something that hasn't been seen in this building. We did a bipartisan budget. We regained the credibility of bringing the Republican side of the aisle to the table as an equal partner in those negotiations. Some might say it was because of the numbers.

But I had always promised when I stepped foot in this building that regardless of the numbers that we're going to have open honest dialogue that would lead us to our best conclusions and move this State

forward.

We need to build on it this year. The election of 2018 is right around the corner. It doesn't have to start now. We can disagree without being disagreeable. There's a lot of folks up in this building that make their living off coming up here and advocating on issues. Whether they're paid lobbyists, volunteer lobbyists, they make their living off of coming up here to advocate.

It's up to each and every one of us in this Chamber to advocate for the people in our District. The people that sent us here. That is our job and we must do it throughout this entire session.

[Applause]

Wanting what's best for the State of Connecticut in my community is why I got involved in politics many years ago. I know from talking to many of you that you feel the same exact way. So, as the nights get late, the decisions become more difficult, let's bear that in mind. We want to make this State, our Towns a better place and by acting

together, we will do that. I wish you all the greatest success. My office door is always open. I will have conversations, I will offer advice. Let's work together and let's move the State of Connecticut forward. Thank you. [Applause]

Thank you. Thank you. Will the Chamber please stand at ease?

Just for our guests today as is typical sometimes we have to wait for the Senate. So, that's what we're doing now. As we wait for the Senate (Gavel) the House come back to order. Are there any announcements or introductions? Representative Borer of the 115th, you're over at Representative Ferraro of the 117th now. Sir, you have the floor.

REP. FERRARO (117TH):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the same theme of bipartisanship. And I have with me the West Haven Delegation who is very proud to welcome two individuals from West Haven. One that you're

very very familiar with and one you may not be so familiar with. But it is my pleasure to introduce the first female mayor of the City of West Haven, Mayor Nancy Rossi. [Applause]

REP. BORER (115TH):

Thank you, Representative Ferraro. And along with our Mayor today is somebody I think who is familiar to many of you, he served in the House of Representatives with dignity, respect, is beloved, over 24 years of service, Lou Esposito. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

For clarification those watching at home that was Lou, not boo. Just to be clear. [Laughter]

REP. FERRARO (117TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Welcome to our Chamber. Representative Scanlon of the 98th District, you have the floor, sir.

REP. SCANLON (98TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know it's a great day, we're all excited to be here and I rise to talk about a sad occasion. And I'll just ask for you to bear with me for a moment. My community of Guilford, my hometown suffered an unspeakable tragedy last week, one week ago from today. Where a 15-year-old boy whose name was Ethan Song was killed by gun. And we lost this young man way too soon.

I didn't know him personally. I knew his family and I know his family. And in the days since this tragedy our community has come together in an amazing, an incredible way. We had a vigil on Friday night, it was very very cold, there were hundreds of people out there to remember this young man. His friends got up and spoke. His family spoke. And our community is hurting right now, no doubt about that, but the testament of our community and the strength that we've seen is incredible and I know the family is incredibly touched by the community coming together.

And I just hope that all of you will join me right now in a moment of silence in the memory of this incredible young man we lost too soon and in memory of all those who are lost by gun violence in the State of Connecticut.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Yes, can we please rise, we'll have a moment of silence. Representative O'Neill of the 69th District for what purposes do you rise, sir?

REP. O'NEILL (69TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for the purposes of an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH):

With me here today I have two guests from the Town of Southbury, Natalie LaBonia and Isabella LaBonia, they are twins. Isabella is the older one

by 10 seconds. They are also freshman at Pomperaug High School in Southbury and they are both accomplished vocalists who sang at the Southbury Celebration. That's an event that's attended by between five and 10 thousand people every year that we have in Southbury.

And they are young entrepreneurs, they have a pet-sitting business, which I believe began with my three-pound Yorkie that they looked after for a week or so when we were away. They are interested in politics and learning about how our government works. Their father is a police officer in the City of Danbury, a detective I believe. And their mother is a teacher in the Newtown School District.

So, if the House would please give them a warm welcome. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much for coming to our Chamber. As the older brother of twin sisters, I know those minutes matter when you're figuring out who is

older, so duly noted. Representative Carney, of the 23rd, for what purposes do you rise, sir?

REP. CARNEY (23RD):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise for the purpose of an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CARNEY (23RD):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, today I have with me one of the best kids in the State of Connecticut. He's my nephew, Jack Glaser. He actually lives in Orange, he lives in Representative Ferraro's District, but he's well represented here in the Chamber by Representative Ferraro and Representative Staneski and the distinguished Minority Leader, Representative Klarides.

Jack goes to the Race Brook School. He's in Fourth Grade. He loves baseball and like me he loves the Mets. Hopefully they'll win a World

Series in his lifetime. And he also loves the Pittsburgh Penguins who have been a little bit better to him than the Mets. He's got a younger brother Andrew and a younger sister Emma, and I just would ask the Chamber to give him a warm welcome. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Welcome to our Chamber. Representative Morin of the 28th District, for what purposes do you rise, sir?

REP. MORIN (28TH):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. For the purposes of an introduction, please?

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good morning, sir. Please proceed.

REP. MORIN (28TH):

To the Members of the Chamber I am joined by a Wethersfield stalwart, our Deputy Mayor Mr. Tony Martino. He's a great public servant, he's also

served our County in the Military with honor. He does so much for our Town, if you ever need somebody to volunteer to help out in something, Tony is the first person to say yes.

I'll give a shameless plug for this Sunday, there is the UNICO famous macaroni dinner, which he is part of and if you want to have a good Italian dinner for a good price come to Wethersfield on Sunday.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in giving a round of applause for Tony Martino.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Morin, I learned many years ago if you refer to it as macaroni dinner, it's a good dinner, so I think I may swing by. Thank you very much, sir. Any other announcements or introductions? Representative Kokoruda of the 101st? I'm trying to look through the glass again. You have the floor, Madam.

REP. KOKORUDA (101ST):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good morning.

REP. KOKORUDA (101ST):

I rise for the purposes of an announcement.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. KOKORUDA (101ST):

To my colleagues, this week nearly 250 American Athletes will descend on PyeongChang, South Korea and represent the U.S. in the 2018 Winter Games. These Olympians come from all over the Country, but eight of them are Connecticut grown. Eight of them have sacrificed and dedicated themselves for years and for this moment and for these games.

