The Senate was called to order at 2:48 p.m., the President in the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

[Crosstalk] Good afternoon, Senator Duff. [Gavel] The Senate will come to order. Good afternoon, Senator Duff. And we are going to start, and we are gonna ask all who are in the chamber to please stand and direct your attention to our chaplain, Father Nock, who will lead us in a prayer.

FATHER NOCK:

Let us pray. Almighty Father we ask your blessing on our circle as we come together this afternoon with three weeks to go in this session.

Help us to use this time wisely, by trusting in your guidance and trusting in our own creativity. And we ask this of You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Father Nock. I now invite Senator Slap to come up and lead us in the Pledge.
SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

[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.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Good afternoon, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. It only seems like this morning I saw you. Madam President --

THE CHAIR:

[Laughing] The sun is shining, however, which is a good thing.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

The sun is shining. That is good news for us here. Madam President, I move that all items on Senate Agenda No. 1, dated Wednesday, May 15, 2019 --

CLERK:

Senate --

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Oh, I’m sorry. Mr. Clerk, do you have Senate Agenda No. 1 on your desk please?

CLERK:
The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda No. 1, dated Wednesday, May 15, 2019.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Now it's my turn. Madam President, I move all items on Senate Agenda No. 1, dated Wednesday, May 15, 2019, be acted upon as indicated and that the Agenda be incorporated by reference into the Senate Journal and the Senate Transcript.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, Mr. Clerk.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Yes.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President, for the purposes of marking?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):
[Background talking] Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 30, Calendar 371, Senate Bill 375, I'd like to mark that go. And on Calendar page 48, Calendar 141, Senate Bill 927, I'd like to mark that item go. And if the Senate could stand at ease for a moment please.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, and those notations will be made. The Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Before we go on our first bill, I have some referrals please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 10, Calendar 146, Senate Bill 273, I'd like to refer that item to the Appropriations Committee.

THE CHAIR:

So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

And on Calendar page 11, Calendar 168, Senate Bill 904, I'd like to refer that item to the Finance Committee.

THE CHAIR:
So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The Senate will stand at ease for a second.

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if the Clerk can call the first item on the go list, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 30, Calendar No. 371, substitute for Senate Bill Number 375, AN ACT CONCERNING NURSING HOME STAFFING LEVELS.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Abrams.

CLERK:

There are amendments.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I would like to yield to my colleague, Senator Anwar, the Vice-Chair of Public Health.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Do you accept the yield, Senator Anwar?

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Yes, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Wonderful. So, please -- please proceed, Senator.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Senator Abrams. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Yes, Madam President. There is a strike-all amendment, and my understanding is that the Clerk is in possession of an amendment, LCO 8232, and I would ask that the Clerk please call the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.
Senator Anwar, please proceed.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

I move adoption of the amendment and ask that its reading be waived and seek leave of the chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Please summarize.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

So, Madam President, this bill is titled, AN ACT CONCERNING -- the amendment is titled, AN ACT CONCERNING NURSING HOME STAFFING LEVELS. We have known that there's been an issue, as a number of people who are in facilities and nursing homes -- we have recognized there are specific staffing levels that are expected. But, if we were to ask the nursing home and the administration, they would claim that the nursing home have the right amount of employees and staff that are taking care of the patients' and the residents' needs. However, the difference is that if you would talk to some of the residents or the family members or if you talk to the staff, they would actually feel otherwise.

What we are seeking through this is to have a transparency built into the system where there would
be an expectation that the nursing homes would actually have -- at the beginning of the day they would be providing the information, and it would be publicly known and acceptable and available to the staff and anyone who is seeking that insight. This would help the transparency but also make sure that the family members as well as the staff as well as the residents, if they have any questions, those questions are easily accessible. This would hopefully increase the quality of care and the support system that the nursing homes have, and with that, I would ask our esteemed Senate to support this amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Anwar. Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, let me try your minds. All in favor of the amendment please signify by saying aye. ["Aye" in background] Opposed? The amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the legislation as amended? Senator Somers. Good afternoon.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Good afternoon. I hope everybody is feeling well rested after last night.

THE CHAIR:

Oh, absolutely.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):
[Laughing] So, Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of LCO No. 7763. I ask the Clerk to please call the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 7763, Senate Schedule B.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the amendment and waive the reading and seek leave to summarize the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. This amendment has to do with state-run nursing homes/hospitals, and what it would require is that if any state employee is convicted of or pleads guilty to a crime, which is a felony, related to the care of a person in state custody or state care by a state employee in a treatment of a state-operated facility, as defined in 17a-458, the attorney general shall apply to the superior court for an order to revoke or reduce the pension of that
person. And this, it comes in light of what we have seen as far as one of the worst abuse scandals that we have had here in the state of Connecticut, actually probably across the country, in a state-run facility that the state employees are responsible for the care of the most vulnerable patients.

We have had ten people arrested. We have had 30 people lose their jobs, and of the ten, some have pleaded guilty. One person is facing nine counts, just been found guilty, and yet during their tenure, they were systematically tormenting patients, increasing their overtime, and will benefit from this. They will still receive their pensions in jail. I find that to be egregious and so do so many people that I have talked to. I've heard from numerous constituents and citizens in the state of Connecticut across the state on how unfair this seems.

So, the severity of the crime related to the care and treatment by the state employee of the person in the state-operated facility would give the attorney general the ability to decide whether they want to seek revocation of the pension or not, but it gives them the ability to please go after that. And they could base it back on withdrawing all the overtime that was calculated towards the pension and reduce it to the standard pension, but it's something that I feel very strongly we need to address here. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Senator Anwar.
SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I actually recognize and respect the fact where this amendment with LCO No. 7763 is coming from, the Honorable Senator Somers, and I have been studying this issue and I truly understand the challenges and concerns that are brought forward, my only hesitancy about this is this is not relevant to the transparency of the nursing home staffing that we are looking at in the current bill. While this amendment has a role maybe in some other vehicle, but this is probably not the one to look at and/or use at this time for the Transparency Bill on the nursing home staffing because this is looking at the nursing home staffing across the board. With that, I would urge my colleagues to not vote in favor of this amendment, and if we were to have a vote, we should do this by roll call, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, a roll call on this amendment will be ordered. Is there any further discussion on the amendment that is before us? Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, -- oh, Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you, Madam President. You know, while I thank my good and fellow Public Health senator, Senator Anwar, this is something that does apply because the state is funding nursing homes. We do this through Medicaid/Medicare, and these are, at times -- if you wanna look at it this way, the state is paying for the salaries of the folks that are taking care of
those people in nursing homes. So, it's similar. It is germane, the fact that we have state employees that are working in facilities that sometimes are covered by Medicaid, sometimes are not, but in their job as a nurse, they are responsible for caring for the most vulnerable, just like they are in a nursing home.

And to have this type of systematic abuse occur when you agitate a patient to the point where you are required to then work overtime because you need two people to care for the person because they become agitated versus one, and to collect for years and years overtime based on this practice, and then to be charged and now convicted of a crime and yet still be able to collect your overtime payment based on your pension -- because it's been added towards your pension -- seems really wrong. I mean, the state of Connecticut should take a moral stand on this and say we will not tolerate our state employees that abuse patients that our in our care.

And that's why I do think it is important that we take a stand, and it is important that we empower the attorney general to make that decision and to make sure that it sets a standard, so people will not do that. In no other profession would you be able to -- and I say this as a physician, as a nurse -- to abuse a patient and then expect your company or your hospital to pay your pension because you are found guilty of a crime of your job that you're doing. And this is something that I think really goes to the core of who we are as a state. We have made drastic changes in trying to change the culture there, and we are making progress, but this is still something that's looming and it's something that, in my opinion, really needs to be addressed. We have
gone after state policemen's pensions for much, much less than this, and I think it's something that I hope this circle can embrace and support. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Will you remark further on the amendment? Will you remark further on the amendment? Oh, Senator Abrams, I do apologize.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

No problem. Thank you, Madam President. I don't disagree with my colleague's remarks about the issue of people collecting either overtime or pensions after having behaved in criminal ways. However, the reference is to a different kind of facility and a facility that we already have a bill on, and I think that this amendment would be more appropriately placed on that bill and not on this current bill, which is, as Senator Anwar has spoken about, dealing with transparency in staffing levels in nursing homes. And so, I also would agree with Senator Anwar that this would not be an amendment that I would support on this particular bill, although I do believe that it would be very appropriate on another bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Thank you, Senator Abrams. Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, Mr. Clerk, would you kindly call the roll, and the machines will be open.

CLERK:
An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 375, Senate Amendment B, LCO No. 7763. An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate, Senate Amendment B, LCO 7763.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the senators voted? Have all the senators voted? The machine will be locked, and the Clerk would kindly call the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 375, Senate Amendment B, LCO No. 7763.

- Total number voting: 35
- Total number voting Yea: 14
- Total voting Nay: 21
- Absent and not voting: 1

THE CHAIR:


SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of LCO No. 7523, and I ask that the Clerk -- to please read the amendment -- or call the amendment.

THE CHAIR:
Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 7523, Senate Schedule C.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would ask for permission to summarize?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. This LCO effectively requires that the Commission of Social Service would provide a rate increase of one percent to the nursing home facilities as of June 30, 2019, due to the impending strike that we have heard about here. We have not finished the budget, so I'm hoping that this could be incorporated into the budget to help avert the strike that we have heard about happening shortly. So, that's what this amendment is for, and I hope that my fellow colleagues will support this amendment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Will you remark?

Senator Anwar.
SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, Madam President, first I wanted to thank my honorable colleague and the Ranking Member of the Public Health Committee for this specific amendment. I just wanted to clarify a couple of points, through you, Madam President, if I may ask?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, please. Senator Somers, prepare yourself.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Through you, Madam President. Senator Somers, is there a fiscal note associated with this please?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, there will be a fiscal note associated with that. I don't have the exact number as of yet, but this is being done to help avert the potential strike that we will -- that we've been hearing about that's supposed to occur shortly -- I think the day before session ends. And -- but I do not have that final number yet. I know we're still in the midst of budget negotiations, so that's what this is intended to do. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Senator Anwar.
SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. It is my understanding that the ask is about a one percent, is that accurate?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, through you, Madam President. We're asking for a one percent rate -- it's a one percent over the rate that the facilities are receiving now, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

And, Madam President, is the one percent -- was this based on a calculation or just a -- an assessment of immediate needs?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. I believe this is what the -- the workers of the nursing homes are asking for.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I'd just like to make a comment. Thank you, through you, thank Senator Somers. I will just make a few comments now.

I actually, in agreement with respect to the need for the -- and I've said it many times publicly that there is a critical need for our state to provide the appropriate level of increase for Medicaid for the nursing home patients. Actually, the fastest growing or the largest segment is the many, many patients which are Medicare and Medicaid patients. This group of patients need more support, and it's important to actually have more resources allocated from the Medicaid and increase that. The numbers actually that have been looked at are two to four percent rather than one percent, but my concern about this particular amendment is that this is not the place because this bill that we are looking at and we are having a conversation on is more about transparency on the workforce in the nursing homes. Again, the fiscal note that I understand has been associated with the current amendment is about $11.6 million dollars. We need to have the Appropriation and the Finance Committees do the work that they're doing, and that would be the place to address this issue and not through this amendment. So, I would actually encourage the honorable senators in the circle to consider not supporting this amendment because this is not the place for addressing this issue. And -- and I would -- when we do a roll call, I would request that a roll call be called for this.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Your request for roll call is noted. Will you remark further? Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Again, I will disagree with my colleague. If this is not the place to put an amendment on a bill for a nursing home when we're pending -- we have a pending strike, I'm not sure exactly what is. It's absolutely applicable in the fact that this may be a great bill as far as transparency goes, but we're not gonna have any transparency when we don't have anybody working in our nursing homes. And, quite frankly, the cost to have these folks go on strike is staggering when you have to replace them with temporary workers until they come back.

We would eat up that small increase of $11.6 million in -- in a matter of weeks if we don't come to an understanding. And I wanna make sure that the people that are working in the nursing homes know how important their jobs are. And I personally know how hard they work every day to care for those who are the most vulnerable, who are Medicaid patients, and I wanna send a message to them that it is important enough for me to put an amendment on here to make sure that they are compensated with the increase that they need. So, I would -- I would respectfully disagree with that. Thank you.
Thank you, Senator Somers. Will you remark further? If not, would the Clerk kindly call a roll call vote? The machine will be open.

CLERK:

An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate, Senate Bill 375, Senate Amendment C, LCO 7523. An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate, Senate Amendment C, LCO 7523. Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate.

An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the senators voted? Have all the senators voted? The machine will be locked, and the Clerk would kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 375, Senate Amendment C, LCO No. 7523.

| Total number voting       | 36 |
| Total number voting Yea   | 14 |
| Total voting Nay          | 22 |
| Absent and not voting     | 0  |

THE CHAIR:

The amendment fails. Will you remark further on the legislation before us? Senator Kelly.
SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, to the proponent of the bill, I have a couple of questions.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Could you explain just the difference between the strike-all and the original bill?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Through you, Madam President. Actually, after the bill had been proposed, there were a number of stakeholders who met and looked at the language, and this was cleaning up the language more than anything else -- the majority of it -- but there some specific penalties that were placed in it that were already in place in the state statute. So, it was simplified and made in a better language. There was no substantial change overall.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):
Thank you, Madam President. So, with regards to -- could you explain what -- what actually the strike-all does? It appears to be a notice that needs to be posted. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Through you, Madam President. Can you repeat the question?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Certainly, could you explain what the strike-all actually does? I think there's a notice requirement, and then there was something else with regards to retaliation and housing. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

So, what it does is it revises the definition of transportation duty, so that the staffing hours posted may include staff that are just assisting residents to and from vehicles for a very short duration. It allows the nursing -- the staff in
administrative or management positions to be included in the posting of direct care staff, but only if such staff is providing direct patient care during the primary portion of their shift.

