The Senate was called to order at 12:16 o’clock p.m., President in the Chair.

DEPUTY CHAPLAIN BONITA GRUBBS:

All wise God, all who gather in this Chamber, though tired, must take many consequential actions today.

The daunting and pressing tasks ahead are to address remaining legislative matters, including approval of the biennial budget. They are complicated, time is limited and much is at stake.

Therefore, seeking Your divine guidance, I ask You to make this moment of decision-making and achieving results as visionary, justice-seeking and history-making as happened a century ago on this date.

In 1912, Massachusetts passed the first minimum wage law and in 1919, the US Congress passed the Women’s Suffrage Bill (or the 19th amendment).

Different issues than these face the Senate today but comparable trailblazing and bold achievements are still within reach. May Your peace and joy abound as they do so in this process of securing a positive and history-making future. AMEN.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Reverend Grubbs and I would ask Senator Witkos to come forward to lead us in the Pledge.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

(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, Senator and good afternoon, Senator Flexer. Senator Berthel, good afternoon.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good afternoon, Madam President. How are you today?

THE CHAIR:

Very well. Thank you, sir.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you, madam. Ma'am, I rise for the purpose of point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you. As the Reverend just spoke to, today is actually a historic day for the Senate Chamber. On
this date in 1969, House Bill 7331 which had been introduced by Representative Neiditz of the 12th House district established the State Legislative Internship Program. Fifty years ago today that bill passed here in this very room and the program began actually in 1967 on a pilot basis where we brought seven Trinity College Students in as a part-time assistance to the members of the House of Representatives. In 1969, after the successful pilot program, Public Act 769 was actually enacted into law by the Governor in July of that year so since that time, we have seen hundreds of interns come through the legislature, all with some really terrific experiences. We have legislators in this circle today who are former interns. We have an abundant number of staff who were also part of the internship program.

Just very quickly, this year statistics because I think it's important, we had 63 legislators that participates in the legislative internship program with 53 in the House, 10 in the Senate and we actually had 102 applicants from 29 different schools in and out of the State that applied this year and we accepted 63 of those 102 from 20 different schools so I think it's important for us to remember that we established this program 50 years ago and it is arguably one of the best legislative internship programs in the country. We hear that all the time and we owe a great amount of recognition and a debt of gratitude to Lisa Roy, who has run that program now for the last four years and has taken it from what it was 50 years ago and really developed it into a tremendous program today so I think we should, I don't know how we would celebrate an anniversary, but perhaps we should just rise and give the program a round of applause in
recognition of its 50th Anniversary. Thank you, Madam President. [Applause]

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Thank you, Senator Berthel for that. Our interns are invaluable. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise for point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, my hometown is North Haven, obviously a town that I'm proud to represent and I have with me a guest that I brought to the Senate Chamber, Paul Ciccarelli. He is someone who's starting to get more involved in politics and getting on the town committee and doing things and it's good to have someone like Paul with a lot of energy and he came up here to observe how sausage is made. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but he's here to see that so I'd like the Senate to give him a welcoming tradition as we do with all guests. Thank you, Madam President. [Applause]

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):
Good afternoon, Madam President. Madam President, I rise for a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. In the gallery we have here today a good friend of mine and that's Leslie Holmes and her mother who have joined us to watch a little bit of the Senate proceedings this afternoon. Leslie was an integral part of my campaign, she's very involved in the town of Wilton in municipal government. She's been an active and unbelievably dedicated member of the Democratic Town Committee and I'm really grateful that she's decided to make the trip up to Hartford along with her mother and her mother's friend to pay us a visit so I hope that the Chamber will join me in giving them a warm welcome. Thank you, Madam President. [Applause]

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Good to see you. Madam President, for the purposes of our marking. Well actually, is the Senate in possession of Senate Agenda No. 1?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.
The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda No. 1 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019.

Thank you, Madam President. I move all items on Senate Agenda No. 1 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019, be acted upon as indicated and that the agenda be incorporated by reference to the Senate Journal, in the Senate transcript and placed immediately on our calendar.

So noted and so ordered.

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the first bill to go will be Calendar page 23, Calendar 399, Senate Bill 1111. I'd like to mark that go followed by House Bill 7424, emergency certified bill on Senate Agenda No. 1. I'd like to place that on our go list as well. Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, sir. Mr. Clerk.
Page 23, Calendar number 399, Senate Bill No. 1111, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF CRIMINAL LAWS OF THIS STATE. There is an amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Good afternoon, 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 WINFIELD (10TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, at this time, if she'd accept it, I'd yield to Senator Flexer.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Flexer. Do you accept the yield?

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Yes, I do.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):
Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of an amendment, LCO No. 10699. I ask that the Clerk call the amendment and I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10699, Senate Schedule A.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed to summarize, Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption. Will you remark?

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Yes, Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the amendment before us is a strike all amendment that makes some modifications to Senate Bill 3 which passed both this Chamber and the House Chamber overwhelmingly in recent weeks. The amendment that is before us represents the good work of all four caucuses in both Chambers coming together on the underlying issues in Senate Bill 3. This amendment makes some small changes in Senate Bill 3 and again, represents a consensus among the Democrat and
Republican Senator and House members. I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Good afternoon, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Great to see you on this lovely Tuesday afternoon. Through you, Madam President, just some questions to the proponent of the amendment?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

And this is to create a legislative history at least on the record here in our Chamber. Does the amendment remove from discriminatory practice the failure to post a notice? Is that more in line of something that someone would get a fine for?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):
Through you, Madam President, yes. Section 1 of the amendment that is before us changes that signage requirement.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much and through you, Madam President, does the amendment now change that to find harassment before the commission that there must be a finding of clear and convincing evidence? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes. In section 2 of the bill, or the amendment, excuse me, in lines 52 through 54, that language is used.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President and through you, Madam President, if the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities has more than 100 public hearings and has available funds, they can hire a magistrate to hear cases from the chief court administrator from their list of magistrates. Is that correct?
Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, section 4 of the bill talks about the use of magistrates, but through you, Madam President, I don't know that it uses the number 100 as the good Senator suggested.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you, Madam President. That's what I have in my notes. Could we just stand at ease and just double check on that? If that's incorrect, I stand corrected.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

And again, Madam President, there's no mention of 100 public hearings?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):
Through you, Madam President, in line 94, it does talk about the referee requesting an appointment when the public hearings exceed 100.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much. So I believe that was in there. Further through you, Madam President, does the amendment which becomes the bill reduce fines from $1000 dollars to $750 dollars for failure to post notice?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, the amendment that is before us allows a fine of up to $750 dollars. The fine can be set at any amount between $1 dollar I suppose and $750 dollars so the fine is not set at $750 dollars, but it cannot be more than $750 dollars.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Senator Flexer for that clarification. Does it reduce the ability to
inspect the premises to only within 12 months upon filing of a complaint and if the premise such as a daycare is at a residence, you would the need permission of the owner of the residence to enter those premises? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, section 5 of the amendment before us details a 12-month period when a complaint has been filed that the commission can go in and investigate, but it also talks about the executive director of the commission having a reasonable belief that the employer is in violation and allowing, that would make it permissible for the commission to enter the place of business, and in that same section at the end, it does have restrictions on a place of business that is a residential home. This is to ensure that the commission cannot just simply enter a residential home because it is also the location of a business that may be in violation or that the commission may have a reasonable belief is in violation.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Senator Flexer and through you, Madam President, is the awarding of damages by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities by this
amendment now discretionary? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, I believe that both in this amendment and the original bill that the Commission has the ability to determine the amount of damages. I believe the good Senator may be referring to the change in line 151 of the amendment before us. In the original bill, that same section used the word "shall" and in 151, it changes the wording to "may" so the Commission "may" award damages.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Senator Flexer, for that point of clarification. Would it also require the reporting to the Judiciary Committee regarding the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities awarding of damages? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Yes. Through you, Madam President, section 6 of the bill, lines 165, excuse me, the amendment, lines 165
through 180 detail the report that the Commission will prepare for the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much and through you, Madam President, it's my understanding that both the underlying bill and now the amendment which would become, both Senate Bill 3 and now this amendment which would be a complement to Senate Bill 3, that there is a task force and that originally that a member would be from the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, that now is no longer the case, but there would be as a member of the task force someone who has represented a victim as a plaintiff.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel. Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Yes, Thank you, Madam President. Through you, Madam President, the good Senator is correct. In lines 209 through 210 of the amendment that we are currently debating, it removes the language in Senate Bill 3 concerning an appointment from the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and instead, in this amendment, in lines 186 to 189, it details that there is an appointment of an attorney who has represented two or more plaintiffs in a civil action
concerning sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or sexual assault. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I thank the good Senator for that response and elaboration. Just two more to go. If there's corrective action taken by an employer that may be in writing, that it could still be acceptable if it was perceived as reasonable by an objective viewer. In other words, let's say the employer says to the employee, male or female, we can move you from the location. The employee says no, I'd like to be in this location and the employer says okay, if that's your desire then that's what we're going to do. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, I appreciate the good Senator's question and because I think this conversation is particularly important, could I just ask that the good Senator repeat that scenario one more time?

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):
Thank you very much, Madam President. So, it's my understanding that this amendment makes it clear that corrective action need not be in writing, but still has to be viewed as reasonable so if there's an employee in let's say a work environment that's having an issue with another employee and the employer says to the victimized employee, we can move your location to another part of the building and that individual says I appreciate your intervention, but I'd actually like to stay where I am, the employer might want that in writing, might not, but if that's the desire of the victim in the matter, allowing that to proceed as the victim so desired, could be perceived and my guess would be would be perceived as a reasonable accommodation in light of the totality of all the things that had taken place? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Thank you, Madam President and I thank the good ranking member of the Judiciary Committee for repeating that scenario again because I do think this conversation is very important. In the scenario that the Senator described, yes. So that conversation would be able to happen between the victim or the complainant and the employer and the language that is here before us would enable the commission to make a determination about whether whatever corrective action was taken was reasonable and not of the detriment to the complainant. Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:
Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much and through you, to the good Senator, one last item. Is it clear in this amendment that sexual contact with someone who is impaired because of mental disability or disease would be considered now third-degree sexual assault? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes, it would.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Madam President, I thank the good Senator for her patience in going through those items. Now, I believe the legislative history and record is clear. I think this amendment does make some minor modifications to Senate Bill 3. If anything, it tightens it up and makes it clear for both the claimants and the employers. Hopefully, this law doesn’t get utilized very much at all so this contact, these issues of assault and harassment do not take place, but I commend Senator Flexer and Senator Winfield and all the other advocates for working on this, all the Chambers and both sides of
the aisle, and I would commend my colleagues here in the circle to strongly support this amendment which would then become the bill. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Kissel. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Senator Miner, good afternoon.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Good day, Madam President. I wanted to just try and make sure that I understood a couple of the sections that are in this amendment because I do agree with Senator Kissel, I think this is to some degree an improvement on the language that we already supported and so if I might, a few questions through you to the proponent of the bill, please.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner, please proceed.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, with regard to training and education, I had an occasion a couple of months ago to visit a summer camp and there are a series of events that they put on during the course of the year. Some are what I would call off-season, some are more involved during the summer season. Is the language clear as to who would be required to be trained within that setting under the amended language? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President. Madam President, the language that is in front of us does not change the definition of an employee, so the definition that is in the amendment before us and on the previously-debated bill, what, whoever qualifies as an employee would be covered under the provisions of this legislation.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

And so through you, Madam President, those individuals that would be covered, I see there's an adjustment in the fine on lines 116 and 117 and if there was a circumstance where a single individual out of 120 employees was missed somehow in the process, is it each employee that potentially has carrying with that not being trained, that fine of $750 dollars? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, first, just a clarification. The fine is not more than $750 dollars. This legislation does not prescribe that the fine is $750 dollars, but it can be up to and
not more than $750 dollars. That's what this amendment does and also, the language that is in front of us makes it clear that the fine would be for the employer to fail to provide training in general. It would not be per employee. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you and so it's once someone has been determined to have failed to do the appropriate training and education, that company then is considered for the fine even if it's more than one individual that they have failed to educate? That may go to how much of the $750 dollars is actually levied in the fine if I understand the gentle lady's response? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President. The Commission would have discretion to determine the amount of the fine but the requirement here would be if there was an opportunity to be provided by the employer, if the training was not provided and there was evidence of that, then the Commission could move forward with the fine of up to $750 dollars. Now, if there was more than one opportunity to provide training and this particular employer proved to continually not be providing this training, that may lead to more
than one fine but again, the fine would not be per employee necessarily, but perhaps per opportunity to not provide the training.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President and I thank the gentle lady for her response. So it sounds more like an inspection opportunity. If the records bear out that the appropriate amount of training and individuals were trained appropriately during 2019 and then again nothing had occurred 2020, 2021, it seems that that would all be contributing evidence that an employer had understood the law, had made good faith effort and then if for some reason 2023 somebody got missed or a date got missed, the whole book of evidence would be evaluated so that it's not just one circumstance and again, if there was no issue, no one had made a claim, it was just the state doing its due diligence to be sure that the action that we're taking here today has resonated in the State of Connecticut, that we think that this is an important enough matter where we need to have these kind of safeguards in place, that even if there was one then, it would be kind of a book of evidence rather than just one incident? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Senator Flexer.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):
I think that was more of a statement, Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Okay.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):
That I kind of understood that she was saying. And lastly, it seems like the amendment has, there's an attempt here to deal with the fact that many small businesses do operate out of their home. I can think of a situation where there's an electrician up the street or a plumber down the street where they have a group of employees that may start their day every morning perhaps in a garage or in this person's home and that when we spoke about this bill originally, I think we were contemplating that it would really be circumstances that someone had made a claim and then the state would come in and do an inspection, but in fact it looked like it may have been more of an opportunity for us as a state to just kind of verify that training was being done or postings were being done. And so in the cases where there is a residential home and people start their day there, am I correct in the language that's drafted in the amendment, that the poster needs only to be in one location on that parcel of property? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you, Senator Miner. Senator Flexer.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):
I think I've got to try that again, Madam President. So my question is, so if my neighbor down the street has a residence and a garage and there are accumulated plumbing parts in the garage and that's where the employees start their day every day, if the posting was in one location either in the home where they may all gather for a cup of coffee or out in the garage where the parts are, would that be determined to be a satisfactory posting for purposes of this statute? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, I believe that it would as long as the residential home that the good Senator is describing is in fact the registered place of business for that employer.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you and so in the case where the registered place of business, it wouldn't be a post office box so in those cases, it's wherever it's legally registered on the Secretary of State's Office? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.
SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes, it would have to be the actual place of business, not a post office box.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

I was just imaging a posting in the post office box. Well Thank you, Madam President. I thank the gentle lady for her responses as well. I do think that from time to time we debate legislation here and it's only through that passage through the second Chamber I guess that somebody takes another look at something and says well it didn't seem that the record was clear on this or it didn't seem like the record was clear on that. I'd like the record to be clear that my questions in no way are reflective of my disinterest in this subject or my concern that we can do a better job as employers and employees when it comes to issues such as sexual harassment. I'm reminded of when I was a first selectman and something that I thought was rather trivial wasn't thought to be so trivial by an adjacent employee in a rather small office and so I continue to look back on that occasion and continue to remember that even as this was a very early conversation about sexual harassment and workplace protections, that even back then I'm not sure, certainly not sure that we all understood how everyone feels in every single circumstance so I am appreciative that we've had a second look at this. I am appreciative of the effort that's gone into to try and make the language that we previously supported even better, and today
I plan on supporting this amendment as well. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? If not, let me try your minds. All in favor of the amendment, please signify by saying aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the legislation as amended? Will you remark further on the legislation as amended? Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

I'd ask it be placed on consent. Okay, never mind. Forget what I just said.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. In that case, Mr. Clerk if you would please call the vote, the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 1111 as amended by Senate A. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered
in the Senate on Senate Bill 1111 as amended by Senate A. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1111 as amended by Senate A. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1111 as amended by Senate A. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1111 as amended by Senate A. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the machine to make sure that your vote is properly cast and the Clerk will please take the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1111 as amended by Senate A.

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THE CHAIR:


SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I move for immediate transmittal of the previous bill down to the House of Representatives for final action.

THE CHAIR:
Without objection, so ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. --

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, with that I move that we stand at ease for a moment.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease. Good afternoon Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Madam President, will the Clerk now please call emergency certified bill, House Bill No. 7424, please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7424, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIAL ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFORE, AND IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 10 --
SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President, could we stand at ease for a moment, please?

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I didn’t mean to stop the Clerk in mid-sentence there, mid-word, please continue Mr. Clerk.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

As I was. Let's see, as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 10581 and House Amendment Schedule "B", LCO No. 10681.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in accordance with the House of Representatives and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Osten, pardon me, we're going to go to Senator Fasano. Good afternoon.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Thank you very much. Madam President, I rise to raise a point relative to jurisdiction of going forward, Madam President. Madam President, it's clear in our laws of the State of Connecticut that the general budget expenditures authorized shall not exceed the estimated amount of revenue. Madam President, what is happening in this budget is there is a certain amount of savings which I think is about $163 million dollars the first year and $200 and some odd million dollars in the second year, relative to a savings from an agreement with SEBAC relative to pension, that is to say a refinance of pension. Madam President, I have noticed that we have not in this Chamber approved the resolution which changes the contract between the State of Connecticut and the union and in fact, I don't believe that the union is even on board with that change and I reflect a memo that I got from the Governor's office a few minutes ago saying that the union has said, we have indicated a willingness to consider a win-win change. That clearly makes it sound an awful lot like there is not a deal. Therefore, if it's not a deal there cannot be a savings and if this is not a savings, then this budget is out of balance and for us to approve it a final action to send it to a Governor to have him sign it, he can't sign a budget that's clearly out of balance. So I would like to raise this Madam President and ask that we do not go forward, it is not properly before this body or this Chamber. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Looney, good afternoon.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Yes, good afternoon, Madam President. Regarding the point of order, Madam President, the requirement that our state budget be balanced is a constitutional one that's contained in Article 18 of the Amendments to our State Constitution and we believe that the budget is, in fact, balanced, but because it is a constitutional requirement, Masons Manual of Legislative Procedure clearly states that this is an issue that cannot be resolved through a Point of Order. Section 242 of Masons states that "it is not the presiding officers right to rule upon the constitutionality or legal effect or expediency of a proposed bill since that authority belongs to the House." So therefore, Madam President, I would urge you to rule that the Point of Order is not well taken. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney and I agree with your points and would also add that a Point of Order according to Section 240, Section 2 of Masons is a device used to require that a body observe its own rules and observe parliamentary procedure and what Senator Fasano has raised is a matter of substance and a constitutional question and I agree with you that under Section 242-1 of Masons, is not the duty of a presiding officer to rule upon the constitutionality of legislation. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):
Madam President, I appreciate that ruling. It is not my intention based upon the numbers of this Chamber to appeal that ruling and I respect the ruling. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President and I'm happy to stand in front of you one more time and bring out a budget that I think has clear ways forward in moving Connecticut in the right direction. So I'm just going to go through some items in the budget, talk about things a little bit and then I will yield to my colleague from the Finance side. I imagine this will take some amount of time but I hope to enlighten people about pieces of this budget that are clearly moving Connecticut, again, in the right direction.

And so I point out today this is a budget that has been worked on with everyone that sits on the Appropriations Committee. We started in February when the Governor presented us with a budget by having presentation by the Governor and a presentation by Secretary McCaw and then we heard from commissioners of each agency. Then we had sub-committee meetings, we had public hearings on all of the issues and then we had reports out from the Chairs in which all parties, Republican and Democrat, House and Senate participated in the process. As a matter of fact, both Democrats and Republicans testified at the public hearings revolving around the budget to extend their points
of view on things they liked or disliked about the Governor's budget.

So one of the things that we did in this budget was eliminate some thousand unfunded vacancies to truly and accurately report on the number of positions that we have in state government, and our state government is leaner than it's been since the 1960's. There are five tiers of state employees. Tier one has about 731 people and ended in 1984. There has been a lot of talk about the prior SEBAC agreement and why do we talk about the SEBAC agreement? Because it is falsely stated often that there are no employees that can be laid off if a Governor should need to address the issues of financial concerns in the state and that is just not true. Any employee, per the SEBAC agreement, that was hired after July 1, 2018 is eligible to be laid off. There are 2303 workers that fit this, fully 5 percent of the state's workforce. Now, I'm not suggesting that we should lay them off. They actually do important work and I think we should keep them working, but to answer the question on whether or not people are eligible to be laid off, they are.

We did a lot of good work together in the last biennium and one of those things that we did was work on the ECS formula, the Education Cost Sharing formula because over the last couple of years we had not operated within a formula to accurately help out our municipalities. We have fully $2 billion dollars plus in both Fiscal Year 20 and Fiscal Year 21. In Fiscal Year 20, we have $37.5 million dollars above the Governor's recommendations of his budget. In year two, we have $75.3 million dollars. This makes us comport with the bipartisan ESC formula and the recommendation in the biennium from
last year on a bipartisan basis, both in the House and the Senate, bicameral and bipartisan, that we roll out the formula through a decade. Now we've done two years. We're working on year three and year four and that allows us to get into a formula that will properly fund our municipalities. Today, there are 90 towns that are above the ECS formula. We want to give them time to react to that, to properly have the ability to fund their schools. There are 70 towns that are below the ECS formula and we want to give them to get to the level and plan for an expansion of the ECS formula to them.

We did a lot of work and many people talk about alliance districts. Many people think that that's an extra pot of money for people who have schools that might have a little bit of a problem. That is not true. Alliance districts have money that is segregated right out of the ECS formula and what they do with that money is address the issue of failing schools, and it allows the state to target different areas in that school to have it comply with a good school system. I was really happy to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on the ECS formula to get us where we needed to be, and I was really proud to do this on a bipartisan basis. That is one of the first things that I will take about that happened on a bipartisan, bicameral basis. In this budget, there is a section that requires municipalities or actually schools on the number of impact, the amount of Impact Aid that they get from the federal government, and what do schools get for Impact Aid? Well, the city of Groton gets about $4 million dollars in Impact Aid to help it teach students from the military population and in Groton last year, they had 1,092 military dependents, fully 20 percent of the student population. And the reason why that's important is
because we need to know where aid is coming into a school system so that we can accurately assess what the state needs to do to bolster that school.

It's also important to understand that in Eastern Connecticut, we will see an increase in military dependents, as we are expecting some 500 military families to come into the area to help support our great sub-making building, manufacturing at Electric Boat. And we know that we're going to need more military men and women and their families so that is an important piece for us to plan for and an important piece for us to understand.

Last year, or two years ago, on a bipartisan, bicameral basis we increased the amount of money that we were paying for our voag students and we did that together to recognize the fact that our farming community is very important not just to the character of the State of Connecticut, but also to our financial welfare because, for example, dairy farms provide some $3 billion dollars to the state's economy, an important thing for us to know. We also did some work with charters and magnets. Now often, there's a debate on whether or not we should have charters or magnets, but we have them and many students in the State of Connecticut choose to go to charter schools or magnet schools. As a matter of fact, my own grandchildren go to a charter school in Norwich, an excellent school system I might say and we in this budget provided some vertical growth and horizontal growth to charter schools and we also provided magnet school growth that is scattered throughout the school system based on available seats. I think it's important, very important for us to recognize the different school systems we have and provide them with the support that is necessary
to keep them successful and to provide our children with many ways to learn.

We also did a lot of work in the last couple of years on again, a bipartisan, bicameral basis and my colleague who sits to my right was by my side through all of those discussions. Sometimes we might have had a difference of opinion or two, I know, hard to believe, but we have increased in our community colleges this year to help fund the unfunded liability, $8.2 million dollars in Fiscal Year 1 and $20.3 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2. Now, why do we want to help out with the unfunded liability? Well what that does is it provides us with an ability to help out the Community Colleges Be Successful. It was not the only thing that we did to help out our Community Colleges Be Successful. One of the problems that our community colleges have had lately is the fact that they are losing or not having enough students head into the community college world, and that is a clear way for young people to get a taste of college, and our community colleges right now give us a taste of certification programs. I always point to Three Rivers Community College and the amount of certification programs they have for machinists and welders and draftsmen, and then there's that great, absolutely great Nuclear Engineering Program that helps get young people into Dominion so not only are we supporting at our community colleges programs for Dominion and Electric Boat and our 4000 manufacturers that are here in the State of Connecticut to give the good paying jobs, something I'm a true fan of is the blue collar trades jobs that get young people into work, getting paid a true living wage, having them be successful and quite frankly, letting them move out of their parents' homes.
We also did a little bit of work revolving around debt-free college this year and we did this because we recognized a couple of different things. We want more students in our community colleges and by providing a revenue diversion, we were able to afford debt-free college in year two of this budget. It makes good sense. It makes good sense for a lot of reasons but it makes really good sense because it brings more people into our community colleges, bringing more federal dollars into our community colleges. That allows young people to come in, make a decision on where they want to go and gives them opportunities that they might not have had. It increases the number of students, increases the amount of Pell grants that our young people can take advantage of, it increases the number of young people that have a chance to decide on their future. It's important to us. It's important to grow our state and those young people will get jobs and what do they do when they have those jobs? Well, they stay here, they work here. You provide them with an education, it allows them to stay here, work here, move out of their parents' homes and have a great life.

We also did a lot of work revolving around helping out people with disabilities. The Governor made a recommendation on the American School of the Deaf. While we agreed with a lot of what the Governor did, we recognize that the American School of the Deaf is an important institution for us to train people that are hard of hearing or deaf and so we put an additional $500,000 dollars per year to help support that. About four or five years ago, this body made a decision to not have interpreters for people who are deaf and hard of hearing and I've been going around Connecticut meeting with people in the disabilities network, in particular of Eastern
Connecticut and meeting with people who are deaf or hard of hearing and asking them what would make it easier for them to be successful here in the State of Connecticut and found that we often did not have interpreters that would be here at the legislature to allow people to testify on important bills that matter to them and so this year, to my great astonishment and my great pleasure, we added in five interpreters that will be at the Institute of Living around the state, posted around the state and one at doors so that we would have interpreters available to help people when they need to. When they have to have someone who can interpret so that they can get their point of view across and understand what is being said. I'm very pleased to have worked on that this year, very pleased to work together with people to get that done.

We also put some money into funding CRIS radio. Now, many people don’t even know about CRIS radio. You know what? If you happen to have a hard time seeing, how do you read the local newspaper? How do you get information on a day-to-day basis because no one is going to make a newspaper in Braille, but CRIS radio reads to people and they work with seniors, they work with schools? As a matter of fact, 86 school systems in the State of Connecticut work with CRIS radio to provide programming for young people. They also work with hospitals to help people out who are in hospitals because you know, when you go into the hospital, the first thing you do as you're getting better is turn on the TV to have a little bit of noise around. Well if you can't see then you don’t know what is going on and so CRIS radio provides hospitals with a methodology of getting information to those patients. And where is CRIS radio? Well they broadcast of Windsor, but they're around the state. They're in Danbury, in
Norwich, in Norwalk, in Trumbull and in West Haven. And so this system works well around the State of Connecticut and I encourage people to find out more about the Disabilities Network and CRIS radio and the American School for the Deaf to know that we are helping people when they most need it and it's important for us to provide ways for people to find out what's going on, not only in the State Capital but around the state.

We did a lot of work around our private providers this year. There's been talk about this, but last year, we did increase wages for employees of the IDDD community and provided a 1 percent COLA for other social service private providers. This year, we expanded the work that we're doing to help out our private providers and what we did with nursing home workers was provide funding of $11 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20, and $18.5 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21. This allows us to stop not only a strike that might have happened in our nursing homes, some 20 of our nursing homes were considering that, but it provided wages for those people so that they could be able to be successful themselves. We passed a contract that helped out childcare workers. This put $2.6 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20 and $5 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21 for wage increases to help out our private providers of family childcare workers. Two thousand, nine hundred fourteen providers care for some of our youngest residents, providing a nurturing and safe environment for children while allowing their parents to remain in the workforce. That keeps people in jobs, that keeps people in their homes, and it helps people out. Sometimes a hand up, a little hand up is what someone needs to be successful.
The OPM budget which we adopted contains funding of $3 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20 and $6 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21 for this purpose. Not later than June 1, 2020 and June 1, 2021, the private providers shall provide documentation to the Secretary that such funds shall only be used for increasing the minimum wage of workers. There's still more work to be done in this arena. We did not provide cost of living adjustments to those in the state supplement, TANF or SAGA but I point this out because last year, on a bipartisan basis, that's what we did, the same thing, working with our colleagues across the aisle and in the House. The last time out of the last 15 years that a COLA has been applied to a state supplement was in Fiscal Year 2015 and Fiscal Year 2014. COLA's have been provided to TANF and SAGA only four times in the past 15 years, 2008, 2009, 2014, and 2015.

In addition, there's much talk about the personal needs allowance. We did raise the personal needs allowance in 2012 from $50 dollars to $60 dollars. Now, is it true that all of these benefits should see an increase? Sure, but let's talk a little bit about SAGA. So SAGA is a cash assistance program and everyone who applies for SAGA must also apply for federal support under SSDI or SSI meaning that it is not intended for people to stay on SAGA. That's true of TANF and that's true of any state system like this so that we can see people be successful because quite frankly, neither TANF nor SAGA provide us with enough resources for someone to be successful and how many people are on TANF? Ten thousand and how many people are on SAGA? Seven thousand. Both of those programs are trending down in numbers and they're trending down because we're able to secure funding for folks in a way that keeps them successful. We're also able to provide them
with support and when necessary, we're able to get them on federal programs which help them out so this is not intended as a living wage for anybody. It's intended as a stop-gap so someone doesn’t fall through the cracks.

Now my colleague to my right and I have talked for years about how we can appropriately help small rural towns who have resident state troopers. This also is because of the unfunded liability that the state has. And why do we want to help out people in rural towns with the unfunded liability that is associated with workers in the state? Well we actually want our small rural towns to have public safety mechanisms that allow them to be safe, allows the community to have a good relationship with someone in uniform, allow them to develop programs like DARE and be able to take advantage of those programs. It's important. We were able to decrease the cost of the unfunded liability by 50 percent for the 53 towns and 95 troopers that are associated the residential treatment program for which those towns pay for and now will be able to retain those residential troopers, again, providing a public safety mechanism for small rural towns that do not have the ability to have a full-fledged police force.

There was another program that we funded this year and the Governor asked us to do an asset test on it and we chose not to do so. We chose not to do so because in the first year of the biennium, much to my chagrin, on a bipartisan, bicameral basis we had cut the Medicare Savings Program. It was not something I was happy about. Well we came back less than three months later to change this, to fully fund the Medicaid Savings Program. And what does the Medicaid Savings Program do? It covers payments
for Medicare Part B. It helps out low-income individuals in need of assistance in the cost of premiums, deductibles and prescription drugs. It provides assistance in covering the 20 percent cost through Medicaid that Medicare does not cover. And I heard about the Medicaid Savings Program when I was at church because I had several of my church-going friends who were on the Medicaid Savings Program and needed it to be successful. So in a bipartisan, bicameral basis we fixed that and we maintained the Medicaid Savings Program as it always has been here in Connecticut above the federal requirement, and we worked together hand-in-hand to make sure that we were helping out seniors and disabled that were on the Medicaid Savings Program. I'm happy to say we continue that effort and I look forward to my colleagues here today on the opposite side of the aisle to say that they will join us because this budget is truly a bipartisan, bicameral budget that covers many of the things that were in our budget from last year and I can't see any reason why they would not want to work with us on this budget.

The Medicare Advocacy Program was also funded this year and this helps us to ensure that we are properly recording and affecting the dollars that come in from the federal government and we wanted to make sure that the proper payer was reflected. It brings real dollars into our state. It helps us out. It's important for us to do this and I think it's necessary. We put some $300,000 dollars into helping that.

We also did a lot of work around reamortizing the debt. And I hear from people all the time, when do you have a plan to help take care of this? Well on the state employee side we've done an awful lot of
work revolving the debt of state employees. We have an actual plan and in the budgets that have been forth, although not this year, the Republicans have taken advantage of the savings that were in the plans that we had. I look forward to working with them as we develop a plan that we can afford and that's what we have done this year. On the state employees side, you can actually see a plan that pays off our unfunded liability and what we did this year was to separate it out, to show what that unfunded liability was on both the state employees and teachers retirement side so that we can recognize it, see it for what it is, look at it. Now, we also did on the state employees side, we're there. We see a direct correlation with separating it out, seeing what our normal cost is for employees in the state and when you look at that, these employees are not expensive. They do great work for us. They are here for us. They are here for the residents of the State of Connecticut. It's important for us to know that we are taking care of this and we're not paying the debt off of today, we're paying the debt off of 70 years of non-payment of pension plans for both state employees and teachers' retirement.