Today we take the time not only to honor them and thank them, but more importantly to tell them how proud we are of them. And how much everyone in

Connecticut is rooting for them over the next two weeks. The eight Olympians from Connecticut are: Zach Donohue, Figure Skating, Madison, Connecticut. Mac Bohannon, Freestyle Skiing, Madison, Connecticut. Kiley McKinnon, Freestyle Skiing, Madison. Yay Madison. [Laughter] Mark Arcobello, Ice Hockey, Milford. Emily Sweeney, Luge, Suffield. Tucker West, Luge, Ridgefield. Lindsey Jacobellis, Snowboarding, Roxbury and Julian Marino, Snowboarding, Westport.

I ask you to take your flags, you were wondering why these were always on your desk. Well, take them and let's show them and send them off with a round of applause and a wave of our flag wishing them well in South Korea. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Kokoruda, with no disrespect, but the only flag I have up here is a little too big for me to wave around. But obviously, we do wish our Connecticut Athletes the best of luck. That's one of the great honors about the Olympics, we get

to stand there and root not only for our hometown,  
our home State, but all of the United States  
Athletes. Thank you, Madam. Representative  
Juleson-Scopino of the 12th, you have the District,  
you have the floor, Madam.

REP. JULESON-SCOPINO (12TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for purposes of  
an introduction, sir.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. JULESON-SCOPINO (12TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like the Chamber  
to join me in welcoming the first Latina elected to  
our Board of Directors in Manchester, Yolanda  
Castillo. [Applause] As they say, Mr. Speaker, the  
future is female. So, thank you very much.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Madam. Representative  
Bolinsky of the 106th. You have the floor, sir.

REP. BOLINSKY (106TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I'd like to acknowledge and respect your call for bipartisan work during this session and I'm completely and totally devoted to what you've asked us about having the ability to disagree without being disagreeable.

But I do rise for a point of personal introduction, please, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed, sir.

REP. BOLINSKY (106TH):

On my right here, I am privileged to have with me today the leaders of the Town of Newtown. To my immediate right this is Dan Rosenthal who is our newly elected First Selectman. And to his right, is Paul Lundquist who is our newly elected and appointed Chairman of our Legislative Counsel, so on behalf of Newtown I would very very grateful if the entire General Assembly would give these gentlemen a

huge welcome. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Welcome to our Chamber and thank you for your public service. Representative Devlin of the 134th, you have the floor, Madam.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good morning.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH):

I rise for a point of personal introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH):

On a day that we are recognizing women by wearing pink, I am very proud to have with me today

Doctor Gayle Alberda from Fairfield University.

Gayle is a political science professor and launched the Ready to Run Program out of Fairfield University that helped train and encourage women to get involved in politics at a local and national and whichever level they should choose.

And Gayle is here with her son, Isaac, who goes to the Assumption School in Fairfield and is enjoying a snow day. So, I appreciate your welcoming them to the Chamber today. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much for the work you do and encouraging more women to run for office. I've learned through not only teaching courses myself, we need to recruit more women, they're not self-recruiters. And Isaac, it's not so bad in here, come back later we have some snacks, we could hang out, I know it's a little overwhelming at first, but welcome to our Chamber. Representative Hilda Santiago, you have the floor, Madam.

REP. SANTIAGO (84TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good morning.

REP. SANTIAGO (84TH):

I'm here for the purposes of doing an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. SANTIAGO (84TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we have in the Chambers, Counselor Miguel Castro and standing next to the Counselor is Representative Abercrombie. So, I just want to say that when I got elected to the Legislature, he finished off my term in the City of Meriden. And he's still wearing those stilettos. So, even though he is not a woman, he's still wearing those stilettos, my shoes to fill.

And he is very involved in immigration issues. Issues in the City of Meriden. He is also involved in the Puerto Rican Relief Committee in Meriden.

So, we just want to welcome him here today to the Chambers and that's it. Thank you. [Applause] Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Welcome to our Chamber and at the risk of messing it up, I think Representative Altobello has schooled me enough, thank you for representing the Silver City, right? Is it the Silver City? Thank you.

Representative McGorty of the 122nd District, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MCGORTY (122ND):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good morning.

REP. MCGORTY (122ND):

I rise for purpose of introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. MCGORTY (122ND):

With me today I have former State Representative Laura Hoydick and also, she is now the first woman Mayor of the Town of Stratford. I'd like to give her a warm welcome this morning.

[Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Congratulations on your run for mayor and your election. I know you'll do a great job as you did in this Chamber. But it really is, once you're gone, we forget kind of quickly. So, but it's good for you to come back and remind us who you are. Thank you. Representative Walker of the 93rd District. Do you have your cane next to you, Madam?

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker. I'm ready.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

All right. Ready for session.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, good to see you up there again.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good to see you, Madam.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

I think it was just yesterday you were there, yeah? Just yesterday. Mr. Speaker, I rise for a point of personal introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a young lady who is a high school senior from New Haven who I

want everybody to get to know and speak to. She's a rising young lady in the area who is going to be graduating and she's graduating hoping to major in psychology or sociology.

And she's hoping to attend Central State University. She wants to be part of our Connecticut higher education system and that is her dream. So, I hope that. But it is important that we encourage our young people in here to come and participate in our system and join us every day. So, I hope everybody in this Chamber will at least bring one high school graduate or potential high school graduate up there this session so that they can all participate, because we need to actually be ready to pass those batons on.

So, with that I ask everybody to greet my young friend, Jackie Marcs.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Walker you bring up a great point. I know some of our schools have spring

break, I will be working with the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader to have a day where we all bring a high school senior with us. I think that's an absolute great idea. Thank you for suggesting it.

My very good friend of the 86th District, Representative Candelora, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning and I'm looking forward to yet another session.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Really?

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

No, complete lie. I rise for the point of an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

Mr. Speaker, in the Chamber today, on behalf of Representative Scanlon and myself, I'd like to introduce our newly elected First Selectman of Guilford, Matt Hoey. We look forward to working with him and we all of course believe that he's going to do a great job for Guilford and if everyone could give him a warm welcome, it would be appreciated. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Give him a warm welcome. [Applause] Representative Kim Rose of the 118th District.

REP. ROSE (118TH):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

You've got a lot of folks over there, Madam. For what purposes do you rise?

REP. ROSE (118TH):

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I rise for a personal

announcement as well as an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed, Madam.