The nursing homes asked for this because there are situations when a nurse is in such a position she or he is also performing direct patient care or is required to perform such care during their shift due to call-outs, etc., and also defines primary portion of their shift. It also adds separate listing of transportation duty direct care staff to schedule consistent with intent of underlying bill and revised changes, and there's a technical correction to make clear the new posting requirement is the citation and adds definition of direct patient care.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. And before we continue with the discussion on the bill, I would welcome our friends in the gallery and just remind you that video recordings [background coughing] and photos are prohibited by the Senate rules. So, thank you very much for respecting our rules, and welcome. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I thank you Senator Anwar for your answers. What we're looking at here, I believe, is transparency [ringing] into an issue regarding patients and residents of nursing home facilities. What we always endeavor to do is to seek to make sure that they get not only the best quality of care but best quality of life. And I know that when I was in your shoes, when I was first
elected in the 2010 election, I came in with then-Governor Dannel Malloy. The Rell administration had concluded, and then Governor Malloy's administration started, and unfortunately for the past now nine years, what I saw that administration do was systematically impact the quality of life for people who are on and participating in the Medicaid program.

One of the things that I felt was a very unkind -- probably the most cruel cut that the Malloy administration did to individuals who resided in nursing homes was to cut the Personal Needs Allowance. That Personal Needs Allowance, which today is only $60 dollars, when I was first elected was $72 dollars -- $72 dollars was all an individual had after they had spent their life savings, lost their home, lost their personal belongings. All they had left from their income, Social Security, pension, savings was $72 dollars a month to pay for things like a haircut, getting your nails clipped, shampoo, chocolate.

This is a dignity issue, and our seniors deserve to be treated better than that. They deserved to be treated better then, and they deserve to be treated better now. I didn't like that cut. I argued against that cut. And every year since then I have proposed a bill to replenish that Personal Needs Allowance, and the dollar amount is not that much. It's only $1.3 million dollars a year in an over $20 billion dollar budget -- that's right folks $20 billion -- we can't find $1 million dollars a year to give to those people in the greatest generation. These are Americans who fought and made our country what it is today, and we can't even give them the dignity of a $72 dollar Personal Needs Allowance.
I can't believe these bills don't just zip right through and go right to the top, but for whatever reason, this is where we decide to cut. Cut the vulnerable. Cut the people that actually paid their dues, that did everything right, and now in the twilight in their life they're left $60 bucks right now in the state of Connecticut, which doesn't get you very far.

So, Madam President, the Clerk has LCO 7525 amendment, would he please call that?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 7525, Senate Schedule D.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the amendment, waive the reading, and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):
Thank you, Madam President. What this bill -- or this amendment does is pretty straightforward. It just raises the -- the amount from $60 to $72. I think it's a -- it's a prudent amendment. The budget has not been set. There are plenty of places in the state budget to find $1 million dollars on an annual basis, and I would -- I believe this is pertinent. And I know I'm probably going to hear that this is not the right bill to do it on, but I really do think that this is the time, this is the place, and this is the bill to do this because these people deserve the extra $12 dollars to bring them up to a human level. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. I rise to support this amendment, and to my good fellow senator, Senator Kelly, I think this is exactly the right place to put this amendment on. I'd like to share with you the story of somebody that I had the privilege of meeting, and her name is Kate. She is 45 years old. She lives in my district in a nursing home. She is a Medicaid patient, and she suffers from MS. She had a thriving career and job before she was stricken with MS. She is not able to walk any longer and lives in a nursing home now. I met with her about the $60 dollar a month stipend, I'll call it, or allowance that she has, and it was something that I won't forget. It brings tears to your eyes when you think about somebody trying to get a haircut, buying a comb. She has a daughter that she can't buy presents for at Christmas.
This is the most vulnerable part of our society, and this is where we cut. These people need to have a sense of dignity. She couldn't buy a new pair of shoes. She hasn't bought a new outfit in years. So, $800 dollars a year -- that's all they have right now for disposable income, to buy, as Senator Kelly said, a piece of chocolate, to be able to go to see a movie. Just think about how much it costs to see a movie if you go with your family. The days of my dating years are older. You can't take a date out for $20 dollars anymore to see movies.

So, this just brings them to a level that we had years ago. So, they have $12 dollars more. Think about what your Starbucks coffee costs you every day. This is something that folks in that position can't even dream of. So, I think this is, you know, drop in the bucket, pennies in the bank for a population that deserves this.

Now we hear a lot of different things about people deserving, but I want people to go into a nursing home and see what that's like. You can't buy shampoo. You can't buy deodorant. These are things that come out of your personal income, and $60 dollars a month, as we know, doesn't go very far at all. So, I wanna throw out a -- another reason to support that amendment that failed for our staff because the staff that works in these nursing homes, they're wonderful. They do things to try to help these individuals. They'll bring in little treats. They bring in sample shampoos. They try to do what they can -- out of their own pockets.

So, the state of Connecticut, you know, I think that we have, as Senator Kelly said, a $20 billion dollar budget. We need to find the extra $12 dollars a
month to help those who are so in need in our nursing homes, and I implore people in this circle to support this. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, I may -- I wanted to ask a few questions from the proponent of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Senator Kelly, prepare yourself.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Senator Kelly, I admire your passion, and I truly understand where you're coming from. I wanted to clarify -- why $72 and why not $78 -- I mean, how did we come to this number? Through you, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):
Thank you, Madam President. Seventy-two is what the number was when we started to cut the number back. Seventy-eight, I would welcome. If that's a friendly amendment, I would accept that.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

And -- and through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Through you, Madam President. Again, I share your sentiments, and if I was in the Senate at the time when it was being cut, I would -- probably would have had a problem with this as well. And I recognize the fact that there is very limited amount of disposable income or financial resources individuals have. And even individuals, when they are sending a card to their loved ones or their grandchildren, that's where that comes from -- these are the very personal amounts that they are.

I'm sensing that we do not, as a Senate or as a legislative body, have enough nursing home bills. And the reason I'm saying that is because we have a bill on transparency of staffing, and we are actually using that to take care of the needs of the -- the financial needs of the residents. And that gives me a sense that we have -- as a body, need to do a better job because it's almost like vehicles are not available to try and address this, and we're using alternate ways of getting the word out to be able to do this.
I can -- I can share with you that I completely agree with the fact that this needs to be done, and I think what I will do is in a little bit try to ask the Chair if there are other vehicles that are there that could be available to do this amendment. Because, for example, when we are looking at the Whiting-related issue, there is a bill, and I will be signing into that for that amendment because that needs to be done. Except -- this is not the way to do this, and maybe I'm thinking like a physician because you -- you're trying to do something, and you try to do it, you don't mix too many things and then try to jeopardize the existing role of what needs to be done.

So, I'm gonna look for another vehicle to try and address this very legitimate concern that you have brought forward and then see what are the opportunities that we have to try and address the needs of our residents. This way, this bill -- or this amendment that we have passed already, I'm not sure if that's the one because that is specifically without any fiscal note. Now we are adding a fiscal note of $1.3 -- $1.3 million dollars to this, and I -- and frankly, I'm not even sure if that $1.3 is the right amount. It could be more. So, if I may ask if we can stand at ease, and I can just clarify if there's an opportunity to look at another vehicle? Should we ask Senator --?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff, there's been a request for the Senate to stand at ease.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):
We will stand at ease then, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

The Senate will come to order. Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you, Senator Duff, for giving us that few moments. That's when I was actually trying to get an idea if there are other vehicles to be able to address this issue. As soon as we actually go and put a fiscal note to the existing bill, it actually takes us in a different direction and would move us away from what we are trying to do -- the transparency.

There's a risk of the Transparency Bill not moving forward because that would not get controlled by us at this time. So, this is something that needs to be addressed, and there's another way to be able to address this. And what I would suggest is that we use some of the aging bills and some of the other bills that are there to address this specific issue, which can work through the Appropriations, through that process, and then there are other bills, which have fiscal notes already with them. This current bill is in the absence of a fiscal note, and therefore this would actually be essentially stopping this process that we are trying to increase the transparency.

So, with that, I would actually request my colleagues to not vote for this amendment -- not because of its value, but because of the fact that
this is not the vehicle to fix what is trying to be fixed. But there are other, better ways to be able to address this, and I appreciate the proponents of the amendment to bring this forward to be able to look at other possibilities of solving this. And then, with that, for the record, I would like to say that we should have a roll call vote for this amendment as well.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. A roll call will be ordered. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. President Reagan once said, "If not now, when? If not us, who?" For nine years, I've put this initiative forward -- whether it was the Malloy administration, numerous General Assemblies. The answer is always tomorrow -- your -- the next bill. The problem is we're dealing with people in nursing homes who have an average lifespan of 27 months -- 27 months is the average length of stay in a nursing home. And for nine years, I've been hearing the same thing -- wait till tomorrow, the next bill, the next bus -- whatever the vehicle is, you can hop on that one, don't do anything to this one because this one doesn't wanna get, for some reason or other, contaminated with that. If I put the million dollars on a billion dollar fiscal note, it's not gonna get passed in this fiscal condition, but $1 million dollars in a $20 billion dollar budget -- I think there's room there. But, to keep saying wait to Connecticut's greatest generation -- America's greatest generation -- Connecticut's seniors is like saying forget about
it. It's a pocket veto 'cause if we don't do it now, another year will go by. Another session will click through. And the next thing you know, I'm standin' here nine years later advocating for the same thing because I'm always told wait -- wait for the next vehicle, wait for the next opportunity, wait.

Well, the fact of the matter is, some of these people living in nursing homes don't have the luxury of time. Time is not on their side. Time is running against them. But for the people under this dome, it's okay to make them wait. Madam President, I just think this is putting human services back in human services. Let's focus on the people. Let's focus on the human that is sitting in nursing homes struggling with dignity. They've lost everything. They've lost their home, their savings, their family. They're with people -- strangers they don't even know, and we can't give 'em a lousy $12 dollars in this budget! You gotta be kidding me!

I just think this is -- it's the human thing to do. It's common sense. And for $1 million dollars, I would -- I would do this all day long. And this is a vehicle. It is germane. It deals with nursing homes. And if we wanna talk about transparency, you can go on the CMS website. You can go on the DPH. You can get all the information you wanna know on various nursing homes to see what staffing levels are and what the quality of care is. That information already exists, but this doesn't. This is something that needs to be reinstated. It was there during the Rell administration, and it has been gone and absent ever since. And it's time that we put humans first! So, Madam President, I ask for a roll call vote so that we can do that.
THE CHAIR:

Yes, a roll call vote has been already requested. Any -- Will you remark further on the amendment? Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise in support of the amendment as well. Last month, I was asked to visit a nursing home up in Canaan and had a nice little round-table meeting with people that I've never met before. They came from actually all over New England. They weren't even from all over northwest Connecticut, which I was kind of surprised to find out. So, when I listen to Senator Kelly, and I think about people that are actually thrust into a situation where they are living with absolute strangers and trying to develop relationships, it's quite honestly true.

The only thing that they asked for was this. That was it. The only thing that they asked for was to get the money restored to what it used to be. They didn't ask to make it a hundred dollars. They didn't ask to make it $200 dollars. They itemized the things that they actually used to be able to buy and can't buy anymore. And it was extraordinary to listen to them -- some in wheelchairs, some who walked in with walkers, some who walked from another building to come in there.

I do respect what Senator Anwar has said about the fact that this does cost money, and maybe -- maybe with a amendment attached to the bill, it would be required to go to the Appropriations Committee. But the truth of the matter is, the Governor's budget
didn't have this in it. The Appropriations budget didn't have this in it. So, two documents have been produced, so far, without the $72 dollars in there, and I don't think anyone involved in that process would disagree that if you had another $1.2 or $1.3 million dollars, this would be a perfectly appropriate place to put it. If the budget was done, and it had gone through both chambers and the Governor had signed off, I would say it's already done. It's done for a year. There's no way we're gonna be able to do this. We actually think that there are some places that we could re-appropriate or redistribute that $1.2 million dollars.

This is the bill. This is the time. It's a time for us as a chamber, as a circle, to join together on a very simple issue, which is to replenish an account that would give people an opportunity to buy the bare necessities of life. That's really what it comes down to. And so I would ask that rather than have the board lit multiple colors that we join together, adopt the amendment. If the leadership wants to send it to the Appropriations Committee, then send it to the Appropriations Committee. It'll come right back out next week. The Ranking Members here, I'm sure the Chair would agree that this is a valuable expenditure, and I just think it's an opportunity for us to come together and do something very positive. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Will you remark further? Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):
Thank you very much, Madam President. Great to see you there this afternoon. I also stand in strong support of the amendment. There's been numerous times where I've been involved with folks in nursing homes, probably the one that is more indelible in my mind is when my wife's grandmother developed Alzheimer's, and what that ended up being was a certain amount of attention while Rose was in her home. At a certain point in time, that was difficult to juggle, so an adult day care was utilized during the daytime, because people just couldn't watch Rose 24/7, and then ultimately at a very good nursing home in Enfield, Parkway Pavilion. And due to the nature of my wife's family, they pretty much visited several times a week for well over a year until Rose finally passed.

And so, if you go, as I went with my wife and her -- her mom and family to see Rose on a very regular basis through those years, you got to know the people working in the nursing home, and you got to look around, and you know some of the smells. And you realize that's a way -- first of all, anybody who works in a nursing home, that's an extraordinarily difficult job. It takes incredible amounts of patience, but you also realize, as so many of my colleagues have said -- and I really commend Senator Kelly's passion on this, and Senator Miner's insights regarding this, and Senator Somers fighting for this -- they don't ask for a lot. Folks in this situation just don't ask for a lot. The very fact of a loved one visiting them, that's probably the number one thing -- not to be forgotten. But, above and beyond that, just the simple things that we take for granted. I would posit to you, no matter what socioeconomic status you may have, sort of scroll through your mind how
much you might spend at a Walgreens or a CVS or a Rite Aid or similar store over the course of a month just for those simple products, like deodorant, shampoo, and a little bit of this. And if you add it up, you're bustin' through $60 without breakin' a sweat.