Let's talk a little bit about teachers' retirement. This year we will reamortize this debt and we will take the return on investment, often noticed as the ROI from 8 percent down to 6.99 percent so that we can achieve what is there. Immediately that would like we owe $3 billion dollars more, but that's not true. What it is, is it's accurately reflecting what we do owe because we've never gotten the 8 percent so we need to accurately record what we get to make sure that everybody knows where we are, what we're doing and how we're doing it. We do spread this out over 30 years. It does add onto our debt,
$1.9 billion dollars as a matter of fact, but it gives us a plan. It's no longer a guess. It gives us an opportunity to address the issues that we have. We are to do this plan, we are putting some of the surplus funds off to the side, some $381 million dollars to backstop the teachers' retirement plan, properly record it, properly fund it and make sure that we're living up to our obligations. Again, I look forward to working with my colleagues on a bipartisan, bicameral basis to get the State of Connecticut moving forward with a plan. That's what we need to do, move forward with a plan, show our residents because people need to know that we hear them, that we hear what they have to say and we can show them a change that works toward a good resolution to our issues.

The Governor also did a change that we did not accept. It was with the Committee Investment Act. On a bipartisan, bicameral basis last year in the biennium we supported our dairy farmers with some additional funds, and we did that again this year. Now, why do we wanna support dairy? Well again, I point out they're a $3-billion-dollar industry and I know that my residents like to have fresh milk, good ice cream, good cheese, that's what they want and we need to make sure our dairy farmers are supported. This budget does support our dairy farmers while still supporting the Department of Agriculture and farmland preservation, the Department of Housing and Homeless Supports, DECD in historical preservation, and DEEP in open space. That's what this does. The CIA is a fund that has been around for a long time now and it's something that we need to continue to keep segregated out of the General Fund and those funds are secure.
Last year or two years ago, we started a program called the Passport Account and last year, that fund started with a $10-dollar payment from residents' vehicles. It's continuing move forward. It supports our conservation districts. It supports the Council on Environmental Quality. It supports our water and soil councils. It supports our environmental teams and why is it important to do those things? It's important to do those things because we have an environment that we want to take care of. We have parks we want to keep open. We have beaches that need lifeguards at them and this fund does that. Early in the Appropriations Committee budget there was some money designed to pay off programs that fit into the Passport Program. We've decided to have those programs paid out of other expenses in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. That's important for people to note in the bipartisan, bicameral budget. There had been two other programs that will be paid out this year out of the Passport Programs that had been included in the Passport Program last year and were not paid out this year, and we will be doing that. As part of this budget we have allowed that to happen. Again, they had been included in the budget from last year.

I'm happy to talk to each and every one of you about the different line items that are in this budget that shows a bipartisan, bicameral budget, honoring the budget of last year, grows non-fixed costs by 0.3 percent. Our growth in this budget is less than the growth of the bipartisan budget. It honors what our residents have asked us to do. It supports people with disabilities. It supports our workforce training programs. It actually increases our workforce training programs. It's important for us to make sure Connecticut is moving forward. So I've
talked a bit about the different components of this State Budget. It's a fiscally responsible, actually I could say it's the most fiscally responsible in Connecticut history. It continues the progress of the bipartisan budget that we crafted together and I look forward to this budget going on consent as I think there's no reason why we cannot support this together and shock everyone in the state that we know how to do this together and I would yield to the Senator from Hartford, Senator John Fonfara for his good work on the revenue side of the budget.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Do you accept the yield, Senator Fonfara?

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

I do, Madam President. Thank you very much and before I begin, I'd like to thank my colleague in terms of the money committee, Senator Osten as, if you were paying attention, this was just a fraction of the word that she puts in. She's tireless, she's dedicated and she cares about the people of Connecticut. I won't mention how much she cares about the people of Eastern Connecticut, that goes without saying but thank you, Senator Osten, for all you do.

I'd like to begin by thanking a few other people as well and that includes my co-chair, Jason Rojas, who stood for many hours yesterday in the debate in the House, ranking member Senator Witkos and my dear friend who I work with closely on this committee as well as in general law, and also ranking member Chris Davis in the House. As I often describe as my right hand, Dave Steuber, Vinnie Moro, Courtney
Cullinan, Liz Keyes. In OFA, Michael Murphy, Chris Wetzel, Neil Ayers and LOR Rubin Pinho. Madam President, in addition to the specifics of the revenue package which I will get to in a moment, I'd like to just pick up where Senator Osten left off in terms of describing the overall impact of the work we're doing there and have begun doing for the last few years.

This tax package in the budget provides for the largest budget reserve fund in the state's history. Previous budget reserve record was $1.38 billion dollars reached in Fiscal Year 07 prior to the great recession. We have now rebuilt our reserve to a record-breaking level projecting $2.9 billion dollars by the end of this biennium; $2.9 billion dollars. Moreover, this budget includes built in surpluses of $97.3 million dollars in the first year and $151 million dollars in the second to handle any unexpected shortfalls in the biennium ahead. So in addition to, I don't think many people outside of this building know this, but in addition to the coveted driven volatility cap that is driving so much of our budget reserve fund, we also passed in the legislature and it is covered by the covenant a requirement that we set aside a fund every year which will grow over the next several years to ensure that any miscalculations, any reductions in revenues that were not, or increase in expenses that were not contemplated within the biennium that we have a piggybank if you will, an additional reserve fund to capture and address those issues and again, that's $97 million dollars in this particular year and $151 million dollars in the second. These built-in structural budget cushions will increase in FY 22 to $185 million dollars and in FY 23 to $235 million dollars.
This budget fully funds our pension contributions as we have for a decade now and as past generations have failed to do, passing the growing expenses onto us. Despite these structural efforts, our fixed costs continue to climb. Even in last year's bipartisan budget, the state was forced to raise more than $1.5 billion dollars in new revenue in both years of the biennium including $956 million dollars and $913 million in new taxes and this year, we have very similar numbers. We're still climbing the hill of those fixed costs today. We've had to absorb those costs in this budget and had to find the revenues necessary to address those. We have a surplus in the current Fiscal Year, an operating surplus of $574 million dollars. We are spending this to make some important further structural changes and reforms to capitalize the reserve for the teachers' pension bonds and to settle the multi-billion-dollar potential liability with the state's hospitals. But we will also be making an $886-million-dollar deposit in our budget reserve fund this year thanks to the volatility cap.

In addition, Madam President, by refinancing our rapidly climbing teachers' pension payments, our obligations in the out years will become steadier, more predictable and easier to meet. We have achieved all of this without any change in the state's major tax rates. There is no income tax increase in this budget. There is no change in our general sales tax rate. Last year's bipartisan budget did not raise these rates and neither does this budget. Overall, on taxes, we raised approximately the same amount in this budget in two years under the bipartisan budget. We are not breaking any of the fiscal reforms adopted two years ago. This budget is under the spending cap, it's
under the revenue cap, and honors our volatility cap.

Now, Madam President, I'd like to provide the Chamber with an overview of the revenue package. Here's what we are continuing from the bipartisan budget over the last two years. With respect to the hospital tax, half of what we have raised here in this revenue package, $560 million dollars, $16 million dollars in both years, extending the surcharge on the corporate income tax and with respect to MRSA, certain fees and transfers from various agencies, we also continue in this tax package. We are honoring our commitment to exempt more seniors' retirement income from the income tax helping them keep more of their Social Security and pension checks. We are also continuing to phase in the federal exemption levels for the estate tax and we are continuing to honor the reduction in the cap on the estate and gift tax. Effective the first of this year, the cap is down to $15 million dollars from $20 million dollars.

With respect to some specific policy decisions, Madam President, we are adjusting the diversion to the motor vehicle tax from the General Fund to the special transportation fund. We are adjusting the sales tax on digital downloads. We are adjusting the tax on prepared foods. We are extending the sales tax to include parking, dry cleaning and laundry services, interior design service. We are lowering the threshold for collection on online retail sales tax. We're implementing a certified service provider to enhance sales tax collections of online sales. We are maintaining the personal income tax exemption cap for teachers' pensions. We are reducing the personal income tax credit for pass-through entity taxes paid. We maintain the
eligibility limits on property tax credits. We are exempting properties with crumbling foundations from the real estate conveyance tax. We begin the phase out of the capital stock tax which is a significant effort to support startups in Connecticut. We are repealing the business entity tax while correspondingly adjusting the annual filing for LLC's and LLP's with the Secretary of State. We're maintaining the corporate surcharge. We are extending and expanding the Angel Investor tax credit from three years to five years. We're reducing the cap on RND and URA tax credits. We are providing funding for the first time in some years now to PEGPETIA which will support local access stations in their capital investments.

We are taxing E-cigarettes and we're recognizing the increase in the sales tax due to the tax on E-cigarettes. We are adjusting the excise tax on alcohol. We are adjusting the sales admission tax on certain venues. We are establishing a surcharge of 10 cents on certain bags. We are, as I indicated earlier, maintaining the hospital user fee. We reflected enhanced OTB enforcement to support Connecticut companies and employees. We are increasing the ride-sharing services from 25 cents to 30 cents. We are adjusting the vehicle trade-in fee as well as adjusting fees for various occupations. We shift revenue from the broker dealers to investment advisor's fee to the General Fund. We are also repealing the income tax on STEM graduates and extending the sales tax to safety apparel.

Madam President, that is in general the revenue adjustments that we are making in the biennium. I believe this is a more than a fair package in terms of raising the revenue necessary, identifying the
funding necessary to meet the needs of the State of Connecticut as outlined in the priorities by Senator Osten earlier and I urge passage of this bill. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us? Good afternoon, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Good to see you this afternoon. I rise for some comments on the budget.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to stand here and talk about some of the ideas that we have for our budget and kind of talk a little bit about some of the comments that I've heard made from my colleagues this afternoon. When you talk about adjustments, I believe we're talking about increases in taxes for the most part. When you talk about, and I heard my good colleague to my left mention over 15 times bipartisan, bicameral and those comments are true. They were true of the last two years more so than they are true of this year. This is an effort to try to move this budget and sell this budget today. But in reality, we weren't involved in the drafting of this budget. Oh sure we were involved in committee hearing, we were involved
in committee meetings. We talked about and listened to agencies as they came to talk to us as a committee. We listened, we asked questions, but all of that is a process that we are here and elected to do as part of the committee and this year, a minority part of the committee. Last year I too was proud to sit as co-chair of the Appropriations Committee, to see across the table from my good colleague to my left and work on a bipartisan, bicameral budget for the last two years. And we did in fact have a successful budget. We're looking at a $574-million-dollar, to use Senator Fonfara's number, surplus that we're looking for at the end of this month and that's something that hasn't happened here in a long time so while I appreciate the opportunities to hear about our bipartisanship and our bicameral work, it's important to note that that was in last session and not this session. And it's important to note that a lot of the good ideas that were in that budget last year were the result of sitting and talking to each other. That's what the people of the State of Connecticut want, that's what we wanted, that's what we offered this time, but that didn't occur in the crafting of this budget.

So I'm just going to go over a few items and I will yield to my good colleague, Senator Witkos, on the Finance Committee to share his thoughts and then I imagine we'll have some questions directly for either of the Senator co-chairs of the money committees. Following along, I have the Office of Fiscal Analysis document that relates to this budget. Section 11 talks about, Madam President, recommended reductions from OPM and executive branch expenditures. Those reductions of $29 million dollars in year one and $26.2 million dollars in year two are listed as recommended reductions. There is no detail to that, but they're recommended
reductions. As you move down the document, again it talks about OPM making expenditure reductions, $163.2 million dollars and $256 million dollars to reduce pension and healthcare expenditures. We know from hearing and listening to the Governor over the last number of months and we know the intent of the Governor as candidate Lamont talking about coming to the table with our great state employees and bringing them to agreement to achieve savings in these areas. And I know that as Governor Lamont he tried to do that. Whether or not he's successful to achieve these dollars I'm not sure, I haven't heard, but I know I did hear through the press that the COLA's were unachievable, the COLA compromises were unachievable and those represent a little over $18 million dollars and a little over $20 million dollars of these numbers that I just read off.

If you go to line 15, section 15 of the OFA document, it talks about another expenditure reduction in the Special Transportation Fund of $18.3 million dollars and $19.7 million dollars, again, with no detail. With regard to other items in this budget, the Office of Fiscal Analysis talks about increases in COG which is $4.1 million dollars but it doesn’t speak to any of the opportunities that may be required of COG and what they would need to do to get that money so I'm a little concerned with that new policy. It goes on to speak about a new policy of the Secretary of State's office, $150,000 dollars to support voter registration at higher education institutions. There is no detail on how that is going to go. The new policy which looks to appropriate $33.2 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20 the Office of State Comptroller to fund the State Employees Retirement System fringe recovery and then University of Connecticut Health Center is funded out of non-General Fund resources, $8.2
million dollars and $20.3 million dollars. It goes on to talk about the employees of the community colleges. With regard to UConn Health, UConn Health came before our committee and presented their budget which was about $70 to $80 million dollars short and they presented that as a shortfall budget. In the previous bipartisan budget from last session, there was a requirement for UConn Health to proceed toward a merger or a sale or an opportunity to stop the bleeding that's occurred there financially over the last number of years. I'm not sure that's addressed in this budget.

Line 48 talks about a number of funding of $3.41 million dollars in each of the next two years through youth service prevention grants but it goes on to list a variety of different earmarks and looks like special interest opportunities to fund in this budget. Section 51 of the Office of Fiscal Analysis talks about reductions in executive branch expenditures associated with contract savings initiatives, $5 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20, $15 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21 and I know from sitting and listening at those Appropriation Committee meetings that this is the new contract standard board, contracting standard boards potential for savings. But this is a new program that for the first time is giving a start to the contracting standard boards. They’ve been around in a very small opportunity for a number of years and to say that we're gonna get $5 million dollars and $15 million dollars for $20 million dollars in savings seems difficult to me to be able to achieve, Madam President.

Continuing on, another new policy talks about services provided by a new ombudsman for the Department of Correction to provide services for
inmates 18 years and younger. It could very well be a good program and I'm wondering what those services are going to be, how the inmates are going to be housed and trained for reentry, treated now that we closed CGATS. Madam President, moving on section 71, distributions annually from the municipal gaming account to West Hartford and Windsor from the proposed tribal casino located in East Windsor. That seems to be outside of the Pequot Fund. There are currently opportunities that we are missing from those last two items that I think we can include and you'll probably hear more about those later, Madam President.

Sections 76 and 77 talk about local and district Department of Health, departments being reduced 10 percent in each of the Fiscal Year of the biennium. That would seem to be a transfer of cost to municipalities who are already struggling. Section 78 talks about delaying the implementation in the use of bond premiums for future issuances. I think we're gonna probably have some questions regarding the current policy because in the bipartisan budget last year, this policy I thought was changed. I thought we were not using bond premiums to fund and use as a revenue for our budget. This seems to be back and I'm wondering what the debt service impact would be with regard to that.

Madam President, we heard talk of the teachers' retirement fund and bolstering that up with about $381 million dollars out of the budget speaks to out of the Reserve Fund of $574 million dollars so we're whittling away a little more. We're gonna backstop it by lottery, lottery proceeds but I'm wondering how that's going to be done. Is there going to be a systematic savings account from the lottery that's going to be put aside in the event three years from
now, ten years from now we need that backstop, or is it just going to come out of operating expenditures at the time it's potentially needed?

The various changes to the teachers' retirement fund methodology for the actuarial measurements, the savings indicated in this budget are $183.4 million dollars and $189.4 million dollars in 2022, which the good Senator mentioned, but didn’t mention the cost of moving that out for an additional $15.6 billion dollars over the next 15 years, 17 years. Didn’t mention the fact that this has become a habit of shifting money out into the future. There was an opportunity to produce a Biennium Tax Incident Report in the bipartisan budget of last session. We're not doing that in this budget. We didn't do it and implement in the last budget. It's too bad because that would be a necessary tool to examine and evaluate our tax policy and the effectiveness of tax rates.

I think I'm sure like many people around the circle on both sides of the aisle that we need to change our tax policy here in the State of Connecticut. We need to adjust it and having that report would go a long way to helping us establish that.

Another new policy in this budget establishes a Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate Board which is designed to provide rebates to purchasers of certain motor vehicles. I imagine those would be electric vehicles, perhaps they're hydrogen, because my understanding is the federal rebate program runs out at the end of this year. And to do that, another fee is added of $5 dollars on various motor vehicle registration fees which will raise $8 million dollars, $3 million dollars of which will go to fund the program, $5
million dollars will go, according to this document, to the General Fund. We seem to be using that vehicle I guess as a way to fund.

Madam President, I heard the good Senator talk about the change in the Passport to Parks sweeps and moving those over to operating expenses of DEEP and I'm grateful to hear that. We did the Passport to Parks together in a bipartisan way last session because Governor Malloy made the change in the management of our parks, he called it passive management which really meant they weren’t gonna staff the place and we came together in a bipartisan way last session to come up with a fix for that because we knew it wasn’t safe for our kids to walk the parks without adequate supervision and we knew that we needed to fund the restoration and the creation of our new parks so that they would remain in the great shape that they need to be because the people in the State of Connecticut through this Passport to Parks Program get an opportunity to go in by having a Connecticut registration and paying $10 dollars on their registration. They get to park at the parks for free and that's a great program. That's a win-win program we were able to do in a bipartisan manner last session.

Madam President, we talked about a number of things so far. Section 144 refers to a state or elected official being able to not accept its compensation or benefit and I know that refers to a couple of people in this new administration who have foregone their salary which I think is noble and it's a good thing if that's what they want to do but as a former first selectman, having faced something like this before, I'm aware that it creates a hole in future budgets because not everybody elected in that position is going to have that opportunity so I just
caution moving forward on something like that while remaining appreciative to those generous people who have decided to do that.

We have some questions with regard to establishing the Partnership for Connecticut Program. The Connecticut Program was the new contributions by the Dalio Family. It's a five-year commitment, $100 million dollars matched by $100 million dollars. We have some questions about how those are distributed. Is the new policy going to report to the money committees with regard to how that money was spent, how it was distributed, the effectiveness of the program and to whom, any of the results?

Another new policy is establishing the municipal redevelopment authority. It's a quasi-public agency to do bonds and I have some concerns. Some years ago there was talk about the Transit-Oriented Development and the talk of eminent domain from some communities being used as a way to increase train and transit opportunities in towns which did not make the cut, but I'm concerned that this might be an opportunity to revisit a policy, a poor policy like that.

Sections 232 and 235 talk about S.B. 1. S.B. 1 is a priority for many people here with regard to the Paid Family and Medical Leave Program. I'm wondering whether in the way this is put whether this allows that funding to be outside of the spending cap. The $5.1 million dollars that was in the budget for the labor agencies installation or initiation of that program, there's no talk of the capital cost necessary to implement that program nor have we heard or talked about I believe any bond bill that I didn’t see associated with this budget so it's hard to tell what those capital costs are.
Madam President, in sections 291 and 292 it talks about freezing the rates for TANF and SAGA and I listened intently to the good Senator to my left talk about the need for temporary programs there, but we were able to provide in section 48 $6 million dollars for specific little programs, but we're freezing the money, any increases for these programs. Section 305 is a new policy. It provides prohibition of covenants not to compete and I think it's earmarked for a specific childcare program, but that would have huge fiscal impacts for businesses around the state if they can't protect their proprietary rights. That policy doesn't establish whether it's just for the one program or whether it's for every business.

So, Madam President, we have some concerns. You're going to hear some other concerns from our side of the aisle. We were hopeful at the beginning of this session; we were hopeful with the new administration. I was glad that both the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor chose New London to come out as one of the first stops they had and we had a wonderful bipartisan conversation and we talked about the needs of moving things in Southeastern Connecticut forward and I would certainly agree with Senator Fonfara that my good colleague to my left does in fact love Eastern and Southeastern Connecticut. But while those ideas were offered to come and sit, they seldom were taken advantage of. So, Madam President, in closing, I would just like to say that small business is the job creator of this country. It always has been and I say that as a job creator in the country and here in the great State of Connecticut. Job creators create. It's what they do. They create jobs, jobs that pay taxes. They invest in capital infrastructure, infrastructure that pays property taxes. They
create cash flows through payrolls and other opportunities that stimulate and grow the economy, funding and paying sales and use taxes. My question, Madam President, is what have we done this session to help those job creators? What have we done? How have we set the table of prosperity for job creators? How are we making Connecticut more business friendly? People around this circle and people in committees that I serve on here me talk about prime costs. As a business owner and a job creator, prime cost is a tool that I use to manage my business. Prime costs are made up of only two costs; product cost and labor cost and they're a benchmark that I use to measure the effectiveness and the profitability of my business moving forward cause it's important for me to manage our business and manage the profitability because it's in that profitability that we're able to create job, build capital infrastructure, help stimulate the economy and move our economy forward. And I'm seeing those prime costs, I'm concerned from some of the things we've done this session and some of the things that are in this budget. We've had a minimum wage increase which we've talked about as being an entry level wage and it's increased and there's many arguments whether that's a good thing. That is going to be a pressure on small business, especially the smallest of small business and other businesses are gonna feel the compression in that minimum wage which means if you raise somebody to $12 dollars an hour, then the people at $12 go to $14 and the people at $14 have to go to $16, etc, etc and it goes up. So that will put pressure on my prime costs or on businesses' prime costs. Paid Family and Medical Leave, while it's a noble idea, the unemployment exemption which was presented as part of the bill, the unemployment exemption is this. It says that if you're hiring a temporary worker for
the 12 weeks that your employee is off on Paid Medical Family Leave qualifying event, they would not be eligible to collect unemployment after those 12 weeks. That was in the bill that we listened to. In this budget, that exemption seems to be stricken and so that would put pressure on my labor costs because the more people that collect unemployment, the higher the modification rate is on your business and the higher your percentage of unemployment compensation begins as a result of that. Training costs and administrative costs go with that program that are unrecognized.

The expansion of the dozen or so contracts that we've increased our personal services line by $92 million dollars, increasing our budget is going to drive up our state's personal service cost and that's gonna end up as a trickledown effect on small business here on Main Street in Connecticut. Job security, as an employer and as a job creator I can say firsthand that employees and frontline employees are our greatest asset and reasonable wage increases are reasonable. The second part of prime cost is our product pressures. New taxes, I happen to work in the hospitality industry, my business is there and we have a new tax. We're not like all the other taxes in the State of Connecticut, all the other businesses that are going to get taxed at 6.35 percent. We have the opportunity for, I don't know why, just as a restaurant or a food preparer, to be taxed at 7.35 percent. I don't know why we were chosen but that certainly is going to put pressure as people begin to think about the increased cost to come into any hospitality industry, any food preparation industry, any place where they can get a drink out of a soda machine or a candy bar or any type of other bar and that 1 percent as part of the conversation, Madam President, was supposed to go to
help fund cities and towns. That was the conversation and I don’t see that in this budget. That 1 percent seems to go to the General Fund so I'm a little concerned about that.

We have many talks of potential tolls. We're up and down on that, everybody's tired of talking about tolls. I don't know if we'll see tolls or we won't see tolls but if we do, any product that is moved through this state on a truck is gonna cost more to get delivered cause those costs are gonna get passed along to the people who use those products and that will further drive up the product portion of mine and other businesses small prime costs.

Tax expansions. Well the rates, as pointed out, have not been raised. The sales tax and other taxes have been expanded to include many, many more opportunities that are going to cost the people in the State of Connecticut more money. More money out of their pocket. So, Madam President, I submit that these policy changes combined with really the limited positive impact on small business that's happened here at this circle as we enter the last two days of session, and actually the General Assembly, is going to make it more difficult for people that operate small businesses, for the families that populate the State of Connecticut and support small businesses to have money in their pocket while other programs will see increases and I have no doubt that the good Senator on my left worked very hard. I have known Senator Osten for many, many years. We worked together as first selectmen on the Council of Governments in Southeastern Connecticut. Her work ethic is legendary. I just disagree with some of the policies that we're putting out here today.
Now there are positive signs and I think they're worthy of recognition, the tourism support that we worked on last session in a bipartisan way. The Passport to Parks that we worked on in a bipartisan opportunity in last session, support for the deaf, the blind, the ECS Policy that we put together in a bipartisan way last session, the Social Security exemption and pension reduction over time that we put together in a bipartisan way last session. Those are good things to continue. But in closing, Madam President, I ask how much better would this budget have been if we were able to be at the table for all of the items in this budget? How much better would this budget have been for the people in the State of Connecticut if we had the opportunity to sit across the table as we did last session and debate this policy changes and understand our differing perspectives.

As I said, I was proud to serve last session as a co-chair of the Appropriations Committee and I'm proud to serve in this circle and I'm proud to serve as ranking member, but once those committee meetings were over, we didn’t have a screening meeting, we didn’t have a meeting where we sat down and talked about budgets. We didn’t have a meeting where we sat down and went over these numbers or new policies that pepper this budget. We had occasional conversations about occasional issues and again, I don’t disrespect the work that's done by all of the people involved here but I think that this final document, this final document that we have in front of us that uses up a lot of the $560 million dollar expected surplus by the end of this month from the bipartisan budget we did last session is gonna create more challenges for us. So, Madam President, I'm unable to support this budget today because this document, I believe swallows up a lot of the good
things that have happened and it includes tax increases of nearly $900 million dollars in each of the next two years. So I want to thank you, Madam President for the opportunity to stand and discuss this as always and I'd like to yield to my good friend and Senator and ranking member on the Finance Committee, Senator Witkos.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Good afternoon, Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President, I accept the yield. So we've heard three well-distinguished Senators speak on the budget and I just hope that I can add to the conversation as one of the newest members of the Budget Committee and I'm honored to serve with Senator Fonfara on the Finance Review and Bonding Committee. He and I have worked, as he said earlier in his comments very well together whether it was on the Energy and Technology Committee, on the General Law Committee and I believe on the Finance Review and Bonding Committee and when we work together, we can accomplish a great many things and I'd like to ask a few questions before I give my remarks. So, Madam President, through you to Senator Fonfara, a few questions that are relative to the finance side of the package. We are instituting what I believe is a new tax on plastic bags; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.
SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):
Thank you and through you, Madam President, what is the cost of the individual bag?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President, Senator Witkos could you expand on that? Is it the tax you're referring to or the cost of the bag itself?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):
The tax that is placed on the bag. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President, 10 cents.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you and through you, Madam President, I watched the debate in the House on this particular portion and I'm to understand that the retail outlet will remit to the Department of Revenue Services in a separate line item those taxes collected through a tax on a bag; is that correct? Through you, Madam President, did I hear that correctly?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

I did not hear that part of the debate, Senator Witkos, but I understand that will be the process.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The reason why I stated that and why I think we are both correct is that you also will not be charged the 6.35 percent on top of the 10 cents on the bag so that would be able, for accounting purposes to be separated. And there's also some exemptions from the plastic bag tax and could the Senator, good Senator go over what those exemptions are? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Yes, Madam President, if we could stand at ease for a moment as I find that.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. Madam President, if I may make it a little bit easier on the Senator, I think I know the three items, I just would ask for a concurrence if you agree with these items.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos, go ahead.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, I believe laundry bags would be exempt, unwrapped food container bags exempt and compostable bags; is that correct? Through you, and those would be the only exempt items?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. Am I limited to the number of unwrapped food bags that I can use in a store without being taxed? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And what would that limit be? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. I understood you to mean unlimited but you did not ask that.
SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

I asked if I was limited so I'm not limited. It's unlimited I can use. I can use an unlimited number of unwrapped food bags without being taxed; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

That is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And is the good Senator aware of -- is there a move towards stores, retail outlets making compostable bags available? Through you, Madam President. Has that been discussed through the industry?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, I've heard talk of that but I can't say whether or not that will eventually become the manner in which people will be using to bring out their purchases.
Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you and in the bill, it says specifically that a retail outlet cannot sell a paper bag to the retailer for use. Am I correct in my understanding? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And is there -- if a person hypothetical went through the cashier lines and said I, you know they had all their groceries and the clerk says paper or plastic and they may not be aware of the law and they say well I'll just use plastic and the clerk says to them well there's a 10-cent charge on each plastic bag and the person says paper, irrespective of the number of bags I use or the customer uses, there's no tax on that bag. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.
SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

I'm sorry, Madam President. If the gentleman could repeat the question.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

If you use multiple paper bags, there's no charge on the number of paper bags that you would use at retail; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

That is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And, Madam President, how did we differentiate between a tax on a plastic bag and why no tax, and actually mandate that no tax can be applied on a paper bag? Through you.

THE CHAIR:
Through you, Madam President. I believe that there is general appreciation for the desire to reduce the number of plastic bags over the next couple of years and then eliminate them entirely for sale, but because there are folks who, whether they don’t have a travel by vehicle of their own, they might not have the ability to have with them if they're going to the grocery store or other store and we believe they're oughta be the availability of some packaging to take their food out or other items out without -- if a person doesn’t have something of their own and not everybody does. Not everyone can store their reasonable bags in their trunk, if they don’t have a vehicle or they're traveling by bus or other means and we felt that it would be important that those folks have the availability without charge to have the means in which to carry their food items or otherwise. Through you, Madam President.

Thank you, Senator. Senator Witkos.

Thank you and through you, Madam President, what if the store requires a plastic bag to be used to carry out a specific product? Are you still charged for that tax?

Thank you, Senator Fonfara.