REP. ROSE (118TH):

I'm happy to announce that on December 17th, my daughter gave birth to two beautiful little girls, Faye Lynn Rose Anderson who was six pounds eleven ounces and Eloise Rose Anderson who was six pounds two ounces. And they join their two-and-a-half-year-old sister Cora. [Applause]

And Mr. Speaker, Milford is certainly very well represented today in the House of Representatives, I along with Representative Staneski, our friends are actually in Representative Staneski's District, but we have here with us today as all of you know, or many of you know, Dominic Cotton. We have Doctor Ellen Russell Beatty who is professor emeritus of public health and nursing.

We have Nigel Phillips and I have two very

special people, these young folks worked on my campaign this summer. I ran for City Clerk and they literally ran my entire volunteer organization.

They have restored my faith in the youth today. There was not an issue that I couldn't bring up whether it was local, city or state that they weren't aware of. And I'm encouraging them to come into politics and hope one day that they will have our seats. Cleo Neal and Lucas Burgard. [phonetic] Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Madam. Representative Skulczyck of the 45th District. You have the floor, sir.

REP. SKULCZYCK (45TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you I have a couple of comments as we start the session. I'd like to take a moment and really think about those men and women across our State and the Country and the Globe in uniform who represent and fight for our

freedoms. I'd also like to take a moment to talk about those men and women in blue in our own State and across the Country that every day go out on the line and protect us and the things we appreciate most about our freedoms. So, acknowledging those two groups through you, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Yeah, if we could all acknowledge the men and women that both serve in our Military and other public safety, firefighters, police officers, if we can rise up now and give them a round of applause please. [Applause]

Representative McCarthy Vahey of the 133rd.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for the purposes of an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with me here today is Molly Baker, a senior in high school, much as we were talking about earlier at Fairfield Ludlowe High School. Molly has been an active member of our town committee. Has been active in the community as a volunteer. And will be honored this April by the Town Committee as a Young Turk award winner.

So, I'm happy to introduce Molly to all of you today. I hope you'll join me in giving her a warm welcome for her first visit to the Capitol.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Molly, welcome. Are there any other announcements or introductions? Representative Linehan of the 103rd District. You have the floor, Madam.

REP. LINEHAN (103RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for the purpose of an announcement.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. LINEHAN (103RD):

Thank you. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge for the folks in the Chamber, up in the Gallery and for the folks at home why we are wearing pink today. We are wearing pink in solidarity with the me-too movement. This movement has become very important to me personally, I have made no secret that 20 years ago I was sexually assaulted while at work.

So, today I rise wearing pink surrounded by my sisters and together we are going to work this session to talk about the me-too movement, to talk about why it's important and to really put the work in to make a difference. 20 years ago, I spoke out after being sexually assaulted at work and I was fired. I was blacklisted. I had a hard time getting a job in my chosen profession for over 10 years so much so that I had to change that

profession.

When I spoke out about it then I received so much backlash and now that I'm speaking out about it now I continue to receive backlash and it is very important for survivors such as myself and other women to stand together and say we will not take it. That we are going to stand with both men and women who are sexually assaulted and who are victims of sexual harassment.

And all of us in this Chamber today can stand together whether you are democrat or republican, man or woman, we all know that sexual assault and sexual harassment is wrong.

And I'm so honored to work with every single one of you to make sure that what happened to me doesn't happen to another. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to everyone in this Chamber.

[Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, Madam. Are there any other

announcements or introductions? Representative Reyes of the 75th District. You have the floor, sir.

REP. REYES (75TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for a point of an announcement and I'll just be brief. This is not the first or last time that I will mention Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As the State of Connecticut has the highest percentage of Puerto Ricans in the United States of America, but I wanted to just point out the generous generosity of the citizens of the State of Connecticut and I also wanted to applaud the leadership of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus and in particular the works with the boots on the ground of Representative Juan Candelora, Representative Minnie Gonzalez and Representative Angel Arce. I rise and salute all of you. Thank you. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Representative

Cummings of the 74th District you have the floor,  
Madam.

REP. CUMMINGS (74TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for a point of  
personal introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. CUMMINGS (74TH):

With me here I have my younger sister,  
Alexandria, which is always great to see a young  
professional here in Connecticut who is going to  
school for her Master's in Social Work and is  
looking forward to being employed here in the State.  
So, welcome Alex.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Welcome to our Chamber, thank you.  
Representative Vail of the 52nd District, you have  
the floor, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Happy New Year.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Happy New Year.

REP. VAIL (52ND):

I rise for purposes of an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND):

I have with me here today my daughter, Sarah, she's a seventh-grade student at the Stafford Middle School where she does drama and dance, but she was excited to come in here with me on opening day as I have many children as some of you may know and we get to spend some alone time together today.

So, she was excited to miss school, but they ended up canceling school anyway so now she has to make the day up at the end of the year. So, if

everyone could please just give her the customary  
welcome, I'd appreciate it. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Sarah, welcome to the Chamber. I'm going to  
put your dad on the spot a little bit here. I also  
spend a lot of time up here and I have a daughter  
who is 11 years old, and the time with my daughter  
is really special time and coming to the Capitol is  
really really cool, don't get wrong. But Kurt, I  
brought my daughter to Disney for three days, so  
maybe you may want to consider that, sir. Okay?  
Thank you very much, sir. For our last announcement  
or introduction, we have Representative Butler of  
the 72nd District.

REP. BUTLER (72ND):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Great to see you  
today.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good to see you, sir.

REP. BUTLER (72ND):

I rise for purposes of an introduction.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. BUTLER (72ND):

Thank you. Today I have with me Mack DeMac, he's actually transitioned from Congresswoman Estes Office to be a policy director in the City of Waterbury working in the Mayor's Office. So, when you see him during the year, you know that he's representing the City of Waterbury, helping us out there and I will hope that we would rise and give him our usual warm welcome.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much for coming in today, sir. [Applause] All right. We will return to business now. Representative Ritter, you have the floor.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

All right. I have got to do one more announcement, Mr. Speaker, if the Chamber doesn't mind indulging me for a second.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Please proceed.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

I was able to reluctantly drag my four-year-old son out who has got his stickers right here, but I'm hoping Jack could just give a wave to the crowd here. This is my four-year-old son, Jack Ritter, thank you. [Applause]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Hey Jack, if given the choice many of us would be in back watching Sports Center too just so you know. Representative Ritter, do you have some business for us, sir?