You know, sometimes, on my way home from work or something like that, I'll pop into a Walgreens, and I'll say, all right, I need contact lens solution, I need this and that. And you get to the register, and it's like $35 dollars. And you go, how did that all add up? And there's nothing magical there. These are the things that you just sorta need to feel like a clean, normal human being. And if someone in a nursing home just wants something a little special, they should be able to have that.

And here we are debating whether to try to go back to where we were about a decade ago. I mean, we're just trying to fight to get -- to treat these folks with minimum decency that was in place about ten years ago. We have gone in the exact opposite direction. Why would we take funds from this pool of individuals? And yeah, if you put it all together, it's upwards of a million dollars. There's all sorts of funds out there that could take the hit without a blink.

Senator Champagne and I are aware of a fund that may be used in another bill proposal comin' down the line that I just learned about this year in the Judiciary Committee. And it's an account that has to do with proceeds from cases settled by the attorney general. It's an attorney general's reserve account, and I guess there's a lot of latitude as -- as to what you could use these funds
for. And this would not even dent that account, and think about how many lives would be made that much better. So, I just feel -- I'm not gonna try to filibuster this bill or amendment or anything like that, but fundamentally we have diminished resources, or we don't have the resources growing as much as we might like.

Clearly, our economy in Connecticut, for whatever reason, is not performing quite as well as many other states in our nation, and we're all about trying to solve those issues, but when you have a small amount that you could set aside that would bring a tremendous amount of good to a large group of people, and as Senator Kelly so aptly pointed out, a group of people that have been stripped of pretty much everything in their lives -- because that is the only way you end up in that place. You may not wake up and see a face that you recognize. You may not even have a room to yourself. You look around and you may have an item or two that was from your life, but that's about it, and God knows whether you have your mobility. Maybe just to go outside and feel the spring sun you need to have a wheelchair, and we can't give them $12 more bucks a month?

At some point -- at some point, I think we need to err on the side of the greatest good for those most in need, and I think this is a group where we could all come together and yes on this amendment. We'll find the money. It's not gonna break the bank, but it's gonna change the lives of hundreds of people, and it's that little thing that can brighten those lives going forward. So, I would urge my colleagues to support the amendment. Thank you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel. Will you remark further? Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you. Good afternoon, Madam President. I rise in support of this amendment, Madam President. And with regard to the fiscal note question, if we can find millions of dollars to give to attorneys and other members of state employee bargaining units without so much as breaking a sweat, then surely we can figure out a way to raise this personal needs allowance by $12 dollars a month. Thank you, Senator Bizzarro. Will you remark further? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good afternoon. Through you, to the proponent of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Kelly, you have some questions from your colleague. Senator Hwang, please proceed.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Less questions -- first, to compliment the good senator on making this proposal, and I think people need to be aware of the senator's experience in -- in the area of aging. And, I'd like to ask him, who are the people that are benefiting from this increase to $72 dollars? And I wanna compliment the good Chair of the committee for raising the dollar
amount. And in this day and age of fiscal competitiveness and challenge, through you, Madam President, I'd like to ask the proponent of the amendment, who are the people that are really benefiting from this? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Madam President, the individuals that we're talking about are individuals who reside in a skilled nursing facility, participate on the Medicaid program, which requires -- because Medicaid is a means-tested program -- that the individual have no more than $1,600 dollars in total assets. And then as far as income, all the income that they receive from all sources, whether it's interest off that $1,600 dollars or the pension, Social Security, all that is applied income that goes to, I'm gonna say, help pay for their stay in a nursing home, and what they're left with is $60 dollars. So, basically, an individual has $60 dollars a month in income and no more than $1,600 dollars in total assets. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I wanna thank the proponent for the explanation because it really is bare minimum ability to survive in the high cost to
live in this state. That being said, I think it's important, as I said before. We are in a state of fiscal challenge, but as we move forward and deliberate and evaluate every aspect of how state government works and its budgeting process, to me and the proponent of this bill and supporter of this amendment, you have placed a priority on those that are the underrepresented, the ones that are within the safety net, our seniors, our valued citizens that are struggling to stay in our state. This is the prioritization that we should have to be able to increase the allocation and recognize that state government has a responsibility to the people it serves and not simply the structure itself. So, I urge support of this amendment, and I wanna thank the proponent for raising the prioritization that -- yes, indeed, we may have to spend money, but I'd much rather spend it on people that I can see and interact and who we represent. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang. Will you remark further on the legislation? Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this amendment. These are -- you know, when I think of $60 dollars a month, I think of one trip to the restaurant, half a tank of gas -- actually, it'd be a whole tank of gas, I guess, today, depending on what you drive -- but, you know, we're talking not a lot of money here. And to raise it by $12 dollars a month and to see what somebody could stretch that $12 dollars a month for, it blows my mind that we're
not raising this even more, like the good doctor said. But, I'm not a proponent for raising taxes, but this is helping some of the poorest people in our state. So, I do stand in support of this, and I hope that this circle votes in favor of helping some of the neediest people in our state. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator, will you remark further? Will you remark further, Senator Anwar?

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I just wanted to make a few observations for the benefit of everyone. Look, I'm here for the past six weeks. So, I'm not gonna take the ownership for the past nine years, let's make that clear, but a lot of you have been around for the last nine years and you have voted on the budgets. So, now suddenly trying to take a bill, which has its own legs to stand on, can address the issues that we are addressing, and trying to block it or trying to put a fiscal note and sending it to another committee is probably not the best way to go. I, again, want you to recognize that. Let's do what is the right thing to do. This is a bill which is focused on a specific responsibility that we feel is necessary at this time.

Now, putting something else on top of this to try and change in a different direction is almost like when a patient comes to me, and they're having a problem with a respiratory issue, and I'm thinking of them, and they say well I have a headache as well. I'll say, well, we'll take care of your headache, but you need to go through the specific
process of the headache, which needs to be done by the specialist who deals with it. But, if I actually start to focus on the other aspect, and what about the breathing. So, let this thing breathe on its own, and let's not try to kill the bill through its mechanism and strategy. This is like killing bill 101 that's going on for the people who are observing our scene.

We need to address what you bring up. I am with you, and I will help you with this. I cannot take the responsibility for the past nine years. Having said that, there are other ways to be able to address this. There is a responsibility that we have to take care of the ones who are the voiceless, and this is something that you're suggesting. I recognize this. I'm sure my colleagues recognize this as well. But the bill is not -- should not become the victim of that need for the past nine years that you have observed and arguably not been able to do much despite voting for those budgets. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Will you remark further, Senator Fasano? And may I say happy birthday?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Oh, thank you, Madam President. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

THE CHAIR:

So glad you're spending the day and the evening with us.
SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

And I actually did yesterday -- oh today, that's right, earlier this morning I was here, so. [Laughing] Madam President, a couple things -- one is the way we move business in this building and bring ideas to a bill when you're a minority is by doing amendments to bills. So, we raise concerns that perhaps were overlooked by the majority party, perhaps weren't thought of by the majority party, or is it a bill that we put in and the majority party did not see eye-to-eye. The way we do that is to bring it in front of this full body and say let's let others of this body take a look at it. But, Madam President, the reason why I stand is it is time for a real, real reality check. Let's be clear -- every single union contract that came up that passed virtually on party lines, I have said number one, let's be clear, when you vote for that union contract and you vote for more expenses, you are doing it at the suffering of social services. Every time you increase 3.5 percent to a union contract, you are crowding out social services. Every contract -- I said it -- and by the way, remember it, 'cause there's six more, and I'm gonna say it six more times.

This is the clearest example. We're talking a million bucks -- a million dollars. There's a contract coming to Appropriations on Friday that's asking for a raise, retroactive, for $1.8 million -- retroactive. We could take that $1.8 million, give a million dollars, and put $12 dollars in people's pockets. They don't have the pensions, the healthcare that the individuals have in that contract. They're not getting 3.5 percent increase each and every year irrespective of the economy.
And we're gonna say, no, you person under our thumb, we can't give you $12 dollars -- we gotta give $1.8 million on the most lucrative union contracts in the country. That's what we're gonna say? People who can't afford food, medicine, a towel if they need it too. We're gonna say, no -- we have to increase these contracts 3.5 percent per year, retroactive in some cases, because we can't. And you're just gonna have to wait your turn!

We're going on year 11 since we made this cut after Jodi Rell. We're going on year 11, so I guess somewhere in the future, perhaps, maybe, could be, possibly it could happen, we'll give you $12 dollars. But, while we're waiting for that, let's take the union contracts that are coming forward, completely wipe out the salary reserve account -- because those six contracts will wipe out the salary reserve account. I think the sentence was clear, but just in case -- those contracts will wipe out the reserve account to the point that you've depleted the reserve account that was put away for the budget, and now you've gotta figure out what you're gonna cut -- or raise taxes -- to pay for these contracts. And maybe some afterthought will be the $12 dollars for the elderly, primarily, who are looking for $12 dollars. Twelve dollars! I urge you around this circle to read those contracts, not just for the increases but what else they pay for -- shoes, dry cleaning, lunches, travel. The list is ridiculously endless. And we can't take dry cleaning out and say let's give that money, $12 dollars, to the poor, who can't have any other way of making their means?

The core function of social service are those people. That's the core function of why we're here
the people who need protection. Far too long I hear, well, you know, maybe one side of the aisle is not as sympathetic as the other. I am telling you, if we can go back $1.8 million dollars retroactively to give people raises in a lucrative contract, we can find $1 million dollars for those who can't even afford to survive, frankly, day-to-day with $60 dollars a month -- $60 dollars a month!

Madam President, I have said each and every contract this was coming. I have said time and time again that now is the time to send the message. Now is the time that we start telling people we can't afford to do this because it is hurting our social services. There is no more clear an example than the contract that goes back for 1.8, and the fact that we can't find out of a $17 billion dollar budget $1 million dollars. We haven't been able to find it for budget years.

Madam President, this amendment should pass. I hear people around this circle tell you healthcare is a civil rights matter. Maybe it is, but human care is a civil rights matter. That's all this is about -- a million dollars. Budget's not done. Budget's not gonna be done till at the earliest next week. There's time to put a million dollars in. At the earliest, it's done next week. We can look between the cushions of some agency and find a million bucks. We can look at overtime, which has been ridiculous in many of our departments. When I say ridiculous -- hundreds of millions of dollars in this fiscal year, and we can take out $1 million dollars of that and put it to this. But no, that's asking too much of the majority. That's asking too much to ask for -- too much scrutiny, too much fiscal responsibility.
This is the time to do it. We can find the savings. It's a million dollars. It is the point. It is a principle. It is about the people in need. I support this amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further, Senator Looney?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, rising in opposition to the amendment, which I think does make a number of good points and equity arguments, but I disagree with the idea of setting this increase in the Personal Care Allowance up against contracts for the state employees as if they were undeserving. And that clearly the Personal Care Allowance is certainly a worthwhile cause, and I certainly would -- would support providing an increase in -- in our budget for that purpose and will certainly devote my efforts toward -- toward making that happen. And -- but again, I think that's -- that's an issue that needs to be addressed in the budget. There is, I think, broad-based support for that as an equity issue, would support inclusion of funding in the budget, but would oppose the amendment today. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further? If not, would the Clerk please call the vote, and the machine will be open.

CLERK:
Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate, Senate Bill 375, Senate Amendment D, LCO No. 7525. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment D, LCO 7525. Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the senators voted? Have all the senators voted? Seeing -- seeing that they have, we will close the vote. And would the Clerk kindly call the tally please?

CLERK:

Senate Bill 375, Senate Amendment D, LCO 7525.

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THE CHAIR:


SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Madam President, should we have a roll call on the bill?

THE CHAIR:
Oh, we will definitely have a roll call on the bill, especially now that you've asked. [Laughing] So, with that, Mr. Clerk, would you please call the vote, and the voting machines will be open.

CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 375 as amended by Senate A. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 375 as amended by Senate A. Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the senators voted? Seeing that they have, the machine will be closed. And, Mr. Clerk, if you would announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 375 as amended by Senate A.

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THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] Measure passes. And now, we will entertain a point of personal privilege. [Background talking] And we won't entertain a point of personal privilege. Senator Carlo Leone. Senator Leone, good afternoon.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):
Good afternoon, Madam President. What we are doing is we are waiting for the Boys and Girls Club to come up here. They are having their annual event for Youth of the Year. They are en route, so if you would just indulge us for a moment.

THE CHAIR:

Absolutely.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):

And could we just be at ease while we get them up here?

THE CHAIR:

We will stand at ease while they are arriving. And I think they are --

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):

Oh, and here -- as we speak.

THE CHAIR:

And their timing is impeccable.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):

[Background talking] Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, Senator Leone, please introduce all of these energetic young people that we have here.
SENATOR LEONE (27TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and to my fellow colleagues, I wanna just take a moment of everyone's time, if you would indulge us. What we wanted to do is introduce the Boys and Girls Club members for Youth of the Year. These are young kids that have given back to their community, our leaders in training. They are accomplishing so much, and they have been provided an avenue to be the very best they can be with this stellar program. The Boys and Girls Club of America is very well established here in the state of Connecticut in multiple communities, and they offer a range of services to provide a youth -- a safe haven to be the very best they can be, and what you see in front of us is the very best of the best for this year. So, we wanted to take a chance -- a moment to showcase this premier recognition program that the Boys and Girls Club has, and these are the members that embody the values of their leadership and service, their academic excellence, and the healthy lifestyles that they've learned at the club.