THE CHAIR:
If the good Senator would like, I'll give an example. So a couple of days ago I went down to Ocean State Job Lot and I was buying some pool shock for my pool and I told the cashier, I don’t need a bag and she goes our store policy requires us to double bag with plastic bags that product in case there's a spill so even though the customer didn’t want the plastic bag, the store mandated that it be taken and that’s how it is delivered. Would tax be applicable to that? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. It's an unusual circumstance, not one I've heard of before but I believe if in the case of once we've begun to tax the item it would no longer be mandated.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you and through you, Madam President, last question on carry out bag items. When a, and I'll use a grocery store, when a grocery store purchases bags available for their customers to utilize to carry products home in, whether it be plastic or paper, they purchase that which means they own that. Are there any other products that the good Senator knows of where a store that owns it is not allowed to charge for a product that they're required to
sell in one instance to the customer, but it's mandated that they cannot sell to the customer in the other instance? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, not off the top of my head.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Okay. Moving -- thank you, Senator. Moving on, Madam President, a few years ago this legislature passed this credit program for the pass-through entity. Could you refresh my memory the reason we moved forward with this piece of legislation?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. Yes. It was the policy of the State of Connecticut to move for pass-through entities to be taxed at the personal level. The policy of the state changed to that of tax requiring, mandating that those who are members of multi-member pass-through entities such as limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships
or S corps, that they would then, any personal income would be, that is taxable would be done so through the entity as opposed to personally. A policy decision of the State of Connecticut.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. Through you, Madam President, was this as a result of legislation that potentially was passed at the federal level? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

I can't say that it was a result of that other than that happened roughly the same time, that may be a coincidence but in terms of the decision of the State of Connecticut and this legislature, it was to change the policy with respect to how personal income for those in organizations I mentioned earlier and how they would therefore file.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you and I was trying to go through some of the past debate when the pass-through entity tax was first created and what I could find was a lot of
reference to the tax reform done at the federal level and that this would provide an avenue for our residents to receive the credit as they run their personal income through their business. Could the good Senator say what the rate it was established at? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. I believe it was 93.5, could be a little off on that, but roughly that percent.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And what did we do in this budget bill?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

We've reduced that to 87.5 percent.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):
So the net effect of that would be a less tax credit to the individual and a larger increase to the State of Connecticut; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

That is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. There's also an alcohol excise tax increase of 10 percent in the budget. Could the good Senator describe why that is before us?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Essentially to, there has not been an increase in that tax for several years, I believe going back to 2011. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.
SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I concur. In 2011, this body increased that excise tax by 20 percent and now we're adding on an additional 10 percent. Alcohol excise taxes are generally applied to what types of alcohol? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

It is generally applied to, although not in this case, to beer, still wines, sparkling and fortified wines, alcohol more than 100 proof, liquor and liquor coolers.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you and we've had a history of picking winners and losers in this Chamber and I'm just curious if the good Senator could explain why beer was excluded from the increase in the excise tax. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. Through you, Madam President, my understanding is it's to help a
growing industry in Connecticut, the brewing industry.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. We've added an additional increase to our ride-share provisions in our bill and that went from 25 cents to 30 cents per ride. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

That is correct. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And how does that compare to other states or what was the policy reason for the increase? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President. I believe that is consistent with what we're seeing in other states.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. There was a lot of discussion and we passed a bill in this Chamber by wide margins for raising the age for purchasing tobacco products to age 21 and above and with that, there was a lot of discussion about keeping tobacco products, specifically vaping products, out of the hands of our youth and I understand we had not had on our books before, but we are proposing to do that now, a tax on vaping products. Could the good Senator describe what those taxes would be?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. Yes. With respect to, and I'm not familiar with this kind of activity, but with respect to for nicotine only it's a 10 percent tax at the wholesale level on the open systems, and a 0.4 mL excise tax on the closed system.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):
Thank you, Madam President and do we believe that those taxes are exorbitant or are they in line with other states or where do we fall, since this is a brand new tax for us here in Connecticut, how did we arrive at those numbers? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

They are consistent with what is happening nationally. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And have the other states that we've compared our taxing policies with seen a reduction in youth utilizing these products? Through you, Madam President, if the Senator is aware.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Anecdotally I had heard that there has been a reduction in other states, but I can't speak to a specific state. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President and there's a line item, albeit small, it mandates that an occupancy tax be collected and remitted by online platforms, and what would an online platform consist of? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. That would be Air B&B, I have a number of them listed here if the gentleman would indulge me for a second. Through you, Madam President. VROB would be another one. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I may not be familiar with those are. What is an Air B&B and a VRBO? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
To my understanding, they are online platforms in which individuals can be connected to whether it be a rental vacation home or a similar kind of lodging that folks can connect with through this platform.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. And are these already operational in the State of Connecticut, these platforms? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. My understanding, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And have they been exempt from the tax prior to this date? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President. My understanding is that Air B&B we've had an arrangement with but this would extend to others as well.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I won't delve deeper into that one because it's confusing but if we do it already for Air B&B what else? I read the description as mandating it be collected and that leads me to believe that the Department of Revenue Services is having a difficult time in collecting it from these types of entities so I'm surprised I didn't see a fiscal note for additional assistance in that. There's a transfer from the Banking Fund of $5.2 million dollars each year in the biennium to the General Fund and how does the Banking Fund receive its dollars and why are those funds being diverted to the General Fund? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. This is with respect to the increase in the broker dealer fee and investment adviser's fee. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.
SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you and I understand, Madam President, that the banks themselves pay 100 percent of these fees into the Banking Fund that runs the Banking Department; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. That is my understanding.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Do we know what the, I couldn’t tell from the notes in the budget what the Banking Fund is on an annual basis and if we remove the $5.2 million dollars sweep each year of the budget, wouldn’t that be just a tax or a charge to the banks to make up that difference? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President. Again, this is with respect to a fee increase that was established in the 2018-2019 budget. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. We're also looking at a sales and use tax including that are specific to, I saw three industries. One is dry cleaning and laundry, parking and the creation of a new licensure requirement which I'd like you to speak of as well and that's the aestheticians and nail technicians. So first of all, how did we address the parking issues as a sales and use? Why did we go down that road especially when we speak of specifically meters when I recall that this body had tried to tax car washes and we had to come back and fix it the following year because coin-operated car washes posed a problem for collecting the tax, yet here with parking meters we impose the tax and specifically to meters, is there new technology that enables us to collect the tax for parking meters? Through you, Madam President. And please also address the dry cleaning and laundry, how those two particular services were decided upon to be taxed.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. More broadly, as the good Senator knows, our economy has increasingly
focused on services rather than production-oriented goods and this is a step in that direction, not a significant one, certainly nothing compared to what the Governor had proposed, but it does begin to look at services as a way to make it fair in terms of the revenue that we generate from the sales tax. As our economy evolves, so should our structure to recognize that evolution. With respect to parking, currently we do tax parking lots or garages, etc, those with greater than 30 spots. This would extend that to those with less than 30 spots. With respect to interior design services and dry cleaning, we felt to a large extent those are discretionary services and therefore, we do propose extending the tax to those activities as well. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. Were there any other discretionary services that were discussed and eliminated through those discussions to land on just those three specific discretionary services? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. There was extensive discussion regarding the Governor's proposal which again, was widespread in terms of different services
to be, the sales tax being extended to. I don't recall the extent that they were discretionary or otherwise at this moment. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. There's a section in the bill that speaks about the expanded sales tax nexus and that goes, I'm assuming that's the Wayfair decision as it's commonly referred to, which reduces from $250,000-dollar sales number to $100,000-dollar sales number keeping the transactions the same at $200; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, it is.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. And the purpose of reducing the $250,000-dollar threshold down to $100,000-dollar threshold is what?
THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. To be consistent with a number of states in the country in terms of what their level of taxation begins at for this activity. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So if we're using a fairness of what other states tax at, in this particular example, have we compared our income tax rates or our sales tax rates with other states to see, for comparative purposes as well cause I can certainly point to any number of states that have lower sales tax rates and income tax rates if we want to do a fairness comparison? I don't expect the Senator to answer that. That's a rhetorical question. There's a tax called a mansion tax I guess if you will and that increases the conveyance fee for estates over $2.5 million dollars and how much of an increase is that? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President, 1 percent.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So that brings that rate to 2.25 percent; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And the goal of that increase, I believe, is twofold in my opinion, but I'd like to ask the good Senator what his opinion is, the reason for the increase to the 2.25 percent. through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President. This would be on homes as the good Senator indicated, values above $2.5 million dollars. Those values below $2.5 million dollars would continue to be taxed at the original rate or the current rate of 1.25. It would be on homes for individuals that are moving out of state. Those that remain in state, if they purchase a home and stay in the state or continue to live in the state and pay income tax, beginning in the third year, they would begin to have a credit that would eliminate that additional 1 percent tax from their income tax. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Is there any precedence that the Senator would refer me to for further research down the road where we're allowed to tax the same group of people but for different circumstances differently? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. To the extent that we have graduated taxes in our tax policy, that certainly is the case for income tax, for corporate income tax. Through you.
Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm speaking specifically to the 1 percent where if you move out of the State of Connecticut, you're gonna get taxed that 1 percent, but if you stay in the State of Connecticut, you can apply that 1 percent as credit to your income and basically be made whole for that additional 1 percent. So we're taxing the people, same set of circumstances, same house, if one stays in Connecticut, they're basically exempt from the increase, if you move out of state you're getting the 1 percent increase and that's kind of where I was looking for research purposes. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, I am not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

And, Madam President, we -- I guess I only have a couple more questions. There's a section in the bill that speaks to the First Five Plus Program extension for four years and personally, I was never a supporter of the First Five Plus and I'd like to
ask the good Senator, what is the purpose of the extension? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. The purpose is to enable the recipient of the tax credits who have not been able to access those fully for a couple of reasons, one is a lack of corporate income tax within the prescribed period and secondly because we reduced the percentage of the credit from 100 percent to 70 which would slow the ability of the recipient to recover through the tax credit. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President and that certainly makes sense to me that on one hand, the state is doing one thing and on the other hand is doing something exactly opposite so we are creating policies that negatively affect the businesses that we propped up in a program that they asked to be a part of whether it's economic development, job creation, workforce development. Out of this, I understand your explanation, but have all of these companies in the First Five Program met the requirements of you know job creation, etc prior to the extension? The extension is basically just, if I understand you correctly, is to allow these companies to utilize
the tax credits they earned because they fulfilled all their requirements of the First Five Plus Program; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. I believe the provision before us is specific to one company and that company has met both its hiring responsibilities, has actually exceeded its hiring obligations under the agreement as well as exceeded its responsibilities in respect to capital investment in its facilities. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. My last question of Senator Fonfara and then I'll just make some comments, there's a fee study in the bill that directs all agency heads to collect information on what they can charge for fees and that total has to meet $50 million dollars and report back to, I believe our committee, Finance Review and Bonding, on opening day of the next session. Was the good Senator present for that discussion and did he have any conversation with agency heads? I know they've been tasked over the past several years to weed out any fat within their budgets and all we've heard
from commissioners on the appropriations side was that they basically are running bare bones budget now and we've heard from some folks that fees have already increased, double a few years ago, so what is the anticipated thought that some of the agency heads will be able to come back and do they believe it's realistic to find $50 million dollars without negatively impacting those persons that will have to pay those fees? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. I was briefly part of some of the discussion regarding this and it is believed that there are some areas that have not seen fee increases in some years and maybe those fee increases were minimal. This is an examination of those fees to determine whether or not there is the ability to bring them up to, based on inflation or otherwise, the $50-million-dollar objective that is being sought in our tax package. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. But if the examination and the ability doesn’t reach the $50-million-dollar mark, it's built into the budget, how, what does, what does, what is the remedy to rectify that
imbalance then at that point? Through you, Madam President, if those discussions took place.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. The extent that there is a question and it was part of the discussion, there was confidence on the part of the administration that they could find this level of revenue from this exercise. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank Senator Fonfara for answering those questions. I don’t have any more questions of Senator Fonfara, I'll just wrap up my comments. You know, I think -- I was asked by a reporter the other day about what do I think about the budget and I said well it's not as bad as budgets have been before us in the past. And I was sharing with my wife last night when I woke her up when I got home that this budget is not an arterial bleed, it's a venous bleed. It's slow, it's death by a thousand cuts and I don’t mean cuts as in we're cutting spending. I mean cuts as in we're bleeding the people of Connecticut dry. You know we talked about a study that says go back out and if you can examine where you are, if you haven't had massive fee hikes, then we'll probably jack those fees up but that price tag is $50 million dollars. We
talked about our Banking Fund transferring money to the General Fund to the tune of $10.4 million dollars over the biennium and everybody complains about their banking fees, well this could be directly attributable to that cause the state's looking for money.

The poor folks trying to make a little extra cash by renting out a room for Air B&B or VRBO, one of those online platforms, I don't know how they're gonna be mandated. If they're already supposed to be paying the tax and they're not paying it, how can we count on that revenue? Are we gonna send DRS agents to knock on their doors? Are we gonna go to the towns and hit them with cease and desist orders? There's a tax on vaping products. We're differentiating between the two products and I think that may be confusing for some if their POS system doesn't allow that change to happen, that's additional cost to our businesses. I'm not so sure that the tax that we've imposed is the right level. I guess we'll see. I understand that one is specific to one specific industry and that would be the closed vaping system because it already comes preassembled and doesn't allow for any change from what I've heard through the building, but by bifurcating our tax system we've closed the possibility of new technology that may come out and maybe there's a different way to smoke that's not covered by these two different taxing purposes. The alcohol excise tax.

Listen, I think we should have learned through the boating industry that when we reduce our taxes, we make more money and we did that, I give the folks credit, by reducing the motor fuel diesel tax to 2.99 percent. I think that's good. I think during the compromised budget two years ago when we reduced the sales tax from 6.35 percent to 2.99 percent on
the boating industry, we heard from the marine and trade association. They said this is great. We're hiring more people. We're selling more boats. They're actually coming to Connecticut now for winter storage, for services and that's the lesion we should learn from that. If we reduce our taxes, they'll come.

A lot of the districts I represent border the state of Massachusetts and I can't tell you the number of Connecticut cars that I see over the border filling up with gasoline, going to the package stores because it's cheaper. Our prices in the package stores are very competitive. What puts us over the top are the excise taxes that we must pay and, in this case, we're adding another 10 percent arbitrary, because we only picked two of the three industries in our state to add the tax to. We just had a huge, huge liquor reform bill in our state which was to bring us up to the 21st century. I think that alcohol excise tax puts us back a little bit. In fact, it was the wine trail that started us here in Connecticut before the beer trail, before our distilleries started doing their thing and yet we whack them with a 10 percent additional tax.

The plastic bags, that's gonna be a problem. How we can tell a person that owns a product, that says you must charge for this particular product but the other one you’ve gotta give away for free. Why is state government mandating that a business give something away for free? We put in a law that says you can't charge for a brown paper bag. Then we're gonna hear from environmentalists soon well you're deforesting everything if everyone moves away from plastic bags. What happens if they double bag something, paper or plastic? Get one charged for one but not for the other?
The ride-share's just a money grab. We talked about fairness in comparison to other states when we talked about the expanded sales tax nexus to drop it down. I think this is the same thing. Just we've got a certain target we have to meet on the spending side so let's just figure out where we're gonna tax to get to that level. If you talk to anybody about their own budgets at home, we always look at how much money do we have? What's our income coming in and we'll adjust our spending accordingly. We don't do that here at the state level. We decide how much do we want to spend, now let's match it. Prime example, the fee study. Find $50 million dollars. We cannot argue that.

Senator Formica mentioned the meal tax. How onerous is that to our restaurants and that group especially coupled with all the other bills that we've considered here and some have passed this General Assembly already. They are a cash register for the State of Connecticut plain and simple. That's all that does. When the bill first came out, my understanding is the restaurant association was supportive of it because they thought the 1 percent tax as Senator Formica was going to go back to the towns in which it was collected and maybe would hold the line on the property tax cause every single person in this Chamber talks about how regressive the property tax system is in Connecticut and how can we work to adjust that and fix that. It was a good thought, but not the State of Connecticut. We thought well we've gotta feed the beast. We need more money in the General Fund so we're taking 1 percent. You finally get a little bit of extra money in your pocket, you've gotta pay an extra 1 percent to go into a restaurant, 1 percent to go buy the rotisserie chicken at the supermarket, anything
that's prepared. I was going through the grocery store the other day and I was looking at all the prepared meals and these are sometimes for folks who can't cook, don't know how to cook so it's a lot easier to go in there and buy the prepared meals and they're good quality ones prepared right there in the kitchens at the facility. They're gonna be paying more for their product.

One of the questions I had and I'm going to throw out there since Senator Fonfara can think about it since I told him I wasn't going to ask any more questions, somebody else can ask him, is we had a discussion in our caucus room if schools would be required to pay the 1 percent or school children when they buy their school lunches if they'd have to pay that 1 percent tax. I think it fits into the definition but I wasn't sure, and also students that are on free and reduced lunch, how does that impact them so somebody else will be asking that question later on, Senator. I'll give you a chance to research that or review that.

So those are concerns. Also the concerns of digital downloads. Those of us who have teenage kids who have phones that are constantly, especially if they know what your password is even if you change it every week, are downloading apps or a movie, that is a considerable increase and that industry, it's going to harm them. I in fact am a member of a book club and I used to get audio books on line and I had it set up so I get one a month. As soon as I saw this budget, I discontinued that. I said hope, I'm not gonna have that automatically once a month. Why do I want mine to go up from 1 percent to 6.35 percent and I'll only do it if need be? I'd rather go the library and borrow a book now than pay an additional tax on that.
We didn’t talk about the motor vehicle diversion, but here’s a cut to the Special Transportation Fund. You know we had a long argument about how to pay for our roads and our infrastructure and here we go reducing the amount of money that is going into the Special Transportation Fund. You know, we had this long discussion, I heard the House debate and the House minority leader say the lockbox was a joke. The people of Connecticut voted for the lockbox cause they said all the money that's collected that should go into the lockbox should only be used for transportation purposes, but again, this is a diversion before it gets there. We only have ourselves to blame. We don’t need a lockbox for anything as long as we have an agreement that we're not gonna touch that money. It's not going anywhere. It takes an affirmative action by this body to make it happen, but unfortunately, this body can't help itself. That's been done year after year after year.

The mansion tax, to me I believe that's unconstitutional. I think that's gonna be challenged by the first person who sells their home and moves out to the State of Connecticut and is required to pay a 1 percent tax while their neighbor, same valued house, stays in the State of Connecticut and they are credited with that. We broke a promise to our teachers. We delayed the teachers' income tax exemption for another two years. Again, we did that by affirmative action of this body. People don’t trust their state government. They can't believe the things that we tell them and this is evidence as to why. I'm glad to see that the majority party pushed back on Governor Lamont in making sure that the pension annuities and the Social Security exemption stayed
in the budget because people were counting on that when they formulated their family budget, but our teachers did too and they were shut out. Like so many, they maybe didn’t have a seat at the table and that's sad.

We eliminate some things that we thought we should be moving forward in our state, the STEM credit for students that graduate with a science, technology, engineering, mathematics degree. If we're trying to prepare and we're so proud of our well-educated youth, we talk about trying to hold the line on tuition increases and we're hearing from the president of the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees at UConn that they’ve gotta do these increases, 4, 6, 8 percent increases, but yet the first year into it, we eliminate the ability for these students that are signed up and enrolled in the type of curriculum that we encouraged, we're pulling that safety net right out from underneath them.

We eliminated in the compromised budget the 7/7 Program. You know I'm very disappointed, extremely disappointed that that program was eliminated. In fact, I can't tell you how many people I spoke to that weren’t even aware of what the 7/7 Program is. There's people around this circle today that don’t know what the 7/7 Program is so let me remind you what that is. It's an economic development, workforce development brownfield remediation program. This is the kind of stuff we should be doing in Connecticut. This is the kind of stuff we should be getting behind. All three of those pieces of the stool would lay a great foundation for Connecticut. We're cleaning stuff up, we're educating our workforce and we're getting them ready for employers to hire them. Why would we eliminate
that out of the budget? We didn’t do enough to promote it in the State of Connecticut, sad to say. I talked to too many economic developers that never heard of it and it was a great program; it just didn’t get enough time.

If you buy a motor vehicle in the State of Connecticut it's gonna cost you more, especially on the trade-ins and this is where I say we're nickeling and diming our residents to death. The trade-in fee used to be $35 dollars for a used car; it goes up to $100 dollars. But now, when you register that car, you're gonna pay a $10-dollar Passports to Parks additional fee, you're gonna pay an additional $10-dollar registration that goes into the CHEAPR Program. Oftentimes I say the people that can't buy new cars because of their economic situation often buy used and we're taking the money out of the middle class and the poor people for programs for the rich cause the CHEAPR Program talks about buying electric cars. If people are buying used cars, they don’t have the extra money to buy $40,000 or $50,000-dollar cars. In fact, the registration money for the CHEAPR Program used to only be on new cars, but we said nope, now we're gonna put it on used cars as well.

So while I'll align my comments with those of Senator Formica, I think it's been a long path that we've traveled together in this Chamber sitting through public hearings, sitting through screenings, having a lot of laughs and some serious discussions, but unfortunately we came to a fork in the road and this budget reflects a well-worn traveled road of tax and spend and we would’ve chosen to go another road of fiscal responsibility and personal responsibility and I think that's where this budget's lacking. So with that, Madam President,
I'll be voting no on the budget. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Good afternoon, Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Over the years I've heard our state budget described in many different ways. Some have called it a blueprint, even a vision of the party in power's plan for the future and I don't disagree with that. It's definitely true that a budget is a symbol of our priorities and properly crafted, it should have a vision for the future and it should have a plan. I got my first look at this state budget that's before us to be voted on yesterday morning and thankfully, the House of Representatives spent a full day into the evening debating it so I actually had more chance to look at this state budget than I think any other one that I've ever had the opportunity to vote on and here it is, 572 pages, this is printed double sided.

Madam President, there are a lot of concerned and angry people in our state and I took that to heart when I read this state budget and based on my review, I would submit that the priorities that are contained therein are at best questionable priorities and I mean no disrespect to the people that have worked on it, but plainly speaking I don't sense any plan whatsoever. Only a cobbled together collection of new revenue and increased taxes designed to plug holes left by the decreasing
revenue streams and increased debt we have been facing and also designed to continue to grow government even further, creating more and more dependents on our state government while adding more and more burdens on those working harder than ever to make ends meet.

The choice Connecticut must face before long is whether we will continue to operate this way, growing government and its monstrous appetite or instead growing our economy and the freedom and wealth that will result from doing so. For me, this budget vote, the question that really matters is, do the people of Connecticut benefit from this policy? Will businesses see this budget as a change in the direction of this state that is sorely needed to make Connecticut more attractive. In sections 232 through 235, the Paid Family Medical Leave Act language is finalized and I don’t want to rehash the entire debate since it was a lengthy discussion in both Chambers, but this mandate on small businesses with as little as one employee to accommodate someone leaving and having to replace them in the short term and then have to account for them when they return including getting rid of the employee that replaced them. The burden on that small business from managing that situation and then ultimately likely having to pay for additional unemployment claims is something that is sending a message to the businesses in our state.

The previous speakers have already discussed the 1 percent prepared food tax that will apply to everything that is food or drink related. You name it. You buy prepared food anywhere, in a restaurant, in a grocery store, from a vending machine, you will have to pay. In section 368, the Office of Policy and Management which is the
Governor's Office, it's the executive branch. We are giving them, I saw we but I don't mean we, I mean the people that are putting this budget forward and who will vote for it, are giving authority to the Governor to find $50 million dollars in new fees on mostly business people across our state; $50 million dollars and an abdication of our responsibility in this Chamber in my opinion.

Sections 338 through 339, this is a great section, something I've advocated for since I've been here, the elimination of the business entity tax, something that basically is an anti-business signal. It says if you want to start a business, well we're gonna start you off with this fee and that's great except that at the same time that this fee is being eliminated, there's another section 334 through 346 where we raise the recording fees for the same people. Ha-ha! Gotcha anyway. Once again, the corporate surcharge is extended. This is something that was supposed to sunset. We only need this money temporarily, this legislature told the businesses in our state and yet, it's extended once again.

Then there is section 305 which seems designed to put a specific company in this state out of business. I won't spend a lot of time on it but what this does is it eliminates the ability for companies that provide services for the elderly in our community by finding them qualified help that have been background checked and are capable of doing the job properly, by changing the law so those companies can no longer put a non-compete agreement on those homecare workers. Basically you're putting them out of business when you do this. The non-compete agreement that they have is incredibly simple. It just says look, we're gonna hire you to
go out there to meet these people and take care of them and have this contract. We don’t care if you work for someone else. We don’t care what you do, but that customer belongs to us at least for six months. I don't think that's a lot for them to ask in their contract. I also believe we have a right to be sticking our nose in that contract in a state budget. What about millennials? The first reaction when I see this budget is the mountains of debt that we are creating for people that will have to pay it in the future. Is that a reason for anyone to want to stay here in Connecticut? To know that we have the highest per capita debt in the whole country and it's only gonna go up based on this. Newsflash, when you graduate from college, if you stay in Connecticut, you're gonna owe us more than any other state you might move to. Great reason to stay here. And then I think what about jobs? For all the reasons I mentioned above and plenty more, do we think that there's going to be more job opportunities in Connecticut as a result of this budget? Those opportunities are certainly going to shrink. Taxes on digital downloads increasing from 1 percent to 6.35 percent already mentioned. That's just a money grab. That's looking between the seat cushions for more revenue.

Sections 86 through 90 are very concerning. This is very similar to something that happened a few years ago where we refinanced some of our pension liabilities in the state and you know why they were refinanced? To reduce only the short-term payments so that it would be easier to balance the budget, but you know what the problem with that is? It adds mountains and millions of dollars more debt onto the citizens of this state in the future. In this case, it's reducing the payments a certain amount, but it's adding $15.6 billion more dollars on future
taxpayers in this state. What about everyone else? Seniors, the many, many people that I talk to all the time that are considering leaving this state. I don't know about the rest of the members in this Chamber, but not a day goes by where someone doesn’t mention to me that they are considering moving to another place. There are social media pages dedicated to people leaving Connecticut. I work in real estate. I've been a realtor you know since shortly after I graduated high school and when I first started no one ever said to me Rob, I want to talk to you about selling my house because I want to move to another state, once every few years maybe. Now, it is the majority of people I speak with. Clearly this is a problem and we can't sustain this and we certainly can't sustain the monstrous appetite of this government without people here working and paying taxes.

So the question is will this budget make any changes that might cause someone to reconsider moving out of the state? Aside from all the things I've already mentioned that are sure to damage businesses and eliminate opportunities, all the taxes are going to raise the cost of everything. Every product and service will cost more as a result of this budget. The pass-through entity tax was already mentioned. It was invented presumably in a response to fixing you know that terrible Trump tax cut that exposed the fact that the people in this state are paying too much in taxes and the result is, Connecticut is gonna get in on the game and we're gonna collect more taxes too.

In section 15, we're continuing the terrible, I keep saying we, I should stop saying we. There is no we. I'm not going to vote for this but this budget in section 15 continues the process of diverting money
away from the Special Transportation Fund. I could go on for hours just regarding everything that has happened regarding transportation funding in this state since I've been here. Make no mistake. There's also going to be increased property taxes resulting from the additional burdens placed on towns in this budget and every cut in aid to towns, education or otherwise is going to mean higher property taxes. There's a new sales tax on things. Even safety items like car seats. In fact, in Connecticut it would be a lot easier to list the things that are not taxed than the things that are. E-cigarettes, alcohol increased taxes. I guess they're easy targets like they were in previous budgets, but I will remind everyone of the hypocrisy of that. Every time those taxes are raised, the argument that is made by the people proposing it is oh we're trying to cut down on those people, the use of cigarettes and tax those. Those are bad for you. But this budget relies on the income from those taxes. It's blatant hypocrisy.

Line 335 is the implementation of an actual exit tax. I heard it described as a mansion tax. Yes, it only applies to very, very expensive homes today, but just wait. This is a bad sign ladies and gentleman of what's coming. People in this Chamber are realizing that folks are moving out of this state and this is the reaction? Let's tax them? You know this is not just a penalty for people leaving the state. It also says to anyone that would think about moving here, don't you dare. They're gonna get you.

The used car trade-in fee, you know this was created in the last cycle because again, what haven't we taxed already. Oh, I got an idea, let's tax used cars. What is the policy behind that except we need
the money? There is no policy and now because it's low-hanging fruit, let's make it $100 dollars instead of $35 dollars. Is that gonna help promote the businesses that are in the sales of automobiles in our state? Of course, it's not. Certainly, ones on the border are going to be especially at risk. There are loads of new policies in this budget, some things that were never debated before, some things that didn’t get a public hearing. There's changes to other policies that were not discussed. Sections 99 through 102 have to do with the retirement security account which I'm just waiting for the people in the state to get wind of when it actually happens but this is a program where you're going to be forced into having a savings account. There's changes being made to that here.

Sections 258 through 260, they put more money for school readiness and daycare programs. That sounds like a reasonable thing except the money is tagged in the budget only to go to the employees, but that's not what this money is for. The money is to create more slots for more children. Think about that for a second. Who's really benefiting from this budget? There's the framework for the public option is in this budget. There's also five pages of earmarks, 120 of them in total, $3,311,000 dollars' worth of earmarks. My dear friend and successor in the House, Representative Mastrofrancesco did a great job on the House floor last night discussing some of these earmarks and she was made to feel terrible because she dared to ask, what are these things in here? What is access educational? What is the artist collective? What is Hartford's proud? What is citadel of love? What are these things? Where is this money going? Are they legitimate places for money to go? Yesterday I brought an amendment to this Chamber for a real
problem and that was, and I will take just a second because I know it's not a budget-related item, but I wanted to help out people who are U.S. citizens that live our state because they can't the driver's license test in their own native language, Vietnamese and Albanian in particular and I was told there's not enough money for that. These people are going to Massachusetts to get driver's licenses because they can't do it in Connecticut. I heard the good Senator and Chair of the Appropriations Committee say that we hired five interpreters in this budget, but those people I guess they're out because we got $3 million dollars plus in earmarks here for God knows what. And I'm sure some of those things are good, but it makes me wonder what our priorities are. Are those items more legitimate, more important than the thing that I brought to this Chamber's attention yesterday? I don't think so.

The question is what is wrong with this state? What is the problem? Why do we have a deficit? Why are we losing population? Why are residents moving away? Why is Connecticut known to be notoriously hostile to businesses? There are loads of reasons. Many of them are contained in this budget and previous budgets. This is just more of the same bringing us down the same tired path and it's likely to result in another huge deficit which will addressed with guess what? More new taxes and it's not hard to figure out the answers. If I had to pick one phrase to boil it down, what's wrong with Connecticut? We are simply not competitive. If you ask your constituents what's wrong, they will tell you. It's not a secret, everybody knows, it's too expensive to live here. There are too many taxes. Energy cost too much. Many of our friends and neighbors are asking themselves, can they afford to live here any longer? Businesses say it's too
expensive. We hear it every day, that's not a secret either. So why does this budget make it even harder to do business? I have even had business owners approach me in confidence and say that they fear us. Can you imagine? And who can blame them when they have to be concerned about the next thing this state government will put upon them.

College graduates, same thing. Ask them why they are not staying. It's too expensive, there's not enough opportunities. No matter who you are, no matter how much you love this state, you cannot help but recognize that we are not competitive. So let's talk about that. If the problem is that it's just too expensive to be here and there are too many taxes and regulations, then the answer must be to work on those problems. How do we do that? It's simple. You can ask just about anyone and they will tell you. We need to start by making it clear that you are not better off in South Carolina or Texas or Florida or even Massachusetts or New York. Whether you're a single person or a growing family or a retiree or a small business or a large corporation, we need to let everyone know that we are going to make the Connecticut the smart decision. Everyone here knows what the problems are and how to fix them. It only requires the will to do so. We need to address our long-term obligations. Yes, that means reigning in our public sector employee unions and the pension debt that is threatening the financial future of our state.

I was hopeful, Madam President, that the change that we made that required affirmative votes on the union contracts that become before this Chamber would give my colleagues in the majority pause, and that those contracts would receive even more scrutiny than they have in the past. By my count, Madam President,
this body has passed something like a dozen more of those contracts and that itself has increased state spending by $100 million dollars. It also means $100 million dollars in more taxes and more reasons for people to not want to stay in our state. How is it possible that we just spent $100 million dollars on those contracts given the clarify of our financial situation? That's not what my constituents are asking for.

More than anything, if you ask people in my district what do you do, they will say the same thing. Cut spending and taxes. That's what they ask every day. Cut spending and taxes. Where is the cut spending and taxes in this giant 500-plus page document? This budget does the exact opposite. It spends close to a billion dollars more each year in new spending and every dollar that's spent has gotta be paid for by some mechanism of revenue, taxes. So there you go, Connecticut, another billion dollars each year in taxes. I don't know need to know another thing about this budget. That's no right there. Not voting for it. I've made the same comment every year that I've been here. I will never vote for a budget that raises taxes or cuts aid to the towns that I represent because those cuts simply translate into increased property taxes on a local level. This state spent and taxed too much when I was first elected the first time back in 2010, coincidently, the same exact year that Governor Malloy was elected and I have watched and I have voted no on every budget since then except for one and that was the Republican budget that was offered in 2017 that passed two years ago and it's because it did those things. No tax hikes and no cuts to town aid.
Unfortunately, Government Malloy vetoed that budget and it's too bad because it was a tremendous start down the correct path and I wonder what things would be like if we were living under that budget now. But sadly, every budget that's passed since 2011 has raised spending and taxes substantially and they were also all, every one of them out of balance on the day they passed. Everyone knew that there was gonna be a deficit the day they were voting for that budget and yet they did it anyway. I've heard some mention that there are policy reasons for these taxes and I'll repeat, what's the reason? We need the money? That's not a good enough reason. The only way forward for our state is economic growth. That's it. It is the only way we're going to create jobs and opportunities, it's the only way to encourage businesses and it's the only way to get people to choose Connecticut. It's also the only way we are going to manage to pay off the long-term obligations that haunt us. And that growth is only going to come with public policy that makes our state more competitive, more attractive for people to live, to work, to retire, to start a business, run a business. That comes from reducing spending and taxes, cutting regulations, lowering the cost of living, the exact opposite of everything that has been done over the last nine years that I've been here. For me, I don't believe that there's more than one way to fix this problem. There are only the ways I just listed.

Last session, as was mentioned, with bipartisan support, this body passed the compromised budget as it's called. Now I didn’t vote for that budget, but I don’t want to get down on my friends and colleagues who supported it. I couldn’t vote it but I completely understand the reasons why they did. Times seemed desperate. The Governor was
threatening massive cuts to education and town aid and it was an opportunity to have some Republican initiatives included in a budget document that otherwise would’ve just been more tax and spend as Governor Malloy had a history of. That budget did some good things and it did some bad things. The good things were really good; a spending cap, a bonding cap, we vote on contracts now. Those good things, particularly the spending cap, are sadly being circumvented in this document and the bad things continue to haunt us. The bailout of Hartford for $500 million dollars, money for the XL Center, the elimination of the $200-dollar property tax credit, a tax on basically everyone who owns a home across the state.

Think of all the houses and count the $200 bucks every time. That was the burden that that budget placed on the citizens of this state and sadly, even though Governor Lamont promised during the campaign that he would get rid of that, it's not. It's still the policy in Connecticut, it has not been restored. And yes, I have it in me to compromise. All of our constituents want us to work together, but I don't know that means that they want me to vote for bad policy. I'm willing to listen, I'm willing to find the common ground, but what I won't bend on are the principals that I believe in or the responsibility I have to my constituents. In this case, there is no viable compromise, not on this document. Compromising would only mean moving away from the correct solution as this budget does.

I wish I had taken the time over the last nine years to write down the comments that were made each time the budgets were passed. Which one of these budgets over the last nine years, or is it this one that's gonna be the one that actually fixes the problem?
No, Madam President, this budget will not be the one that solves our problems. We will be back here in no time addressing the same issues with more deficits and passing more Band-Aids, more corporate welfare, more taxes. What we need to fix this mess that we are in as a state is a much harder thing to accomplish and sadly, our ability to actually pass meaningful reforms in a budget were dramatically reduced when the labor deal was passed in early 2017. This budget is in direct contradiction, Madam President, to the message we need to send as a signal to businesses and citizens that Connecticut has a bright future. I have said in here several times just this session that every bill that we pass needs to be measured against whether it makes us more attractive and competitive as a state and if the answer is no, then the vote should be no.

This budget is also in direct contraindication to my beliefs in Republican and American principals. It just feeds the monster that has become our state government and I cannot vote for it. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Good afternoon, Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I rise with a few comments on the budget before us and in trying to review the document, obviously it's quite lengthy, I did have a few questions that I would like to ask of the proponent of the bill, please? Through you.
THE CHAIR:

And would that be our, would that be Senator Osten or Senator Fonfara?