REP. RITTER (1ST):

I do. And so, if you are looking to use the restroom or take a break now is a good time. We

have some procedural stuff to go through. Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of our rules for the immediate consideration of House Resolution No. 1, House Resolution No. 2 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 1.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. The question before the Chamber is on suspension of the rules for immediate consideration of House Resolution No. 2, House Resolution No. 1 and Joint Resolution No. 1. Is there objection? Is there objection? Hearing none. We are suspended for those purposes. Will the Clerk please call House Resolution No. 1?

THE CLERK:

House Resolution No. 1, RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PRINTING OF THE HOUSE JOURNAL, LCO No. 355 introduced by Representative Ritter.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Mr. Speaker, I move adoption of the Resolution, the Resolution is self-explanatory.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. The question is on adoption. Will you remark? Will you remark if not let me try your minds, all those in favor please signify by saying aye? (All) Aye. Those opposed nay, the ayes have it. The Resolution is adopted. Will the Clerk please call Senate Joint Resolution No. 1?

THE CLERK:

Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, RESOLUTION CONCERNING PUBLICATION OF LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN, PRINTING OF BILLS AND EXPENSES. LCO No. 351 introduced by Senator Duff, Senator Witkos and Representative Ritter.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Ritter?

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move adoption of the Resolution, which is self-explanatory.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. The question is on adoption, will you remark? Will you remark if not, let me try your minds. All those in favor please signify by saying aye. (All) Aye. Those opposed nay, the ayes have it. The resolution is adopted. Will the Clerk please call House Resolution No. 2?

THE CLERK:

House Resolution No. 2, RESOLUTION RAISING A COMMITTEE TO INFORM THE SENATE THAT THE HOUSE IS READY TO MEET IN JOINT CONVENTION, LCO No. 352 introduced by Representative Ritter.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Ritter, who have you selected?

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Mr. Speaker I move adoption of the Resolution.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. The question is on adoption of the Resolution. Will you remark? Will you remark, if not let me try your minds, all those in favor please signify by saying aye. (All) Aye. Those opposed, nay. The Ayes have it. The Resolution is adopted.

With that at this time I will appoint Representative Gentile, Representative Reyes and Representative Polletta to inform the Senate that we are ready to convene in Joint Session.

Mr. Clerk, are you ready for your part now?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Is there any business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. There are interim communications from the Speaker of the House of Representatives concerning committee assignments.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Order they be printed in the Journal.

THE CLERK:

Communications from General Assembly Leaders, communications from the Speaker of the House of Representatives, communication from the House Majority Leader. Communication from the House Minority Leader. Communication from the Senate Majority Leader. Communications from the Senate Republican President Pro Tempore.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Refer to then the Committee on Executive Nominations.

THE CLERK:

Communications from the Governor list of interim appointments.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Order that they be printed in the Journal.

THE CLERK:

Communication from the Governor, Executive and  
Legislative Nominations.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Refer to the Committee on Executive  
Nominations.

THE CLERK:

Communications from the Governor, Judicial  
Nominations.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Those will be referred to the Committee on  
Judiciary.

THE CLERK:

Communications and reports.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

So ordered.

THE CLERK:

Introduction of Bills list number one.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

That's also so ordered, Mr. Clerk.

Representative Currey of the 11th District, for what purposes do you rise, sir?

REP. CURREY (11TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recess subject to the Call of the Chair.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Before we recess I ask the Committee to inform the Senate to advise them that we are ready to meet in Joint Convention. That being said we stand in recess. (Gavel)

(On motion of Representative Curry of the 11th District, the house recessed at 10:52 o'clock a.m.,

to reconvene at the Call of the Chair)

(The House reconvened at 11:53 o'clock p.m.,  
Speaker Aresimowicz in the Chair.)

THE CLERK:

Members to the Chamber. The House of  
Representatives will reconvene immediately. Members  
to the Chamber.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

(Gavel) Will the House please come to order?  
Members take your seats. Guests that have seats,  
please take your seats, if not, I see you all  
standing up in the back. Representative Gentile of  
the 104th, for what purposes do you rise, Madam?

REP. GENTILE (104TH):

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that the  
Committee has met to inform the Senate and called

upon the Lieutenant Governor and informed the Senate that we are ready to receive its members in our Joint Session.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Thank you very much for your report, Representative Gentile. And I see the Senate is starting to assemble down in the Well of the House. Welcome. Representative Ritter?

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Mr. Speaker, nice to see you again. I move that we recess subject to the Call of the Chair.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Question before the Chamber is on recessing subject to the Call of the Chair. Is there objection? Hearing none, the House will stand in recess.

(On motion of Representative Ritter of the 1st District, the House recessed at 11:54 o'clock a.m.,

to reconvene at the Call of the chair.)

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

(Gavel) I see the Senators starting to assemble. As you know in the House we start promptly. The Governor is due to arrive at noon. At this time, it does give me great pleasure to welcome our colleagues from the Senate. I know they had their opening day this morning, but it is a pleasure to have you with us in the House today. Thank you. [Applause]

And both Senate Leaders behind me, Senator Looney, a very good friend, leader for many of the causes that I believe in and we've been fighting for for many years, Marty, welcome to the House.

And also, Senator Len Fasano, another good friend, you know us football guys tend to stick together. Senator Fasano, thank you for coming down to the House. And now also we're joined by our very good friend, someone who came out of the House, went

out to the comptroller and then spends her time as the Lieutenant Governor, but also up in the Senate, a friend to us all, fighting for working people around Connecticut, our Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman. [Applause]

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Thank you. Thank you, thank you very much. Please sit down. Please sit down. Thank you. Okay. [Applause]

Thank you. Okay. Sit down, come on. Okay, that's enough. Okay. Really, thank you very much. Okay, that's enough, really, please. Thank you very very much. Thank you. Will the Joint Convention please come to order? Members and guests please rise and direct your attention to the Senate Chaplain, Reverend James Nock who will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN REVEREND JAMES NOCK:

Let us pray. Almighty Father, we ask of your blessing on this Joint Convention as it comes

together this afternoon to be in a new legislative session for 2018. This will be a challenging session seeking evasive, seeking unknown, but find the reason for settling our problems together. For we are the Land of a Charter Oak. We are the area where originating ideas become part of our lives. So, therefore, let us go forward together seeking the truth. Seeking the solutions of the State's problems realizing there's no limit as to what we can achieve, but the limit of our own imagination. Amen.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Thank you. Thank you, Reverend Nock. At this time, I'd ask Mr. speaker, would you lead us in the Pledge of the Allegiance.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

(All) I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Thank you very much. Please be seated. I want to recognize and thank our other House Leaders, Majority Leader Matt Ritter and of course Minority Leader Themis Klarides for their leadership and of course I have to mention again, I will mention again, the Senate Leadership of Senator's Looney and Fasano and Duff, Senator Witkos could not be joining us today, but I thank them all for their leadership. You know, for me today is a special day, a different day. This is my -- my Senators heard this already, but I will repeat it.