So, please join me in welcoming the 15 members, Youth of the Year, from the birthplace of the Boys and Girls Club movement in our very own state. And I'll just quickly run through the list of names, and as I call your names, just raise your hand so everyone can see who you are. And then, if you could, we could all just give a quick round of applause for their great accomplishments.

So, first up, we have Tyrese Gallant from the club of Waterbury [applause following each name], Michael Rincon from Greenwich, Xavier Arrocho from Meriden, Joseph Marchionni from Milford, Manuel Benitez IV
from New Britain, all right, Jesse Campbell from New Haven, Maureen Ferrer from Stamford, Nevaeh Sorrentino from the Naugatuck Valley, Aracelis Figueroa from Hartford, Stanley Cardona from Bristol, Kelsey Lynn Morales from New London, Renee Cauchon from Ridgefield, Caitlin Trutnau from Ulbrich, Rory Smith from Wakeman, and heading from - - for all of us, Colin Holm-Hanson from Redding-Easton. [Applause]

So, please give a well-deserved round of applause for these -- these great kids for all that they do and all that they are going to accomplish in their lives under the tutelage and guidance of the Boys and Girls Club of America and in the state of Connecticut. We thank you for all that you do. You are leaders for your colleagues and peers, and we wish you nothing but success and happiness in your endeavors going forward. So, thank you, Madam President. [Applause]

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, and I just want to say to the young ladies and gentleman that are here, on behalf of Governor Lamont and I, congratulations and we look forward to seeing you in the Senate and House chambers in just a few years. Good luck and have a great summer. [Applause/crosstalk]

If the Senate could come to order, we have -- I'd like to recognize Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH):
Good afternoon, Madam President, and thank you very much. And my congratulations to all our visitors today in the chamber. [Background noise]

THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] Hang on, Senator Hartley. We will come to order. If you'd like to step out for a photo, please -- please do so, and please give Senator Hartley your attention.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And all of our visitors, congratulations, and thanks for taking the time to be with us. And also, I would like to introduce to the chamber an individual who I have such admiration for and who has done such an incredible job on a municipal level in the city of Waterbury -- that is our town clerk, Chick Spinelli. I think Chick has gotten a name throughout the entire state working with the Association, and they are actually here today in Old Judic having an event, so be sure to stop down to see your town clerk. And if you would join me in saying thank you to all the town clerks, and in particularly, our Waterbury Town Clerk. Thank you, Madam President. [Applause]

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hartley. And may I just say to Madam Clerk, Chick Spinelli, thank you for the great work that you do in Waterbury. Thank you for your leadership on the Town Clerks Association. So nice to see you, and I'm looking forward to stopping down to visit for the town clerks coffee. Thank you.
Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 48, Calendar No. 141, substitute for Senate Bill Number 927, AN ACT CREATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND WITHIN THE CONNECTICUT GREEN BANK. There are amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Bergstein, good afternoon.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Good afternoon. Thank you, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question -- the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The Clerk is in possession of an amendment. It is LCO 8486, and I move adoption of the amendment and waive its reading and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Mr. Clerk, if you would read that amendment number please.
Thank you, Madam President. This is AN ACT TO CREATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE BANK WITHIN THE GREEN BANK OF CONNECTICUT. And for those who don't know, the Connecticut Green Bank is a shining example of Connecticut innovation and achievement. It was established in 2011 with bipartisan support, and since then it has a stellar track record of taking our public funds and leveraging them six times with private investment in order to create 16,500 jobs, $1.5 billion dollars of investment in our state's economy, lowering energy costs for many thousands of Connecticut homeowners, and also reducing five million tons of carbon dioxide, which in turn has led to a cost savings of over $200 million dollars for healthcare costs for people who otherwise would have suffered from the impacts of fossil fuel consumption.

In 2017, Harvard University recognized the Connecticut Green Bank as the best in class for government innovation and efficiency. This is what we expect from our government. We expect smart policy, innovation, efficiency, and an excellent return on investment. That is what the Connecticut Green Bank has done for us in the past eight years.
So, because it was the first such green bank established in this country, and it did so well, other states have followed suit. They've also established green banks, but they've given their green banks more bandwidth to do projects that go beyond just energy projects. So, for eight years, the Connecticut Green Bank has been limited to doing just energy projects, which in most cases means that they help finance the installation of solar panels in communities, mostly low and middle-income communities. And I have a list of all the projects they've done throughout the state, and it touches every district that we represent.

The projects are financed not through tax dollars but from a Ratepayer Fund -- .1 penny of every dollar spent on energy bills, and that goes into a Ratepayer Fund, Clean Energy Fund, and that's how they do these projects. Now they have an excellent track record. I already gave you some of the numbers of what they have achieved for us in terms of environmental responsibility and also fiscal responsibility. What I would like to do with this bill is to expand the scope of the Green Bank's authority, so they can start to do other types of projects -- environmental infrastructure projects, which can include everything from biodigesters, recycling programs, electric vehicle charging stations, bike-sharing programs, all sorts of things that they do not currently have the authority to explore. So, with that, Madam President, I would like to move adoption of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. The question is on adoption. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us?
Will you remark further? Senator Berthel, good afternoon.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Thank you for the opportunity to remark. Through you, I do have a couple of questions for the proponent.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, through you, if the proponent could address on -- in the amendment, which I guess will become the underlying bill should it pass, lines 28 through 32 speak to some very general ideas and topics with respect to the types of projects that would be covered under the environmental infrastructure. I'm wondering if the good senator might speak to specifically some examples of what those projects might be. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to my Ranking Member on Banking Committee for his question. I'd be happy to explain some examples. So, the things that the Connecticut Green Bank could do would be projects -- in a broad sense, projects
that help mitigate climate change, lower energy costs for consumers, alleviate traffic and congestion in our cities and on our roads, and produce cleaner water, cleaner air for the consumption and benefit of all our citizens.

Now, how they do that, here are some specific examples. They could, for instance, help finance the installation of electrical vehicle charging stations. I drive an electric vehicle, and I can assure you, there are not enough charging stations available. They could also help finance biodigesters to take some of the trash, hopefully one day all of the trash, that we produce and turn it into energy. We do have the technology to do that, and we should be doing that. They could also help finance the remediation of brown fields and other compromised land, so that we could actually put this land into use, make it productive again and not just an eyesore.

They could also help with projects involving reforestation and coastal resiliency. We all know that because of climate change our sea levels are rising, and there's a lot that we can do and should be doing to protect our shoreline, which is a precious resource in Connecticut, and we should be protecting it from sea level increase. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):
Thank you, Madam President, and I thank the Banking Chair for the answers. With respect to lines 67 through 76 in the amendment, I'm curious as to the language here that says the fund may receive any amount required by law to be deposited into the fund and may receive any federal funds. Besides the federal funds, I'm wondering where those other funds are coming from? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you for the question. In the lines that you're specifying, 67 through 76, this actually carves out funds that may not go into the Green Bank because they are currently in the cognizance of other agencies. So, this was -- this is language that was the product of discussions with the Treasurer's Office, with the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. So, clean water fund -- funds collected from a water company -- may not go into this Environmental Infrastructure Fund. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you, Madam President, and I thank the Chair for the clarification. And the last question I have with respect to the amendment, on -- beginning on
line 80 of the bill, just below the section we were just discussing, there is -- and forgive me if -- if this may be outlined somewhere else in the bill, but I think it's good to perhaps talk about this -- line 80 speaks to a comprehensive plan that will be developed and maintained, and I'm just wondering who -- I'm assuming that this is developed through the Green Bank. I’m wondering who's involved in that development, if that is the current structure of the Green Bank, or if there's -- if there are other people that will be involved with respect to the development of this comprehensive plan? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. While it's not specified in the bill who will give input to the comprehensive plan, the Connecticut Green Bank has a long history of working in collaboration with agencies, with foundations, with communities, community banks. So, I am confident that they will continue to receive input from all the stakeholders in developing a comprehensive plan. And the reason for the comprehensive plan, I think, is quite obvious. We want to make sure that projects are not just done haphazardly or without a strategy, an overall strategy, to achieve the goals of the Green Bank. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Berthel.
SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you, Madam President. Again, I thank the Chair for the answer. So, just one final question with respect to that answer. So, assuming that this plan will be developed in the manner just described, I'm wondering what -- what kind of opportunity there is, if any, for viewing that plan or for either the legislative body or the public or others to comment and participate in the development of that plan. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Berthel. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The comprehensive plan would most likely be part of the annual report that is required from the Connecticut Green Bank. The annual report -- this is in lines 367 on down -- the annual report is required to be disclosed to DEEP, to the legislative committees that have cognizance over the Green Bank, which includes Energy, Environment, and Commerce, and through that process, I believe the public would have access to it as well. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Okay. Thank you, Madam President, and again, I thank the good Chair for the responses to the
questions. Madam President, I -- I support the amendment, which will upon passage, or soon passage, will become the underlying bill or become the bill, and while I'm sure there will be some other questions here this afternoon, I would encourage support of the amendment at this point in time.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Berthel. Will you remark further on the amendment? Will you remark further, Senator Formica?

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you. I rise for the purpose of a few questions and a few comments for the proponent.

THE CHAIR:

Please -- please proceed.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I'm just gonna get to -- Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator. How are you?
SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Very well, thanks.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you. I have some questions with regard to the expansion of the authority of Green Bank from energy to environment. You just spoke about the reporting, I think, to Senator Berthel. And the same report will go to both the Energy and the Environmental Committees, or will it be one report inclusive of both? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I believe the intent is to have one report -- one annual report that's issued to all of the agencies and legislative committees I just mentioned. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):
Thank you very much, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. In line 77 to 80, specifically under line 79, "upon authorization of the Connecticut Green Bank established pursuant to this section, any amount in the fund may be used for expenditures that promote investment in environmental infrastructure with a comprehensive plan to foster growth, commercial and development and, where applicable, preservation of environmental infrastructure." Could you give some instances of environmental infrastructure this bill contemplates? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes. The environmental infrastructure projects can encompass a wide range of projects, some of which I've already mentioned, things like land conservation, recycling programs, biodigesters, electric vehicle charging stations, brown field remediations, waste water treatment projects, ride-sharing/bike-sharing programs, coastal resiliency, and reforestation. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

That's a fairly significant expansion of opportunities for -- for the Green Bank, and it's gonna be done by the people that operate the Green Bank currently? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

I'm sorry. I didn't actually hear the question. There was some noise behind me. Could you repeat it, Senator, please?

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Of course, Senator. Thank you. The question was -- it's quite an expansion of opportunities that the Green Bank is going to get themselves involved in. I'm wondering if it's the same people that operate the energy portion of the Green Bank now will be operating in the environmental portion? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, they are not contemplating adding any employees. They're not asking for any money from the state. So, yes, the same team has the capacity to explore new opportunities and expand the scope of what they do. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much, Senator. Thank -- through you, Madam President. Administrative expenses incurred by the Green Bank and capital costs incurred by the Green Bank in connection with the operation of the
fund and implementation of this and other -- did the state provide the seed money to establish the Green Bank way back when through bonding or through capital infrastructure, and has that money been repaid and now they're operating independently and resourcefully on the money that they've made and perhaps received as a result of repurposed loans? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, the state did provide some seed funding for Connecticut Green Bank. They also took a lot of funding away, and yet the Green Bank has thrived. A total of $237 million dollars of public funds have been invested over eight years, but that has generated $1.5 billion in investments. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. And the money, I think, that I wanted to make sure was it did not come from the state bond funds or state operating expenditures, it was funded by another source. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, they are contemplating other sources of funding, not state funding. They can actually issue their own bonds -- green bonds. They can also receive financing from private investors, from foundations, philanthropic organizations. So, there are other sources. They're not looking for a handout from the state.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Madam President, in advance.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further? [Laughing]

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

So, I guess what I was -- thank you, I will -- what I guess I was going after was that the money funded to seed the Green Bank comes from electric ratepayer dollars through the bill that they receive every month -- the ratepayers receive every month. Through you, Madam President. Would that be correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Yes, currently the Clean Energy Fund, which is already established, is funded through the Ratepayer Fund, and there is a firewall now between that fund and the -- if we adopt it -- the new Environmental Infrastructure Fund. So, those funds cannot be rated. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So -- thank you, Senator -- so, I think you're referring -- it sounded like two different things, but I think the environmental funds that are going to be used to fund this new program expansion and the energy expansion come from the ratepayer funding that everybody participates with when they pay their electric bill. That's where the money comes from to seed Green Bank. I think what you were speaking to -- the money being rated -- was a couple of budgets ago, the money was diverted from that source to pay for the Medicare Savings Program in essence in the budget, and then last session, we provided an opportunity to make sure that that didn't happen in the future. I think -- so, it sounded like you were referring to one thing there, but I think there were two separate things you were referring to. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Thank you, Madam President. Well, I just wanted to clarify that the Clean Energy Fund of the Green Bank will continue and will continue to be funded from ratepayer funds, and that will be segregated from any funds going into the Environmental Infrastructure Fund. Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So, I thought I was clearing myself up, but I think I just got more confused. So -- so we have one entity, the Connecticut Green Bank. They're funded by the funds generated through the ratepayer portion of their electric bill that goes to the Clean Energy Fund. That's how the Green Bank has been established over the period of years. With this expansion, it's going to be the same. We're not asking for an increase in ratepayer funds to add this expansion of opportunities that the Green Bank is gonna enter, but they will manage that one line item that they get through the Connecticut Energy Fund -- the Clean Energy Fund on the electric bills. They're not looking for an expansion or an addition to that, and then they leverage other dollars that they bond and finally get repurposed when those -- once those get paid back. Am I correct in that? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.
SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. You are correct.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. With regard to lines 216 -- 216 refers to a single entity LLC, and it talks from line 213 -- I don't know if you see that -- "The subsidiary of said banks will be deemed a quasi-public agency for the purposes of this chapter or have all the privileges, immunities --" and then underlined, it looks like this is in addition to the bill, "unless such subsidiaries, a single member limited liability company that is disregarded as an entity separate from its owner." And I'm not familiar with that term, and I wonder if you might be able to help me, Senator? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The explanation I received for this language -- and I will just read it to you -- is that, "The tax status of
subsidiaries, typically quasi-subsidiaries, are tax exempt. The Green Bank's enabling legislation currently states that Green Bank subsidiaries are taxable to take advantage of federal income tax credit for solar leases and power purchase agreements, the PPA. This change allows the Green Bank additional flexibility to have non-taxable subsidiaries consistent with other quasi-publics."