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

I would choose either one, probably Senator Fonfara. It has to do with the taxing of prepared foods. I just had a quick question for the record.

THE CHAIR:

I think that would be within his bailiwick. Senator Fonfara, prepare yourself. Please proceed.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. So through you, Madam President, I wanted to just for the record get clarity on the 1 percent tax on the prepared food and the way that it reads, it says that cafeteria food would be taxed and I wanted to see if that includes school lunches which would be prepared food. There's, I'd like to get that out on the record. I would assume it's not, but I wanted to make sure, that's all, if you could.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Through you, thank you, Senator Somers. School foods are not taxed under current law. Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):
Thank you. I just, thank you for that answer. I wanted to get that for the record because it wasn’t clear in the text language because it says cafeteria so I want to make sure that people who are watching this understand that their child's lunch will not be taxed if they buy prepared food at school. Moving on from that, my concerns on this budget are again, we are now for x year in a row giving an $800-million-dollar tax increase to the citizens of Connecticut that have already overwhelmingly shared with I'm sure each one of us that they are feeling absolutely overburdened, and then another $900-million-dollar tax increase in the following year. This is something that we continue to do year after year in the State of Connecticut and you can see the results with the decrease in business and whether we want to believe it or not, if you look at the census, people leaving, there was just another article about people leaving Connecticut and the average salary is $250,000 dollars and they're not just going south, they're going to Massachusetts, they're going to New York. If we have a replacement job, it's coming in at less than a third of the people that are leaving. That concerns me and I feel that the policies that we are instituting and the budgets that we're passing are adding to that.

My concerns also about this budget are the process in which this budget was developed. There are many, many items in this budget that never had a full public hearing. There are bills that never came in front of a committee. People did not have an opportunity to weigh in. There was no input from
those affected, there was no input from the public and I think that's bad policy. That is not what we're set up to do here. That's not what this Chamber represents and there is quite a bit of that in this budget. There is the framework for a public option which never had a public hearing, maybe the bill titled public option did, but what was in that bill and what is set up here did not have a public hearing.

There was discussion on what types of bags to exclude as far as plastic bags are concerned. The alternatives were never given an opportunity to be heard, they were never given an opportunity for a hearing and within this budget they're carved out.

We've added $100 million dollars in state spending. We are reamortizing debt that will cost our future generation $15 billion dollars and the list goes on and on. So this budget for me is exactly what we've seen for the past eight years here in Connecticut and look where we are. We're at the bottom of all the economic indicators. This is history repeating itself again and again. There's no relief, there's no hope for working people in the state. There's no plan to fundamentally change government or reform the government that we have here and there's no courage to change or to lift the burdens that have been placed on the working people of Connecticut over and over for the past eight years. There's been a lot of noise and a lot of talk made about negotiations, about some negotiations being done you know behind prying eyes. There's been talk about a bipartisan effort, but in reality, this was done by people that are in the majority, this budget. And maybe it would've been easier to stomach if the result had been really an honest accounting of really where we are and an honest explanation to our
citizens about our expenses, our liabilities, our true revenues and our long-term obligations. But that's not what I see. If there had been a hint of an open-door conversation that was focused on growth, that was focused on prosperity and fairness for all, not just those who are in the majority here, I think we would be having a different outcome of this budget today. But instead, I feel that we've been given really a closed-door process that has shut out regular citizens because there's things in here that nobody got to have any input on. It has shut out small businesses or they have not been listened to, we're putting a $50-million-dollar tax increase on them, and it endorses a bigger approach to government when we are not doing a good job as government. And what we've seen in this budget now is government touching every aspect of your life. I think that people are better off controlling their own life than having government control it for them.

We also have left out many legislators in this process as far as the budget's concerned and I do believe that being an effective government is not passing bills that sound great in the title or that have you know good intentions so to speak, but that good government is one that's able to provide for its most vulnerable troubled residents, its employers, and it needs to learn to prioritize, it learns from its mistakes, and it changes its approach when that approach is going in the wrong direction. We have not seemed to do that here in the State of Connecticut. So I believe that we need to really take a different approach. We need to dive down hard; we need to look at the areas of our weaknesses here in Connecticut. We need to look at the areas of weaknesses within our Connecticut agencies, the problems that they have, the challenges that they face, and I think we need to
address them clearly and head-on with the citizens intentionally in order to transform them and transform the future of Connecticut. I think we should all demand high standards, high accountability and opportunity for all of us to prosper, for our children, for our employers, and that's what our citizens deserve here in Connecticut. And I think that we need leaders that are willing to see the big picture, not just an agenda for the next two years and I think that's lacking in this budget.

This budget, you see those who are vulnerable not getting a cost of living adjustment, but you are seeing others who are already pretty entitled get massive, what I would consider massive pay increases. You see new positions being created for those who are connected and I say that government is not the solution, that people are the solution, and that government here in Connecticut has really been the problem and we're adding layers and layers of government to this budget. I feel that if we continue down this path, we will continue to be our own problem. It's almost as if we can't get out of our own way. So I am someone who is not going to support this budget for a variety of reasons, but primarily because of the process, the massive tax increase, and I do believe that this is a budget that is status quo. We are just allowing Connecticut to vacillate as it has in its current state of affairs and it is the wrong message and the wrong direction, I believe for the citizens of Connecticut.

That being said, there are certain areas of this budget that are really alarming to me personally and to many who have called me about this. There is one section I will actually say that, Madam President,
the Clerk is in possession of an amendment. It is LCO No. 10782 and I ask that he call the amendment please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10782, Senate Schedule A.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, I ask to waive the reading and seek to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. This section of the budget really struck home. It's section 71 and it has to do with those towns that are entitled to funding from the non-lapsing Mashantucket, Pequot and Mohegan Fund and there are two new towns listed that will be towns that will be getting $750,000 dollars that have not been listed before. Those are West Hartford and Windsor and this amendment seeks to reduce the amount of funding that those two towns get by $250,000 dollars each and set it aside for the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation which is one of the oldest tribes we have here in the State of
Connecticut, located in North Stonington. They were not privy to any of this funding originally, but they are intimately impacted by what happens to the casino. They were originally federally recognized and then that was stripped for a long battle with the State of Connecticut and this is a tribe which I believe has the oldest reservation in the State of Connecticut and they are headed by a lovely woman who has been asking for help for years from the State of Connecticut and how can we designate money to two towns that have no connection, but we are leaving a tribe that has great connection with zero funding. They would like to use this money to develop a community well so they have clean water and for infrastructure for roads. I know that my good Senator Osten has been trying to help with funding for them for years and when I saw this in the budget, it made me pause and I wasn’t going to put an amendment on, but when I noticed this it was something that I couldn’t just let go so I ask my fellow colleagues to support this amendment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Will you remark on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President, and while I appreciate my colleague's intent here, I asked my colleague to sign on a million-dollar bond which would take care of the community well and the needed septic system there that is currently in a request to the Governor for bonding for the Eastern Pequot's. This would not resolve their issue as the
Municipal Gaming Account will not be populated with any funds until after East Windsor is built and I think that you know during the upcoming summer months, I have asked my colleague, Representative Walker, to look at the Mohegan/Pequot Fund to detail what we should be doing and how we should be handling the Mohegan/Pequot Fund which is more appropriate for the Eastern Pequot's than the Municipal Gaming Account which will not have any benefit for these people.

So I look forward to Senator Somers signing onto my bill for the million dollars. I have talked with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. I've gotten the support of Representative Rotella and we did have subsequent to my filing that bill a meeting with the Eastern Pequot's and what they need is a standard dollar amount and they can't wait until there is real money available so as this would have no accounting for the Eastern Pequot's, would not provide them with any resources and does not deal with the structural issues with our three state-recognized tribes, not only the Eastern Pequot's, but also the Schaghticoke's and the Golden Paugussett's, so I think we should look at this more globally and address our issues in providing them with help on their reservations and I look forward to working with all of my colleagues on this issue and recognizing some of what we have done to our Native American tribes in not helping them out and I urge my colleagues to vote no, as this does not provide any resources for any of our Native American state-recognized tribes. Thank you very much, Madam President.
Thank you. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon still, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon still.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

I rise for a brief comment on the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This is certainly a population that needs support. The intent of this amendment is to provide that support. I appreciate the good Chair's comments with regard to the timing and I look forward to lending my name to moving any initiative forward to helping the Eastern Pequot Nation, moving that forward. That being said, it's been some time since we've started this conversation and while this may be a year or two away, this amendment will put something in place if it still takes some further time. So I ask that we approve this amendment as a stop-gap at the end while we work together to try to solve this problem in the beginning and I believe we want to have this vote by roll if possible. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you. There will be a roll call vote. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. I was going to ask for a roll call vote and also, I would just like to say that I believe that our Native American tribes are entitled to this money if not more than towns that are not impacted like West Hartford and Windsor. I mean that's a really illegitimate argument to make myself. This would allow them to have some money coming it, albeit it might not be immediately, but they would know that they were going to be able to have an income stream coming in just for basic sanitation so I hope that this circle will support the amendment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers and a roll call vote has been requested with that. Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, Mr. Clerk, kindly call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment A, LCO No. 10782. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment A, LCO No. 10782. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate, Senate Amendment A, LCO No. 10782. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 7424. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered
in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, Senate Amendment A, LCO No. 10782. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment A, LCO No. 10782.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? If so, the machine will be locked and Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7424, Senate Amendment A, LCO 10782.

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THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] Amendment fails. Will you remark further on the budget that is before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I'd like to if I could propose a few questions to the proponent of the bill, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, and would that be Senator Osten or Senator Fonfara that you would like to?
SENATOR MINER (30TH):

I'm sorry, I apologize. Senator Osten, please.

THE CHAIR:

Certainly. Senator Osten, prepare yourself and please do proceed and let's clear the floor so we can see and hear Senator Osten. Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I know that in the Appropriations Committee there was a discussion about a spending package and I'm trying to remember the day we talked about that package and the extent to which we discussed items that seem to be included in the budget that is before us today and so under specific sections, section 228, if the gentle lady could remind me, were expenditures under section 228 included in the budget that was, spending package that was adopted by the Appropriations Committee? Through you, please.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President, one minute to get to that section. Please proceed, through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
I believe there were, Senator Miner, would you kindly repeat the question? I believe the Senator is at the appropriate section.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So my question was, through you, Madam President, in section 228 of the budget that is before us, was that included in the Appropriations Committee proposal that was voted on back at the end of April? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Yes, it was. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

And through you, Madam President, each one of those items earmarking specific dollars to specific projects within municipalities was listed in which area of the budget if I might, through you, please?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):
Thank you very much, Madam President. The total dollar was included in the Appropriations package, but it was not detailed out until this package, but the dollar in total was included under the Judicial Section of the Appropriations budget. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Through you, Madam President. I thank the gentle lady for her explanation. So the dollar amount was listed as a line item within an agency, but specifics as to what that would be used for was not I think was the response that we just heard and if I might, also, section 48 of the budget has a similar list of appropriations totaling some $3 million dollars. If the gentle lady could remind me if those were also a part of the Appropriations package at the time we voted on that on or about April 25. Through you, please, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I believe that would be so. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I thank the gentle lady for her response and her recollection of the Appropriations Committee discussion. Madam President, to be sure, putting together a budget for the State of Connecticut is no easy task and having participated in that process a number of times on both the Finance and Appropriations side, I know that we often have participants that have interests, have needs, are representing their community as well as the state as a whole and certainly find it an interest of theirs to try and make sure that their constituents are represented in a budget. So in section 228, there is a list of items that I think represent those types of expenditures, expenditures that to a person whether they’re in the House or the Senate, may demonstrate a specific need, a goal, a policy, again laudable. Sometimes they serve a public service, sometimes they serve as an opportunity for youth to try and direct an upbringing, direct an involvement in a civic organization, all important, all good goals, all worthy of consideration for a budget.

Madam President, the Chamber may remember back on or about May 15, we were having a conversation about nursing staff, staffing levels in nursing homes and at that time, I offered an amendment that would appropriate some money toward the senior citizen community that was calling home the nursing home that they were living in at that time and at that time, we had a conversation about the longevity of those individuals, how long they would usually live in those settings and despite our efforts, despite our interest in trying to provide them good shelter, good food, good healthcare, that at the age at which they were, more often than not, they were not with us for a longer period of time.
Madam President, I think we all know that back under the Malloy Administration a decision was made to reduce the personal needs care allowance and that it went from $72 dollars to $60 dollars and I think all of us have looked at that as an issue that we felt needed to be addressed and so if I might, through you, I've looked through the budget a number of times, if the gentle lady could tell me whether or not increasing that area of the budget to accommodate additional funds for the personal needs allowance is in this document of some 567 pages. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. No, it's not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. That’s kind of what I thought. I couldn’t find it, but knowing that more often than not we make large appropriations to agencies and that we don’t often direct them specifically on how to spend those dollars, I thought there was a possibility that it just wasn’t clear to me. So, Madam President, the Clerk has an amendment. It's LCO 10866, if he would call it and I be allowed to summarize, please?
THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO 10866, Senate Schedule B.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, what I think this amendment does, or at least what it attempts to achieve, is to return the personal needs allowance as we discussed on May 15 to $72 dollars a month. What it seeks to do is make use of the almost $1.9 million dollars that would be included in that list of section 228, the resources not required, again, to return that to $72 dollars from $60 dollars would be used to fund youth violence initiatives and that would be in the amendment section 503. Madam President, certainly many of these choices are not easy that we make in a budget, whether it was this budget, a budget that was offered two years ago by a large group of us, budgets that were previous to that. But having had this conversation within the last month and having
had an opportunity over the last two or three months to visit a number of nursing facilities, nursing home facilities where it became clear to me that this was an initiative that really needed to be addressed. Many people in this Chamber assured me during the time that we discussed the nursing home staffing bill that we would have an opportunity to address that in the future. I think this is as good a time as any and I would ask that when the vote be taken, Madam President, it be taken by roll call.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. A roll call vote will be ordered at the appropriate time. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President and while I certainly understand my good colleague's interest in the personal needs allowance that helps out clients and those who live in nursing homes around the state, quite frankly, we talked about this in the bipartisan budget and were never able to resolve this issue and I would be happy to work with my colleague next year on this issue and come up with an overall plan to address the issue of the personal needs allowance which has not been addressed since Fiscal Year 12 and 13 when it was raised from $50 to $60 dollars per person so I unfortunately will be asking my colleagues to vote against this amendment, as it is directly in conflict with the rest of this budget. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

Thank you, Madam President. I think that's unfortunate and you know I understand the position. We get to vote on the budget last. The House got to take the budget first. Certainly had we not had the conversation back in the middle of May, I would've been probably more reluctant to request this amendment. Frankly, I thought after that conversation we had left the door open to find what I really think amounts to about $1.2 million dollars out of a $20 plus billion-dollar annual budget and so that's the reason it's back here. I don't know if there's any other way to resolve this except to do it through an amendment. I don't think there's any other bill, at least I haven't been able to find one that I think we could reach agreement on and so, with all due respect to the Chair of the Appropriations Committee's request and recommendation to oppose the amendment, I would ask the Chamber support the amendment. I think it's a worthwhile cause. I think these individuals would greatly appreciate the additional funds. Another $12 dollars goes a long way when you're only getting $60 dollars. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I rise just for a quick comment on the amendment.

THE CHAIR:
Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much. I too find this an amendment to be opportune at this time and I think that there are certainly funds available in here to satisfy the need. We've had many opportunities to move other populations forward while this population who's most in need remains stagnant in terms of dollars toward their monthly personal fund allowance and a little bit would mean so much so I stand in support of this amendment and urge adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Mr. Clerk, please call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment B, LCO No. 10866. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment B, LCO No. 10866. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate, Senate Amendment B, LCO No. 10866. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 7424. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment b, LCO No. 10866. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, LCO No. 10866.

THE CHAIR:
Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? If so, the machine will be locked and Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7424, Senate Amendment B, LCO 10866.

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THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] Amendment fails. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Senator Champagne, good evening, sir.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just have a few questions that I want to clarify, being new to this process, through you, to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

And would that be Senator Osten or Senator Fonfara?

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Senator Osten, please.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Osten, prepare yourself. Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Senator Osten, I'm trying to understand. There's a lot of grants that are being handed out and I'm just trying to understand how did these grants get into this budget? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President, through the Youth Violence Initiative? Is that the grants that you're talking about? Which grants would my good colleague be talking about?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Well I'd like to start on pages 42 through 47. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

And the name of the grant would be? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well we can't start at number one and go through every one of them. How about the first one, Access Educational for $10,000 dollars on page 42?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Give me one minute to get to that page. Is it the page of the bill or the page of the LOR Report or the page of the OFA Report? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

It's on, thank you, through you, Madam President, it's through the Bill 7424. I have the complete copy so that's on page 42.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):
Thank you very much. That's the Youth Service Prevention grants. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. And through you, Madam President, can you tell me what the Access Educational Grant for $10,000 dollars is?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. All of those grants are decided to effect change in communities that are primarily of color and they deal with a number of issues that enhance that community and stem youth violence. These grants are through the Judicial Department. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and through you, who comes up with this list of grants and where they should go?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.
SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. They are decided through the Black and Puerto Rican caucus. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. What is, I didn’t realize a caucus did this. What is the set amount of money that is given to this caucus to decide to hand out? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. About $3.3 million dollars. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And what other caucuses are allowed to spend money, millions of dollars? Through you, Madam President.
Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. The caucuses don’t actually spend the money. They forward organizations that promote youth violence prevention and the money is spent through the Judicial Department who oversees these organizations to make sure they fit the character. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and through you, Madam President, where can I find the standards on how to apply for these grants?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Those standards are just plain and simple to prevent youth violence, to prevent violence in communities. That's simply put that standard. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.
SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Are these grants renewed on a yearly basis to the same organizations? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I'm sorry, Madam President, could my good colleague repeat that question?

THE CHAIR:

Please repeat the question, sir, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President and through you, are these grants renewed for the same places every year or are they different every year?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. As they were in the bipartisan budget, they're different each year although some organizations may get repeated grants year after year if they are complying with the mission of preventing youth violence. Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So I guess I get the general understanding but when I look through this and I see things that, I don't understand how they fit in there I guess just because I've never seen the standards, but I see theaters, Diva's on the Move, I don't understand what that one is and I guess there's a lot of other things in here that I just don't understand. So when was the last time they were reviewed? When was the last time they were reviewed? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. As they're through the Judicial Department, they're reviewed each and every year. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On page 36, there's a large grant that's a two-year grant for $450,000 dollars, it's section 32. I just, can you just describe what that, the Women's Business Development Council in Stamford does?
THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. This is a standard grant that has been approved year after year. There's actually usually a supplemental component of this, $350,000 dollars and what the Women's Business Development Council does, it promotes women businesses and it operates across the state, not just down in Stamford so it's a statewide program. It's also in New London, my colleague to the right of me, it's one of the towns he represents so year after year after year we work on promoting and supporting women business development and this council works on that and across the board has been supported on a bipartisan, bicameral basis. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Again, I haven't been here and a lot of these large expenses I just want to get an idea as to what they are. When we give out $450,000 dollars to any organization, do we get a report back that says how they're doing? Have they helped start businesses? I mean if they didn’t start any businesses last year, that would be a concern to me but do we get a report back on how the money's being spent and how it's going? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Most of these companies that get, or these organizations that get grants are 5013c. They have to comply with reporting requirements through 990 forms which talk about what they do with that and whether it's through DECD or Connecticut Innovations or other state agencies, they report back as to their expenditure. They're not just simply given a lump sum and spend away. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I wouldn't say they would just spend away, I simply want accountability on everything that we do. I know that in my other job that I do, when we give out grants, we do want a report back every year to see and make sure that it's doing what we're asking and the more money we give, the more detailed report we would like.

On section 33, same page, we have a Thames River Heritage Park for the park's water taxi. I have no idea what that is. Through you, Madam President, could you just describe what we're getting for $100,000 dollars a year?

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne. Senator Osten.
SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. And that was at a request by the good Senator to the right of me. Thames River Heritage Park is in New London and it travels between New London and Groton. The Senator to the left of me and they have a program where they have started a water taxi on the Thames River which used to be called, quite frankly, used to be called the Pequot River which was changed after there was a slaughter of the Mashantucket Pequot's and they didn’t want the name to remind them of what had happened, but we are doing a water taxi service to promote the Thames River and so both New London and Groton are able to continue with this process and this is only a portion of their funding sources. They have other funding sources and eventually, the goal is to make themselves sufficient, but since they’ve just started building up over the last three or four years, this is just a beginning piece of it. They actually had two boats delivered to them that were given to them by the Navy so this is a continued process to promote tourism and travel on the Thames River between New London and Groton. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President and you know what? As long as the numbers are up and we're getting a good report back, I support it, especially if we're gonna bring tourists in. Down in section 35, $125,000
dollars a year, the Tech Collaborative. Can you just describe that? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Which number is that again?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

It's section 35, it's between lines 269 and 275.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Sorry for the delay, Madam President and through you, it's a new city program called Career Pathways/Tech Collaborative. It aims to get teens high school credit and professional credentials for after school vocational training at the Eli Whitney Technical School. This started out as a pilot program and continues that program. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Again, another good program. What I am wondering, well I don't know if we have the numbers or anything. Do we know how many students that effects or go into that program? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I do not know. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President and thank you. On line 276, it's $50,000 dollars for first robotics competition teams. That's just for municipalities of more than 50,000 and no grant shall exceed $10,000 dollars. Why did we limit the population for that grant?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. This is a new program to promote robotics across the state and it is no more than $10,000 dollars per school and many
of the robotics programs that are around are in schools above that dollar amount and maybe next year or the year after we can encourage more of the smaller municipalities and school environments to build up their own robotics programs, but this is just a start to see what we can do. Eventually, we'd like to see this be a statewide program in every municipality and every school district. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Let's move on to the next one. Between lines 298 and 292, we have a grant, $463,479 dollars each year for the project Oceanology in Groton. Can you just tell me what that is? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, this is an exceptional program that brings young people from around the state to Project Oceanology which is housed on Avery Point in Groton, my good colleague to the left of me and what it does, students from around the state at a grammar school, junior high school level go there to learn more about our oceans and it gets people out and about in maritime environments to sort of see what's out there, to show our marvelous seacoast for what
it is and deals with the science of our seacoast and promotes children hopefully to get involved in looking at that. This has been a standard grant for a number of years. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm going through these and a lot of these grants I'm just pointing out because I see at least $9.5 million dollars in grants that are handed out and to a lot of different things. I see a lot of baseball teams. I see a lot of, well we have wrestling clubs I just don't understand, why you know steam trains and I guess this goes back to my question that I've asked several times. Throughout this budget we have these grants totaling a lot of money and we can't go back, in fact twice this circle's voted against giving some of the neediest people in our state $12 dollars more a month yet we provide water taxis, we give a lot of money to a lot of baseball teams and numerous other programs. In fact, some of those programs have a connection to a lot of different lawmakers in this building and I guess it's disappointing that we can't help some of the neediest people in the state for $12 dollars more a month, yet we give these grants out. Some of these grants are good. Anything that promotes bringing money into the state, anything that promotes tourism in the state, anything that can keep kids out of trouble. I can understand that but again, it just surprises me that we couldn’t out of this huge budget find money for the neediest people.
I could go on about the different taxes that go on but I think we've touched on a lot of that. I'm very disappointed with this budget and my main disappointment is the fact that we really hurt small businesses. You know small businesses in our state account for over 90 percent of all businesses here.

They account for a huge of the state employees, yet this budget and the laws that we passed in this session really put small business on the back burner and sets them back and I think that's the most disappointing thing about this budget followed by the tax increases. I wish we could find better ways to cut money. You know maybe we need to look at all these grants that we sent out there to make sure that they're doing what we want them to do, that these grants have some sort of followup and a proven track record because I know $12 dollars a month would have a proven track record because it would definitely improve these peoples' lives on an everyday basis and it's such a small amount of money. Because of that, I'm having a real hard time supporting this budget. Obviously there's a lot more reasons in there but I'm going to stop at this point. Hopefully I can find out where these grants and if they are a success and they have a proven track record. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us? Good evening, Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, this vote can't come fast enough for me. I was
disappointed that we weren’t able to vote on this budget last night. I couldn’t wait to vote no and disassociate myself from this budget and clear my conscience in knowing that I was not going to participate in the punishment that we are about to inflict on so many hardworking families and small businesses across this state that are the lifeblood of Connecticut's economy.

Madam President, we've been at this for a couple of hours now. This budget clearly includes in it many new taxes, many tax increases, pork, rats, I'm not going to go through all of them again and repeat all the remarks that have already been articulated so well. I would, however, Madam President, just make some remarks limited to what I think is one of the most egregious sections of this budget and that is the change in the pass-through entity tax structure. With your permission, Madam President, through you, I would like to inquire of the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Senator from the 1st for purpose of laying some background as to the pass-through entity tax. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bizzarro. Senator Fonfara, please prepare yourself. Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, Madam President, if the good Senator from our 1st district would kindly just take us back to the conversation that he had with the Senator from the 8th earlier about the pass-through entity tax and flush out in a little more detail exactly what that pass-through
entity tax is and who pays that tax, how exactly that tax works.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Bizzarro. Yes, the pass-through entity tax which was adopted last year moves from a, for those who are members of, multiple members of LLC's, LLP's and S Corps, they are required under Connecticut law to file for income, personal income at the entity level as well as personally, filing their state income tax personally and that is what the state mandate is as of last year. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I thank the good Chairman for his answer. I'm wondering again, through you, Madam President, if the Senator can expand a little bit on which sorts of entities this tax applies to and what the impetus was. I understand that there was a change in policy, but I'm wondering what the impetus was behind that change. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Again, through you, Madam President, it is with respect to multiple member limited liability corporations, limited liability partnerships as well as S Corps and the change was because Connecticut and this legislature decided to move from for those institution, from those organizations and members of them that instead of filing for personal income tax purposes at the individual level, to change that to at the entity level. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I understand, I understand the change in the policy. I'm not sure I understand why that policy was changed, but in an event, Madam President, through you, Madam President, just to be clear, so when we say pass-through entities and the tax that we're talking about here, it would apply, through you, Madam President, to any LLC's regardless of size. Through you, Madam President, is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

No, single member LLC's are not covered under this. Through you.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So, through you, Madam President, any multi-member partnership LLC even for instance family members who are involved in a partnership, would this pass-through entity tax apply to them? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President and Madam President, may I also inquire, through you, Madam President, why this budget decreases the tax credit back to those individual members of the pass-through entity as opposed to increasing the marginal rate on that pass-through entity tax? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):
Through you, Madam President. The decision in this process, in this proposal before us to modify the credit that we established in the last budget, 2018, at 93.01, we are modifying it here to 87.5. It's a policy decision that is contained in this budget.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you. Through you, Madam President, could the same revenue goal be achieved by increasing the marginal rate as opposed to reducing the credit back to the individuals? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Madam President, may I ask the good Senator, through you, Madam President, to explain to me what the volatility cap is? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.
SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, yes. The volatility cap was passed I believe two years ago and codified with respect to the covenant that ensure that under contract that we are bound by the decision to segregate estimates and finals revenue which is the most volatile portion of our income tax which we have repeatedly included in our spending even though it might be there one year and gone the next because it is such a volatile revenue stream unlike withholding which is much more predictable. So the volatility cap separates from approximately 3.15 adjusted if I can find my, here it is. So right now in 2019, the threshold is $3.196 billion dollars. Anything exceeding that level would be segregated off and intended for the budget reserve fund.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you for explaining that to me, Senator. So, through you, Madam President, going back to my question of a few moments ago, if this budget instead of decreasing the tax credit back the individual members or partners of the pass-through entity would instead increase the marginal tax rate, would that then implicate the volatility cap because that revenue then would have to be segregated and would not be able to count towards revenue without a corresponding offset in the budget reserve fund? Through you, Madam President, is that correct?

THE CHAIR:
Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, any revenue that exceeds the $3.196 threshold that is considered estimates or finals or pass-through entity revenue is segregated off. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

I thank you Madam President. That was my understanding in reading this and trying to bring myself up to speed with the pass-through entity tax and the volatility cap. One more question for the good Senator. Through you, Madam President, my question is, have we just figured out a way to work around the volatility cap? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, as someone who argued strongly for the implementation of the volatility cap, that would not be intent nor would I consider as the Chair of the Finance Committee advancing such a notion. It is important that we have a revenue stream that is predictable, that we remove as much volatility from it as we possibly can and I believe
we're great strides towards that. The fact that we are heading, at least through projections at the end of this biennium to have deposit into the budget reserve fund $2.9 billion dollars, the largest amount ever contained in the budget reserve fund in our history, that certainly would not be my intent nor is it the purpose for this action that is before us today. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President and just to be clear for everyone around the circle, I certainly did not intend by my question to imply that that was the intent. If fact, I asked that question trusting that the good Chairman would give the answer that he gave, that is that in fact no, in fact having worked so hard on getting that volatility cap enacted so as to protect our precious resources and Connecticut taxpayers in the process, he would not in fact think that we would want to participate in any scheme to work around that volatility cap so I'm glad to have that answer. I do, as a result of those answers, have a couple of questions for the proponent. Madam President, through you, I'm wondering whether the Chairman has had any occasion to consider whether there are any implications in any of the bond covenants in connection with any bonds that may have been issued since the volatility cap and the bond covenant legislation took effect last year? Through you, Madam President, is the Chairman aware of any bond covenants that might be violated if we were to make this change to the pass-through entity tax?
THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, no.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bizzarro.

SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President and I hope that's the case. These are things that have just occurred to me and I'm not sure I have the answers either. It would appear to me that it's not a literal violation of the statute creating that cap. It is certainly a violation of the spirit of that legislation and that cap and I worry that, and I'm not sure if there have been any bonds that have been issued, but I worry that some of our bond holders may see it as such. I also wonder, Madam President, why the decrease in the tax credit back is limited to whatever works out to 6 percent or so. In other words, why is it 87.5 percent and not 80 percent. I think the answer to that is probably, and it's just a rhetorical question of course, I think the answer is probably we needed, we collectively, needed to back into a revenue figure and I'm not gonna put the Chairman on the spot and ask him if this is something having done it this year could be replicated next year because I think we all know the answer to that.

The answer is it most certainly can be. So we've decreased the tax credit from 93.01 percent to 87.5 percent this year. There's nothing stopping us from
deciding it again next year and so on and so forth and I think that is a direct violation, again in spirit at least if not in actuality, a violation of the volatility cap.

Madam President, this is a tax increase. It's a tax increase on all of those hardworking people who derive income from partnerships across Connecticut so I wonder to myself why are we doing this? And I think the good Senator from the 16th district for pointing out earlier that I should probably use the term we very loosely here. But I wonder why we're doing this. I spoke a few weeks ago on a bill. I stood up before the circle and I talked about perspective and most of the bills that we've debated so far really boil down if you think about it to perspective. It boils down to, our votes usually boil down to a difference in the way we perceive the effect of the legislation that we're gonna pass. Again, we've got a certain piece of legislation. We've got one group of us that says this is gonna hurt and another group of us that says nope, this is gonna help a certain class of individuals across the state, but when it comes to this particular portion of the budget, there can be no debate about the effect here. This is going to hurt anyone who derives income from a partnership in this state.

This is going to hurt the middle-class people of Connecticut. There can be no debate about that. This middle class that I'm talking about is suffering. This is a middle class that cries out to us for help and ever since November, even before I got here, all I heard across the state during campaign season was we've gotta figure out ways to help Connecticut's struggling middle class. I heard for six months about this progressive movement that's sweeping across Connecticut and across the
country. Where is the outcry from members of that group? Do you realize, Madam President, that this pass-through entity tax change that we are about to enact is a regressive tax? Take a look at the numbers. It is going to result in an effective increase of 0.5 percent on the income derived from a pass-through entity and as the marginal tax bracket of the individual member gradually increases, so too does the credit back so that the effective tax rate decreases. It's regressive. We're not gonna tax capital gains. No, we can't do that, but we're gonna slam the middle class. Where is the outcry?

So the brother and sister who own a Mexican restaurant in my city of New Britain who have no other jobs because for those of you in the food and beverage business you know, working a restaurant is a 24/7 occupation. Their families who rely on that income as their sole source of support for those families, we are going to raise their income taxes by half a percent. We are raising their Connecticut income taxes by half a percent by passing this portion of the budget. Again, this is an income tax increase on anyone who operates as a partnership in this state. We need to stop trying to sanitize this by calling it an increase in business taxes; it is not. This is an income tax increase on anyone who operates as a partnership and derives their income from a partnership in this state. And that is so, Madam President, because by its very nature, a pass-through entity is one in which the profits of the business flow through to the individual members or partners. This is not a tax on the wealthy because I've seen comments to that effect. This is not a tax on the wealthy. It's not a tax solely in the hedge funds littered throughout Fairfield County or the corporations in Hartford that can pay to have their representatives wander the hall here to
advance their agendas. Nope. This is a tax on the middle class. It's a tax on all the small businesses and all the small business owners on every Main Street in this state.