This is my 35th opening day, three years as staff and 32 years as an elected official. Over these years many of you have become my family and I want to thank you for your friendship and your trust.

This is a bittersweet year for me and for some of you who are not seeking reelection as well. For those of you who are not running again, thank you for your service to this State that we all love.

This year as in the past years, we have a lot of work to do. We were elected to find solutions to very difficult problems and I know that by working together in a bipartisan fashion we can. There are other critical issues at stake as well.

The health and well-being of our residents. How we stand up for those who have been knocked down and to those who are doing the pushing. In my last year before you I'm asking you this year and, in the future, to continue moving forward. Democrat or Republican, Republican or Democrat we are united by love for Connecticut and our residents.

There are other States and other entities committed to rolling back rights and turning the clock back on progress. We cannot allow that retreat to happen here. In Connecticut we are proud of our values and our progress.

This session should reflect those values and that progress and our willingness to work together no matter which side of the aisle you sit on.

So, I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart, again, for your friendship, for giving up your time to serving the people of this State. To me, you all have a very difficult job, but you also give it and do it well.

So, is there anything on the Clerks desk -- [applause] thank you, thank you very much. Thank you, thank you, thank you. [Ringing] So, somebody is calling me. So, Mr. Clerk, is there anything on your desk?

THE CLERK:

I've got the Joint Convention Resolution No. 2 and 3.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President and by that warm applause you received I know that you are loved by not only the Senate, but the House by all

citizens of this great State and we thank you again for your service to all of us and to the State, you've done so much. So, thank you again, for everything you've done.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Thank you. Thank you. Okay. [Applause]  
That's enough. Okay, Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, would the Clerk please call Joint Convention Resolution No. 1. Okay. Resolution No. 2

THE CLERK:

This would be 2.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Okay. Would you call one and two.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Okay. Just two.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Just two, they just told me. Okay? Whatever.  
We know who really runs the Chambers around here.  
Mr. Clerk, would you do, sir, Resolution No. 2

THE CLERK:

Joint Convention Resolution No. 2, RESOLUTION  
RAISING A COMMITTEE TO INFORM THE GOVERNOR THAT THE  
SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ARE MET IN JOINT  
CONVENTION TO RECEIVE HIS BUDGET MESSAGE.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I  
move adoption of the Resolution.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Motion is on adoption, I'll try your minds, all  
those in favor please say aye? (All) Aye.

At this time, we'll appoint the leaders,  
Senator Duff, Senator Guglielmo, Representative

Ritter, Representative Candelora to invite the Governor to attend the Joint Session. Now.

[Laughter] Please okay. I would like to take at this time to introduce some of the dignitaries that are here with us today. Our own Secretary of State, Denise Merrill, former member of the House. There you go. [Applause]

Our State Comptroller, Kevin Lembo. [Applause]

And our fabulous Attorney General, George Jepsen. [Applause]

And I want to see who is here now, because we have our Former Speakers that are here today, we love them, wait a minute. You can't clap for them yet, I haven't mentioned their names yet. Don't you remember? Okay. Brendan Sharkey. [Applause]

Chris Donovan. [Applause]

And a guy that the Majority Leader really kind of knows a little bit more than we do, Thomas Ritter. [Applause]

We also of course have and I should recognize him again, is Reverend Nock who is here and Rabbi Lefkowitz is here. And of course, we have just been joined by our great Treasurer, Denise Nappier.  
[Applause]

I haven't seen the Committee yet. Nobody listens when I say rush, but at this time we will stand at ease until the Committee has finished their job. They will finish their job.

I believe that the Committee has now reported that they fulfilled their duties and they're coming in, I think they're coming. [Applause]

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's now my great pleasure to introduce our Governor, who now proudly goes by Grandpa. Over the past eight years he has worked incredibly hard to make Connecticut a better place to work, live and put down roots. His blood, sweat and heart have always been with the people of this State even during the most difficult decisions and during the most difficult times.

I'm honored to have had the opportunity to run with him, to work with him and to lead with him. Please welcome our Governor and Grace Elizabeth's grandfather, Governor Dannel Malloy. [Applause]

GOVERNOR DANDEL MALLOY:

Thank you, thank you. Great to be with you. Thank you. [Applause] Now I should point out that my granddaughter is destined for politics, all that applause didn't scare her. In fact, it may have excited her.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Governor Wyman, and my fellow state officials, ladies and gentlemen of the General Assembly, members of the clergy, and all the people of our great State: Thank you for the honor of inviting me once again into the people's House.

I want to thank and you have already done it, but I want to thank the best Lieutenant Governor in the whole wide world, Nancy Wyman. [Applause]

As always, let us thank Connecticut's brave men

and women serving our Nation here at home and around the globe. And finally, I do want to thank my wife Cathy and our children, and as I said for the first time, my granddaughter for all their love and support.

Historically, when I come before you to begin a new session, I spend much of my time focusing on the state budget and my ideas for keeping it in balance. This year, I purposely began that conversation a little early. On Monday I put forward a proposal to keep our budget in balance this fiscal year and next. And last week I issued a detailed plan to shore up our Special Transportation Fund to the benefit of every business and every family in Connecticut. Those plans and their supporting legislation are now before you.

As always, there will be plenty of times throughout the session for us to continue our conversations about responsible stewardship of state resources. I can assure you I plan to work with all of you on all of those things. And to be sure, we

have a lot of work to do. But for this day, with this opportunity, and with this honor to address you once again, I'd like to do something different.

I'd like to begin the 2018 legislative session by focusing our attention on just one thing. Something that is a simple concept, but also a bold aspiration.

I'd like to talk about fairness. Fairness lies at the very center of our national origin, and our national purpose. It is part of the American promise that if freedom means anything, it means a fair shot at a decent life for all of our people. Fairness is also the compact we make with one another in our homes, in our neighborhoods, and yes, in our workplaces. It's the golden rule we teach our children, to treat others as you wish to be treated.