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. So, in this, this refers to an LLC opportunity that the Green Bank would create for itself, amongst itself in an effort to try to create opportunities that it wouldn't -- it would be tax exempt on. Is that pretty much --?

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. To the best of my knowledge, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):
All right. Thank you very much, Madam President, and thank you, Senator. I am looking at now, Senator, line number 277, which talks about some of those repurposed funds. So, the funds repurposed from existing programs providing financing support shall be used for the expenses of finance grants and loans, and then it says, "provided not required to deposit the Clean Water Fund." That is kept separate. Do you know why? Does that mean they're not involved in clean water opportunities or just can't comingle with the Clean Water Fund? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica, thank you. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The Clean Water Fund, as I understand it, is -- is off-limits; however, if there is excess funds -- there are excess funds in the Clean Water Fund or projects that DPH or DEEP cannot do, don't have the capacity to do, then for those excess funds, the Clean -- sorry, the Green Bank could apply for those. That is my understanding. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. So, energy projects, environmental projects that you spoke about, the potential for water -- lines 323,
it talks about shall not be eligible, I believe, for grants under the Federal Water Quality Act. And what I'm trying to do is get as much on the record here for what they wanna do and what this bill contemplates allowing them to do because I believe there's another bill surfacing somewhere that talks about their opportunities to expand their opportunities in federal programs, which has nothing to do with that, but, you know, it looks like we're building a stepping stone from one to the other. And you did mention earlier about not adding any employees as a result of this expansion, and they'll do it within the available number of employees that they have. Do they report those employee scrolls and payroll opportunities as part of the report for the energy and environmental report that they'll do? Do they give a balance sheet or a profit and loss based on that, or do they just talk about specific projects that they may have applied for, accomplished, or are in the middle of with regard to that? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I have a copy of an annual report right here. So, I will look at it and see if they actually do disclose -- you're looking for employee salaries disclosure? Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.
SENNATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Line 367 talks about issuing annually a report ["Yes -- right" in background] reviewing the activities of the Green Bank in detail, and it doesn't say specifically whether it's a P and L or a balance sheet plus, you know, a list of projects or opportunities that they may -- they may be going through. So, I didn't know if you knew. If you don't know, that's -- that's okay, 'cause it's not clear here either, so. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much, Senator Formica. Senator Bergstein.

SENNATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Thank you, Madam President. Yes, they do disclose their list of projects and financials as well.

SENNATOR FORMICA (20TH):

They do -- they do financials?

SENNATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Yes.

SENNATOR FORMICA (20TH):

All right, great. Thank you. Thank you, Senator. I don't have any further questions for the senator, Madam President, but I'll just make a comment or two, and I thank the good senator for the answers that she provided. You know, I have, as a member of
the Energy Committee, been watching Green Bank grow and provide some of the projects moving forward that they've been able to develop [background talking] in public/private partnerships throughout the state of Connecticut. This seems to be a significant expansion to their role, and I'm not quite sure, to be honest with you, how I'm feeling about that. I think there may be an opportunity to do things that perhaps might be outside the budget of the DEEP and accomplish some things that perhaps otherwise would not be accomplished. So, that may be a good thing.

On the other side of the coin, I'm just not sure, when you have a quasi-public agency that is expanding its power in one bill through banks and asking to expand its power in another bill through the Energy Committee, kind of where we're going and would that be problematic as we move forward. So, Madam President, I have some concerns. I -- again, I've supported the good work of Green Bank, and I wanna just close with a note that I have that the Treasurer submitted some reservations regarding the possibility of funding being redirected from existing programs. So, I'm not quite sure what that means, but again, I wanna thank the good senator for her answers, and thank you, Madam President, for the time today.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Bradley.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this amendment, and I thank the good senator for all the hard work that she's done through her committee
to make this happen. And the reason I rise before you, Madam President, is that this is exactly what government needs to be doing. It's about having a vision of what the state of Connecticut is going to be. And I've owned several properties in the city of Bridgeport, and I can tell you, I don't do anything as exciting as what the Green Bank is doing. But dealing with the bureaucracy, dealing with government, and trying to -- getting permits, and trying to understand what the law is and what you can and cannot do when you're just simply doing a rehab on an old home, it is arduous. It is difficult. It is cumbersome.

The Green Bank streamlines a lot of this new technology that is new to municipalities, new to cities, and not only that, has made a market proposition that they're going to incorporate green new technology in urban areas, in impoverished areas, in small towns -- something that the world said could not be done, something that the world said would surely fail. The Connecticut Green Bank not only engaged in that endeavor but has thrived and succeeded. It's a huge honor to see that they're doing such remarkable work in the state of Connecticut, and I harken back to the words of Warren Buffett in his biography The Snowball Effect. And when they asked the Oracle of Omaha, how do you know or how did you know throughout your life that this corporation or that corporation would be successful, and he said, well, I would go to that company, and I would speak to the CEO, and I would speak to the president, and I'd speak to management. And I'd take 'em out to McDonald's, and I'd sit down and I'd get an understanding of what it is that makes them tick, and what it is that gets 'em energized. And when I'd hear the passion in what
they're doing, when I'd hear the vision in what they're doing, I'd know if it's an appropriate investment or not to give this particular corporation money.

And if you go to the Connecticut Green Bank, and you speak to people like Bryan Garcia, who has studied in some of the best institutions that this country has to offer -- specifically dealing with green energy, specifically dealing with the business component of how to make this marketable -- you understand why this institution is thriving. When you go and you speak to the workers that work there, people like Emily Basher [phonetic], who also studied at some of the best institutions this country has to offer, and you see how she has engaged in this endeavor of making green jobs, of making this new technology available for us -- and not only available for all of us, but profitable -- you understand why this institution is thriving.

This is the epitome of what we need to be doing as government -- looking forward, having a vision, having an understanding of what the state is going to be, but not only that, understanding that business, government, and these new technologies can come together and work for some wonderful things. So, I really commend you, Senator, for the work you're doing, and I am fully in support of this. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bradley. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I have some reluctance on the matter before us, and it's not necessarily directly related to the Green Bank, per se. It's probably more with respect to the quasis in -- about the state of Connecticut. When we look at the past quasis we've had in our state, what we do is we create these entities, and we sorta shove them off-shore and say go do the work we want you to do. And we expect them to do that work, and then they're out of sight. And the next time they appear in front of us is when we see some headline on Capitol Report that strikes a nerve that this isn't why we created these quasis.

Most recent example, which most of us lived with last year at this time and maybe two years before it culminated last year, is the Lottery Commission, where there was debacle after debacle, payments for employees that weren't supposed to be employees, but when they left, somehow they became employees. We ended up paying full pensions and medical. There was a CHFA issue, where an employee was dismissed, for reasons that we still don't know why, and was paid a $250,000 dollar fee upon cutting ties with CHFA. We have no idea what these quasis are doing. I think we well-intention that they go off in a direction that perhaps even with the legislation and the individuals at the helm today all understand the vision, but over time, the Legislature changes, the individual changes, and therefore the entity becomes an island of its own, who do things on their own.

For example, salaries -- none of us approved those salaries of any quasi. None of us get informed about the salaries at any of the quasis. None of us have control over the contracts of the quasis. They do what they want to do in their own little world,
which one would argue -- if they get close to each other, which they do 'cause they're working together -- it may be tough to make a distinction between should I give 'em a 10 percent increase or a 20 percent increase. You're not a corporation looking at your profits and saying, we made X, let's give this increase. The mother ship, which is the state of Connecticut, is your backer. The mother ship, which is the state of Connecticut, is funding you. It's not your money, so there's no real accountability when you give out the salaries.

Now, Madam President, if I may, to the proponent of the bill, in line 28 through 32 -- the amendment is now the bill, is that my understanding, 'cause I stepped out, right? In line 28 through 32, it says the environmental infrastructure, and it lists a whole bunch of items there -- land conservation, agricultural, parks and recs. Through you, Madam President, to the good senator. With respect to those items, is there a limitation of what they could do, or is it -- could they buy agricultural land, for instance? Could they purchase recreational areas along the waterfront? Could they purchase and run zero-emission stations? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator, before Senator Bergstein answers the question, I will say, we are discussing the amendment. We're on the amendment. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEBIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you, Senator Looney -- sorry, Senator Fasano, for your question.
And I just wanna say, I completely agree with your skepticism about quasis in general, but I would offer you humbly that quasis should be judged just as any entity is judged -- based on their performance. And the performance of the Connecticut Green Bank is unmistakably excellent. All we have to do is look at the metrics, what they have produced. First of all, let me also clarify that the employees of the Green Bank are not state employees, so a discussion of state pensions, I don't think, is germane.

So, there performance speaks for itself -- $1.5 billion in investment in our economy, 16,000 jobs created, $75 million in new tax revenues, and many, many tons of carbon dioxide that has been prevented. So, an entity that takes one dollar of public funds and turns it into six dollars of investment that promotes clean energy, clean environment, healthy communities, sustainable economy, new jobs, also supports local community banks -- I would say that is an excellent, excellent example of how a quasi can be successful. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. But perhaps, the question that I posed was in line 28 through line 32, could the Green Energy Bank purchase lands for conservation, purchase agricultural property, purchase and operate zero-emission vehicle refueling areas? Would that be in their purview based upon line 28 through 32? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. It does not explicitly state in lines 28 through 32 whether they could purchase such properties, and that has not been their model to date. They're not landlords or property owners, but they finance such projects. So they would work in collaboration with property owners to structure and finance projects that enhance the value of properties. Through you, Madam President. [Ringing]

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and through you to Senator Bergstein. Is there anything that prohibits them from purchasing those items that are referenced through 28 through 32? Could they, if they desired, purchase and operate a zero- emissions vehicle refueling station? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Thank you, Madam President. There is no explicit prohibition on the purchase. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

And through you, Madam President, rather than going through every item -- and I recognize that parks are municipal in nature, but private parks is what I'd be referring to -- any item within this, is there any prohibition from 28 through 32 in environmental infrastructure for them purchasing any of the items that would be listed here? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Again, there is no explicit prohibition on the purchase, but that is not their model. Their model is to finance projects that are owned by others. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
And with respect to that, it's my understanding the Green Bank can create a subsidiary, and within that subsidiary, it's my understanding that the green bank could be the sole single member of a limited liability company and operate as well. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. May I ask Senator Fasano which lines in the amendment you're referring to specifically?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well, I think a couple of lines -- line 203 through 204, etc., as I understand it, it allows Green Bank may form one or more subsidiaries to carry out the purpose. So, they could create a subsidiary of the Green Bank. Is that accurate? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Thank you, Madam President. Yes, they may create a subsidiary. Thank you.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

You --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Sorry, Madam President. Madam President, I have more questions on the amendment, but perhaps -- 'cause it will lead to amendments I have -- perhaps it would be better if I withhold my questions, allow the amendment to go forward, and then reconvene the questioning. I think it would make more sense.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Okay. That would be fine, Senator. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? If not, let me -- go ahead, go ahead, Senator.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'd like to ask for a voice vote on the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

A voice vote? Thank you, all in favor then --
SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

No, sorry -- [Crosstalk]

THE CHAIR:

Okay. So, the question is on adoption of the amendment that has been discussed. Let me try your minds. All in favor of the amendment, please signify by saying aye. ["Aye" in background] Opposed? The amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I wanted the amendment -- and it was fine with the voice vote. Thank you. So, if I could ask to the proponent of the bill, can you help explain line 213 through 218, where the new language says, "unless such subsidiary is a single member limited liability company that is disregarded as an entity separate from its owner"? Relative, I'm just tryin' to figure out that scenario -- it's -- other than the initial change and some language change, this kinda speaks out to a particular scenario, perhaps, and I'd like you to help me understand that sentence or two. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. My understanding is that this language was added simply to -- to make
this consistent with what other quasi-public agencies have. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

So, if I read that correctly, it's saying that the subsidiary that we talked about in line -- I think it was 203 -- that the quasi Green Bank could create would be subject to Chapter 12. If I -- and help me out on this -- however, if it is a subsidiary of a single member, it would not be subject to Chapter 12. I get a little confused on the language here. I'm wondering if you could -- if that's an accurate understanding of those lines. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. It does read that no such subsidiary of said bank shall be deemed a quasi-public for purposes of Chapter 12, unless such subsidiary is a single member LLC -- that is disregarded. So yes, I believe that is accurate. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
And why would we allow a single member LLC created by the Green Bank to be excluded from the rules relative to quasi under Chapter 12. What would be the public policy, other than other quasis perhaps do it, which may be an issue, but why would we put that in there? What's the policy of doing that? What is the relief granted that the Green Bank is looking for to have this exception. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well, I am a lawyer but not a bankruptcy lawyer, so I imagine that there may be some protections for single member LLCs. I don't have a complete answer at this time but can provide further information in conjunction with a discussion with the Green Bank executives. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and I appreciate the honesty of the answer. It raises concerns for me because we're taking a quasi, who's now allowed to create a subsidiary of a single member LLC, and that is now no longer subject to Chapter 12 of our statutes that deal with quasis. So, essentially, when you boil that all out, they're removed from the
statute, removed from any authority that this Legislature could have over whatever this subsidiary does with the seed and perhaps continue feeding of taxpayers' money. So, they're able to be created. They go through all the gyrations. They get the money we created, and they get spun off and we no longer have control. That's a little bit concerning to me as I read that. Now, there might be well-intentioned reason for this, but as I stand here now, I'm not sure I understand that.