I'm gonna ask everybody to join me on a figurative walk down Main Street in your town. I'm gonna walk down Broad Street in New Britain right now just to see all the people that are gonna be affected by this. Broad Street in New Britain, for those of you who have never been there, is not only the crown jewel of the city, but is a shining example of what every neighborhood and every municipality in the state should strive for. Twenty years ago, that entire neighborhood which is now known as Little Poland, Little Polonia was a crime-invested, downtrodden neighborhood. Nobody wanted to go down there. Madam President, I'm proud to say that on Sunday, we had over 35,000 visitors to Broad Street in New Britain to celebrate our annual Little Poland Festival including many elected officials. So if I take a walk down Broad Street because I've heard that this is a tax that's gonna affect the wealthy, the big corporations, the businesses that can afford to pay it, I'm gonna walk down Broad Street, I'm gonna invite all of you to walk down Main Street in your town.

THE CHAIR:

Pardon me just, Senator. I'm just gonna stop you just for a moment. I wanted to welcome our guests who are here and we welcome having them listen to the debate, but we'd ask them to respect our rules which prohibit videotaping and photo taping so thank you for being here. We're glad you're here. Senator Bizzarro, please continue. Sorry to interrupt you.
SENATOR BIZZARRO (6TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate that. So I'm gonna walk down Broad Street and I'm gonna tell you who this tax is gonna affect, this income tax increase. Well, it's every restaurant, it's every deli, every diner, every convenience store, every bodega, every barbershop, every flower shop, every laundromat, every clothing store, every antique store, every liquor store, every bakery, every ice cream shop, every bowling alley, every travel agency, every insurance agency, every real estate agency, every law firm, every healthcare practice which operates as a partnership. I trust that many of my colleagues around this circle have lots of those types of businesses in their districts run by family members, run by friends, run by average Joe's, middle class people just trying to make a living in this state and we're turning around, and not only are we increasing their income taxes by half a percent, we're out there telling everybody that this budget contains no income tax increases. I've heard it said on the floor today. This budget contains no income tax increase.

Really? Is that so? So I ask why are we doing this? Why? Because it's a head scratcher for me. Well I anticipate an argument would be that this is a benefit that the state conveyed not too long ago on all of those individuals and so they're still better off than before and all we're doing is taking back some of that benefit. That's a bogus argument. So to understand it, basically what we're saying is look we recognize that you are paying too much in taxes and you need relief. We hear you loud and clear. We're gonna do something about it and then less than 12 months later, we're gonna say you know
what? Forget it. We're taking it back and we reserve the right to take more back next year. That's what we're doing. And there's a few problems with this argument as well, Madam President. One is, and I was trying to get at this earlier but it's my understanding and I think my colleague, the Senator from the 16th or the Senator from the 8th, one of them mentioned it earlier, my understanding is that this was, this pass-through entity tax was something that was enacted in response to the federal income tax changes and specifically, the SALT deduction limitation that hurt so many people across Connecticut.

So if that's the case, then I have to ask, well aren't we pre-supposing that everybody would be hurt by that SALT deduction limitation? Cause when it's revenue neutral and we can look at a taxpayer and say this is not gonna cost you anything, most people are gonna be better off, but at the worst, you're not, you're gonna be in the same position. You won't be worse off; I promise you that. And that's fine the way it was written and the way the numbers were crunched and I know for a fact that the people that put this together spent a great deal of time crunching these numbers, working them because the math is hard. I've sat there and done it. I've sat with representatives from DRS and I've gone through this and I know how hard it is to come up with the numbers. The equation is not easy. You've gotta factor in the benefit that you get on the federal level, you gotta calculate the difference in the state tax liability, and they were able to their credit to come up with a table and come up with numbers that were precise, or as about as precise as you can get which is nearly impossible. And now we're gonna take all of that and we're gonna throw all of that out of whack.
So when it's revenue neutral and it doesn't cost the taxpayer anything, fine. But if you're worse, if you are in a worse position now than you were before we enacted it, how is that fair?

And the second problem with that argument about it being simply a reduction in a benefit that they wouldn't have had anyway, is that it erodes the trust that the public has in its government. How can the public have any confidence in us? This is why we can't pass tolls. This is why, with all due respect to everybody in this building, we cannot be trusted with a new revenue stream. Look what happens. Oh, figured out a way to get a new revenue stream in but oh, it's gonna be hands off. We're not gonna tinker with it. This is gonna be for the purpose of bestowing a benefit on the people that really need it. Nope. We gotta close the budget. How are we gonna do it? Oh, I got an idea, let's take some of that revenue. Does that sound familiar? We talked about the lockbox which I never understood. I still don’t understand it.

We had to pass a constitutional amendment to protect the people of Connecticut from us, their elected legislators? And now we've gotta figure out a way to fix this problem with the volatility tax [sic] because my colleagues I know, I trust worked very hard to get that enacted for purposes of protecting that volatile income, that volatile revenue stream and we've just figured out a way to do an end around. We're not touching the revenue off the top. We're not increasing the marginal tax rate because then we just have to make a corresponding ledger entry to the reserve fund. Nope. But what we can do is we can simply decrease the credit back. Doesn't violate the volatility cap, sorry, I said
volatility tax, I meant volatility cap. Doesn't violate the volatility cap, nope. I'm sure that's what the lawyers will say but think about how this looks from the perspective, again, perspective, the perspective of the people that are watching us. We're doing this to help you, it's revenue neutral, we promise, not gonna cost you anything. Less than twelve months later, sorry, we lied. That's what we're doing if we pass this provision of the budget.

And finally, Madam President, the last thing I'll note about the argument, again, talking about the rebuttal that I anticipate, that rebuttal being well you're still better off than you were before we passed this cause that's gonna be the response, I know it when I sit down. The final thing I'll say about that is that logic is incredibly dangerous. Let's think about the ways if you extrapolate that it can harm people. We could say, for instance, well, we're gonna divert some money from the transportation lockbox but at least we're funding it in part. We're putting some money in so you're still better off than you were before cause before we were never funding it. So now we're gonna put some money in, not everything we promised you but we'll put some in and then the year after we put less in, we divert it and what's the argument gonna be? Well you're still better off than you were two years ago cause at least you got something in there.

And how about ECS? Hey alliance districts, hey Bridgeport, hey New Haven, hey New Britain and Hartford, you know what? We figured out a way to reduce the money you're getting but you're still getting more than you were ten years ago so it's still a benefit to you. You shouldn't complain about it. Or perhaps a year or two from now when we finally hear the cries of all the businesses across
the state, we come back here and we say you know what? Maybe $15-dollar minimum wage is not such a good idea after all. Maybe we went up too far too fast. Maybe it should be $13 dollars. And then we'll do a press release and we'll tell everybody across the state, you know what? Quit crying, $13 dollars an hour is still better than what you were making before. I have no further comments. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bizzarro. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Senator Hwang, good evening, sir.
SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Good evening, Madam President. You know, when we first began this legislative session in January it was full of anxiousness and promise and the single biggest goal that we had was to address a budget that had a $3.7-billion-dollar hole. And I was ready. We were ready to make some constructive cuts and I was full of the enthusiasm that we have a new Governor, we've got a new Governor and a new vision, that we were going to make a positive contribution to the same old ways that we used to do business. The tax more, the spend more, the borrow more and then as we began the legislative process, our committees met, we met the new chairs, we deliberated, we reviewed over 3000 proposed bills in the various committees and we screamed through the leadership of the committee to vet these bills to ensure that the expertise and the evaluation, the due diligence was undertaken and then we had public hearings on those bills in which we brought in the public. We brought in expert testimony. We vetted and interviewed and tried to do the best we could to
understand each and every bill that we evaluated. And then we deliberated some more, screened the bills a little bit more and then had a committee meeting to jointly favorably approve them. It really is an integral part of our legislative process, but this budget blew a hole in that legislative process because this budget in talking about the process of combining the budget with the implementer included legislation that was never vetted, that never had a public hearing and then we inserted it in the dark of night in a yes or no budget vote that we're gonna have today.

It's remarkable. It's remarkable to remember as much as we talk about the budget, I'm talking about the process, the way we have implemented bills and policy in this budget is a travesty to the legislative process. It is a tremendous disrespect to the people who came and testified, the people who submitted testimony, the peoples who poured their hearts out to us to share their thoughts and ideas as it relates to each and every legislation. This budget document includes bills that did not have a public hearing and once such example is the public option insurance policy program that is in this budget. Another such example is the discussion of how we fund a debt-free college. The idea that even though as the ranking member on higher education, we talked about the idea of debt-free college. We debated it and we agreed to disagree in committee. We referred it to the necessary financial and budget-making committees and they voted out of that, but presto. It appears in this budget with an entirely different funding method that has not been voted on, that says we will give you debt-free college. But wait a second, we'll fund it with the possibility of an internet lottery game system that has not been vetted by the Public Safety Committee,
that has not been approved, but we're gonna tell the rest of the world that we've done some wonderful things. That we're gonna give you debt-free college but wait, we have to wait till there's money. Again, these are two examples out of many in this 567-page document that we got just days before and I would propose that if we had more time to read through this, we would find more gems of betraying the legislative process.

So I propose with what this budget, what this process does, why do we have a legislative process at all? Why don't we just come in in the first of week of June and just throw the bills in there and let's just vote it. Let's not put up the charade of saying we hear you, we're listening to you and your voice matters because what this document, what this document that we will vote on says is you know what? We in the State Capitol, we the decision makers, we the budget writers know better than you. And you wonder why people don’t trust government. You wonder why people when they hear we're gonna do one thing, they brace themselves for something else. When you look at this budget and you talk about a lack of funding for transportation and then you find that money is diverted out of the Special Transportation Fund, it's no sweat, it's not taking out of the lockbox. It's diverted. You know what the people on the street think? They think and believe and it has been validated that you can't trust government. It's remarkable.

We never cease to disappoint in that arena. We do it over and over and over again. No wonder people just get jaded. It's remarkable. So as we talk about this budget, many of my colleagues have talked about the numbers, about the dollars and about the accounts in particular. I would say the process is
broken and we have done this over and over and over again. It is not bipartisan. It is not bicameral. It isn’t even grass roots. Most of my colleagues that are going to be voting on this have not read the complete bill. How could you? You would need a CPA and a legal degree to be able to filter it through but one thing that's clear for people up and down the street that we represent, their interests are not represented here.

So I'm absolutely appalled at this process. Whether you agree with this budget or not, the process in which we undertook this is the prime reason that people will never trust any product we put out here. That being said, I do not support this budget for financial reasons. It seems the only people that benefit from this are special interests, built in entities, people that hire well informed, well-connected lobbyists and it seems with the lack of initial taxes on the earned income, etc, the only people we're punishing are the middle class and the working class. When I look at all the taxes that are being imposed on consumers and the working class and the middle class, this has to be in my ten-year experience in this building the most regressive tax budget I have ever had the displeasure to vote on. It's remarkable. We're gonna make people pay for their dry cleaning. We're gonna make people pay to have their prepared foods. We're even going to figure out a way to tax people on parking meters. Then you combine the fact that we will be raising the minimum wage, imposing a payroll deduction to implement as other people have said in this country one of the most generous Family Medical Leave plans. It's the small businesses and the working class that gets hit over and over and over again. We tax too much, we spend too much, we borrow too much.
I don’t agree with this budget. I'm absolutely appalled at the process and to just add icing on the cake, when you read through the earmarks or a less graceful term, the pork that's in this, it's remarkable.

It is absolutely stunning in its audacity. When you think we began January in this legislative session with a cloud of $3.7 billion dollars hanging over this state. We now through this budget created a balanced budget, we didn’t raise taxes but voila! That $3.7 billion dollars is gone. And now we have more than enough money to be able to give benefits to wonderful organizations but I was just talking to people when I was reading through this budget. The idea that as we are raising taxes, as we are borrowing, that we find $50,000 dollars to give to a little league. We find $37,000 dollars to give to a Boy Scout troop. We have found money to give to a wonderful Greek Orthodox Church right in the Bridgeport/Fairfield area. These are all great organizations. But wait a second. Isn't our state broke? When do we have the largess to be able to give these kind of benefits. You know it's sort of that uncle that comes during the holidays, that comes bearing gifts for everybody to be the most liked individual. But that uncle doesn't have a penny to his name but he's living off a credit card. He wants to make everybody happy. He wants to be the most popular person at the holiday gathering but then boy after the holidays, he's piled on with debt.

He's going back to every one of those relatives and saying can you spare a dime? Can I borrow some money? We all know those uncles or aunts. They want to be grand. They want to be generous to everybody. They just can't say no. And you know
what? That's what this budget shows me. We can't say no and we continue to kid ourselves, the kid the people and ultimately, push the burden down the road for the next legislative session, for the next generation to bear the burden because right now, we're gonna pat ourselves on the back and say boy is this a great budget. CCM doesn’t hate it. COST doesn’t hate it. Our municipalities are happy, education, which is critical. Where are we coming up with the money?

I look forward to listening more to this debate but right now, I'm disillusioned with the process, I'm disappointed with our lack of discipline and ultimately, and most important of all, the only loser in this budget are not Republicans, are not lobbyists, it's the Joe's and the Jill's that are working their days, trying to pay the mortgage, trying to pay the bills and we have now just added the cost when they go to the grocery store. We have just added cost that if they're trying to make a living as a small business, they're gonna work a little bit harder just because we in the General Assembly can't say no. I hope we find the courage in the future to do so. Thank you, ma'am.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President, good to see you up there. How's it feel? A little different. I do have a couple questions that I'd like to ask the proponent of the bill and it would be Senator Osten.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Osten, prepare yourself. Proceed, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, in section 14, lines 62 to 69, could you explain and I guess the question somewhat is, are we authorizing OPM that it may make reductions in allotment in any budgeted agency and fund of the state for each Fiscal Year in order to reduce pension and healthcare expenditures. In Fiscal Year 20 it's $163 million dollars and in Fiscal Year 21, it's $256 million dollars so could you explain that to me? So you're looking to reduce an allocation here. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you, Madam President, are you talking about the lapse that references savings for labor concessions? Through you.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Yes, I believe that's, I don't know if it's a lapse but it is the reduction in pension and healthcare expenditures. Through you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This is revolving around a lapse in pension and healthcare savings of $163.2 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20, and $256 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21 in the General Fund, savings of $18.3 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20 and $19.7 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21, referencing the Special Transportation Fund. The pension savings primarily reflect the reamortization of the Teachers Retirement System. The SERS reamortization is already allowed in current law. The budget anticipate savings reflective of improved pharmacy pricing, expansion of the smart shopper and site of service programs. CBAC 2017 gives the comptroller the ability to do so. There would be no agreement required. The remaining healthcare savings are to be achieved through reducing costs by improving utilization and negotiating rates with medical providers as long as the healthcare savings do not reduce materially or impact benefits. There is no need to reference any collective bargaining agreements either through SEBAC or anybody else and the comptroller has statutory authority and past precedence to achieve these savings as long as
there's no diminishment of these benefits. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So to my understanding then it sounds like we would need to balance the budget with the assumption of these savings. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President and it is a pleasure to see you up there today and that would be true, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So with what discussed earlier today before we began the discussion on this bill, it sounds like we still would have to open up the labor agreement in order to achieve those savings. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. That would be an inaccurate statement.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

I'm sorry, inaccurate or accurate? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Inaccurate. We do not as I said at the beginning, that SEBAC 2017 already gives the comptroller the ability to achieve savings reflective of improved pharmacy pricing, that past precedent and statutory authority is already granted to the comptroller to achieve savings as long as there's no material impact no benefits, no agreement required from the union on at least two of these. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):
So would you need then a memorandum of understanding in order to accomplish that? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President, no.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

So let me ask a question regarding that MOI. Would it be, would the MOI be required for the amortization portion of it? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President. Are you talking about the reamortization of the Teachers' Pension? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):
No, SIR's. Through you, Madam Chair. The answer is no. I'm looking for if the MOA is required for the SIR's agreement. Through you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President and from the chief negotiator of State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition, we have made clear that we are not open to a penny of further concessions beyond the $24 billion dollars in savings we are already providing through the SEBAC 2017 agreement which references some of the changes we just talked about, but they have a willingness to consider win/win changes including the pension funding proposal included the budget. We don’t consider it unreasonable for the budget to assume the parties will agree to this change. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

I'm a little confused but I think the answer may have been a yes to my question of whether or not an MOA is required in this or not. Through you, Mr. Chairman, are there any pension or healthcare accounts that you can reduce without any MOI or MOA, excuse me? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I apologize. I was distracted, Madam President. Could my good colleague repeat the question? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Are there any pension or healthcare accounts that you can reduce without the MOA?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Healthcare is, as I said, already approved through SEBAC 2017 and the pension agreement has been agreed in concept. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam Chair. So moving on to section 14b, lines 70-75, it's a similar language that the same authorization can make an allotment reduction
related to the pension and healthcare savings applicable to the universities, UConn and the Connecticut state colleges and universities, UConn Health. It doesn’t provide an amount in this section of the bill. Would you be able to tell us approximately how much of a savings that is the target amount? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President, and that section was which section? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

It's 14b, lines 70 to 75.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten, when you're ready.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

One moment, please, Madam President. Thank you very much, Madam President and through you, are you talking about the notwithstanding provisions of sections 10a-77, 10a-99, 10a-105, and 10a-143 of the general statutes? Any reductions in allotments pursuant to subsection of this section that are applicable to the Connecticut state colleges and
universities, University of Connecticut, and the University of Connecticut Health Center shall be credited to the General Fund. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Yes, those are the lines. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. This is a technical provision which makes sure that these are recorded and credited to the General Fund. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Through you, Madam President. So there is no targeted amount of savings that you're looking to achieve within this paragraph or lines of the bill? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.
SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

That would be correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you. Section 15, lines 76 to 82, speaks to the STF and the same authorization is applicable and it looks to reduce pensions and healthcare costs with a savings of $18.3 million dollars in one year and then followed by $19.7 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21. Can you say where or what fund that these savings would be deposited into? Through you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This is making sure that we're crediting back the accounts that are necessary to be credited back on the $163-dollar labor concessions. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):
So we achieve these savings and I guess I'm looking to see will that be deposited into the STF fund or will it be deposited into the General Fund? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

A portion of the savings go into the Special Transportation Fund so that they're appropriately credited for the savings. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

I'm sorry, I was, my fault here. Through you, Madam President, so are the funds going to be deposited into the Special Transportation Fund to offset expenditures there or will these funds that are saved be deposited into the General Fund? Through you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

This is making sure that the accounts that are having the savings are credited for those savings. Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

And can you be specific as to what those accounts are? Through you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I believe the section that the good gentleman is talking about is the Special Transportation Fund. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

So the funds will be deposited into the Special Transportation Fund? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. To be clear, the funds aren’t being deposited anywhere. It's an accounting mechanism to be sure that there's
appropriate accounting for those particular expenses. I want to make sure that we're not talking about -- it's not like a bank account where there are funds deposited. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

So let me phrase it another way. So the funds that are being credited here are the funds, the funds that we are saving on are being applied towards or transferred over to an expenditure or maybe a deficiency in some aspect in the Special Transportation Fund? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. There's an accounting mechanism that makes sure that the savings are appropriately recorded to the fund that they are supposed recorded, whether it's Special Transportation Fund, UConn, the Banking Fund or any of the other funds to make sure that we're not drawing down on those particular funds so it doesn't matter, Special Transportation Fund, UConn Health Center, UConn, State universities, Banking Fund, Insurance Fund, all of the other funds. We make sure that they're getting the appropriate credit for the savings. Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

So I guess what I'm looking for is if we're going to receive a savings, whether we negotiate it through an MOA or opening up an agreement and we're going to receive a savings, whether it's for pension or for health and it's relative to the Special Transportation Fund because that's sort of the operational portion of the DOD, then I would think that those credits are going to be applied towards that account and that's all I'm trying to find out here so if the answer to my question is that's correct, that those funds were saved in the STF and they will be applied in the STF, then I'm okay with it. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I don’t want to make this more complicated than what it is. Essentially, I think we're saying the exact same thing so if there is savings for 100 employees that are in the Special Transportation Fund and 100 employees in the General Fund and two employees in the Banking Fund, the savings are apportioned out on a per person basis to any of the funds that are applicable. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Okay so then if we are talking about 100 individuals and we're saving on 100 individuals, 80 of them were in the DOT and the others were somewhere else in the state agencies or one of the other state agencies, if we receive all the savings from the STF, what you're telling me is that we could apply it towards the 80 that are in the DOT or STF, and we could also allocate it to 20 other employees in other agencies; is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

So I think I'm just gonna end, uh, maybe end this, through you, Madam President, I think I'm just gonna end this, I'm hoping to end this conversation, I think we're saying the exact same thing so I'm just gonna simply say yes. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Okay. Thank you, Madam President. I was hoping to hear the answer that we had a savings, a negotiated savings in the STF from employees that are working for the DOT and we had those savings there, that those savings would be applied entirely to the STF and not shared through other agencies. Okay, moving on. Section 42, lines 371 to 372, it talks about
carrying forward $500,000 dollars from the Elderly Renters Rebate Account and transferring that funding for procurement streamlining. What is procurement streamlining? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. That's a way for us to achieve savings by making sure that we're streamlining the process of procuring different items throughout the whole state agencies. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

It just seems, let me ask, why would this outweigh a rebate for the elderly disabled renters? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

So through you, Madam President, I'm not sure which account my good colleague is talking about on the Elderly and Disabled Renters. I'm not certain there's two or three different accounts there but
this was a carryforward to use to assist the state in saving more money. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Well it would seem to me that we've allocated funding for the elderly, the disabled, that we would find ways to spend on them regardless if we had a lapse in that account and we had leftover monies, that we should be continuing those efforts in providing for them. Section 51, lines 488 to 494.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I'm sorry, Madam President. On the Elderly and Disabled Rental Program, the numbers have been decreasing. They don’t need as much dollars in there. That has nothing to do with cutting benefits. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Then I'll just make a comment and move on, but the other night we tried different amendments regarding helping those through an amendment by Senator Kelly regarding increasing from $60 dollars by $12 dollars, I can't remember what the use was for specifically, but it's something that we had taken away from them years back, and we tried to help them out. I'm just surprised that we couldn’t do that
and here's an opportunity for an account that had some extra money, that we couldn't help that population, but nonetheless. So section 51, lines 488 to 494, the OPM may make reduction in allotments in any budgetary agency of the Executive Branch in order to achieve savings of $5 million dollars in Fiscal Year 21, and then $15 million dollars in Fiscal Year 22. These savings are associated with contracting savings initiatives. What are contracting initiatives?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President, and through you, those are initiatives to, we talked about this in the Appropriations Committee many times, we asked many questions of state agencies on contracts that they put out. What we're saying to the state agencies, and this was also in the Fiscal Stability Report and the contracting standard board stating that they actually had a much higher dollar amount but we did not believe that the higher dollar amount was achievable and so we have a $5-million-dollar and a $15-million-dollar savings by directing state agencies to look at their contracts in a much more concrete fashion to save money for the state. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):
Through you, Madam President. So I would take that
to mean vendors for paper goods or vendors that they
may use for IT or would it be, would it be for
current contracts where they would need to reopen
those contracts? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. It could be
something as simple as a contract to buy paperclips
or a contract for programmatic issues or a variety
of contracts. In most cases, contracts come in on a
revolving basis, come due on a revolving basis and
so we would start with those contracts that are
coming open and if needed, go into contracts that
have a longer life span so it's just a way for us to
save money by reviewing contracts overall. Through
you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. In section 70, lines
678 to 687, it deals with the motor vehicle property
tax. What was the reason for the name change? It
refers to these grants as municipal transition
grants, that's what you're changing it to rather
than the motor vehicle property tax grants. Through
you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Is my good colleague saying that we're changing it from motor vehicle or to motor vehicle because I believe it has always been a municipal transition grant? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Yes, it refers to these grants as municipal transition grants rather than the motor vehicle property tax grants. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President, I think it's just a clarity issue. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I believe that is just a clarity issue. Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The grant portion of this or the paragraph here also includes three grants for the fire districts totaling about $520,000 dollars. Why wasn’t this included in the bonding package? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Is my good colleague referring to the West Haven fire districts? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

That is correct, Madam President. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):
Thank you very much. These are not bonded dollars so would not be included in the bonding package. They are for three fire districts in West Haven and it came to the attention of the committee that these three fire districts were not receiving the correct dollar amounts and so this just addresses that issue for the City of West Haven. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So it appears to just be a one-time fix and only occurring in one year and not both years? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President and through you, it's only fixed in one year because the problem existed in year one. It was corrected in year two. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Moving on to section 71, lines 690 to 707, it deals with the casinos, the
Municipal Games Account. How many communities are currently receiving the grants? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President. Are you referring to the Municipal Gaming Account? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Yes. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President. None.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

How many will be receiving funding or grants once the casinos are open? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President. I believe we're up to 19, but I'm not certain that number won't go up or down before, this is just referring to the East Windsor Casino. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Through you, Madam President. It is currently ten and each community the bill outlines that they will be sharing $7.5 million dollars and each community would be receiving $750,000 dollars. However, we're adding two additional towns and it's a little confusing because they, in the bill, it only, it doesn't make for an adjustment for those two extra towns of $750,000 dollars so I just want to have some clarity. Maybe it was just a typo error, I'm not sure, but are each of the communities to receive $750,000 dollars and if that's the case, then the amount times twelve should be $9 million dollars and not $7.5 million dollars. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):
Thank you very much, and I believe it's more than the ten because I think a part of this statute also talks about distressed municipalities around the state and so I don't think that it's just those towns that are mentioned there. I believe in another section of the bill that passed when we authorized the East Windsor Casino and we authorized the Municipal Gaming Account to reflect that, that it also included a section saying if a town or an urban area of a certain size would receive additional grants but as no grants are given out right now, it's not "a typo." Those two towns were added on and no town is getting money until the casino is built.

I look forward to the ribbon cutting happening at East Windsor and I'm hoping that this body will also look at assisting other towns with casinos if they're so interested to be run by the Native American tribes and as this has been a very controversial this year, I'm hoping that we can pull the State of Connecticut together and work on that in a succinct fashion and at that time, we will deal with the issue on which towns are getting which grants, and the conversation was that they would be considered host communities. Right now, in the Mashantucket/Pequot grant, a host community gets $750,000 dollars, that's where the dollar amount comes from. I don't believe that this has yet come to fruition in this particular statute. They've added two towns on it. When we need to, we'll address the issue for those towns are considered "host communities." Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.
SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I believe it's pretty clear in the document here that there are ten current towns and now we are adding two additional towns for a total of twelve and it has a line that mentions that there would be a reduction proportionately and I guess if the funding wasn't there or the revenues weren't all there when the revenue stream does begin, and I know the towns have been told they'd be receiving $750,000 dollars. I'm just curious to know if they're aware that they may not be getting $750,000 dollars because like all municipalities, they are expecting to be receiving a certain amount of money, they start budgeting for that and I wouldn't be surprised that they'd be pretty upset when they realize that gee, that $750,000 dollars was actually $650,000 dollars. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I think if you read the line it says a minimum of $7 million dollars, it does not say a maximum so as towns are added in, the towns have already been told that it's $750,000 dollars, but again, no town, none of those towns are budgeting for this money because they can't budget for it until the casino is built. Nobody should be budgeting for this until the casino is built and so I'm thinking that nobody's counting on receiving this money this Fiscal Year or next Fiscal Year because the casino is not yet built. We haven't even broken ground yet and I don't think
that anybody has anything to worry about in regard to this and I'm certain that when we get to that point, we'll adjust the statute as needed, but we don’t need to adjust it right now because we're not appropriating the dollars out of that count. Once we get to that point and we're appropriating dollars out of that account, we'll do them exactly the same way we do the Mohegan/Pequot Grant and provide an exact listing with the dollars. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I guess I would ask, and it's probably a more rhetorical question here is gee, why do we have to include those towns now in this bill if we're two years away from having any type of revenue stream. But let me just add this. In line 705, and to my question regarding the reduction proportionately to each of the communities, it says the amount of the grant payable to each municipality during any Fiscal Year shall be reduced proportionately if the total of such grants exceeds the amount available for such year. So moving on, Madam President, can we just hold, recess, not recess, hit the pause button for a second.

THE CHAIR:

We'll stand at ease. Senator Martin?

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):
Thank you, Madam President. I did have another question regarding the Department of Health and it's per capita but I'll pass on that. I really just have maybe two other comments. It's my understanding that in the refinancing of the Teachers' Retirement Fund that we will be using, in order to balance our budget so that we actually have a savings so to speak, for 10 to 13 years starting with $183 million dollars, $189 million dollars, $127 million dollars, and it goes on until about 2031. So I take it that -- I guess the question that I have is why are we not applying this to other debt or reduce our overall I guess liability rather than using these funds to balance our budget? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I'm not really clear as to what my colleague is talking about. What line items is he referencing? What sections of the budget? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

It deals with the refinancing of the teachers' retirement fund.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Are you talking about the reamortization?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Yes. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Are you talking about the reamortization on a yearly basis?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Yes. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):
So the point of reamortizing is to have a steady payment and as the treasurer stated, when he came and spoke to the Appropriations Committee, what we want to have is a steady payment to make sure that we're able to pay our unfunded liability on the teachers' pension and that this is the reason to do that, is to have that steady payment. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. From the information that I see her, by doing it the way that we are, we're adding another $15 billion dollars to the overall liability so I just don't get why we refinanced and we're not trying to address the underlying issue. We're refinancing using some savings, reducing our I guess, we're using the monies from the bond to balance our budget, we're using it for a 13-year period roughly, and then we start paying down. We're not using those funds to balance our budget. I just don't get it. I don't understand that type of math but lastly, I just want to close on this and I'm reading this from the Office of Fiscal Analysis and I'm looking at the out year balance and we're looking at future debt in 2022 of $972 million dollars. We are looking at future debt in 2023 of $1.3 billion dollars and then in 2024, an additional $1.2 billion dollars' debt. I don't see how we've made some structural changes in this budget to have this type of outlook.

This is what we are trying to fix is these type of issues that are ahead of us. I don't see that
taking place in this budget so for that reason, I will not be voting for this budget.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Excuse me, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. I'm not certain if there was a question or not. I just want to make sure that my colleague knows we're not adding $15 billion dollars. That's a fallacy and that is not an accurate statement. According to the treasurer, it's $1.9 billion dollars more. I said this earlier. It is not a $15-billion-dollar increase and when we went from 8 percent return on investment to 6.99 return on investment, present value dollars, it accurately records what we have actually been receiving so it goes up $3 billion dollars year over year, but that $3 billion dollars was there. We were just not showing it because it was an 8 percent return on investment. So it goes up $3 billion dollars, yes, but we already owed that $3 billion dollars.

This is a more accurate reflection of what we owe on the pension and year over year over the 30 years, present value dollars is $1.9 billion dollars. The point on teachers' retirement is that the cost are going up and we do not have the ability to pay the balloon payments that were coming due on teachers' retirement fund and it effectively would’ve devastated the state in regard to the funding of our
schools and other things and so what we're trying to do is to make a structural change with long-term payouts so that we know what we have to pay and we can make those payments. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm just gonna close again once. In looking at the future out years is we are showing deficits, on an average over a billion dollars a year. We have not made structural changes because this would show, had we made those structural change, these numbers would be different. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST)

Thank you very much, Madam President and good evening.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening to you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST)

Thank you. No matter where I go in the 21st district, whether it's down at the seawall in Stratford, at the Seymour Cinemas 12, the Monroe Big
Y or at Billy Dee's waiting for an egg sandwich in Shelton, the conversation usually goes something like this where people of Connecticut feel the economic pinch of the great recession. It's an economic pinch that visits every household, but lands hardest on the backs of the middle class and those that have even less. That's why it's so important that we focus our attention and our efforts to help people in the middle class.

I was looking at some paperwork this afternoon dealing with healthcare issues and I saw a statistic that's very troubling. That almost 50 percent of Connecticut has household income under 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Let me state that again. Almost 50 percent of our state's population is under 400 percent of the federal poverty level. That's households with less than $67,000-dollar median income. It's not a lot of money in a very, very expensive state. Now I'm just a middle class State Senator and I don't know how you slice and dice the numbers, but it seems like the books are cooked against the middle class. And the numbers, when you look at them, just don't seem to add up.

In Fiscal Year 19, the State of Connecticut spent $20.8 billion, that's billion with a B, dollars. We had a $3-billion-dollar deficit because in Connecticut, our State government was living beyond its means. In other words, it spent more money than it took in. This budget doesn’t do what the middle class family does. When you lose income, you cut back. You live within your means. Nope. Not when you're under this dome do you do that because unlike the middle class who can't go to their employer and say hey, look, the car payment went up so you gotta give me a raise. It doesn’t work like that in the
real world. In the real world, when you don't get a raise and your expenses go up, you make due.