Now, no matter your creed or your culture, no matter when or how you or your ancestors arrived in this Country, fairness is a common sensibility we all hold dear. It is a touchstone of what it means

to be an American. And here in Connecticut, the pursuit of fairness has been a constant throughout our history.

After all, Connecticut is the birthplace of John Brown, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Fairness inspired our state heroine, Prudence Crandall, when in 1832 she defied unjust laws by inviting Black women from around the County here to Connecticut to be educated. In 1869 fairness drove Frances Ellen Burr and Isabella Beecher Hooker to form the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, helping lead the way nationally in the fight to allow women to vote.

Here in Hartford, restaurant cooks, and waiters sought fairness in 1902 when they formed Connecticut's first Black labor union, fighting for their declared principles of "living wages, justice, protection, and equal rights." And in 1943, fairness was demanded by the inmates of our Danbury prison, when they staged a 135-day hunger strike to protest racial segregation in their dining hall.

Because of their efforts, Danbury became the very first federal prison in America to have integrated meals amongst their inmates.

This common thread of fairness has woven its way through Connecticut's history, all the way to the present. In recent years, we have worked hard to ensure that when it comes to equity, justice, and basic compassion, we have it and express it for one another. Our actions have lived up to our rhetoric. We have been driven by Connecticut Fairness. Connecticut Fairness recognizes that love comes in all forms. It's why in 2008 we became just the third state in our Nation to legalize gay marriage. [Applause]

Connecticut Fairness means fighting discrimination wherever we see it. It's why in 2011 we ensured that all people's rights were protected regardless of their gender identity or expression. Connecticut Fairness means that people should be valued in their place of work. It's why we were the first state in the Nation to raise our minimum wage

over ten dollars. [Applause]

Connecticut Fairness means that we protect survivors of domestic violence. It's why in 2016 we prohibited the possession of a firearm for anyone who has become subject to a temporary restraining order.

Connecticut Fairness means we don't punish children for the actions of their parents. It is why we passed the Connecticut DREAM Act. We make sure that kids brought to this Country by their parents still have access to affordable higher education. And we should be proud of that. And Connecticut Fairness means we help those most in need. It is why we have welcomed vulnerable people when other State's would not. From our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico to those fleeing war and poverty around the globe, simply put, Connecticut Fairness means we take of one another, especially our most vulnerable.

We reach out to one another across our great cities and towns, across our neighborhood streets and across the aisle in state government.

This year, I urge you to consider Connecticut's rich tradition of fairness in the context of a national and global landscape that is changing by the hour. It is leaving many of our constituents feeling anxious about their future and about the future of their State and Nation. Today, too many people are falling behind financially, even as they work harder and harder. The gap between the rich and the working poor continues to grow.

Many historically marginalized groups are still subject to harassment, oppression and unequal treatment. Too many of our fellow citizens are denied a real chance, let alone a second chance at a good and productive life. Too many people are embracing a newfound disregard for truth. It's a bizarre reality where facts are called fake and the free press is mocked and maligned in a way that we have never ever seen before.

My friends, we find ourselves at a defining moment in our history, as a State and as a Nation. We can no longer afford the luxury of silence, or

the alluring comfort of the status quo. This year, in the face of growing national inequity and unfairness, I want to begin a conversation about a series of commonsense changes we can adopt to advance our proud tradition of Connecticut Fairness. I'm going to touch on a number of diverse topics that reach across the spectrum of services we offer our citizens. As I share them I want you to keep in mind that each of these proposals builds upon work we have already begun together in this Hall over the last seven years.

Now, we will not be able to solve every problem. Or right every wrong. But together we can send a signal to the rest of the Nation and indeed the rest of the world that Connecticut leaders will always recognize injustice and inequity, and that we will meet it head on with compassion, with love and with fairness. [Applause]

Let's start with a basic human right that should never be out of reach for anyone. Let's talk about healthcare. When the Federal Government

finally gave Connecticut the chance to provide affordable healthcare to more of our citizens, Nancy Wyman got to work. Under Nancy's leadership, Connecticut has built one of the most successful healthcare exchanges in the Nation. We've cut the number of uninsured people in half. Just this year 100,000 residents found their health insurance through our exchange. But now affordable healthcare is under assault in Washington. If we fail to act in Connecticut premiums will rise and lifesaving treatments will be put out of reach for more and more families.

Connecticut Fairness should mean keeping health insurance affordable for everyone. We must take action to ensure stability in our insurance marketplace and to contain premium costs for consumers. We can do something our neighbors in Massachusetts have already done on a bipartisan basis and under a Republican Governor. Together, let's pass a bill that preserves the most vital elements of the Affordable Care Act, including the

individual mandate. Let's make it clear that in Connecticut, healthcare is a fundamental right. And while we're working on healthcare, we can do one more thing, we can pass a law that ensures that irrespective of what happens in Washington, birth control for Connecticut women will remain cost-free. [Applause].

Connecticut Fairness also means that hard-working people should know that they will not lose their job just for getting sick. It's why in 2011 we passed the first "paid-sick" law in the Nation. [Applause]

Since then, eight states and Washington D.C. have followed our lead. A person should not worry about losing wages when they catch the flu. A parent should not need to choose between lost pay and taking care of a sick child. And customers should not worry about being served by a sick employee.

This year the opportunity is before us to improve our paid sick leave laws. So, let's catch

up with State's that have now surpassed us on this front. Together, let us pass a bill that closes loopholes, protects even more of our workers, and makes Connecticut a healthier place to live and to work. [Applause]

Connecticut Fairness also means that as we worry about the health of our residents, we also need to worry about the health of their environment. The science is indisputable. Our climate is changing. Temperatures continue to rise, the ice caps continue to melt and our weather is more severe than at any time in modern history. In 2008, Connecticut set ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and to the credit of many people in this Chamber, we hit that goal eight years early. [Applause] In recent years, we've diversified the kinds of energy we use, bringing in more than a billion dollars in new investment in fuel cells and other green energy and creating 13,000 new jobs along the way. But we have to do more, because Connecticut Fairness means caring not just about our

own immediate interests, but also about the interests of future generations. And the truth is, future generations face an undeniable threat, sea levels in Connecticut are now set to rise nearly two feet by the year 2050.