Madam President, as I mentioned, I think that the quasis have raised my antenna, and unfortunately it's very difficult to separate out one from the other. And where I think in the bill Senator Bergstein's right that the employees of this Green Bank are not state employees, but I would also add, as we saw in the lottery, the person who left wasn't supposed to be a state employee either. But, as they left, they became a state employee subject to our pension rules and our healthcare rules that applied. How that happened is still under investigation, frankly, by many different groups, but that's the type of stuff that makes me nervous.

Madam President, if we look at the Green Bank's salaries, they're significant. And I'm not saying that people deserve the money or don't deserve the money. This is complicated stuff. Without a doubt, it is complicated stuff. But, once again, these salaries are given and these increases are given -- maybe rightly so and maybe deservingly so -- but when you see that a group of people are giving themselves salary, there is no objective overview to determine whether or not there's an objective point-of-view. You just can't help it. If you're in a room with a group of people and you all know each
other, and you all know you're working hard, there's no objectivity to it.

Madam President, I would like the LCO 8814 called, if I may, please.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 8814, Senate Schedule B.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. I would move the amendment and request permission to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you. Madam President, this is a very simple amendment. Basically, what it says is that no salary -- this goes for not just this but quasis across -- that we have in our portfolio -- but basically it says that no annual salary should be greater than $150,000 without first receiving a vote of approval on the salary from the Joint Standing
Committee of the General Assembly. So, if it was the lottery, it would be Public Safety. If it was -- if it was this particular Green Bank, it would be the Banking Committee. Basically, it's just to have another set of eyes to make sure that the salaries are warranted.

Madam President, the reason why I raise this is because we have an obligation to our constituency that our taxpayers' money are being used appropriately, and therefore I would urge adoption of this amendment. And remember that these employees, as I understand it, for the Green Bank, as I understand it, do -- we do pay a fringe, so there are some benefits that go with this. So, when you talk about $150,000 dollars, it's 92 cents on a dollar for fringe. So, for instance, if someone's making $180,000 dollars at the Green Bank, our fringe benefit cost -- so, we're payin' $150,000 -- $180,000 rather -- our fringe benefit costs are $157,000 dollars a year. So, $180,000 base salary, yields $157,000 fringe. I just think we have a right to say we reviewed it, and we're okay with it.

So, Madam President, all this does is have it go to the appropriate committee to receive a vote of approval for salaries that start to get above greater than $150,000 dollars for quasis. I look forward to adoption. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark, Senator Bergstein?

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I fully concur with the underlying premise of the amendment, which is that our taxpayer money should be used appropriately and that there should be full transparency and accountability for any quasi. However, I also believe that we should limit any excess bureaucracy, any excess demands that we make on our Legislature and ensure that there are no gratuitous exercises that we create for them.

I would oppose -- respectfully oppose this amendment simply because, as I stated before, the performance of the Connecticut Green Bank speaks for itself. The numbers tell the story -- that our taxpayer money is not only being used appropriately, it's being used effectively, outstandingly. We have a tremendous return on investment with every dollar we spend through the Connecticut Green Bank. So, to look at their salaries under a microscope and say someone's making let's say $151,000 dollars, or maybe more than that, is I think irrelevant to their performance. What we really should be looking at is the portfolio, as any company does. We don't judge a company necessarily based on the salaries of their employees. We judge a company based on the quality of their product and their profit -- what they're doing, what they're actually contributing, the value they're contributing. And I strongly urge my colleagues to judge the Green Bank on those same -- by those same criteria -- performance, quality, value, what they're actually doing for our state and not to create another layer of bureaucracy, another demand on legislator time by having to scrutinize individual employee salaries through a legislative process. Thank you, Madam President.
Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Will you remark further? Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I've served my time here in the Legislature on both the Finance Committee and Appropriations Committee, and during that time, we've had many conversations about wages and benefits -- many times, especially within the budget-making process, done -- had rather deep discussions about the costs associated with not only state employees but quasi-public agencies' employees. I don't think it's a gratuitous exercise. I think it frankly could serve to support the points that have been made by the gentlelady with regard to their worth.

Certainly, some of the quasi-public agencies that we have here in the state of Connecticut deal with some rather specific areas of expertise. It may very well be that in those cases there is a value much higher than some threshold we may wanna have a review over, but I think it's a legitimate exercise. I think it's a thoughtful exercise. I think it allows us all to answer questions from constituents more frankly, especially when more often than not someone here takes a sound-bite of a number or a sound-bite of an exercise and then communicates it to the whole state. And so, I think it is a worldwide -- a worthwhile exercise, and I stand in support of the amendment. And, Madam President, when the vote is taken, I would ask that it be taken by roll call.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you, Senator Miner. Will you remark further on the amendment? Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, a question to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Yes, um, the --

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

I guess maybe it'd be to -- to Senator Fasano on the amendment. This amendment would apply only to this particular quasi-public agency and not to any of the others, is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

It would apply to all of the quasis. Through you, Madam President.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

All of 'em. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Senator Hwang.
SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, to the proponent of the bill, in regards to the intent. And I think the first question was answered -- that it applies to all quasi-publics. So --

THE CHAIR:

Okay, so you said the proponent of the bill, that is Senator Bergstein. The proponent of the amendment?

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

It would be proper for me to address it to the amendment, correct Ma'am?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, yes.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Because we're in a debate on the amendment?

THE CHAIR:

Yes. Senator Fasano, if you could stand ready to answer questions from Senator Hwang. Please proceed.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, to Senator Fasano, when it was cited here from the issue of having this salary review, the proponent of the underlying bill cited performance, value, measures. I think, for me, when I look at the ability to
review that fulfils that requirement, the fiduciary responsibility that we have as a legislative body, and I understand that may be the purpose of your amendment -- to have an underlying review of the standards of performance, and value, and obviously the ability to make the dollar -- every tax dollar worthwhile. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you for the question. I would think if I was a very successful quasi, I would give -- I would want every opportunity to come in to the committee that gave me birth and explain to them what I have done with your money as a seed entity, the return of investments that I have done, and brag about the success that I have brought to the state of Connecticut and the landmark things that I have done being the Green Energy Bank. And I would think that would not be unabashed with saying, as a result of that, the good work that these folks are doing, who probably can make more money in the private sector, absent fringe, I ask that you give them a raise for their hard work based upon the return of investment. I would think this would give them the platform to sell who they are because none of us in this -- strike that -- a lot of folks in this circle, and I've been here quite a while, Green Bank is doing its thing, but you don't hear a lot about them -- when we do budgets we do -- but we don't hear a lot about them. And it's a complicated area. I would think this is a great platform for them to say how
good they're doing. And I'd certainly be someone to say, listen, I want you to come in front of my committee, want you to say the good work. I wanna support that raise. I wanna see people who are gonna turn down folks who have made this state better with green energy and surged ahead.

This was a unique model that was put together by Commissioner Esty back in the day. So, I think that this would give 'em that platform. Through you, Madam President.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Through you, Madam President. I think the key is the quasi-public status, and this amendment would apply to all quasi-publics, and that's the unique aspect of this debate is because these entities are collaborations with state government, utilizing state funds. Look, if this was a private company, they would have their own internal board of directors measuring compensation, performance, and value. But, as a quasi-public, the state and legislative bodies is a partner in this process, and to ask that we are allowed a review of a salary beyond a certain point to ensure those performances are met, the value is there, and ultimately, as the proponent of the amendment said, if the performance is outstanding, then perhaps the salary and the possible increases are merited. This is all about transparency. This is all about meeting the obligations of a quasi-public, not a private company. You are in a partnership with the state, and we're asking as a legislative body to partner with you, to do the performance review, and we're asking for an opportunity to do that.
So, I urge support for this amendment. I wanna thank the proponent for raising it. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

For the second time, you know, I just wanna bring out this one issue. In the lottery issue, for those of you who may or may not recall, there was a president of Lottery who resigned, and then we took another person and moved them to president, and with that gave them a salary commensurate with an acting president. When I say "we," the Lottery Commission did it with their board outside the scope, which they had every right to, of the Public Safety Committee.

Then the Lottery Commission hired a new president at a little bit higher than the one they had as acting president. But the acting president, who went back to non-acting president duties, never got a reduction for their salary. That's what I'm talkin' about. I think a committee would say, okay, I get it. You want this person to act as president, temporarily we'll give that salary. Now you got a president -- I get it -- we gotta pay this person to come in and do these really good things. But you can't have two presidential salaries. But why can't they do that? Because none of us even know what the budget is at the Lottery Commission. They take money from the lottery and they hold back to use for their expenses, and their answer is -- when you
question 'em -- is we're making you money, just be happy. This is how quasis get out of control. This is why we have the problem in the state with our budgets, and when we read an article by Jon Lender, who writes these things, we're all shocked that these things come up because we don't look into it till an issue arises by someone else bringing it to our attention. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would just like to assure Senators Fasano, Hwang, Miner, and everybody else who is legitimately concerned about how quasis are spending their money on salaries and otherwise that for the Connecticut Green Bank, every single one of their transactions -- every check they write, every salary they pay -- is currently visible to the public on the OpenCT website. So, we do not have a transparency problem. We have full transparency with the Connecticut Green Bank. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Will you remark further? Senator Cassano, for the second time.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Madam President. I don't disagree with the intent of the amendment. I do disagree with the process. I have no doubt in my mind that there should be, on
an annual basis, some process that has been established by this body that would require that -- or on a biannual basis -- that would require that the -- each of these agencies come before them with a budget, with a plan, and so on -- consistently, not -- not because the Green Bank happens to be on the agenda. Because they're on the agenda, we have an amendment that deals with all of 'em.

Several years ago, you might remember the collapse of one of those. That was the CRRA, and I was the mayor at the time, and the mayors of Old Saybrook and myself ended up becoming co-chairs of CRRA for about a year-and-a-half tryin' to get 'em out of the mess that was there. And there was really no rules or regulations or anything else. I mean, they were -- they were quasi-public. They got money from the public, and they ran themselves.

There should be some answering to this body, but I don't think it should be through an amendment process. I think we ought to be creating what those requirements are and a process so this is done on an annual basis, and we have control -- because that's the thing that's missing here. I think what Senator Fasano is looking for is to have some bit of control and say in how money is being spent and what's being done. I kind of feel the same way. They shouldn't float by themselves, but it shouldn't be part of an amendment. So, I oppose the amendment process. I'd be glad to work with anyone to put together a process that has oversight. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cassano. Will you remark further? There has been a request for a roll call
vote on the amendment. So, with that, Mr. Clerk, if you could please call the vote, and the machine will be open.

CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate, Senate Bill 927, Senate Amendment B, LCO 8814. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 927, Senate Amendment B, LCO 8814. Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the senators voted? Have all the senators voted? The machine will be locked, and Mr. Clerk, if you would please announce the tally on the amendment.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 927, Senate Amendment B, LCO 8814.

Total number voting 36
Total number voting Yea 14
Total voting Nay 22
Absent and not voting 0

THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] The amendment fails. And I just wanna welcome to the chamber, before he leaves, former Representative Bill Dyson. The Honorable Bill Dyson, welcome to our esteemed chamber. [Applause] It's always a pleasure to see you, sir, and you look
exactly as we left you. Retirement is a very beautiful thing, at least from public service. Nice to see you, sir.

All right. The chamber will come back to order. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. It is good to see Bill Dyson in the chamber. I remember going to my first meeting, and he got into a dispute with someone. And I thought he was really upset, and he looked over at me because I must've looked a little taken aback, and he winked at me, as if to say, don't worry, everything's okay. So, that was my first day in the Legislature. [Laughing]

Madam President, I think that Senator Cassano hit upon a point that I wanna talk a little bit about. He had said, look, there's two things -- one, he had said, we shouldn't do this through an amendment process, and I think he's right. However, I would point out, I did submit a bill this year that GAE did not act upon, and it was the same bill I submitted the year before, which is the same bill I submitted the year before, and I think it's the same bill I submitted the year before. And every time there was a public hearing, the quasis would run to those folks in charge of the committee and say it is not necessary, we're cool, we're doin' it fine, Fasano's out of his mind, we got this -- and the bill would die. Why won't they let us under the hood? Why not? That's the problem.

I would agree with you, sir, if this was the first time I brought this issue to the table, or quasis
came up and said, you know what, Len, let's talk about what your concerns are so we can address them and make sure it's running smoothly. The answer is, we got this, we're a quasi, keep your nose out of our tent and we're fine. I can't accept that -- not after the historical period we had for the last six years, where there's been issues after issue after issue. So, I appreciate the comment, but I will also say to Senator Bergstein, who talked about slowing down the process, there's another way of doing this. If I could have our Clerk call LCO 8423?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 8423, Senate Schedule C.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move the amendment, and I request permission to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
Madam President, this doesn't clog up anything. What this says is that the quasis must send to OPM, and therefore they don't have to appear -- they send to OPM a breakdown of the board of directors. They submit a report on its hours, wages, conditions of employment. [Ringing in background] They give their budgets. They give their finance and revenue reports. They give their raises, their salary increases from year-to-year, incentive pays. Basically, this is a financial report that we get to look at.

If we're curious, we go to OPM. We get to look at it and say, this is where our money's going in the quasi, this is what they're spending it on, these are the salary increases percentage-wise, here are the incentive bonuses. Because, mind you, I don't know how many of you know, but mind you, with the Green Bank there are incentive bonuses. So, they go out and they sell their products, and they get a salary, but if they close a deal, they get a bonus for closing the deal. I don't know how much these bonuses are, but as I understand it, there are bonuses for closing the deals.