I used the example the other day when we were talking about another item, you buy instead of Cheerios, you buy Oat-E-Oh's. But not at the State Capitol. That's what we do. So we're not living within our means. We can't balance the budget. We have structural deficits of $3 billion dollars and so from 19 to 20 we're gonna increase spending by 2.1 percent, and then from 20 to 21, another 3.7 percent. That's an increase, an increase of spending of $1.2 billion dollars. On the other side, how are you gonna make it work? I'll tell how you make it work here. This budget of this Governor and his majority levees $1.8 billion dollars in new taxes on the middle and lower classes of Connecticut with some of the most regressive, that's right regressive with an R, not a P, regressive taxes that you can imagine. They're gonna hit people at the lower end of the earning spectrum rather than at the higher end of the earning spectrum which is not fair when you have half of your population under 400 percent of the federal poverty level. This is not a blueprint of prosperity for the masses. It does not take Connecticut forward.

I will give credit where credit is due because there are some things that are okay. I do like the fact that we are going to maintain the new ECS formula which was the byproduct of a Republican/Democrat bipartisan budget that invests in our future and our children. That is good and it's nice to see that it remained intact because I believe that was a good initiative and it's one that must continue. I also like the fact that we're gonna continue the tax benefits on Social Security and pension income. But when we look at this it reminds me of the old Clint
Eastwood Movie, The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. That was good. Unfortunately, it doesn’t get better. When I talked about regressive taxes, you see things in here that I just don’t understand. We're gonna have sales tax on parking. Parking. Whether you have a Mercedes or you have a Chevy. You're gonna pay the same for parking with an additional tax. It's the bottom end of the income threshold. A digital download went from 1 to 6.35 percent.

What if you can't afford to go to a movie? Now you try to do a digital download, you're taking care of your kids, you want them to stay home, do a digital download, see a move at the house, now you're gonna hit that family harder. Plastic bags. I get the environmental perspective but a tax on them doesn't get rid of them. Instead, it puts an extra 10 cents and 10 cents to somebody on a median income of $67,000 dollars is a lot different than somebody who is at a median income of $219,000 dollars. But be that as it may, it's the same amount. The person below the 400 percent of the poverty level is gonna pay that dime just the guy over it. Uber and Lyft. The tax on those increased by 20 percent. Trade-ins on motor vehicles. So if I wanted to upgrade my motor vehicle, that just tripped and the sales tax on prepared meals. That one really baffles me because who's really, you know when you see what we're going after you say, who is this really aimed at getting at? It's not somebody who's going fine dining at the best restaurants in the State of Connecticut. No, this tax gets as eating establishments and then classifies those eating establishments as pizza drive-ins, hotdog cars, food trucks, ice cream, snack bars. You buy a bag of peanuts at the snack bar, you're gonna pay an extra 1 percent.
I think the cruelest tax is put on the boarding house. So if you live in a boarding house that gives not only a room but also a meal, we're gonna tax that too. Talk about getting after the working class, two parents if you're lucky that go out and work every day, spend their honest day doing their job, taking the kids to wherever they are, doing whatever they do, you're tired, you come home, you pick up something on the way home, you go to Duchess, who by the way always does it fresh, and you pick up some hotdogs and yes, you gotta pay the extra tax. This isn't get after all when you, you're on the campaign trail and all I hear about is we're gonna get the 1 percent. Let me tell you something. The 1 percent doesn't live in boarding houses. They aren't eating hotdogs every night or buying their dinner off the back of a food truck between their shift for 15 minutes 'cause that's all the get. No. But that's who we're taxing. We're taxing the working class. Like I said, regressive. Regressive, not progressive and that's not fair. This is not fair to the middle class. This is not fair to the people who are in need because of the financial circumstances that we are in, that need our help to give them a blueprint that they can believe in, a blueprint that's gonna show hope and opportunity and a future for the Connecticut family.

A couple of years ago we had the refinance of the pension fund come before us. So many people when I walked around the district asked me what were you doing? And I said this is the kind of math that they do in Hartford. They see a $5-billion-dollar cliff coming up, a $5-billion-dollar problem and they solve it with a $12-billion-dollar solution and then we wonder why we're in structural deficits, not to mention it's only going to be $12 billion dollars
if we have a rate of return at 7.9 percent which since I've been here in 2011 has never occurred and quite frankly, won't. But yet we make these false assumptions as if somehow, it's gonna work itself out. Well it works itself out by putting more debt on future generations. This refinance, an extra $3 billion dollars onto the backs of future generations. We heard a lot about that, a lot of disdain for our prioritized progress which invests almost $70 billion dollars over 30 years in transportation and can start as early as July 1 with no tolls and that was unacceptable because we would be using state bonding to do that and that was an unacceptable, unpalatable program. But here you are putting debt onto future generations. That was okay.

So stuffed in this, in this bill and we've heard a lot about the budget from other members and I'm not gonna rehash a lot of what they've brought up and gone through. I'm gonna remain focused on what I see as ranking member in the committees that I serve on and what I found interesting, I will talk about one point that I do know was raised because I think it is important that people know that the process that we have here is unlike a process I've seen in the last nine sessions that I've been here and I don’t quite understand why we have a legislative session if we're going to put bills in this budget that didn’t have the opportunity to go through the committee process, didn’t have the opportunity of a public hearing, didn’t have the opportunity for the public to see what we were going to do and to invite comment and conversation on the issues that apparently are important to the Governor and his majority. No, many of these bills and concepts didn’t have that opportunity. Some of them didn’t pass, but what it shows is if this is the way we're
gonna do business, then we don’t need the long legislative session. We only need a week in June. We can pull together the bills and concepts we want to do. Who cares about public hearings and public input? Let's not give the opportunity for the public to comment. Let's just put in a budget, make the numbers work and pass it. I don't think that's the process that our forefathers thought of when they drafted the constitutional form of government which is a Connecticut concept, born right here in Hartford where the people would run their government and the people would have an opportunity to comment and participate. This is not that. This is not that.

So stuffed in the 567-page document is a concept that one could say loosely was discussed during the committee process, but not actually discussed. Never once did we discuss a public option for municipal employees to utilize the state employee platform similar to the partnership plan that's currently offered by the comptroller. We talked at length about a public option for small group and small business. We talked about the Connecticut option but not this one. But this is one that made its way into the budget and yes, it's a public option. It offers a government program to pay healthcare claims of municipal employees in exchange for a fee paid to the comptroller's office. The current example of that is, as I said, the comptroller's partnership plan which currently in this Fiscal Year is operating in a deficit. Why is that fact important? That fact's important because this bill, which didn’t have the benefit of a public hearing, if it operates like the partnership plan is gonna put that cost on the back of Connecticut taxpayers and that's not factored into the budget. It's not there.
There's no independent actuary to make sure that the plans that the comptroller designs are actually designed not to expose the taxpayer. There's no review of a certified public accountant that's either there or independent to make sure that the books are accurate and there's no stop loss insurance so at a time when the Connecticut taxpayer and our General Fund cannot take any more risk, we're gonna do it again just like we did with the partnership plan. We're gonna open up something that's an open-ended proposition that can expose our General Fund and taxpayers to greater risk and that is the current experience that the comptroller's office has and keep in mind, the comptroller is basically a constitutional office and while the current comptroller has not only an interest, but experience in dealing with healthcare and insurance issues, there's nowhere in the Connecticut constitution that requires that the comptroller have that experience. So the next comptroller could be a carpenter and the office is ill-equipped to deal with the risk of running a health program.

Throughout the campaign and even when talking about the other public option and the Connecticut option, I hear time and time again that we should offer Connecticut the same type of healthcare that we have as state employees. This bill doesn’t do that. This bill gives them a different plan. One that is, quite frankly, not as good. Connecticut State Employee plan is one of the best plans in the country and we talked about that and we say well we're gonna offer them the same thing on the same platform. Once again, what's in the bill? Let's read it and find out and you'll see that's not what's there. It's not the same platform. As a matter of fact, in that case, the comptroller has
the ability to design different plans, actually has
the ability to engage in geographic rating much like
the insurance industry does. So for all the claims
that he doesn't like what the insurance company does
in the private market, he's willing to be able to do
in his public market. And keep in mind that because
this is a state government program to pay healthcare
claims, it's not insurance. You use the language of
premium but that's paying premium for an insurance
policy. This is not an insurance policy. It is not
going to be regulated by the Connecticut Insurance
Department and I can't understand for the life of me
why.

We are well known nationally and internationally as
one of the best if not the best regulators of
insurance and have the skill, knowledge and
capability to do that, and why we would turn our
back on that experience especially considering that
the comptroller and the Governor are from the same
party? What is the comptroller afraid of? Why
would you not want to put that policy, that program
through the crucible of the Connecticut Insurance
Department to make sure that the premium, the fees
that he's charging are gonna be adequate to pay the
bills? Nope, we're not gonna do that. We're not
gonna use that experience, but what he does have,
which is ironic, he does have the ability to try to
limit adverse selection through people participating
in this new plan by putting their risk into his plan
and he's gonna utilize the Healthcare Containment
Committee which is made up in large part of union
members, labor, but the committee needs to evaluate
medical risk. And while I will say that labor does
a good job representing employees and labor issues,
I don't know if I want them dealing with my medical
issues. They're gonna evaluate whether peoples'
medical records are too risky? Have you ever read a
medical record? These are easy to read let alone decipher. Much of the handwriting is just a blur across the page, but nonetheless, the comptroller is not an insurance company and shouldn’t be looked at as being an insurance company. And what's most problematic here is that once again, despite the fact that the public option didn’t move forward and the Connecticut option didn’t move forward for the known reasons, and we saw last week when Cigna came out and said if you have a public option, we can't stay in Connecticut. We can't stay in Connecticut. This sounds so familiar to the echoes we heard in the Malloy administration and those years and we're right back at it again.

So you failed twice, now we're gonna throw it into the budget. Here it is yet again, popping up where we're gonna put the comptroller in direct competition our private carriers over the municipal insurance market. The critical distinction is that all the competitors of the comptroller have to meet numerous, numerous, I've got them here, numerous regulations they have to comply with that the comptroller doesn’t. Things and mandates that are required, required in the individual area are not required in the comptroller's plan. Things like network adequacy. The list goes on and on, I mean there's such a list here I'm not even gonna spend the time but there's a prescription drug consumer protection, all the mandates that our legislature has voted and enacted over the past several years are not required under the comptroller's plan. They are required in the private market. So this didn’t have the benefit of going through the process where you stake a claim, you stake the ground, you say this is what you want to do, you have the public comment both pro and con on an issue to see whether
or not it has merit, and you move it forward accordingly. Didn’t happen here and no wonder.

So, Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of LCO No. 10679. I ask the Clerk to please call amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10679, Senate Schedule C.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

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

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you very much, Madam President. This amendment is fairly straight forward. As I mentioned before, we hear all the time about how we should extend the Connecticut State Employee Plan to all individuals and why if you want to include the public option and bring municipal employees into the State Employee Plan, you just don’t bring them right
into the State Employee Plan. This amendment would strike that ability of the comptroller to design a different plan other than the State Employee Plan, which as I mentioned about the mandates, the State Employee Plan does voluntarily follow those mandates and the costs and therefore, what this amendment would do is require the comptroller to offer that plan so I would urge that our circle adopt the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark on the amendment before the Chamber? Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. First, I would ask that there be a roll call vote and as this bill has already passed the House of Representatives I would ask my colleagues to not support this amendment and oppose it in its entirety. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? If not, a roll call has been requested so Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 7424, Senate
Amendment C, LCO No. 10679. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment C, LCO No. 10679. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate, Senate Amendment C, LCO No. 10679. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment C, LCO No. 10679. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? If so, the machine will be locked and, oh, Senator Duff. The machine has been closed. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7424, Senate Amendment C, LCO 10679.

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THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] Amendment fails. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us? Senator Kelly.

SENIOR KELLY (21ST):

So despite a good effort to allow us to offer the plan to I'm going to say municipal employees, the State Employee Plan to municipal employees, one thing we could do is enable this to engage in an insurance product no different than the private
market and there is a way to do that which would bring the guarantee of all the mandates and protections of things like the Affordable Care Act to the plan and it's just by making the plan subject to title 38a, make it subject to the Connecticut Insurance Department and so, Madam President, to that end, the Clerk is in possession of LCO No. 10664. I ask the Clerk to please call the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10664, 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 do proceed, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President, and I ask at the time for a roll call vote. Basically, what this does is it's a very simple amendment. What it does is just basically in section 378a, that first part, it just
takes out notwithstanding any provision of title 38a, and would make this plan subject to the insurance statutes. It would ensure that everybody in the plan would have the same protections that are offered throughout the Connecticut, the promises of the Affordable Care Act. It would also give the plan the benefit of the Connecticut regulator who as we know is one of the best in the country if not the world and I think it makes sense. It's good consumer protection and I would urge its adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark on the amendment before the Chamber? Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I urge my colleagues to vote in opposition to this bill. I appreciate my good colleague's consideration and I look forward to this legislation coming before the General Assembly next year for consideration. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Will you remark further on the legislation, on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? If not, a roll call has been requested. Mr. Clerk, please announce the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been
ordered in the Senate, House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment D, LCO No. 10664. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment D, LCO No. 10664. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment D, LCO No. 10664. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment D, LCO No. 10664. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment D, LCO No. 10664. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7424, Senate Amendment D, LCO 10664.

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THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] The Amendment fails. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Well I thought I was gonna get one of those and so I'm gonna move to some
that might be a little easier and make a lot more sense, not that the others didn’t. But I think one of the things in this part of the budget is there's a requirement, and normally we buy health insurance on a year-to-year basis. You get your renewal during the open enrollment, you buy your health insurance and you're good for the next year and most families look at that because they can plan what's gonna happen in the next year. Under this bill, under this budget, it's not one year, it's not two years. You're locked in for three years not really knowing what's gonna happen cause we do know as a fact that the comptroller's current partnership plan is operating in a deficit and so the fact remains that you could end up in a situation where you not only have a deficit and your premium goes up, but it could go up for three years with no relief or opportunity to get out. When it comes to health insurance, I don't know of any other health plan that locks you in for that long of a period. We see in employment areas, people work for five years and move on. Three years is a long time in this world and this environment and so what I'd like to see and I'm going to offer is the reduction from three years to one year so Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of LCO No. 10677. I ask the Clerk to please call the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10677, Senate Schedule E.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the amendment, seek leave to summarize and I ask for a roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

Roll call will be ordered. Please proceed to summarize, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Simply put, this amendment reduces the three-year requirement to one year. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I appreciate my colleague's thought process on this. Unfortunately, I still cannot support this. I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Will you remark further on the amendment? Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):
Thank you, Madam President. If a roll call has been ordered, could we have a roll call vote, please?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, there had been a request for that so yes, indeed, we will have a roll call vote and to that end, Mr. Clerk, if you would please call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment E, LCO No. 10677. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment E, LCO No. 10677. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate, Senate Amendment E, LCO No. 10677. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7424, Senate Amendment E, LCO 10677.

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THE CHAIR:
[Gavel] The Amendment fails. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Senator Kelly, do you have more delightfulfulness for us? [laughter]

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Yes, I do, Madam President and this one I think is really good and I saved the best for last because what this one does is I believe brings a lot of equity and fairness to a bill that is in need of it because there is a section in the bill that allows the comptroller to engage in what's known as geographic rating. In other words, he's going to be able to by county charge different premiums depending upon the cost of healthcare in those counties. Now, the county that I represent is Fairfield and in Fairfield County, we have municipalities in lower Fairfield County, there was an article in the Hartfield Current that ran January of this year, eight of the top incomes in the State of Connecticut, six are in Fairfield County. Weston median income $219,000 dollars, Darien $208,000 dollars, Westport $181,000 dollars, Wilton $180,000 dollars, New Canaan $174,000 dollars, Greenwich $138,000 dollars. The community I represent is Stratford. The median income is $72,000 dollars, less than half of most of those municipalities. The city of Bridgeport is also in Fairfield County. That median income is $44,000 dollars, five times less than Weston. The cost of healthcare in lower Fairfield County is more expensive than it is in the greater Bridgeport area but because of the comptroller's geographic rating and the decision to do it by county, folks with less than half of the median income are gonna be charged more than the rest of the State of Connecticut because
municipalities in the Fairfield County cost more to deliver healthcare services. That's unfair to communities like Stratford and Bridgeport. It's unfair when you look at how this is designed on a countywide basis rather than a municipal basis. For that reason, Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of LCO No. 10670. I ask the Clerk to please call the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10670, Senate Schedule F.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the amendment, seek leave to summarize and I ask for a roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call will be ordered. Please do proceed to summarize, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. What this basically does is change one word. It changes municipality or it changes state or not, okay. It changes county to municipality so that the geographic rating is done
by municipality so that those employees in Stratford pay the Stratford rate versus individuals in lower Fairfield County would pay the lower Fairfield County rate. I think this is an issue of fairness and equity and I would urge my colleagues to support it.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark? Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Again, thank you very much, Madam President. I appreciate my colleague's attempt at coming up with free healthcare for all but I need to urge my colleagues to vote against the amendment and also like his idea of a roll call vote. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the amendment? Will you remark further? Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, through you, to Senator Kelly, is this the result of the comptroller's testimony and/or report regarding the fact that when they were doing some insurance municipal that there were claims in the Greenwich/Fairfield area, mostly Greenwich as I understand it, were causing rates to go up because that area had a higher impact upon the insurance
rates. I'm wondering if that's the genesis of this idea? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President and to the good Senator Fasano. Yes, that's exactly what this is aimed at addressing is that the comptroller is trying to get this rating authority to behave much like the insurance industry. It's why the partnership is running in deficit and so now he's looking at a geographic rating of the entire county and in so doing, he has captured municipalities like Stratford and Bridgeport and seeking to increase their premium because the cost of healthcare in Greenwich, Wilton, Darien is more expensive. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And through you to Senator Kelly so because his finding was that a particular part of Connecticut, one particular town per se had a higher rate of causing the insurance rates to go up, that town would now be incorporated with the whole Fairfield area which would include Stratford and Bridgeport causing those insurance rates to go up to help ameliorate or spread that cost among many people. Is that accurate? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Yes, hit the nail on the head.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, so as a result of that, other people would be sharing, outside of Greenwich, would be sharing the burden that Greenwich puts on the system, other people in these other towns like Bridgeport and Stratford and other towns would be sharing that cost and paying at a higher rate. Is that accurate? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President, to Senator Fasano, yes, that's exactly what is going on and my concern to offer this in fairness and equity. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Fasano.
SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate Senator Kelly's answers to my questions so I'm going to support this amendment because what it is doing is saying it is not fair to take the burden of one town and spread it across. In particular, this would be anybody who has constituents in the Fairfield area other than Greenwich would have to have this spread among all of them. That just seems unfair. We want to bring the rates down, not up, not up. So you don’t want to take folks or a pool of folks and raise their rates up and unfairly tax by virtue of having increased rates those other people. So, Madam President, I think this is a good amendment. It goes to the very heart of what this Chamber does in a bipartisan manner year after year after year which is to try to figure out a way to drive rates down. If this doesn’t pass, you can be assured by virtue of the comptroller's own admission, rates will go up so I support the amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I just want to echo what Senator Fasano was driving at which is basically in essence the bill in the budget as drafted would treat Stratford and its participation or membership in Fairfield County as a preexisting condition. Stratford, just because it happens to be in Fairfield County is going to pay higher rates for
that membership and that is just not fair and so I would urge adoption of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment F, LCO No. 10670. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424, Senate Amendment F, LCO No. 10670. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate, Senate Amendment F, LCO No. 10670. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? If so, the machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

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THE CHAIR:

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Just in conclusion, the one thing is that this budget has done a lot of things, but it hasn’t done certain things. It didn’t find the necessary money to fund the healthcare issue that we have with regard to premium in accordance with the Wakely Report. It didn’t fund a $12-dollar increase to America's Greatest Generation so they can have a modicum of dignity as they age in nursing homes. They were told to wait yet again. It doesn’t include a buy Connecticut initiative to create good-paying jobs. We know that Washington has issued a contract to Sikorsky of $1.1 billion dollars. That initiative would have focused on supply line manufacturing jobs and given RND and tax credits to companies that our defense industry would contract with. Those are high tech good-paying jobs and the types of jobs we need to create, far better than minimum wage jobs. That also was not in the budget. There's no private public partnership to deliver human services, to make sure that we not only preserve the social safety net, but also improve it. In a day and age when we don’t have the money, this was a way through, an opportunity to do more with less, but we chose not to go down that path either. What we have done as I have said before is not given a blueprint for prosperity and hope. Connecticut can do better. Connecticut must do better. Too many middle class families still feel the financial pain of the Great Recession and this budget doesn’t do anything to remove that pain, but actually inflicts more. I wish it went further to do that; it doesn’t. The
people of Connecticut deserve better and for those reasons, I will not be supporting this budget.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark further? Good evening, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Great to see you. Well, we're getting to the end of the discussion and debate regarding this budget and I've been here, I've been so honored to be here for the last going on 27 years so I've heard a lot of these budget debates over the years. First of all, there are obviously some very good things in this particular budget. In reviewing the municipal aid to my district, I wanted to note that Enfield, the largest town in my district is getting a rather large increase in aid and I understand that the budget says bonding will be a whole capital different discussion so I want to thank the drafters of this. I'm not sure exactly what the formula is but some of my towns are winners. Enfield is one of the bigger winners. Some of my smaller towns unfortunately do not fair in a more positive fashion, but while they're not gonna be happy they got reduced municipal aid, it's not draconian. So that extent there is some silver lining to the cloud. But it would be remiss of me if I didn't state that over the years I've heard so many eloquent Senators state that a budget is aspiration, that it paints a vision for the future. By necessity, it is based upon best estimates as to where we are and where we want to go financially, but usually there's an overarching theme to a budget and this year, I see no such theme. I did not find this budget aspirational at
all and for the folks in my district, I think it's going to be death by a thousand small cuts.

Let me pull out some of the more pedestrian examples. I go out and do my own food shopping all the time. Sometimes it's a lot of items, sometimes it's that twelve items or less but when I go and I check out, more often than not I have someone at the register, but typically there's not two people. I mean if you're really lucky you have someone there that will be cashing you out and someone bagging your groceries, but typically the person that checks you out will then finalize what you're purchasing and then turn around, tell you what the total is and then you either get your cash ready or your debit card or credit card or however you're gonna pay. Once that's done, then that person proceeds to bag your groceries. So in this budget we have this 10-cent tax on plastic bags. I understand that the environmentalists hate plastic bags. To be honest I'm not so sure they're our worst energy. In this day and age where Jeff Bezos and Amazon and UPS and FEDEX and the United States mail is delivering packages and packages and packages and packages, I'm thinking that that cardboard that comes to everybody's house all the time, that's the huge buildup. Not these plastic bags where if you grind them up in your hand there's nothing. I would think we could be more creative as to how to approach this than to charge what I consider to be a hefty fee, 10 cents per plastic bag. But as a practical matter, when this passes, how is this gonna roll out? Am I going to have to let the person who's doing the transaction bag the groceries so that we know how many bags I need before we can finalize the financial transaction? Because that's backwards from the way it works now. And I can just see my constituents having to go through this now
cumbersome process and God forbid something needs to be double-bagged so there's gonna be that discussion, is it gonna be a 10-cent charge or a 20-cent charge? Because it's all gonna have to be factored in at that point of service and they're gonna call me up and say who came up with this idea? Ten cents. Because it'll add up. I mean it's not anything to have 16 items and have four bags and if you think everybody's gonna swap over to paper, I think that's not gonna take place. And studies have shown that those canvas or however else, those reusable bags, after any number of times, they're like a health hazard, they're like a breeding ground for germs. So people may think that's the way to go. I think this is all gonna have to be rethought.

The other thing that really bothers me, a couple of things, and I have a limited amount of time before I know folks want to wrap it up tonight, at least on the budget, this 1 percent tax on restaurants, I don't get it. It's like musical chairs. I guess the music ran out and they just didn't grab a chair. But it's not just the restauranteurs. You know, a lot of these small chains such as Subway and others, they're margins are very low and if at the same time we're raising the minimum wage and we're adding this extra burden on them, what does that do? You know it's hard enough in every area of retail in the United States right now between robotics and using the internet, all these other services, to undermine these other businesses, it would be terrible. Go out there. Go to your malls, strip malls, go to your retail centers. They are struggling as we speak and none of this in this budget is going to help them. I really feel that not only were restaurants disproportionately impacted, and we're not talking as other speakers have stated high-end restaurants, but you know the ones that sell pizzas
and grinders and things like that, family owned and operated. And again, if they're LLC as Senator Bizzarro pointed out, there's a 5 percent hit on their income tax pass-through. We're just clobbering these people from left, right and center. Budgets are supposed to be aspirational. They're supposed to be high minded. They're supposed to, whether I like your goals or not, at least I would walk out of this building and I would say this is the horizon the majority party wants to lead us to. I don’t get any of that. I get that this is just cobbled together, patchwork quilt as much as could be done in the last final waning days and I don’t want to be accusatory in any way, shape or manner because in my heart of hearts, the reason I've been doing this as a public servant, and I love this job as much today as I did when I was very elected, is that I like to be a happy warrior. Republican yes, but I like that kind of Hubert Humphrey approach. I don’t want to be jaded, but you know I keep hearing in this building that these earmarks and these odd ball amounts of money tucked away for certain entities and groups, laudable as they may be, that they all may be a predicate for a future endeavor to create tolls in the State of Connecticut. I don’t want to view this budget in that Machiavellian kind of prism. I hope this building has evolved into that. You know what would you like, what can we do to make these other initiatives flow more smoothly. That's not the Connecticut that my constituents dream of. So I could go on and on but so much has already been stated about the intricacies of the budget but I felt compelled because typically, and for those of you who has served with me over the years, typically I never speak on budgetary matters. I leave it to the Appropriations and Finance people and other interested senators that really feel passionately but I feel passionately this evening.
I do feel like the middle class is getting hurt. I do feel like young people are losing their options. I do feel like small businesses especially those in the food service area are being undermined for nothing that they did untoward. I think we're making it incredibly difficult to survive in this state and I think that's a shame. I look around this circle and I'm so proud of the people I serve with, but I just really feel in my heart of hearts we could do so much better. It is hard to survive out there. People are living hand to mouth and now we want to saddle them with, you know, it reminds me of that Beatle's song, the Taxman. Go, find it, listen to it. Anything that's not nailed down they wanted to tax and that's what I look at this budget and I see. It's just a hodgepodge of if we haven't taxed it, we're gonna tax it and 1 percent here and 0.5 percent there. It all adds up and peoples' incomes are not going up at that same rate so you're making them make more and more difficult decisions. I would urge you folks that I serve with, I know the folks that put this budget together worked really, really hard, but I think on occasion we should maybe take a step back and think about those people in the ever-diminishing middle class. It is not unusual to pick up the people or hear on the news, television, radio that the income gap between those that are well off and those that aren’t is growing. But it doesn’t grow at the expense of no one. What it means is that those folks in the middle are evaporating, are being pushed out, are being driven out, are vanishing and I would posit that that is the glue that holds our society together and if we end up as a society with just very, very rich and very, very poor, we're going to regret the decisions that we made today. So for that reason and so many others, I will not be voting for this budget, Madam President. Thank you.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel. Will you remark further? Good evening, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to urge support of the bill before us. Madam President, this bill is the result of many, many months of work, many, many months of listening, many, many months of working together in collaboration with a lot of parties in order to bring forth this document to the circle. Now we all know anytime there's any type of a budget, there's always things in there that people will like, things that people will not like, but I must say that in this budget here today, there are many things to like than there are not to and the reason I say that is we do have and we have had to make some very difficult decisions over the past 8, 9, 10 years. We had to make sure that we were finally catching up on our pensions and finally actuarially paying into those pensions after decades of neglect which has squeezed many of the things we would have liked to have done over the years in education, in municipal aid, in other types of initiatives that would be important to the State of Connecticut, but we had to make some of those difficult decisions.

But this year, Madam President, I believe that through the hard work of Senator Osten and Senator Fonfara, we have struck a balance in order to continue to make key investments in areas but also do it in ways that are very responsible and very prudent for the benefit of the residents and the taxpayers of the State of Connecticut. One example,
the glaring example of that is the fact that we have over 2.6 or will have over $2.6 billion dollars in our rainy day fund. It wasn’t that long ago, Madam President, that we had nothing in our rainy day fund. It was almost depleted or just simply about $200 million dollars or so and now we're on the cusp of having over $2.6 billion dollars in that fund.

Madam President, I believe that it's important that we look at some of the things that we have done in this budget and why it is important for us to vote yes when the vote does come. Some of the things that we did over the last two years in our bipartisan budget and I was very proud to be part of that process of helping to craft a bipartisan budget, and there were many ideas in that budget that were both Democratic and Republican ideas that were smart and good and that showed that you know we could work together very well, but we have managed to maintain a lot of those promises that we made in the bipartisan budget such as keeping the tax breaks on Social Security and pensions, making sure that we continue on that and those promises that have been made. We keep intact our bipartisan education funding formula that we worked so hard on the last two years and continue to maintain funding for that formula which is extremely important so there are a number of things that I believe that reflect the work that we have done over the last three years that are still reflected in this budget as well which is why we're able to then have that rainy day fund with over $2.6 billion dollars. We've managed to keep the volatility cap and worked with that. We have kept our expenditure cap. We're actually under our constitutional spending cap and under our bonding cap, under our expenditure cap, under our volatility cap so we have, we have done that and in addition, increased the funding for education. We
are increasing funding for UConn by $9.7 million dollars in 2020 and $20.6 million dollars in 2021 and isn’t that a welcome relief? After years and years and years of actually cutting back to the University of Connecticut, our flagship university, we're actually in a position now to increase their funding, help them along, help to make sure that tuition does not increase for our students there and help to maintain and support our flagship university.

In addition to that, as we spoke earlier at a press conference, we have debt-free college in this budget which is going to help people avail themselves to our committee college system. Here in the State of Connecticut we know that there are jobs of the 21st century and people need to have that education so that they can go after those jobs. They can improve themselves and their standard of living. You can't do that with a high school education but the cost of community college or the cost of higher education is keeping people away from being able to obtain their dreams that they want to have for themselves and for their family so we have the debt-free college as well.