To help our communities up and down our beautiful shoreline, we need to create a new comprehensive resiliency plan, one that will give Connecticut towns the tools and the resources they need to protect their residents. And we can't stop there. We have to lower carbon emissions everywhere. We have to once again make Connecticut a National leader in green energy. Together, let's create a new, more aggressive target for clean air. Let's mandate that by the year 2030, 75 percent of Connecticut energy is clean energy. [Applause]

Connecticut Fairness also means that people across our State should have access to safe, affordable housing. For too many working families, the cost of housing dominates their monthly budget. The simple truth is that no one should have to

choose between a roof over their head or healthcare. A roof over their head or warm clothing. A roof over their head or nutritious food for their children. These are choices that no family should have to face.

It's why over the past seven years we've funded nearly 20,000 new units of affordable housing in Connecticut. It's why we have worked so hard to make Connecticut just the second State in the Nation to end homelessness amongst Veterans. [Applause]

And why we have led the Nation in the fight to end chronic homelessness for all of our people who live in Connecticut. We know that a diverse mix of housing creates better neighborhoods. It enables young people graduating college to move back to their hometowns. It allows seniors to remain in their communities. It lets teachers and police officers and firefighters actually live in the towns that they serve.

Unfortunately, there are still too many places in Connecticut where the supply of affordable

housing I simply not keeping up with the demand. We need to take action this year to build more housing. We need to incentivize cities and towns to develop more inclusive options for their residents. We can do it by building upon the efforts of the bipartisan Fair Housing Working Group that has been focused on recommitting Connecticut to this important endeavor.

Together, let's pass a bill that ensures that all people have a place to live, regardless of their income or their zip code. [Applause]

Connecticut Fairness also means that the well-being of our constituents always takes precedence over the desires of the powerful special interests. We have held true to this maxim before. During some of the darkest days in our history, in the aftermath of an unspeakable tragedy of gun violence, state leaders emerged united and determined. We passed bipartisan gun violence prevention laws that are among the strongest in the Nation, and the people of Connecticut are safer for it. In fact, over the last four years violent crime has dropped faster in

Connecticut than in any other State in the Nation.

[Applause]

While Connecticut has done its part, Congress continues to capitulate to the demands of the NRA over the demands of the American people. It is not right, and it is not fair. We have a duty to build on our past work together, and to continue protecting Connecticut families.

After last year's horror in Las Vegas, Congress tried and failed to ban modifications that allow weapons to fire at machine-gun like speed. These devices are cheap, they are deadly, and they are completely and utterly unnecessary in our society today. [Applause]

After all, it is only fair that small children not face terror in their schools, that churches remain places of worship and not scenes of violence and that concerts are venues for celebrations, not carnage.

Surely, regardless of where each of us stands

on the Second Amendment, we can all agree that no innocent person should know the terror of gunfire raining down on them at a rate of 90 bullets every ten seconds.

Together, let us do what Congress could not do. Let us close dangerous loopholes and ban bump stocks in the State of Connecticut. [Applause]

Here's something else Connecticut Fairness recognizes: Everyone deserves a legitimate second chance. This includes our youngest adults who are just beginning to build a life of their own. Unfortunately, all too often, a young person's opportunity to a genuine second chance is unfairly derailed before they're even old enough to buy alcohol or rent a car in Connecticut.

The research is clear: The brains of young adults are still developing well into their twenties. And the fact is, under current law, the infractions of the vast, vast majority of young adults in our court system do not result in even a single day of jail. And yet, simply appearing in

adult court becomes an indelible mark on their record, potentially damaging them for life as they apply for college or a job.

In response, since 2010, Connecticut has twice raised the age for which constitutes a juvenile in our court system. I want to say that again. We haven't done it just once, but twice. The result has been less crime, fewer victims, fewer prisoners and reduced cost to taxpayers. [Applause] In fact, our efforts have been hailed as a national model for success. We know what works.

This year it's time to take another measured, sensible step forward. We can ensure that young adults who have not fully matured are not branded for the rest of their lives for mistakes they made when they were young.

Together, let us pass a bill that offers Connecticut young adults a real second chance. Let's give them classrooms instead of prison cells and opportunity instead of incarceration. We can do this. [Applause]

Another thing that Connecticut Fairness entails is protecting a person's right to vote. Our democracy depends on open and fair elections, and Connecticut has a track record of protecting and expanding voting rights.

In 2012, we passed "same-day registration" so that eligible voters could sign-up on Election Day and cast their ballot in the town in which they reside. In 2016, we implemented one of the Country's most comprehensive "motor-voter" programs, making registration easier and more convenient. But still, our modern lives and busy schedules don't always align with a 14-hour block of time for voting. People who work hard and follow the rules should be able to express their most fundamental democratic right. That's why I will continue working with Secretary of State Denise Merrill and with everyone in this Chamber to make voting more accessible.

Here's one simple, but powerful way we can start. Together this session, we can pass a Constitutional Amendment that would allow all

Connecticut residents to vote early for any reason.

[Applause] And on this topic, let us not waste a moment of our efforts to make voting even easier and even more accessible. Let's plan ahead. Let's look at the best practices around the Nation for increasing voter participation.

To that end, today I will issue an Executive Order directing my administration to explore and report on the feasibility and benefits of creating a vote-by-mail system in Connecticut. Let's work together and get this done. [Applause]

The final few ideas I want to share with you today are all squarely focused on furthering the cause of fairness in the workplace.

We can start with fair wages. Holding a full-time job should afford a person a standard of living that meets their basic needs. [Applause]

As I reminded you previously, in 2014 we led the Nation by raising our minimum wage to more than \$10.00 dollars an hour. But the truth is that over time the cost of living continues to rise. Basic

necessities like rent and food and utilities continue to increase. As a result, family budgets are more strained. We should be leaders on this issue again.

Now, Senator Looney, you have been a stalwart champion for working people in our State. I am committed to working with you and member of both chambers this session. Together, let us pass a bill that ensures that not another January comes and goes without a raise in the Connecticut minimum wage.

[Applause]

I also want to focus for a moment on more than 8,000 professionals. They care for our loved ones who are elderly or disabled. These hardworking people do lifesaving work, and they do it in-home, which is far better for their patients and quite frankly for Connecticut taxpayers. They deserve a livable wage and to finally be covered for something we all take for granted, workers compensation.

[Applause]

A negotiated contract that will soon come

before you for approval will do just that. It's the right and fair thing to do, and I urge you to support it.