Well, these are things we should know about. We may be perfectly fine with it. We may wanna tweak it, but all it does is say please send this report to OPM so that we can look at it when we wanna look at it. Is that really asking too much? Is that really asking too much of a quasi -- to send a report that just details the employment for the next year, how many more people they employed -- basically, as a stockholder, which we are, asking for financial information?
Madam President, all this does is just give -- the word around this building I hear all the time -- transparency, transparency, transparency. Well, apparently we don't want transparency when raises -- when salaries get over $150,000. Maybe we want transparency just to know what we're doing in these quasis. Maybe we just wanna know where these funds are going and who is getting what and to what extent. I don't think that's too much to ask. If you go on the website, particularly for the Green Bank -- and I'm not picking on them, 'cause I think this is true with all the quasis, but I just had a look -- you cannot look at their checkbook and say how much they're spending, 'cause it's not broken down -- $2000 went here, $5000 went here. It's $2 million dollars, $2 million dollars -- $3 million dollars to an account -- that's it. No one knows -- not that they're doing anything wrong, but nobody knows what that is for.

We can't even question whether or not we can cut expenses, or whether or not the job that they're doing is fair and equitable without knowing the full story. So, Madam President, I think this is really a minor push, if I may, but it gives you voluminous information at very little cost to the agency. They've gotta do it for their accountants, so they should be able to do it for us. Madam President, I urge adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I rise to support this amendment. I believe this is an natural extension of the conversation that we're having today. If it's important for the Green Bank to provide its opportunity in one sector of energy, and this bill contemplates expansion of that into another sector, then it certainly makes sense to have good reporting. You know, in our business, we have -- we have a saying that everything measured improves, and everything that measures and is reported on improves exponentially. And I believe that this will only make this a better bill, will only make the project a better project, and I urge adoption of this amendment. Thank you, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Will you remark further on the amendment? Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Again, while I agree with the underlying premise of the amendment, that we need full transparency and accountability for quasis for all government agencies, we already have that, and I will cite how. The Green Bank discloses all of their salaries, all of their checkbook transactions on the OpenCT website, and in fact, they were the first quasi to volunteer this information.

So, they are always out in front in terms of accountability and transparency. They also have an annual audit report, which discloses all of their projects and their financials in a very digestible
format. And, on their website, they disclose all of their board meetings and transactions again. Board meetings are also open to the public, and in fact, members are the board are appointed by the minority leader and majority leader. So, they could not be more open to public input, public scrutiny. We have all the information we need, and they deserve the respect of being able to continue their work in a timely fashion without imposing more burdens on their time, but also really the burden would be on OPM to try to discern what they're supposed to do with this information.

I would say we want a leaner government. That means not making further requests on the agencies that we have with limited capacity, and we need to recognize and support models that work really well. The Connecticut Green Bank is a model of innovation, efficiency, transparency, and accountability. So, let's agree that that is -- those are the objectives that we're working towards in government, but I respectfully request my colleagues to vote against this amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Will you remark further?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
Madam President, for the second time, I agree the salaries are on the website, but you go on Open Checkbook, details are not on the Open Checkbook. These are just large sums. I've had my staff just check it to see if I missed it. That's what I'm talking about. And this thing about burdensome on Green Bank. Oh, God forbid, we ask quasis that we create and fund to do a little work for us so we know what we're doin' is right. That's the whole point of this. We can't let them be autonomous. We have a fiduciary responsibility. It's like me owning a company and saying, I don't need them to tell me what they're doing -- they're just doin' fine, I'm gonna leave 'em alone. No. How burdensome is it? You've gotta keep books and records -- I hope so -- so just put that down, what it is. Is it really hard to say what your salary increases? Is it really hard to tell us what your bonuses are? How could that possibly -- I can't even fathom that concept -- that we'd be bothering an agency -- a quasi -- to give us information in one that we give the lifeblood to and the breath to.

So, Madam President, if it is burdensome for them to show up to a hearing and tell us what they're doing on salaries, then ask us for a vote. It cannot be burdensome to ask them to give us papers already generated and put 'em through a copy machine or scan and send it to us in email to OPM. And OPM doesn't have to do anything but collect it. And if you look at our statutes, they collect a lot of information. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us. If not, Senator Bergstein --
SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam --

THE CHAIR:

The request has been made for a roll call vote. So, with that, Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly call it, and the machine will be open.

CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 927, Senate Amendment C, LCO No. 8423. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment C, LCO No. 8423. Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate.

Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the senators voted? Have all the senators voted? The machine will be locked, and the Clerk would please announce the tally. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 927, Senate Amendment C, LCO No. 8423.

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THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] The amendment fails. Will you remark further, Senator Fasano?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I don't have any other amendments. I just have a few questions for the proponent of the bill. Through you, Madam President. Would you say that the Green Bank was mildly successful or very successful? How would you characterize their financial success? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I think they have achieved the objectives that were set for them by the Legislature, and they have been successful.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Through you, Madam President. Madam President, it is my understanding that you had indicated that -- that return of investments were very well. Do you know what the return of the investments have been with respect to the investments that the Green Banks
have made in the marketplace or for the green energy and the return that they got? I'm not puttin' you on the spot. If you don't know, I perfectly understand it. But do you know what those returns have been, either roughly or characterize those returns? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. What I do know is that they've invested a total of $237 million dollars, which they were able to leverage with private investments 6:1 ratio to achieve a $1.5 billion dollar investment in projects. So, the projects that they're doing are solar panel installations around the state, which save consumers many, many hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy consumption costs. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

And, through you, Madam President. Do you know what the rate of return on those investments is -- is it ten percent, five percent, seven percent? If you know -- if you don't, once again, I know that these are detail --

THE CHAIR:
Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I don't have that particular number.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Through you, Madam President. Are they well capitalized to the best of your knowledge? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would say they are undercapitalized, but they are incredibly creative and innovative with the -- and they create opportunities for themselves. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
So, when you say undercapitalized, you're indicating that they need more money from the state? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. No, I'm not suggesting any such thing. I'm saying that if we had fiscal health in this state, and if we had money to invest, which we may not at this time -- I'm not asserting that we do -- but if we did have money to invest, this would be a great investment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

So, through you, Madam President. The return of investment that you talked about earlier -- you had said they had a great return of investment -- do you still stick by that statement? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Thank you, Madam President. Yes, I do stick by my earlier assertion that we have had a great return on investment because there are many metrics by which we can judge the success of the Green Bank. And it's not just dollar-for-dollar how much money was invested in green energy projects, it's also how much -- how many other benefits were created in terms of health, climate change, mitigation, adaptation to a green economy, and just general awareness of what we need to do at a much bigger scale in our state to become resilient, to become energy independent, and to ensure that we have a sustainable economy going forward that is not reliant on fossil fuels. And another thing that Green Bank does is makes our energy grid stronger, more resilient, and sustainable. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

So, Madam President, through you. Is it true that the way that the current Green Bank is funded is identified in line 34 through 37?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Just asking for clarification. Is Senator Fasano asking about lines 34 through 37 as the -- I’m sorry, may I see which -- which lines you're referring to?

THE CHAIR:
Senator Fasano.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Oh, yes. No, no, no -- sorry -- that's the Ratepayer Fund. That's only going into the Clean Energy Fund. That has nothing to do with the Environmental Infrastructure Fund. So, the way the Environmental Infrastructure Fund will be funded -- if that's your question?

THE CHAIR:

Okay, Senator -- this is getting hard, but we're good. Senator Fasano, go ahead.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

No, I was talking about not the Infrastructure Fund but the Clean Energy Fund itself gets funded out of the tax -- out of the rates on electricity -- a portion of it goes to Clean Energy Fund, is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Through you, Madam President. That is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
So, Madam President -- thank you, Senator, and I appreciate indulging the questions. So, Madam President, I think that the success of the Clean Energy Fund and the investments that they have have gotten a greater return, and they have invested the money. But this money's not free. This comes out of our rates that are charged on electricity. These are electrical rates. In Connecticut, our electrical rates go up.

The question is, now we're giving more authority to the Green Bank, more investment opportunities, at the cost of continued higher interest rates. If you were to close the loop -- and maybe they're expanding because the amount of solar panel requests, residential and commercial, have bookended -- in other words they've grown, and now they're kind of plateauing off, and they're looking for another area to go in. I would argue, what is better? Do we reduce the energy cost to taxpayers by reducing the rate on our energy bills and let them take the investments that they're getting and the return on that investment and reinvestment, or are we gonna say, look, you got that money tied up over there -- we're gonna give you a new venture, and we're gonna continue to fund you from the electrical rates that consumers, whether they're business or residential, continue to bear and understand our burden to them as they live in the state of Connecticut. That's what gives me pause.

We don't know where the money is going. We don't know what the plans are. We don't know what the rates -- what the salary increases have been. We don't know what the bonuses have been. We don't know what the capital is. We don't know where the money is going. But yet, we're continuing to take
it out of our electrical rates, and now we want more authority because we found other investments -- maybe good policy, maybe not -- other investments, and we gotta continue to take money out of the electrical rates. Why not say, can we take breather? Let's give people in Connecticut a break. Let's not take any more money out of the ratepayers' account, UI account or whatever the rate is -- whoever you have, and let's not cause that energy to go up, and let's hold still for a little bit. It's free money to the Clean Energy Fund, but it's a cost to consumers. And there isn't a person in this room -- to a person, I have not heard that the cost of energy is killing business, manufacturers, and even consumers. So, Madam President, that's another issue that gives me pause, and why I'm not sure I can support this bill -- not because it's Clean Energy Folks, who are good people, but because it is a quasi that's unaccountable, that's asking for more opportunities. We're taking the money from ratepayers. I don't see an end in sight. You know, this [coughing] Clean Energy Fund was started by Commissioner Esty, and Commissioner Esty wrote the book *Green to Gold* and then three other volumes thereafter, and he was talking about using money off the electrical rates to get this off the ground so that they could help invest and spur the development of solar panels across the state and other energy efficiencies that go along with it. [Background coughing] That was the purpose that we went into it. Now we're going down a whole different avenue. I don't remember when Dan Esty brought this up -- Commissioner Esty -- that he talked about step one, step two. His whole argument was, if we're gonna do solar panels, we need to have Connecticut make the investment at the lowest interest rates, use the
power, faith, credit of the state of Connecticut, which they do, and get it moving. Mission accomplished. But now we gotta move to another area.

Madam President, it's just very tough for me to support this bill without any oversight, without any understanding of where the money is going and controlling the money. So, Madam President, more likely than not, gonna be a no on this bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further? Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this bill. At one point, Connecticut led the country in patents per capita. We were the most innovative state in the nation. Current ranking has us as the fourth most innovative state in the nation, and hopefully we will return to that top spot, but innovation can't just apply to the businesses in our state. We need to apply that to government as well, and this is a prime example of how we can apply innovation to our government.

I've long been interested in pay-for-success financing, what some may call social impact bonds, but I've also become interested in their corollary, environmental impact bonds. This bill will allows us to apply innovation to improving our environment, and we will only pay for what works. This will enable the Green Bank to provide resources and
intellectual capital to the cities to help them structure programs to improve environmental outcomes.

One example is what's been done in Washington DC, Baltimore, and Atlanta, where they have used programs where in those cities there's storm water runoff in the waste water. Well, the waste water, sewage, and storm water runoff are comingled. And what happens in those instances is, when we have high rain as we've had in the last couple of weeks, you end up dumping raw sewage into a body of water, which is not good for the environment.

In Connecticut, a number of our cities still have the waste water and storm water runoff -- the sanitary sewage and the storm water runoff comingled. Bridgeport is involved in a program, but New Haven, trying to separate them, but they still have a ways to go. New Haven, New London, Hartford, they're all comingled. And what this does is it's a way of separating that to improve the environmental outcomes in an innovative matter of financing that. So, I stand in strong support of this bill, and I thank Senator Bergstein for bringing it forward.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Maroney. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if I might, just a couple of questions to the proponent of the bill, as amended.
Thank you, Senator. Senator Miner, please proceed.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I've listened -- I've listened to this conversation, and am I correct that the Green Bank funds cannot be used for any of the other purposes outlined in this bill? Through you.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. You are correct that the Ratepayer Fund that's currently going into the Clean Energy Fund of the Green Bank cannot be used for other purposes. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

And with regard to all the important infrastructure ideas that Senator Maroney spoke about, where will the dollars come from to capitalize those projects? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Thank you, Madam President, and thank you for the question, 'cause it is an important one. The funds will come from green bonds, which is -- which the Connecticut Green Bank is authorized to issue, and I would lead you to the lines 133 to 148 in the original amendment. The Green Bank has the authority to issue bonds and which are repaid by revenues from revenue-producing projects. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

And, through you, Madam President. Will there be any other legislation required to authorize surcharges or fees that might be levied in relationship to those capital projects to repay those bonds? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I do not anticipate any further legislation. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):
Thank you, Madam President. So, under current statute, there are some mechanisms to repay clean water expenditures for sewer treatment plant upgrades and infrastructure improvements. There are usually thresholds, upside limits, based on whatever the improvement might bring in terms of an asset value to the real estate. So, in statute, I think, and in common law, there are limits as to how much WPCA can charge in user fees. Will the Legislature revisit any of those types of ideas so that consumers, theoretically, will not run the risk of being overcharged for any capital improvements that they may seek out through these funds, or will it be up to this quasi-public agency to establish the rate, repayment structure, and whatever fees may be levied? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. No further legislation is contemplated at this time. Consumers are also not being overcharged. Because consumers are actually benefiting from the projects, their energy costs are going down, their environment is getting cleaner and safer, the economy is becoming more resilient. So, I would assert that consumers are benefiting from all of these projects. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Miner.
SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and I thank the gentlelady for her response. Madam President, I -- prior to becoming elected to state office, I was a first selectman, and there were many occasions we had to discuss rates and fees, user fees. As I said, there's plenty of case law. And so, is it anticipated that the environment value will somehow be used as a benefit for which all that would be benefiting, or at least using some kind of a capital improvement, would at some point get to vote on? Is there anticipated any mechanism where the users would be polled in some way before a fee is levied, if it never comes back to the Legislature? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Public polling is not anticipated as a form of input in designing these projects. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I don't have any further questions, and maybe I -- polling was the wrong choice of words, maybe it should have been a referenda or something similar. Look, I understand
that there's great movement toward green energy, trying to become more resilient to climate change, and to some extent, I think all my constituents believe that we are at a crossroads and should begin to think about some of those capital investments. The question for me is whether or not this is the place where we have that full and broad conversation. I think there's a way to capitalize some of the infrastructure improvements that are contemplated in the bill. In fact, I've had conversations with the DEC -- new DEC -- DECD commissioner about that very matter, that perhaps the state of Connecticut could bring private-public partnerships to bear, so that we can back away from the Clean Water Fund -- not in concept, but maybe our money's no longer necessary, maybe the private bond market is the place where entrepreneurs can make investments, recapitalize infrastructure, and because of discounted rates or what have you our public dollars are no longer necessary for that purpose.