So, Madam President, I don’t want to belabor the point on this but I do believe that again, this strikes the right balance to many of the things we want to do here in the state. We have cut billions and billions of dollars in our discretionary spending over the years. We have cut our employee workforce over the years. We have actually paid into our pensions over the years. We continue to do those things but also still striking the balance with many investments that we have.
I just want to take a quick moment to thank again as Senator Fonfara and Senator Osten did by thanking some folks as well. Again, first and foremost thanking the two leaders, the Senate leaders of the respective committees. I certainly want to thank Senator Looney for his work on this because his strategy and the way he navigates the minefields on putting together a budget that will ultimately pass the Senate and the House and receive the Governor's signature speaks to his years of experience and his strategy and the way he knows how to get the best product out of the legislative process and certainly understands that. I'd like to thank our members in the House for their work, Representatives Walker and Rojas and the staff who has worked so hard on this including Dave Steuber and Manny Marisoas, Katie Hubbard, Susan Keene from the Appropriations Committee, Tom from the Finance Committee as well, OFLOR and LCO. This is a lot of work and when budgets come together, a lot of folks from behind the scenes have to come together and work quickly so and lastly of course just want to thank the leadership of the House, Speaker Aresimowicz and Majority Leader Ritter. So thank you, Madam President. I would urge my colleagues to support his budget and move our state forward over the next two years. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Duff. Will you remark further? Senator Fasano, good evening.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I do want to address the budget that is now before us. Madam President, I believe at some point earlier this evening it was said that this budget is a
bipartisan budget and it was said about 16 to 18 times; this is a bipartisan budget. This is not a bipartisan budget. Just because people sit in a room and gather and listen to the discussions does not make it a bipartisan budget. This administration never once asked the Republicans to come to a room; not once. Now we had individual conversations but there never was let's get all the leaders together to see what common ground we have and what common ground we don't have. I've been here a fairly decent amount of time, been assistant leader and leader a fairly decent amount of time and this is the first time I've ever seen that happen. Now there's been times where we've been in a room for about 20 seconds, where we found there was no common ground, but at least we got into the room to realize we couldn't get there from here. But there never was an occasion where all the leaders didn't sit in a room and talk. We were never asked. We never knew negotiations were going on. We never knew who was having the conversations with who. Leadership on the opposite side of the aisle never said hey, can we sit down and talk, can we have a conversation? I don't think there's any topic in this building ever, certainly not since I've been leader, that I have not said let's have a conversation about it and low and behold there are many bills we passed this session and tons before where we thought we had no common ground, we got the room, had a conversation and we found common ground. Why not this year? And I think the answer is embedded in the rhetorical question of why didn't the Republicans do a budget? I often hear in this building as an excuse for passing, putting forth a budget that one could question to be the right direction for the State of Connecticut, is that well you know, you Republicans didn't offer any ideas. Well we've got to get at least intellectually honest
with each other of this session. This session started off with the gates bursting open with the majority party saying here are five things we're gonna get done. This is our five top list. This was in early December. These are things we're going to do, get out of our way. Get out of our way. Here they are, we're taking over, here are the five things we're gonna do, thank you for the bipartisanship of two years ago, we don’t need it anymore, we're going forward. You could feel it. I often say that the LOB is a living breathing animal and when you walk through it, you don’t have to talk to a person, but you can feel what's going on in that building just by walking around the building and if you’ve been here long enough, you know what it says. If you're new, it sounds like a lot of crazy people running around but if you’ve been here long enough, you know what it says. You understand the pulse. What bills are gonna make it, what bills aren’t, whose pushing what and what's the real reason why it's going forward. You just feel it. You can feel it in this Chamber too by the way but at the time it was the LOB and it was we are going forward with this agenda, with these five things, the top five, get out of our way. We knew that there was no way that we could put together a budget that this other side of the aisle would even have a conversation about if it didn’t include Paid Family Leave in the manner in which the other side of the aisle wanted to do paid family leave. We put up an alternative. We put up an alternative. Not that we're against it but there wasn’t even a conversation. In fact, I will say I reached out to many leaders in this building and in the Executive Branch saying before you go public, can we have a conversation about paid family leave? Can we sit down and talk about where we are on paid family leave? Cause maybe we can find some common ground.
Yeah, I'll get back to you. I didn’t do it just once. I didn’t do it just twice. I didn’t do it just three times. If I didn’t do it four or five times, I'd be lying. I did it every opportunity I had as leader for my caucus to say let's have a conversation, but clearly that isn’t what they wanted. I did it to different leaders, I did it to different Chambers, and I did it to the Executive Branch. Minimum wage. Let's have a conversation. Maybe we get there, maybe we don’t, but we have some ideas on minimum wage. You know we talked very open in fact even two weeks after the election. Not one conversation about minimum wage so we knew it was minimum wage, paid family leave, marijuana, the assault bill which there was some conversation and I thank everyone for that, but overall, it was here are the things we're going to do, first day of session the gates break open, off to the races, and if you stood in the way, you got trampled and if you questioned, you got accused. And if you said what if, you were stalling. I remember the first big debate in this Chamber. The tweets that went out that day claiming a filibuster because some folks dared to ask questions about a particular bill that was being discussed. That was the attitude. Thankfully, that attitude has changed. That has changed and I'll chalk it up to exuberance and I said it then and I'll say it now, that isn’t what this Chamber is about.

There was plenty of opportunity to have a conversation but to argue and that's okay by the way. Clearly, the numbers are the numbers and if you want to run a partisan budget you're more than happy to run a partisan budget. That is your right, that is your privilege, that's what happens with elections. Just don’t cloak it in bipartisanship when it is not. We hear about some ideas that are
in this budget that were in the bipartisan budget, education costs, same formula that was derived in a bipartisan conversation, no tax on Social Security, decreasing tax on pensions. Those are caps. Those are all things I just heard talked about tonight that were part of the bipartisan budget and those are good things to keep and I'm glad you kept them, but you then can't circle the whole budget with policies, ideas, and revenue increases that go in an opposite direction of the core of what our bipartisan budget was about.

Madam President, two years ago we passed a bipartisan budget that did do the caps. We had the spending cap, the bonding cap, the volatility cap to name a few and at the end of the Fiscal Year, this Fiscal Year, we have seen the fruits of this labor. I think someone said we have the most we ever had in our rainy day fund which is over $2 billion dollars, historically the most, probably the most we ever put in and that was because of the volatility cap and because of the bonding you can't touch. Senator Fonfara was the one who brought that to the group and we all talked about it and I think he offered it, that it should go into bonding as a condition. We put it in the bonding with the other caps for one reason and one reason only. If you put it into the bonding, we can't touch it. Had we not put it in the bonding, I am sure as I stand here right now there would be arguments that we got $2.4 billion dollars in the rainy day fund, we can't raise fees or taxes, we gotta grow government, we gotta take that money and use it but because it's in the covenants and you can't get around it, you can't touch it. However, we can touch the surplus. The surplus doesn't make its way to the rainy day fund until after the close of the Fiscal Year when it automatically goes so you have to do a budget that
you have before you, which will get to my points later on, you have to do this budget and you gotta do it before session ends because if you don't do it by the end of the month of June, you can't use that money so we have a surplus of $500 and some odd million dollars and by the time you do the hospital deal, by the time you do the teacher deal, by the time you use it for some of the shortfalls, by the time you use it for this, that and the other thing that they have in the budget, there is virtually nothing left of that surplus; nothing. We have nothing to show for that surplus and I guarantee you if that rainy day fund had the same opportunity to take, it'd be tough to wipe out $2.4 billion dollars, but if that same opportunity to take, it would not be at that level. So when you talk about the bipartisan budget what we did, I am proud of that budget because it, we have, the reason why the deficit isn't as great by the way I might add from when we started off ending from last year, is because the revenue has increased in the State of Connecticut I would argue because we set parameters never set before in this building. We told the public we are gonna control our spending, we're gonna control our borrowing, trust us and if the stock market goes crazy, we're gonna take a portion and we're gonna put it in our piggybank because we are going to be conservatively controlling our expenses so we can move us forward and I would argue, I would argue that the people responded by saying right track, good direction. That's what I would argue.

Let's just go back to GE. I still have a letter on my computer of why GE left that they sent to their employees, I still have it on my computer. And what was said was the inability of the State of Connecticut to control their debt means that they cannot sustain their structure in the State of
Connecticut and build and therefore, with a tax increase of 2011 coupled with the growing debt, we're taking off. Everyone can say oh they went to Boston for this, that and the other thing. I sat with the CFO and I have that letter on my computer that was sent to their employees.

What we did in this budget which I'll get to in a little bit is play exactly to the reason why GE left, exactly the reason why GE left. So with the budget two years ago, we had no new taxes. People are gonna say the hospital tax. If you remember two years ago, we did do the hospital tax but that was something the hospitals had settled on with Governor Malloy and we stuck it in the budget because it was a deal that was struck and we codified that deal. Everybody was happy. You take that out, there were no real new taxes. There were some fees, okay, I'll give you that. There were no real new taxes. So we had caps, no real new taxes, but probably one of the most key elements that I've heard since day one in this building is transportation. We took a new car sales tax that went to the General Fund and we said let's make a commitment to the Transportation Fund. Every year, let's put a little bit more and a little bit more and a little bit more until we transfer all the new car sales tax to the Transportation Fund. What did that do? That made the Transportation Fund solvent. What else did that do? We have to show the federal government in October and November that for the next five years our Transportation Fund is solvent and if we can do that, we get our federal funding so we guarantee the future for our state.

Then we had prioritized progress that in our bipartisan budget we took $250 million dollars and we stuck it in transportation. So we had funding immediately, so much money that DOT was so surprised
they could barely use it all because they were ramping up to get there and when Governor Lamont went to go take it away in his budget, they said you're gonna crucify us. So what happened in this budget? Eight hundred and fifty million dollars. That's at least $150 thousand, $150 million dollars short of what DOT says they need just to keep pace and not do new projects. Just Town Road Aid and repairs. Now think about that for a second. We talked about the lockbox that also was just voted on and we said we gotta put this lockbox in place and we're gonna put the money in the lockbox. That's what we told the people and they voted for it. In that same budget, we said we're gonna put this new car sales tax in. This budget diverts that new car sales tax money and says don't put it in the STF. It reminds me -- and then we talked about tolls, trust me on tolls, it reminds me of that old advertisement when the NFL coach comes out playoffs, playoffs, you talking playoffs? After this you're saying tolls? You're talking tolls? How can you be trusted on tolls when you make a promise that you're not gonna divert the funds in the very same year that you made the promise you're not gonna divert the funds, you divert the funds? To the detriment of the Special Transportation Fund. And oh by the way, when you're diverting those funds and you're taking out more because originally it was 750, you're taking out 850, you have now taken that STF, the Special Transportation Fund and you've put it in a very vulnerable position in 2024-2025 to the point that it will be a crisis, a self-imposed crisis but it will be a crisis.

The other thing that our bipartisan budget did was use real numbers and it balanced. It balanced. This budget before us that we'll get to has gimmicks. This budget's out of balance, this budget
wipes out the surplus, this budget creates taxes, this budget creates laps that don't exist and probably at least in my view, the most egregious part of this budget is there's 63 new laws put into this budget. When I say new laws, when you see in our budget, your budget, section so and so new. I'm not even totally telling you that when the section is in and they wipe out a whole section of it and put in new language, I'm talking about where it says new sections. Sixty-three. Sixty-three. And we're gonna talk about it. Some of these not only didn't have a public hearing, they weren't even bills in the legislature. They were not even bills in the legislature. They were not even ideas that Chairman of Committees even knew existed let alone the public because they didn’t exist and we threw them in a budget. Why? Because you could. And just because you could doesn’t mean you should. That's what drives me nuts. I've seen implementers before and I've been here ranting about implementers before, about bills that died, sure they’ve been in there, but to do ones that never had a public hearing, do ones that never even showed up as a proposed bill? Somebody said you're gonna mention the one party rule and I guess that would be the time I mention the existence of a one party rule. Madam President, when we talk about different pieces of legislation, we have in here 20 pages establishing the Municipal Redevelopment Authority, a quasi-public agency, brand new, $500,000 dollars in 2020 and $500,000 dollars in 2021. I don't think anybody in this room has any misunderstanding where I believe quasi's are, that they're not very good. But that bill came out of the House, sits on our calendar, and went immediately into this budget. There's a whole section on nail technicians and eyelash technicians which I agree probably need some oversight, but the first bill that was written was very egregious and
they scaled it down for a vote because they realized how overreaching it was and when they put it in this budget, they pumped it back up to the original form that people agreed was way over the line and way too much and stuck it in this bill. And you're gonna here, I know you're gonna hear when constituents come up to those people who voted for this bill, are gonna say okay, but it was a budget bill, there's a whole bunch of stuff in there. I didn’t like that section, but the other sections I liked so I had to vote for it and I would say no, you didn’t. You could've said no. Madam President, one of the changes that strike me as being very significant is this; several years ago, this body passed the Public Retirement Plan. Now the Public Retirement Plan was a tied vote here in the Senate and Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman cast the deciding vote and what the Public Retirement Plan said was this; it was a party-line vote, that we're gonna take out of everybody's salary a little bit of money and we're gonna have you put that into a retirement plan because we know better than you that you're not getting ready for retirement so we know how to do this. So we're gonna take that out. So when there was a lot of rigmarole, it was well the way we're gonna do this is we're gonna create this agency and this agency's gonna give you different types of plans so if you're my age, which is still young, but you wanted a quick growing pension plan that maybe had some risk, you would maybe go into more risky investments because you had a higher rate of return, but if you're younger like Senator Haskell, perhaps you want a slow growth, no risk, because you're young and you're gonna be working for a while, or maybe you're middle age and you're saying I want a little bit of this and I want a little bit of that but you, who we took the money out, would have an absolute right to pick which retirement plan you
would like to be in. In this budget, you have voted in this budget to say no, no. We're taking the money out of your wallet, out of your paycheck, we're gonna invest it the way we want to, in the manner we prescribed and you have to deal with it. You have no say, no pick, no option, no discretion. We will tell you one plan fits all and you have no rights. That isn’t how that bill was passed, even those who voted for it in this Chamber. That isn’t how that bill was passed. That wasn’t the idea and there was no bill brought forth to any committee to address this and clearly therefore, no public hearing.

You have the power to do it, doesn’t mean you should. Madam President, I'm not gonna go through the healthcare bill because I think Senator Kelly did a great job on that issue. Madam President, the amount of taxes and fees in this budget sends the wrong message. You know it took us, for those of us who were in the room two years ago, we started negotiating the budget maybe in April and we didn’t finish doing that budget until the end of October if not November, my recollection is and we had really good conversations, really good conversations. We had to protect social services. We wanted to make sure we sent the right message to the people. It was a divisive time in our country. We wanted to have a bipartisan get together so we could march out and say whatever's happening in Washington, it's not happening in Connecticut and here's the direction to move us forward. That did not happen this time. When you put a 1 percent tax on meals and beverages, I would argue you sent the wrong message and it isn’t just one thing don’t forget. You have the minimum wage going up and you’ve got the tax on beverages and restaurants. Thank God that shift scheduling didn’t go through but if you add those
together, you are going to be increasing the cost to people at every facility who go out to eat. If you get a soda at a restaurant, just a soda, you're gonna be charged more. Digital downloads. That's just a money grab. It's just a money grab. We think plastic bags as Senator Kissel was talking about are so awful that rather than ban them, we gotta tax them. They're really bad, but if we're getting some money, they're not quite as bad as we may think they are. You know they're, they're sort of bad but a way to get some revenue? I can live with them for a couple of years. We could ban them in a year, but that doesn't balance the budget so we'll just charge you for it because it's easier than doing that. Ride-sharing, Lyft and Uber, I don't know what else is out there. We did 25 cents a ride. We broke that bubble. We had great discussion whether we should do this and we said, all right let's do it, but just like this legislature does and it would do with tolls is we'll raise it 5 cents. I guarantee if there were tolls on the road, we would see a couple pennies to 5 cents increase per mile on tolls and people would say well I don't like but it was in the budget. I had to vote for the budget. I didn’t like that piece though. So we go up 5 cents on the ride-sharing. Same thing with vehicle trade-in. We said all right let's put $300 dollars for vehicle trade-in in the bipartisan budget. Let's throw it in there. Once you break that bubble, awe $300 is $500 dollars. What's another couple hundred bucks. It's in there. They're gonna gripe about it anyway so make it go up $200 bucks. Half the people won't even know until it happens.

Then we're gonna go up on dry cleaning and we're gonna go up on design services. Then we're gonna make sure if people leave this state, leave their
wallets. Then we're gonna go up on cigarettes. Then we're gonna go up on alcohol. And then, we're gonna create a $5-dollar charge on another bill that never saw the light of day in this building or the LOB which is this whole thing about charging $5 dollars for an electric car program with a rebate and we're gonna charge an extra $5 dollars because we're gonna use that for rebate and that's a good thing until we get broke. Then we'll probably swipe that money but the point is, none of that ever made its way into any public hearing. There was never a public hearing on it and I guarantee two years from now when that money is in there, we'll say well, you know, the federal government did their rebate program, we don't need as much. We'll just take a couple bucks out of it and reduce the rebate so we don't have to raise taxes. We'll just take it out of that fund like we did the Banking Fund in this documents. But there never was a public hearing. Not one person had the opportunity to come up and argue whether that's good or bad. Nobody from the industry, nobody from the car industry, nobody from electric cars, nobody who said I got another idea. No, we just throw it in the budget and because you could doesn't mean you should.

Then, after all the tricks are done, after every pocket is turned inside out, after every little ounce of juice we could squeeze, there's a realization that we've run out of places to grab money. We just can't find it but we are assured $15 million dollars in year two. We can't find it the budget says, we don't know where it's gonna come from so let's come up with an idea. I got it. Let's tell the OPM secretary to scour every agency, every place we can get a fee and come back and report to us that she found $50 million dollars. There's not even enough there for this body who put
this budget together to find it. We gotta tell somebody to go look in every nook and cranny, under every rock to find out how we can squeeze out $50 million dollars because we are out of ideas to raise evaluation. Really? Really? That's where we are now that we're gonna put in a budget? Eh, you know what, we gotta get this puppy outa here. Go find the $50 million dollars, let us know when you find it, and then we'll enact it.

Madam President, I was saying as we pass, as this budget's gonna pass because I can count votes, we'll hear a sucking sound of $550 million dollars coming out of this surplus and as we talk about the budget we have to talk about an issue that I said for the last three months was going to be pretty much an I told you so moment and what I mean by that, Madam President, are the social services. I said to this body every time we approved a union contract to the tune of $100 million dollars, well $90 million dollars, that if we don't raise SAGA and TANF and the disabled and we don't give them money so that the aid to the blind has $9000 dollars less money, and the aid to the disabled is $1.47 million and TANF, the poorest of the poor, $4.2 million dollars, SAGA $1 million dollars for a total of $7 million dollars. If this budget did not rectify those social services, there has to be an answer from those who vote for this budget. You've put in a $100 million dollars of increased cost including pension fringe and yet you froze, froze and it says the word froze, well freeze, all those increases across the social services, but you got $100 million dollars for new contracts. Every time those contracts came up, all I heard in this circle was we got the money, we got the money. The money never went to the people who need it most. The money never went to the neediest of the needy or
the core function of government which is to help those who cannot help themselves. They didn’t get a dime. They got frozen. We talked about oh, we've got to get these lawyers, not that being a lawyer is a bad thing, but we gotta these lawyers a 3.5 percent increase, these tax lawyers every year but we can't give TANF a cost of living increase of less than 2 percent. We gotta give people making $100,000 dollars plus 3.5 percent plus their health benefits, but we can't give SAGA a couple extra dollars. We can't find $1 million dollars out of a $21-billion-dollar budget for folks who are living under care who ask for $10 dollars more to keep in their pocket. We couldn't find $1.2 million dollars out of $21 million dollars and by the way, when that was brought up, somebody opposed it and said not now. Well it wasn’t now back then and it wasn’t now being in this budget because that is not here so to argue not now meant really not ever.

How do you do that? How do you pass a budget that says we're gonna take care of $100 million dollars of new contract liability but we are not going to give one more cent to social services? From the very first contract that came in front of this body I said, if you're gonna do this, at least have the common decency and courage to hold to that conviction that people need more money because there are rising costs in Connecticut and we are going to take care of those where a dollar means a lot to these folks. And every contract that came up except for maybe two that I didn’t want to be too repetitive on, I made that same argument.

Madam President, while we're on that topic, let's talk about the savings in this budget that's under the word lapse. What lapse means is that there's an anticipated savings from the deal made with the
unions. Now there's two, there's three deals here so let's break them down. We got the TERS deal which is the refinance which I'll get to secondly probably but that we could do because statutorily we can do. That's fine. No argument there. Then we've got the savings with respect to Smart Shopper which is a savings which arguably a willing party, and a willing party being the unions in the state, could agree that they will use other doctors in other locales to keep the cost down and that apparently happened in this case, although I'm not 100 percent certain, it's not something I am challenging. The third one is the refinance of the pension plan under SERS, not TERS, but SERS. Under SERS, we have a contract with the unions and the contract says we are gonna make these payments for the pension plan and it's laid out. That is a signed agreement between us and the unions. The only way you can change that agreement is if the unions agree to change that agreement, number one, the rank and file vote to change that agreement, number two, the State of Connecticut through the Executive Branch negotiates that change, number three, and the final, final step is we approve a resolution that changes that contract. For those of us who were here in the Senate in 2017, that's exactly what happened when the same contract was renegotiated in 2017. Governor Malloy negotiated the deal during the fall, in December it was submitted to the Clerk's office here in the Senate, it was voted on by the rank and file, in February, first week of February, 17-17 tie, we had two vacant seats, Lieutenant Governor voted to break the tie and the deal was done. None of that has happened. I'm gonna repeat that. None of that has happened. There has been no agreement, there's been no memorandum, we haven't voted on it, it doesn't exist and when I said that earlier today, the response
from the Governor's office, quoting Mr. Livingston who represents the unions is, we are willing to have a conversation about it. We are willing to have a conversation about it. It wasn’t even we have a deal in principal. It wasn’t hey, we're really close, Senator Fasano, you're crazy, we have a deal, we're drafting it as you're talking. It was we're willing to talk about it. That's about as far away from a deal as you can get. That's even, that's as far away as you can get to the point that it is an idea that's floating out there without any conversations. I asked the Executive Branch to give me letters or emails and I couldn’t get any because it's just conversation. But it's in the budget. Now earlier today, I made a motion that it shouldn’t be before us and the reason I made that motion is because there is a constitutional requirement that we pass a balanced budget. There is a constitutional requirement that the Governor signs a balanced budget. By definition, this budget is not balanced. Now Senator Looney made a correct motion to argue the constitutionality of any law in front of this Chamber is not a subject matter for this Chamber and must be properly brought to the courts. Otherwise, you may argue that any law is not constitutional and we are not constitutional authority people so that was an improper motion for which I concur with the ruling of the Chair. But, nevertheless, make no mistake, the budget that is before you does not balance, admittedly by the unions does not have a deal to balance, and you are short. You are short almost $400 million dollars. That's short by a long shot. That paragraph in there saying the secretary better find $50 million dollars is gonna need a 4 in front of that 50. You are short by a long shot. This isn’t and shouldn’t be before us. It's not the right thing to do in the State of Connecticut. Some may argue well we'll fix
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It. What does that mean? Look, you want to find $2 million dollars, I'm with you. You want to find $10 million dollars? I can get there. You want to find $450 million dollars when you have the secretary you gotta already find $50 million dollars in the second year? You've bled it dry. There is no $450 million dollars to find. So why are we rushing a budget that's out of balance, that doesn't have a union agreement, that doesn't say what it's supposed to do which is we are gonna get the savings from the unions when we know that's not true. What could possibly be the rationale for taking the State of Connecticut and asking this legislature, this Chamber to vote for a budget that's completely out of balance? We have to get it done by the end of session? What, like we never had a budget that went past the end of session so we can sit there and say we passed a budget before the end of session, look how good we are? Well, yeah, if you're gonna pass a budget that's not a real budget, what difference does it make? Pass anything.

In 2011, we had this issue, some of you may recall. What we had was the following. We had a budget, there was a union deal on the table, everyone thought that was gonna get passed by a union vote, we were gonna right after that vote for a budget. That union deal fell through. The budget was amended to say the following: If the union deal does not get passed, the Secretary of State and OPM will find the necessary savings to fix the budget and there was a lawsuit on it after it was passed and the court dismissed the lawsuit for two reasons; one, it's an ongoing budget process because the budget itself is an ongoing budget process so it was premature and number two, there was a subsequent vote by the unions that said we'll accept the deal, so it made the issue pretty much moot. We don't
have any of that language in this budget. There is
no contingency language to say if we don't have a
union deal, then here's the process we'll go
through. It assumes a savings that doesn't exist,
and then people wonder why we're in trouble. Then
people wonder why can't Connecticut get their act
together. Madam President, that annoys me to an end
because if we believe in the institution and we
believe in the obligation we have sitting in this
seat, Republican or Democrat, at the very least you
owe an obligation to the state and the people who
live in it to do a balanced budget. Now, if you're
off a couple bucks cause your estimates are off, mea
culpa and we may argue you're a little aggressive
here and a little underestimating the expense there,
fair game, but when it doesn't exist, how do you say
it's okay? How do you say we did our job as
fiduciaries? How do you look people in the face and
say, yeah, no, this puppy's good? We're gonna do
dwell with this budget. I heard someone say that
this was the best budget they've seen. You know the
last time I heard someone say this is the best
budget, actually the two last times I heard people
say this is the best budget I've seen was 2011, the
largest tax increase that sent us into huge debt,
and the second time was the budget that came in
front of this Chamber that couldn't even get a vote.
Those are the last two times I heard someone say
this is the best budget possible to be in front of
the legislature. When there's that much accolade,
you gotta pull back the cover. Madam President, a
lot of people talked about the pork and earmarks and
our bipartisan budget. We did not have that. Madam
President, I'm gonna wrap up at this point and say
the following. When we talk about budgeting for the
state, there's two parts to it in my belief. One,
we gotta do the numbers part because the numbers
matter, right? We gotta balance. Second thing we
gotta have a vision and the third thing is the budget is about priorities. That's all it is. What are the priorities of this State, arguably what is the priority of the Senate that represents the State? I would argue nothing is more of a priority than social services, mental health, drug addiction, disabled, disabled adults, the elderly, TANF, SAGA. Those are core functions of government because those are the people that need help and I have said this and those of you who were in the room when we did our bipartisan deal two years ago know I've said the same thing. You cannot make cuts across the board, they have to be surgical because there's core functions of government that need to be protected because depend upon it and that's what we do. People are allowed to depend upon us to help them. So what is budget but a priority and our number one priority is social services. Second, we've gotta show a future. We've gotta show the kids that are growing up in this state there is a future. Look, I get that free college and we talk about it as a talking point. It says I'm gonna give you debt-free college because I want to be able to say we put debt-free college in the budget, but it's really not debt-free college because it's predicated upon the lottery to do the internet which they don’t have at this time, but when they do and if they get there, we'll have a conversation about it, but we got it in our budget. What? What the heck is that? We can have a conversation about those things and we can find novel ways of getting there, but let's have a conversation about those things. That's a good direction for the state. Jobs, good direction for the state. Being able to live in this state without going broke. All of us have heard it, some of you may deny it, but you’ve all heard it, I'm leaving the state because it's too expensive, whether it's taxes or cost of living or property taxes or gas,
whatever it is. It's too hard to live in the state. We all have heard it. Some of us may admit it more than others, but we've all heard it. We have to send the message that we hear you and we want you to stay. That's why, by the way, the bipartisan budget doesn't tax Social Security and cuts down on pensions because we had that conversation. We said we want to keep people retired in the state rather than leaving the state. Over 25 percent of state employees leave our state and their checks go with them. We want people to stay here and if you're getting a retirement check, heck, you'd rather be in a state that doesn't tax your retirement money. That's money in your pocket. Money to give to your kids or buy something. You stay in this state, we're gonna take it from you. Why? Because we can. Those are the directions that we have to talk about. And then you take those principals, those ideas, those values, that direction, that future and you build the budget around those key components. That's the way you do it, not with 63 new laws, some of which never got a public hearing. Not with a hodgepodge of ideas. I think Senator Kissel also mentioned this, a hodgepodge of ideas all in a bag, shook them all up, and then we wrap revenue around it, put on a bow and say vote for it. That's not a plan. That's just everybody saying I want mine so you can get yours and then we'll wrap revenue around it and everybody will be happy at least from one side of the aisle. That's how 63 bills get in the file and we all know it. We all know it. So, Madam President, I believe this is the wrong direction. We can do better. Frankly, we have done better. Frankly, together, we did the budget two years ago that put a path that I think we all talk about every single time the budget being talked about, appropriations, finance, on the floor here we talk about surplus, the most ever, how good this budget
is, we're not taxing this, the growth in the economy. That didn’t happen by magic. That happened by a bipartisan budget where people got together and shared ideas. My view of the world is different than each and every person's in this room and each and every person's view is different than my view. Nobody's right, nobody's wrong. It's a question of how we can come together to do something. That's what we're supposed to do. That isn’t what was done this year. I promise you, we are going to be back in this Chamber for two things. One, we're gonna be back because this union deal is nowhere near any lifeform and it's gonna be a problem because you're not gonna get those savings. Two, we got the hospital tax that is talked about in here, but there's no language in here that makes it happen so we gotta come back for that one and three, we're gonna have a shortfall. We're gonna have a shortfall. Now, one may argue well, Len, we're not budgeting 100 percent of our income so we got a buffer, but if you use that buffer to pay expenses I would argue, why are you doing a buffer? You gotta keep that buffer sacred. We will be back here and I hope when we do, I really hope when we do, not people rhetorically saying my door is open because doors were open but nobody was home, but saying let's have a conversation together. Let's talk. Let's sit down in a room and say what are your ideas? Here's mine. Let's get the leaders together. Between the leaders and the chairs of the committees and ranks, we've all served with each other for a whole lot of years. We all get along but yet we never had one conversation about this budget. We've known each other for years and we enjoy each other's company on top of it. So what kept us out of the room? Partisanship. Partisanship. Thank you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I was just going to get up and say good bill, oughta pass, but I think in light of the discussion and the volume of comments that have been made, I think I do need to say a bit more. I think that Senator Fasano and I are not reading the same document, certainly with the same overall impressions because in my view, Madam President, despite the great deal of hand-wringing on the part of the minority party in both Chambers, this really is a strong and forward-thinking budget for the State of Connecticut. We've heard some comments that it doesn't have a vision, doesn't have a purpose. I think it does. I think it shows confidence in the future of this state and will move us in that direction in a way that we'll all be proud of.

First of all, I just want to mention just a few of the highlights. The budget maintains our pledge to cities and towns especially through the ECS funding. In a bipartisan way, we did come together to develop a new formula in the 2017 session and after ten years of not adhering to a formula at all and basically proceeding on an ad hoc basis, we did adopt a new formula and it was an extremely process and we are to phase in this formula over ten years. Now, there had been a proposal earlier in the Governor's budget to accelerate the phase-in of the ECS reductions and to make an alteration to what we had done in that bipartisan budget. But what we are
maintaining is that ten-year schedule and an increased commitment to ECS of almost $38 million dollars in the first year of the biennium and over $75 million dollars in the second year. This is hugely important to our cities and towns that have, that they will have a predictable system of state funding in which to do their budgets. In addition, Madam President, we've had some discussion of debt-free college and that is also something that provides great hope and I think greater confidence for the middle class and aspirational young people in this state. We all know that student debt is one of the things that's casting a shadow over the lives of many young people in this state, and community college in particular is the starting point for people from low and moderate income families who want to get higher education in our state and because of the difficulties and the cost, we have seen that enrollment in community colleges fell by over 5500 students between 2010 and 2018 and it's projected that under this new program, we will see an increase of maybe 3000 students in the next five to six years and we need college graduates and we need to encourage our young people to strive for higher education because the jobs in the future as we know will require more than secondary education. So our neighbors in New York and Rhode Island have started similar programs and Oregon and Tennessee have also adopted similar programs and we must keep pace and this bill will start, this provision will start us in the process of doing so.

There was a great deal of discussion about the pass-through entity tax for revenue and as well all know, the genesis of that was what President Trump and the Republicans in Washington did in 2017 in passing a tax increase focused on specific states in our nation and targeting most those who have reliance on
property taxes to the extent that we do and the loss of the SALT deduction was a cruel blow in Connecticut or the limitation of it to $10,000 dollars and what we are doing with the pass-through change is recognizing that OFA has estimated that the creation of this will save Connecticut residents over $300 million dollars. That is the creation of the pass-through entity tax in 2017 resulted in the saving of about $300 million dollars and IRS data says approximately 63 percent of all the pass-through entity funding is paid by individuals whose income is over $1 million dollars a year so in fact, and a full 80 percent comes from those with income over $500,000 dollars a year so this is primarily targeted at those who can best afford to pay it.

Also, Madam President, in terms of other priorities in the budget, it contains $11 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20 and $18.5 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2021 for wage enhancements for those workers who care for family and friends in our nursing homes, critically important. Nursing homes in Connecticut were facing potential strikes at 20 nursing homes and besides the potential threats this provides to those most in need of care, the strike would have cost over $1 million dollars a day to manage. Again, there has been a great deal of discussion about the Special Transportation Fund, assertions that money had been stolen somehow from the STF, but I'd like to clarify that. Going back a little bit in history, in 2015, when the legislature and Governor were negotiating a budget, at that time it was decided that 0.5 percent of the sales tax would go into the STF and 0.5 percent would also be given to cities and towns in recognition of high property taxes and there was a need for new revenue sources for our municipalities and at the same time, we had to find a way to supplement traditional
revenue sources for the Special Transportation Fund as our gas tax revenues continue to be flat and are projected to be even flatter which is why we are grappling with that problem now. While we've been unable to continue that 0.5 percent of sales tax to cities and towns, the 0.5 percent devoted to transportation has continued but it's so severe obviously that we have also, it's so severe that under the bipartisan budget adopted in 2017, we began a phase-in of the sales tax as well from all new motor vehicle sales which also provided a new revenue stream for the STF so the combination of the 0.5 percent sales tax and the new motor vehicle sales tax under this budget will provide about $640 million dollars in sales tax revenue in the aggregate to the STF by Fiscal Year 22 so OFA tells us that by Fiscal Year 22, our traditional gas tax will only generate about $505 million dollars for the STF so in fact, by that time, sales tax revenue will in fact become the largest component of STF revenue and in fact, the General Fund will in fact be subsidizing the STF by about $640 million dollars by that year, and by Fiscal Year 24 it'll grow to $755 million dollars so when I hear my friends and colleagues talking about money being taken from the STF, I have to wonder why it is that when a $755 million dollar transfer into the STF can be characterized as stealing money from the STF so we are fully committed to doing the responsible thing there.

Also, Madam President, other highlights in this budget, we are all concerned about job creation and workforce development. It funds the jobs Funnel Program over a million dollars each year, Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative $2 million dollars a year, Healthcare Apprenticeship Initiative half-million dollars a year, Connecticut Youth Employment
Program $5 million dollars each year, Cradle to Career $100,000 dollars each year, Pilot Reentry Program $800,000 dollars a year, Veterans Machinist Training $250,000 dollars each year. These are all responses to the need for job creation, workforce development and finding ways to match up our workforce with the economy as we head further into the 21st century.