Connecticut Fairness also means that people should be paid according to what they know, their own personal know-how and skill, not their gender or their race. We know that asking for salary histories disproportionately impact women and people of color. When a person begins their career underpaid, they are unlikely to ever catch-up. That's why Connecticut took a stand against unfair compensation practices. Together, we passed a law prohibiting employers from silencing workers when it comes to salary.

But we have more work to do. On average, women in Connecticut still only earn 82 cents for every dollar that a man makes in the same or similar position. For women of color, the disparity is even more glaring. Our moral compass demands that we do better. [Applause]

This year, we should build upon prior

successful efforts to promote fair pay. We should encourage employers to base their salaries on the qualifications of the applicant. The demands of the given job and the value of that position in the marketplace. Not on how much someone was previously paid in another position. [Applause]

I know that legislative leaders of both parties, as well as Senator Bye, Representative Porter and others are working hard on this topic and I want to work with you. Together this year, let's pass a bill that helps make sure every person in Connecticut receives equal pay for equal work. [Applause]

Connecticut Fairness also means that everyone has the right to feel secure and free of harassment in their place of work. The fact is, most Americans spend the majority of their waking hours at work. It is also true that our places of employment often come with an innate power structure that can leave too many people vulnerable and open to abuse. Far too many people have been denigrated, intimidated

and yes, violated in their workplace. I want to applaud the legions of courageous women across our Nation who have come forward to share their stories of sexual harassment.

The reality is that we are long overdue for an honest reckoning over harassment in the workplace.

[Applause]

There is an immediate need to change.

[Applause]

There is an immediate need to change workplace culture, from small towns to Hollywood, from the mailroom to the boardroom and from the jailhouse to the statehouse, all the way to the White House.

[Applause]

The truth is very often, men see women first and foremost as our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters. But women are more, they are not simply a reflection of the men around them. [Applause]

Their value is defined, their value should be defined by something external, not by something

external, but rather something innate, a basic human dignity we all possess and we must all recognize in one another, male and female alike. [Applause] Let me, let me be very clear, let me be very clear that that is why we need to hear the voices of the victims and we need to believe them and we need to act. [Applause]

This session, let us have a conversation about respect, about boundaries and about basic human decency. Let's improve and expand training in all workplaces, public and private. [Applause]

Let's empower bystanders to help stop harassment. Let's focus on changing our culture, not just changing compliance. And let's make sure that these efforts endure beyond this year and beyond this generation.

Together, let us pass a bill that moves this important conversation forward, because we know it can no longer wait. Time is up. We must act.

My friends, as we begin another session

together, I am reminded of my mother's words. She told me every day that we live together, that we have an obligation to leave the world a better place for our having lived in it. That is an obligation we all feel. It is why we ran for office in the first place. It is what led us into this Chamber. It is our shared belief in Connecticut Fairness.

Together, we have the advantage. We have strength in numbers. Good people are never outnumbered. Not in this State, not in this Nation. Again, and again this past year, in the face of growing anxiety across our Nation and around the globe, we saw clear examples of common humanity. As minority groups have been marginalized and harassed and as the government deports law-abiding residents, communities are banding together to say no, and to demand that Congress take action. [Applause]

As gerrymandering and voter suppression have taken root in far too many places in our Nation, people who just a few short years ago would never have considered running for office are now putting

their names on the ballot and winning. [Applause]

They are standing up and demanding to be heard.

And as women from every walk of life have faced degradation from the highest office in our land, they are now marching en masse in some of the largest single-day demonstrations in our Nation's History. Let us offer, let us offer a beacon of hope to all of these people fighting on the right side of fairness.

We can hold fast to our common humanity. We can strive to evermore, to be ever more inclusive, and evermore compassionate. We can stop the tides of prejudice and hate from washing away our progress and drowning our ideals. We, we need to fight together to build a more just and more equitable society. We cannot be deterred.

History will judge us by our action this year, this session, to build a better, fairer Connecticut. So, let's go to work. [Applause]

God bless you and God bless the great State of

Connecticut and the United States of America.

Just in case you needed a reminder of what we  
work for. God bless you all. [Applause]

(Gavel)

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Senator Duff? Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President,  
would the Clerk call Joint Convention Resolution No.  
3, please.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Mr. Clerk?

THE CLERK:

Senate Joint Convention Resolution No. 3,  
RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PRINTING OF THE GOVERNOR'S  
BUDGET MESSAGE LCO No. 354 introduced by Senator's  
Duff, Witkos and Representative Ritter.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the resolution please.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

The question is on adoption, I'll try your minds. All those in favor, please say aye? (All)  
Aye.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

All right, that was strong. The resolution is adopted. Members and guests, (Gavel), members and guests, please rise and direct your attention to House Chaplain Rabbi Lefkowitz, who will give us the benediction.

CHAPLAIN RABBI LEFKOWITZ:

My God, our God, help us to watch our language, to speak to each other without deception. Without ridicule, crudeness and thoughtlessness. Help us to be better listeners, to listen so that others can

speaking their truth without interruption and criticism. May all our actions be acceptable to you and sweet to you. And may we pray for peace in our State, in our Nation and all of who inhabit this world. We say, Amen. (All) Amen. [Applause]

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Thank you, Rabbi.

CHAPLAIN RABBI LEFKOWITZ:

Thank you.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

Thank you. Thank you, Rabbi. Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move adjournment of the Joint Convention.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

All of those in favor, please signify by saying aye. (All) Aye.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WYMAN:

We are now -- the Joint Convention is dissolved. Have a wonderful day.

(Upon motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, it was voted that the Convention be dissolved.

The President thereupon dissolved the convention and the Senate withdrew.)

(The House reconvened at 12:53 o'clock p.m., Deputy Speaker Ryan in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

[Gavel]Will the House please come to order?  
Will the House please come to order? Is there any business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CLERK:

No business, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Thank you. Are there any announcements or introductions? Are there any announcements or introductions? Are there any announcements or introductions? Representative Currey?

REP. CURREY (11TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn subject to the Call of the Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

The motion is to adjourn subject to the Call of the Chair. Is there objection? Is there objection? Hearing none, the House is adjourned subject to the Call of the Chair.

(On motion of Representative Currey of the 11th District, the House adjourned at 12:54 o'clock p.m., sine die.)

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 84 pages is a complete and accurate transcription of a digital sound recording of the House Proceedings on Wednesday, February 7, 2018.

I further certify that the digital sound recording was transcribed by the word processing department employees of Alpha Transcription, under my direction.

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Alpha Transcription  
3244 Ridge View Ct 104  
Lake Ridge VA 22192