I just worry that this bill as it's drafted seems to have a number of open-ended sections that contemplate something else happening [ringing] -- that I don't know what it is. I don't think any of us know what it is. Maybe some of us know what some of it is, but I'm not sure, as we vote on it today, we'll know really what we've done until it starts to roll itself out in a -- in a fashion that is not really contained within the Legislature, it'll be through this agency, and so that's what gives me pause. I do thank the gentlelady for her work on this effort. As I said, I do think that some of my constituents are keenly aware of ideas, concept with regard to energy -- green energy, waste water, trash to energy, the whole nine yards. But I do think
that historically we have served the public better when we've had more control over it, and this seems to be rather open-ended. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and I appreciate the good senator's comments about public-private partnerships because that's exactly the model of the Connecticut Green Bank. And if I may, I'd just like to read a quote from the president of banking at Key Bank, one of the many partners of the Green Bank, and he said, "The importance of public-private partnerships like the one between Key Bank and Connecticut Green Bank cannot be overstated. Our partnership with the Connecticut Green Bank through the CT Solar Lease led to over $100 million dollars of investment to reduce the energy burden of nearly 1,200 families and 75 businesses in our communities." And that is just one example of the hundreds, hundreds of projects and partnerships that the Connecticut Green Bank has achieved over the last eight years.

And I would say that they are a model of innovation and accountability and efficiency and transparency. By every metric, they have been a success, and we should be so proud because we, the Legislature, created this model eight years ago. They have proven their worth. They have proven that they can do what we hoped they could do. Now, all we are asking is that we unclip their wings and let them expand their model to other opportunities. So, I
would ask at this time, Madam President, if the -- we have another amendment. This is now a friendly amendment. The Clerk is in possession of amendment 8827, and I would ask that he please call the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 8827, Senate Schedule D.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the amendment, waive its reading, and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Please -- please do.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):
Thank you, Madam President. So, this is a friendly amendment between Senator Fasano and myself which simply asks that the Green Bank, when they issue their annual report also send it to the Banks Committee. They have cognizance over the Green Bank, as does Energy, Environment, and Commerce, so we're simply adding the Banks Committee. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bergstein. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank the senator for adopting the amendment. I won't be 0-for for the evening on this, so I appreciate that. I like the amendment. I think that banks should have a right to see what's going on with respect to the report, and therefore I urge adoption. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the friendly amendment? If not, let me try your minds. All in favor, please signify by saying aye. ["Aye" in background] Opposed? The amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended? If not, Mr. Clerk, would you kindly -- oh, Senator Leone, did not see you -- please proceed.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):

That's quite all right, Madam President. Pleasure to see you. I just wanted to rise in support of
this legislation for many reasons, but I also wanted
to thank the good senator for her leadership,
Senator Bergstein, on crafting this bill because
it's something that we should be doing for the
future of our state. As was mentioned, the Green
Bank, when it was first proposed a number of years
ago, it was due to the fact that we needed to start
preparing for the future on how we need to invest in
our environmental infrastructure, in our
sustainability. And as we realize with fossil fuels
on the decline and the impact that it has had, not
only in our local environment but in our global
environment, the impact on our climate, the trends
are somewhat obvious as to where things are goin' if
we don't make improvements, and it's all about bein'
sustainable and how to invest in the future in the
right way.

Given that the track record of the Green Bank has
been a positive one, expanding it so that they can
do a little bit more to retain that mission of
making sure we invest in the proper future
industries as we try to move away from the past that
has done such damage, this is the way to do it where
we have a bit of oversight as well. With the fact
that it's a quasi-agency, they're a little bit more
nimble to act, and we've seen many of their
successes in a lot of our local towns. And it's a
way to inspire other businesses to do the same and
to have everyone play their part in moving towards a
new future that is sustainable, that is right for
the planet, and is also right for business and for
our consumers. So, it's that mission and that
mindset that makes this product as good as it is,
which we now hope will be better. The track record
of the past successes hopefully is a precursor for
what might be, and based on that, I think we have a
-- something that we can hopefully look forward to some positive impacts based on the past.

So, it's with that I wanted to voice my support for this bill, for this legislation. It's about our future, making sure that there's one there for our children and their children. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Leone. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, kindly call the vote, and the machine will be open.

CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 927 as amended by Senate A and D. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 927 as amended by Senate A and D. Immediate Roll Call vote in the Senate. [Background talking]

THE CHAIR:

Have all the senators voted? And I would encourage the senators to please stay in the chamber because we anticipate one more vote very shortly. So while we have your attention and your presence, please stay right here, so that we can finish our business. [Background talking]

Have all the senators voted? Have all the senators voted? The machine will be locked, and Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the tally?
CLERK:

Senate Bill 927 as amended by Senate A and D.

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THE CHAIR:


SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, a couple notations. On Calendar page 11, Calendar 168, Senate Bill 904, I'd earlier marked that to go to Finance, and I'd like to remove that referral and just mark that as PR.

THE CHAIR:

So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And on Calendar page 40, Calendar 437, Senate Bill 880, I'd like to refer that to the Appropriations Committee.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I'd like to mark two more bills go. One is Calendar page 9, Calendar 138, Senate Bill 70, followed by, if we can actually -- followed by Calendar page 1, Calendar 48, House Joint Resolution 165, and I move for a suspension to take up that item.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 9, Calendar 138, substitute for Senate Bill Number 70, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT INFRASTRUCTURE BANK. There is an amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. The Clerk is in possession of Amendment No. 8724. I move adoption of the amendment, waive its reading, and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, if you would please call the amendment.

CLERK:

LCO No. 8724, Senate Schedule A.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Bergstein, please proceed.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Quick summary. This would be AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT INFRASTRUCTURE BANK, along the lines of the model of the Green Bank. This would be a -- an infrastructure bank that would simply leverage public funds with private investments and be a transformative model for creating more accountability and transparency in our infrastructure projects, so we could do them faster, cheaper, higher quality, and bigger scale. I move adoption of the amendment, Madam President. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. The question is on adoption. Will you remark further. Will you remark further? Senator Formica. No? Will you remark further? If not, all in favor of this amendment, let me try your minds. All in favor, please signify by saying aye. ["Aye" in background] Opposed? The amendment is adopted. Senator Bergstein. Ah, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move that we refer this item to the GAE Committee please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Mr. Clerk.
CLERK:

Page 1, Calendar 488, House Joint Resolution Number 165, RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR., OF SHELTON TO BE A JUDGE OF THE APPELLATE COURT AND A JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon -- evening.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Or, good evening more accurately. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and adoption of the resolution.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, the question is on adoption. Will you remark?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This is Judge Devlin who came before the Judiciary Committee -- I should say again, he's been before us several times in many ways. As many members of the circle know
that he's a leader on the Sentencing Commission and has a lot to do with those bills that come here every year for the last several years that have helped to make our state better, leading a commission that is a commission made up of people from all parts of the discussion that we're talking about, so that we can have a better system. Judge Devlin has a distinguished career, impressive in the Judiciary Committee, and I urge adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Winfield. Will you remark? Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Good evening as well. I'd like to associated myself with the remarks of Chairman Winfield and have the highest regard for Judge Devlin. He is indeed 69 years old, approaching the mandatory retirement age. Although, in the state of Connecticut, even though you will hit age 70, there are still many roles that you can perform, and he will indeed do that, to be of service to the people of the state of Connecticut, as an ancillary assistant to the Appellate Court in the various roles that we allow.

What I wanna highlight though is that over the last probably decade or so, we have striven mightily to diversify our bench in a variety of ways. For example, Connecticut led the nation in the first Muslim judge of the Superior Court, and indeed he came back this year after his first eight years and said Texas has an individual that has that faith as well, but Connecticut took the lead on that. We
have folks on the Appellate Court and Supreme Court that never were on the Superior Court but had various backgrounds such that they would bring diversity, either gender, or race, or ethnicity. And so, we went -- went down that path, and those folks ascended to those benches.

The interesting thing about Judge Devlin is he's been a Superior Court judge for well over 20 years. He brings a tremendous amount of criminal law background to the Appellate Court. So, that'll be a great addition to the Appellate Court, but also I think it sends a really positive message to all the other folks that are working day-in and day-out as Superior Court judges. You're never too old if you have the capacity and the abilities to be elevated to the Appellate Court or Supreme Court, and Judge Devlin is the perfect example of that at age 69. He will bring great strength to the Appellate Court, and so that if there's other judges out there saying -- jeepers, I have to be a certain kind of person to get elevated, and I'm just working here and the part A's or the GAs are on the civil side, and I guess my chance to be elevated has passed me by. That is not the case whatsoever. Judge Devlin is your role model, 'cause anything can happen to anyone in this great country of the United States and in the state of Connecticut if you work hard and you're willing to be a fantastic public servant, and indeed he is. As Senator Winfield stated, he has done a fabulous job heading up the Sentencing Commission. We have proposals before us that they have striven mightily to get their arms around, and so for a variety of reasons, as I have stated here on the floor of the Senate, I strongly support Judge Devlin to be a member of the Appellate Court and would urge my
colleagues' support as well. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Kissel. Senator Bradley, will you remark?

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD):

My very first criminal trial was heard by Judge Devlin. What a gentleman. I was a rookie lawyer, hadn't tried a criminal trial ever in my life before, and he was an absolute gentleman. I really wanna associate my remarks with what my -- Senator Kissel said -- my colleague, Senator Kissel said. He is a role model for everyone, a true jurist, a person who's passionate about the law, a person who extends himself to make sure that there's fairness and equity throughout the entire process, a person who does not -- doesn't show whether he's a Democrat or Republican, doesn't show whether he's Progressive or Conservative, a person who's in pursuit of justice and the truth. And it was such a tremendous eye opener for me -- Connecticut law, a lot of times, has a reputation of being a good ol' boy state, of being a state that's biased towards people, of being a state that doesn't look at the truth and the facts. Judge Devlin dispels any of that in his courtroom.

I am so honored that he's being elevated, and absolutely, Senator Kissel, these are the type of people we want. And yes, while diversity is very important for me, and I want to see more African Americans, I want to see more Hispanics, I want to see more women become judges and be elevated as
well, but equally is important is that whoever we select, that they show the character that Judge Devlin has. So, I commend him on his appointment, and I think that was an outstanding selection.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Bradley. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and good evening. Rising in support of Judge Devlin's nomination for elevation to the Appellate Court. I agree wholeheartedly with the remarks of Chairman Winfield and Ranking Member Senator Kissel and Senator Bradley that Judge Devlin is entirely deserving of this elevation. He has been one of the -- the leading bright lights among our Superior Court judges during his whole career as a Superior Court judge for more than 20 years, especially on the criminal side -- because his experience, again, prior to becoming a Superior Court judge, he had quite a major distinguished career handling major criminal prosecutions as a federal prosecutor, as an assistant U.S. attorney. But he is somebody who I think all of us know -- and Senator Bradley and I know as defense counsel -- who has been very fair and even-handed to the defense. He is not -- not somebody who has shown a prosecutorial bias in his years on the Superior Court. He's been even-handed, fair, with a significant sensitivity to the particular circumstances and nuances of each case that comes before him, and that's exactly what we need to see in judges at all levels.
He's also scholarly, someone who's really steeped in the -- in the law -- in the criminal law. He will, I think, add significantly to the criminal law expertise on the Appellate Court because, of course, many of the major cases that do come to that court are appeals of criminal convictions.

And my great regret, as mentioned earlier, is that he wasn't appointed to this position earlier in his career because he will have one year to serve, and obviously he will have an opportunity as a referee thereafter to continue. But I certainly applaud the appointment and celebrate it as someone who will add a great deal to our Appellate Court. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Looney. Will you remark further on this resolution? Will you remark further? If not, would the Clerk please call the vote, and the machine will be open.

CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Joint Resolution 165. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Joint Resolution 165.

Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Joint Resolution 165. Immediate Roll Call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Joint Resolution 165.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you. The machine will be closed, and the Clerk would kindly announce the tally on the resolution.

CLERK:

House Joint Resolution Number 165.

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THE CHAIR:


SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Two points of personal privilege. First, I'd like to ask the chamber to stand and for a moment of silence in recognition of National Law Enforcement Officers Week. Today is the recognition of fallen law enforcement officers. [Moment of silence in the chamber]

Thank you very much, appreciate that. And while you're standing, you might as well put your hands together and wish Len Fasano a very happy birthday 'cause today is his birthday. [Applause] Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Senator Needleman.
SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, during the debate on Calendar 141, Senate Bill 927, Amendment C, which was LCO 8423, I was out of the chamber on urgent legislative business and missed the roll call vote. I would like the Journal to reflect that I wish to be recorded in the negative.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Needleman. The Journal will so reflect that. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, that concludes our business for today. I wanna wish everybody a safe travel home. Tomorrow Senate Democrats will meet in caucus and 10 o'clock, and the Senate will meet in session at 11 o'clock tomorrow. And with that --

On motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 6:54 p.m. adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.