In terms of fiscal responsibility, we will now have a rainy day fund of about $2.6 billion dollars. The budget has an extraordinarily low growth rate in state spending in 2020 of only 1.7 percent, about 3.4 percent in Fiscal Year 21. In fact, the percentage of increase in the parts of the budget that are not fixed cost really is even lower than that at about 3/10 of a percent.

Also the hospital agreement that the Governor is reaching with the hospitals will relieve us of a significant potential liability that would hang out there if those lawsuits went all the way to a potential conclusion and it's important to mention again that the budget is under the constitutional spending cap, although of course narrowly in the first year. It's under the bonding cap, under the expenditure cap and under the volatility cap as well so these are all responsible achievements in this budget with being aware of our limitations, being aware of our constraints and still meeting the major needs of our people including funding for juvenile justice, about $11.7 million dollars in Fiscal Year 20, $10.2 million dollars in 2021. Funding for a new state trooper class, funding to staff welcome centers and restore the hours of operation at the rest areas for our highways to give Connecticut more of a welcoming appearance for tourism so $500,000 dollars each year in new funding for the Connecticut
Diaper Bank. These are all important initiatives as well as funding for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities including employment and day services for new high school graduates and individuals aging out of DCF services as well.

Madam President, there was also a great deal of discussion on the reamortization of the Teacher Retirement Plan. We had discussion from our state treasurer who pointed out that the cost of the Teachers' Retirement Fund restructuring over the revised 30-year period from 2020 to 2049 as compared with the estimated actuarially required payments under the current framework for the teachers' retirement fund due to the bonds that were issued in 2008 to deal with that shortfalls would be estimated at about $1.9 million dollars on a present value basis because for the first 13 years of the restructured amortization, the savings to the state would be about $3.15 billion dollars and then for the next 17 years after that, the cost would be about $5.417 billion dollars so the net cost is about $1.9 billion dollars and it is a way to in effect smooth out those payments to make them affordable as we get back on track.

One final thing to mention, Madam President, is the creation of the Municipal Redevelopment Authority and that's something I would very much like to thank and acknowledge the great work of Speaker Joe Aresimowicz on that issue. It is modeled after the Capital Regent Development Authority which has been of singular importance in helping development projects occur in Hartford that might otherwise have been unable to aggregate the financing for those projects so we have set aside $500,000 dollars in each of the next two years to launch this municipal development authority and to qualify as a member
communities, cities or towns must demonstrate they are in financial or have a population of at least 70,000 members and the idea is to spur transit-oriented development which we all know is important in our central cities, the revival of core business districts and also new or rehabilitated housing and demolition or redevelopment of vacant buildings. All the things are critically important not only to Hartford, but to New Haven, to Bridgeport, to Waterbury, to other communities in our state with similar needs. Bonds to be issued by the authority would not count towards the state's bond cap although the state would provide a guarantee. This is hugely important and it's something that the other cities in our state for a long time wished they had because they've seen the Capital Regent Development Authority as being such a vital component for the city of Hartford and now they will be able to have something similar.

So there are so many things here, Madam President, that do point to a forward-looking, confident future for the State of Connecticut and this budget recognizes it in ways that recognize our constraints, but also recognize our potential and recognize our needs, but also recognize the fact that people in Connecticut are entrepreneurial, hopeful, positive and confident and that is what we are reflecting in this budget which I do think embodies a significant vision so I would very much like to thank the Governor's administration for their on this and especially of course our Appropriations Committee Chair, Senator Cathy Osten and our Finance and Revenue Bonding Chair, Senator John Fonfara, the great work that they have done on this along with their counterparts, Representative Walker, Representative Rojas. I wanted to thank our majority leader, Senator Duff for his great
consensus building work in this entire process as well as the leadership of the House, Speaker Aresimowicz and majority leader Matt Ritter. So I believe that this budget which has passed the House of Representatives and I hope will pass the Senate in a few minutes is something of which we really can be proud and does respond to the needs of the people of this state and truly does keep faith with them. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark? Will you remark further on the legislation before us? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on 7424. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 7424. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7424.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:
House Bill No. 7424.

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THE CHAIR:


SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, does the Clerk have Senate Agendas No. 2 and 3 on his desk?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda No. 2 and No. 3 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move all items on Senate Agendas No. 2 and No. 3 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019, be acted as upon as indicated and that the agenda be incorporated by reference into the Senate journal and Senate transcripts.
THE CHAIR:

So noted and so ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

And immediately placed on our Calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

So noted and so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the, two items to go please and we can do these two bills first?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, please, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 33, Calendar 486, House Bill 7156 go, followed by Calendar page 66, Calendar 226, Senate Bill 224 go, and if we could stand at ease for a moment, please.

THE CHAIR:

And the Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if the Clerk can call the first bill. Thank you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 33, Calendar No. 486, Substitute for House Bill No. 7156, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED FROM OFFSHORE WIND. (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 8292). There is an amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Very nice to see you after that long debate on the budget. I stand here looking to move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark further, sir?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

I think there is an approved bill [sic], LCO 8292. I move acceptance of that. Can the Clerk --

THE CHAIR:

Yes, will the Clerk please call that LCO number? I see, sorry, that's the House Bill.
SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Yes.

THE CHAIR:

Okay. Apologies, sir, please proceed.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Sorry for that misunderstanding. I had a script from another bill. So I'm here to propose acceptance of this very, very significant piece of green energy legislation. This is one of the largest job creation bills that we'll be taking up this year. It will allow for the state and DEEP to procure 2000 megawatts of renewable class 1 carbon-free energy from offshore wind and I think that this has far-reaching implications for the state. This amount of wind power will be enough to replace Millstone when Millstone goes offline. It's approximately the same amount of energy and it is a major step forward in meeting our renewable energy goals. With that, I ask for any questions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Needleman. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I rise for some comments on the legislation.

THE CHAIR:
Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. First, I'd like to commend the good chairs of the Energy Committee for their hard work and their bipartisan effort in moving all of the bills in Energy forward, but in particular, this very important bill for the State of Connecticut. I had the great opportunity in 2005 to come up here and begin my term on the Energy Committee and have served since then in various capacities on the Energy Committee and understanding over that period of time the connectivity and the complication of all of the energy goals for generation and transmission here in the State of Connecticut that we're trying to put forward to get the best price for the ratepayer. We heard about the problems that are happening with nuclear around the country, Madam President. We saw that those problems manifest themselves here and we put a solution together on the Energy Committee that would solve that problem. In a bipartisan effort, the Governor came through and closed that deal. All along, we have said that is the beginning. All along we said we must secure our baseload power as a bridge to the energy future which we know is renewable. Rooftop solar, grid scale solar is moving forward, but the difficulties of acquiring land for large solar projects here in the State of Connecticut because of its expensiveness makes that difficult.

Offshore wind is a new and emerging opportunity. It's an opportunity the first of its kind here in the northeast section of the United States, specifically in our great ports of Bridgeport, New Haven and New London. New London with its deep
water portability, with its convenience and unobstructed opportunities to get to the far reaches of 40 and 60 miles offshore unobstructed make it the perfect place for staging. Bridgeport as well. This will create the opportunity not only for our future energy power, but for jobs and an economic boom not only to Southeast and Eastern Connecticut, but in our entire state because I believe Bridgeport too is poised to benefit from this great industry over time.

You know, Madam President, the longer I'm here and I've said this before, the more I realize that government is like a blueberry pie. You take a slice of blueberry pie out and all the blueberries tend to go together. Everything is connected. Everything is connected and when I was Chair of the Council of Governments as first selectman, I had the great pleasure of working with Congressman Courtney and the people on the southeast COG, the leaders of 22 other towns where we helped the congressman procure TIGER grant, a TIGER grant that was used to increase the capabilities of the freight line that connects the port of New London going north through Norwich, through Willimantic, through Stafford Springs to Brattleboro, to Montreal, left and right to New York and Los Angeles and why is that important for this initiative tonight? It's important because if New London's pier is going to benefit from reconstruction and renovation and have the opportunity to be the staging area for this new industry of offshore wind, then in the future we're going to need opportunities for component assembly, for manufacturing and for opportunities to grow that industry and what better place to locate than those areas in Norwich, Columbia, Willimantic and north that we can access by that freight line? Bring those parts and components down to the pier in New
London or bring them down to Bridgeport and find ways to get those on barges and get them 45 miles out to sea where this offshore wind can benefit our state and our New England coast.

So everything is connected. New London is ready. The Energy Committee is ready. The New England portion of the United States is ready because our continental shelf is such that it's a perfect staging area before it drops off into the depth to stage and have these turbines built which have been improving over time. Now, Madam President, I would say to you that this is a new and emerging industry. It's going to collide with an industry that has been here for generations upon generations upon generations and that is our fishing industry. Our fishermen, who have been out there for families, generation after generation so it's important, and we have been working together to try to mitigate and offset any negative aspect that will take to the fishing industry out there and to marine life in general. So for legislative intent and as part of this bill with each of these procurements and the good Chairman talked about 2000 megawatts. Those will be procured in sections of 400 megawatts each and in each of those 400-megawatt procurements there will be a fisheries mitigation plan to make sure that during each mitigation, during each procurement, we will take care to do the best we can to protect the quality of our marine life and the quality of our fishing industry by giving them safe and unobstructed access to resources, hold harmless for elisions and entanglements and compensation for any loss of gear or time. Make sure that they can properly transit into the lanes for safety and have limited exposure to risk amongst their cable.
So Madam President, this is a good bill, it is a forward-thinking bill, it is a bill with dovetail with our baseload power as it begins to think about exiting the system in 10 or 12 or 15 years if we can get that long out of nuclear. Offshore wind will be the opportunity to replace a lot of that. So Madam President, I stand in strong support of this bill. I urge my colleagues to think of the future and to support this bill as we forward. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further? Senator Maroney to be followed by Senator Somers.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. For the purposes of legislative intent, I would like to ask a few questions or just one question of the proponent of the bill?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir. Senator Needleman, prepare yourself.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you. I'm fortunate enough to represent the town with the largest coastline in the State of Connecticut as well as the oldest and with all due respect to the good Senator from Norwalk, the oldest and largest Oyster Festival in the State of Connecticut [laughter] and with that being the case, you may guess that we have some commercial fisherman
and they have expressed some concern so I just want to ensure that their concerns are being taken into account. Senator Formica had mentioned a few of their concerns, but I just wanted to be make sure that there would be a consistency review to Connecticut's Coastal Management Act or other applicable policy or law with purview of Connecticut's coastal waters, and opportunity for them to review draft environmental impact statements and to require protections for fisheries that are at a minimum equivalent to any protections adopted by the State of New York.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Maroney. Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President, as a longtime fisherman fishing in the waters that we're talking about the wind energy going, it is my understanding that DEEP is going to take every one of these things into account with regard to each procurement. As Senator Formica said, each procurement will be evaluated separately with every intention of making sure that the fishing grounds that this is going to impact are going to be looked at very carefully and make sure that we minimize the impact.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Needleman. Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

I thank the good Senator for his answer. Thank you, Madam President.
Thank you. Will you remark further on the bill that is before us? Senator Somers.

Senator Somers (18th):

Yes, good evening, Madam President. Through you, I have some question for the proponent of the bill.

The Chair:

Please proceed.

Senator Somers (18th):

Well thank you, Senator Maroney having the largest shoreline in Connecticut. I have the last commercial fishing fleet in my district here in Connecticut or the last largest commercial fishing fleet, which is very small by the way. So I have some questions for legislative intent concerning certain sections of the bill that I would like to get on the record if possible?

The Chair:

Please proceed.

Senator Somers (18th):

Okay. Thank you. So on lines 36 through 45, I'd like to ask some specific questions as far as, the bill refers to the term wildlife. Does wildlife include birds?

The Chair:
Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

It is my understanding that it does.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. Does it include mammals and fish also?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, it is my understanding that it does.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. Are there any other categories that could be included in the term wildlife?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):
Through you, Madam President, the fisherman. No, I'm only kidding. [laughter] Some of them are kind of wild out there but I would think that would cover most of it.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. I just want to read the definition from DEEP. Wildlife for them means all species of invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals which are found wild in nature. Would you agree with that definition?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, I do.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. Through you, Madam President, what is meant if you can describe for us on the record, "will avoid, minimize and mitigate any impacts to wildlife, natural resources, ecosystems and traditional or existing water-dependent uses including, but not limited to commercial fishing." Could you describe that a little more for us?
THE CHAIR:
Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):
Through you, Madam President, it is my understanding that DEEP in doing each procurement will look at every one of those factors and make sure that the impact, we mitigate the impact on all of the aspects of wildlife in that area to do everything they can to make sure that they are as minimally impacted as possible.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you, Senator Needleman. Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):
Thank you. So when we talk about mitigating any impacts to wildlife, we're talking about mitigating any impacts to birds, to fish, to invertebrates, to reptiles, and other mammals, correct?

THE CHAIR:
Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):
Through you, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Somers.
SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Okay. Thank you. Does this language include the ability to provide mitigation that could take place outside of the actual physical location of the wind turbines?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, can you say that one more time?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Sure. What we're trying to find, what I'm trying to find out for legislative intent is could this mitigation take place outside of the actual physical location of where the turbine is? For example, if instead of a bird being hit necessarily by you know a windmill, could the mitigation have to do with because they're, I'm making this up because there's some kind of bird issue that they're not laying nests on a beach, could it be all included or is it solely just where the turbines are?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):
I think it would, through you, Madam President, I think it would have to do with the movement of the turbines out there to make sure that had a minimal impact. I'm not sure that anybody could guarantee that a turbine wouldn't hit a bird at some point or a bird more likely hit the turbine, but again, I think that there is a very significant intent to make sure that every aspect of this is mitigated with regard to the impact on wildlife.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

So would you say --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. For example, a mitigation proposal could include or could possibly include payments for the ecosystem improvements or the permanent protection of coastal species along Long Island Sound as a possible mitigation?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, I would think that that would be up to how DEEP managed the procurement.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.
SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Okay. Again, this is for legislative intent and to be on the record. Could the mitigation include a mitigation fund to pay commercial fisherman for the hardship that they may encounter as a result of the construction or operation of the selected wind turbines?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, although that's not specifically mentioned in the legislation, I would think that DEEP would be doing that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. The reason I ask that question is because in the original language, it was in the bill, a specific mitigation fund and I noticed it has been taken out of the bill in this amendment. I want to make it clear that the State of Rhode Island has run into issues concerning this specific problem, the mitigation fund that was not originally set aside for commercial fisherman, and now they've had to go back through their State Senate and try to recreate that and that's why I'm asking that question, and what I'm hearing you say is that would be handled through DEEP and the commission; is that correct? That they're going to establish?
THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Okay. And I had originally asked why the specific requirements as far as mitigation were taken out of the original bill and I was told in conversations with DEEP that the reason it was taken out is because it was very narrow in its description and if we had that language stay in the bill, it could tie their hands or make it more difficult in the future and that's why they set up the commission; is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President, yes, I believe that the intent is to give broad authority to DEEP to manage this.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.
SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. Now, I understand that there is a commission on environmental standards that's being put together by the DEEP and that that is comprised mostly of individuals with environmental background. There are some legislators, there are some commercial fisherman on there and they will be coming up with what they would like to see as recommendations concerning the RFP and the environmental standards; is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Do you know whether this commission will be required to submit an actual written report when it's finished with its recommendations?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, I am not sure.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):
Okay.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):
Okay.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Excuse me, I'm sorry, through you, yes. The commissioner just gave me a thumbs up so absolutely.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):
Great. Thank you. Will that report will be public or would it be posted on the DEEP's website?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.
SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, I got another thumbs up, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

I'm just going to keep asking questions cause it's just thumbs up all the way here. This is awesome. And will this environmental commission focus on the impacts to wildlife in addition to potentially commercial fisherman?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Wow, this is great. Okay. So could you describe how after this commission gets together and they come up with the recommendations, how is that gonna be incorporated into the RFP for the solicitation?

THE CHAIR:
Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

I am not sure.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Could you give me an idea?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, I would assume that they will have a study and write up recommendations and we will look at them and they will be part of every RFP.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

The reason that I'm asking that question is because if you read the bill, it says that the RFP for the first procurement needs to be issued no later than 14 days after the effective date of the bill so I'm wondering how this commission can get together so quickly and be able to provide recommendations that would be used in the initial RFP. You know, how are
they considered so quickly to be able to get out to solicit a request for proposal?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, so my understanding is this is not the first RFP for wind energy and a lot of this work has been done already.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you for that answer. So are you saying that the work or the standards are already in existence or is this commission going to be making recommendations for the standard because those are two conflicting answers?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, so as I understand it, a lot of the work has been done and they will continue to do it and the reason that they want to do an initial procurement is because some of the federal tax credits are going away and we want to get the first tranche of this in with those tax credits.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Okay. So I'm a little confused on that because if the work is already done then according to the bill, this Commission on Environmental Standards is supposed to be participating in writing what those environmental standards are for the people that are going to be submitting a procurement on this first tranche of 400 megawatts so if it's already done, how would this commission that's not been established yet as far as I understand be able to weigh in?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

So again, my understanding is that a lot of that work has been done ahead of time.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Can you tell me how the work has been done ahead of time if the commission has not been set up yet?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.
SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, I cannot.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Okay. That gives me great pause. I will tell you that because if I'm reading this correctly and perhaps we can stand at ease so you could ask the DEEP Commissioner, it appears or from what I have been told that this Commission on Environmental Standards is supposed to get together and set the standards for what the environmental, what they would like to see as far as the proposal from the potential bidders on this wind farm and if we don't have this commission set up, they haven't been able to meet to provide input, whether it be how far out these wind farms can possibly be spaced so they navigate through them to a mitigation fund to whatever it may be, then it is alarming that what is read in the bill is different than what you're telling me so can you address that?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

So again, my understanding is that a lot of the background work has been done and although the RFP is gonna be done quickly, there is no necessary time limit for the issuance of the award for the
procurement so there is plenty of time for them to do all that work and I actually have a lot of faith that they will get that work done because they are the Environmental Protection Agency and their desire is to make sure that this impact is mitigated as much as possible.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Okay. So maybe I'll rephrase my question. Will this Commission on Environmental Standards that has not yet met, will they be providing I guess input on the first RFP that will go out because if you're telling me the work's already been done, then the answer would be no unless you're sending out an RFP and you will follow up at a later time with a supplement that would have the requirements, but I'm assuming this commission would get together, they would discuss it, they would vote amongst themselves along with the DEEP and come up with the standards.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President, my understanding is that the work that has been done is the background work. The commission has not been formed, but because there is so much background work that has been done, they will be off and ready to go once they get the commission formed.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

So would the DEEP be able to provide us, if they're ready to go, with what these environmental standards would be for the RFP? Concerning specifically the commercial fishing and wildlife.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

So the commission, through you, Madam President, the commission will determine that and it will be done through the RFP.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Okay. I'm feeling like I'm not getting my questions answered so when is the commission going to convene?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

I am not aware of that.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Would you be able to give us an idea in section 25 through 157? I'm sorry, that's wrong. There is a list of items 1 through 7 that the, I guess it's the DEEP will take into consideration when they make their award and 6 and 7 have to do with the environmental impacts. Are they weighted in any special way or you know if the person who comes up with the proposal scores high 1 through 5 but doesn’t provide an environmental impact let's say on 6 to 7, is it evenly weighted or can you talk about how the distribution is on the weighting of those different categories for the award?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President, no, I cannot.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

So is it possible, not that this would happen, but is it possible that the commissioner could perhaps not look at items 6 and 7 in making a selection of a proposal or do they have to look at all of the items when, and I can list them through. Like it talks
about number 1, the proposal is in the best interest of the ratepayers, number 2, the proposal promotes electric distribution reliability. Number 3 is any positive impacts on the state's economy. Number 4 would be whether the proposal is consistent to reduce greenhouse gases. Number 5 is whether the proposal is consistent with the policy outlined in the Comprehensive Energy Strategy Plan. Number 6 is whether the proposal is consistent with the goals set forth under the section which has to do with the commission, which you said is already actually, they’ve already determined that, and whether the proposal uses practices to avoid and minimize and mitigate wildlife natural resources as I read before so I'm wondering how they're weighted. Could somebody put in a proposal that avoids addressing number 7 completely?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, no. I think that all of those things will be considered. I just can't give you the exact weighting, but I think they're all important and they will all be part of the final determination.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

So for legislative intent, it would not, it would be fair to say that there would not be a proposal submitted to the DEEP that could be awarded that
would not address the mitigation that is necessary for wildlife or commercial fishing; is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

My understanding is that it will, it is not possible to not address it.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. My last question would be, I did not see anywhere in the bill and I could’ve missed it, where we talk about when you go out for an RFP, all of these things are required which I think that they should be required because of the experience that other states have had, and I think it's very important that we have renewable energy sources and that we are moving in this direction, but it cannot be at the expense of a historic you know industry that we have here in the State of Connecticut and I hope that they can find a symbiotic relationship to work well together. My concern is I did not see any language in here that said when the award is actually made, that it must contain a mitigation plan for wildlife and for commercial fishing. It talks about a request for proposal, but it doesn’t talk about the actual award. Can you address that at all? Or I might’ve missed it in the bill.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President, my understanding is every bid has to have a mitigation plan with it.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. So you're saying that an award would not be made from the State of Connecticut unless it had a mitigation plan that would address the factors that are identified by this commission?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, my understanding is that no bid would be accepted without it.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you. I'm sorry, I couldn't hear your last response. Could you repeat that?
Through you, my understanding is that no bid would be accepted without it.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you very much. Those are all my questions. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers, thank you. Will you remark further on the bill that is before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Bradley.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD):

Good evening, Madam President, it's an honor to see you this afternoon, this evening and I just want to simply say that we've talked a lot in this Chamber about how we can transform the State of Connecticut and we just deliberated here for maybe about six hours about how we can be transformative and I took a sound piece of what some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and that is that we have to find innovative ways to put Connecticut back to work and I couldn't agree more and even though I commend Senator Fonfara for the tremendous work he's done and Senator Osten for the tremendous work she's done, I believe we can always do more and even though this budget was something which was revolutionary in many aspects in bringing a lot of people together, what Senator Needleman is bringing forth here today is exactly what the State of
Connecticut needs. It's a project to make sure that places like New London, places like New Haven, places like Bridgeport are going back to work. And we're not talking about a race to the bottom, talking about industries of old and jobs of old that have left this great country and are never coming back. We're talking about the future. When we talk about renewable energy we're talking about getting jobs that are real for today, that are high quality, that are high paying, that ensure that places like Bridgeport are gonna be back on the map and when places like Bridgeport are back on the map, Connecticut is back on the map. This is not just simply about looking after all the things that we need to look after. This is about making sure that blue collar folks, regular every day Joe's have once again human dignity, that we ensure that they have jobs again in the state and when you look at what this project's gonna look like, you look at the plans that they’ve laid out, these are pristine white fields as far as the eye can see of wind farms all over Bridgeport God willing, all over New London God willing, all over New Haven God willing, these are ports that are ready to work and people that are ready to work and I commend Senator Needleman for the hard work that he's done in preparing this and bringing this forward. I commend the leadership for the hard work that they’ve done and having the courage to bring this forward. I know there's been a lot of people in my great city that are starving for this opportunity, that are willing to pull themselves up by the bootstraps, that want to be part of this work force, that want to be part of progress and this bill does exactly that. It ensures that we're no longer a state that simply to tax people or simply looks to push people out or simply looks to marginalize people. We ensure that everyone has an opportunity to do what this country
does best and that's breathe free air. So thank you Senator Needleman for the work that you’ve done and bringing this forth and I encourage every single Senator to please vote for this because it's what gonna put Connecticut back on top. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bradley. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I just wanna reiterate. First of all, this committee worked together in a bipartisan way to pass this bill and several other bills. Most people know that Senator Formica and I have a longstanding friendship, but we work together very close with Representative Arconti and Representative Ferraro in a very bipartisan way to come up with a bill here and then the other bills that we're gonna bring out that will move the state forward. This is a jobs bill as much as a green energy bill. We are paving the way for the future of our children and our grandchildren with good clean energy that will supplement our baseload energy in a great way. This may be the single largest economic development policy and economic development piece of legislation that this body will pass this year. This is about jobs, it's about green energy, it's about the future. I also ask that every member of this body vote to support this.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you, sir Needleman. Will you remark further? Senator Needleman?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Madam President, may we put this on the consent Calendar. Seeing no objection, uh, with that, Mr. Clerk, kindly call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7156. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7156. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 7156. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7156.

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THE CHAIR:

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move for immediate transmittal to the Governor, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, will the Clerk please now go to Calendar page 66, Calendar 226, Senate Bill 424.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 66, Calendar 226, Senate Bill 424, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY REGARDING CAMERA VIDEO SYSTEMS INSIDE SCHOOL BUSES AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES USED TO TRANSPORT STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] And I know the hour is late but I would just ask our guests and staff to please lower the volume because we have legislation still to consider. With that, please proceed, Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):
Thank you, Madam President, very kind of you. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. If ever there was one of our bills where the title explains the intent, this is one of them. This is simply a study regarding the camera video systems inside school buses for student transportation and vehicles used to transport students with special needs, and basically, this is to ensure the safety of our children as they're being transported to and from school and as parents, we always want to make sure that they always protected but if you are a parent of a child with special needs, that runs even a little bit deeper. Of course, as a society, we all want to do the very best we can in protecting our children. So this was a request brought up by parents to us in Transportation. We felt it was a worthy bill to bring forward, but because there were some questions left unanswered, it is the reason why we wanted to take the time to create a study to flush out all the questions to make sure that we can do it justice in the proper way in hopefully the next session and it is with that reason why I would urge adoption that we are allowed to do this. And I do want to thank my Senate ranking member, Senator Martin for his assistance as well as the members
down in the House, and I would urge its adoption. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Leone. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us? Good evening, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to support this legislation. I have no questions and I encourage my colleagues to support this bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the bill that is before us? Will you remark further? Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH):

Thank you, Madam President. If there are no objections, I would request putting this on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the Senate stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:
Senate will stand at ease. Good evening, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, for purposes of marking please?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Agenda 2 for House Bill 7303, I'd like to move for suspension and mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Agenda 2 Senate Bill 1070, I'd like to move for suspension and mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Agenda 2 Senate Bill 1069, I'd like to move for suspension and mark that item go.
THE CHAIR:
So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 27, Calendar 421, House Bill 6522, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:
So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 20, Calendar 364, Senate Bill 641, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:
So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 35, Calendar 631, House Bill 5002, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:
So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Then we'll have a consent calendar after that. Thank you.
Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

Senate Agenda No. 2, Substitute for House Bill No. 7303, AN ACT CONCERNING DENTAL PRACTITIONERS. (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 10428.)

THE CHAIR:

Senator Abrams, good evening.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This bill makes various changes to laws on dental practitioners. Among other things, it establishes a one-year clinical residency as a standard requirement for dental licensure. It eliminates examination with human subjects by July 1, 2121. It allows out of state dentists meeting certain standards to become licensed here without examination of they have worked at least one year rather than the current five years before the application. It allows dentists and dental hygienists to substitute 8 hours
of volunteer practice at temporary dental clinics for one hour of continuing education within certain limits. It requires the Public Health Committee Chairperson to convene a working group to advise the Committee on the Department of Public Health certification of dental therapists, and it allows dentists to administer finger-stick diabetes tests to patients who have increased risk of diabetes but who have not been diagnosed with diabetes.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Abrams. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I rise in support of this bill. This is a bill that Public Health has been working on for going on three years now. It's a culmination of I guess two different sets of chairman's, etc. We have everybody on board to support it and it will certainly help those who need oral care because they don't have the access that they deserve. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Will you remark further? Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Yes, thank you. I'd like to thank the ranking member, Senator Somers for her support and her hard work on this bill and I would ask for a roll call vote.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you. A roll call vote will be ordered. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, kindly call the vote and the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7303. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 7303. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate House Bill 7303. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7303.

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THE CHAIR:

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. I'd like to yield to Senator Flexer for a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer, good evening.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I rise for a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Please do proceed.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I know the hour is getting late but I didn’t want to let the entirety of June 4 pass and not take a moment to explain why many of the women today are wearing white or a very pale color. We're wearing this color because today is the 100th anniversary of congressional passage of the Women's Suffrage Amendment so here in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, many of the women in both Chambers are wearing white to celebrate that seminal moment in our history which was a huge accomplishment which was frankly, about 100 years' worth of work to get to the point where the Senate and the House in Washington, D.C. passed the Women's Suffrage
Amendment and then led to the opportunity for the states to then ratify it which became effective a year later so Madam President, I just wanted to recognize that and acknowledge that while women are more than half of the population, we still don’t quite make up half of this Chamber or half of the Chamber downstairs, but we're well on our way and the women were quite visible today. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Flexer, and I will just say on the 90th anniversary of Women's Suffrage and the passage in Congress, I had the honor of meeting a lady from Tolland, Connecticut who voted for the first time in 1920 for President Harding, she told me and so I am glad that we are celebrating here today and thank you for recognizing that.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Thank you. [Applause]

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda No. 2, Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1070, AN ACT CONCERNING ABANDONED AND BLIGHTED PROPERTY STEWARDSHIP. (As amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9593 and as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 10830).

THE CHAIR:
Good evening, Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill and waive [crosstalk].

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes, this is a bill that we had before us and passed unanimously. It went to the House. The House amended the bill, line 72, with a population of 75,000 or more. The House has amended it to be 35,000 or more which quite honestly opens it up to more communities and so on. It is a good amendment and I urge adoption of the bill that makes it concurrent with the House adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Concur with the House, excuse me.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):
Seeing none, I'd ask it go on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson, are you objecting to placing the item on the Consent Calendar?

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Yes, ma'am and I'd just like to state for the record that the bill did not pass this Chamber unanimously. I believe there were two no votes when it passed out of the Senate previously.

THE CHAIR:

So noted, sir and when we take a vote, it will be by roll. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, kindly call the vote and the machine will be opened.

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 1070. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 1070. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1070. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1070. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1070.

THE CHAIR:
Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill No. 1070.

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THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] The legislation is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda No. 2, Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1069, AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES. (As amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9170 and as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 10841).

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator McCrory.

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Well good evening, Madam President. How are you this evening?

THE CHAIR:

I am well. Thank you, sir.
SENATOR MCCRARY (2ND):

That's great, that's great. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR MCCRARY (2ND):

Yes, this bill passed us previously unanimously. There was a subtraction actually made in the House striking section 10 out of the bill. I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Senator Berthel, good evening.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good evening, Madam President. I stand in support of the bill as amended back from the House and encourage adoption. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the legislation? Senator McCrory.
SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Madam President, I ask that this bill be placed on Consent.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 27, Calendar No. 421, Substitute for House Bill No. 6522, AN ACT CONCERNING CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION IN SCREENING FOR INFLAMMATORY BREAST CANCER AND GASTROINTESTINAL CANCERS.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This bill allows as part of existing law continuing education requirements for physicians to include training to address screening for inflammatory breast cancer and gastrointestinal cancers including colon, gastric, pancreatic and neo-endocrine cancers and other rare
gastrointestinal tumors. The starting date would be on or after October 1, 2019. I should mention that this is permissive and not mandatory and it passed unanimously out of Committee and the House. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise to make a comment about this bill. There is no question but I wanted to make sure I shared some perspective. Every action that we take, there are intended consequences and there are some unintended consequences and I want to touch on the unintended consequences of this. As of right now, there is a requirement that all physicians are supposed to have 50 hours of continuing medical education every 24 months. What we have been doing as a body in the Connecticut General Assembly in the last few years is we are adding one topic or the other which has now reached, recently about a few weeks ago we added Alzheimer's on the list. Now we are going to be adding these rare gastric cancers to the list. The downside to this is that of those 50 hours these physicians are going to spend, these are opportunities for the specialists to become super specialists in those areas because medical sciences are evolving so a psychiatrist wants to know what are the newest thing in psychiatrist, but now they're going to be required or obligated to look at a list of about ten or twelve illnesses or diseases or areas that they need to learn about that will take them away from their abilities to become
specialists in the areas that they want to learn about so a cardiologist will not be able to become as a good a cardiologist as they could if we continue on this path. So that's a downside and unintended consequence. If we as a body will continue to do these, there will be situations where all the specialists will stop becoming specialists and they will just follow what you're telling them to do and that's not fair to yourself and your families. So that's one thing. The second thing is, according to some estimates, there about 11,000 physicians and some about 5000 APRN's so put that together. In one hour, an individual may see 3-4 patients so we will be looking at, people will be spending about 60,000 patients would not get seen if we add more and more burden on the clinicians to be able to see this and people will say well let's give rights to somebody to practice because the physicians can't see the patients anymore. So while I will be supporting this bill out of respect for the patients who are being impacted and the work that has gone on by some of the individuals, I would urge my colleagues that this path is not a healthy path because anytime anybody is gonna come to advocate for you and say I have had a loved one die from an illness and we actually move in the direction to make every single physician learn about that and every single APRN learn about it, before you know it, they will be just learning what you're telling them to do and they will stop learning what they're supposed to be learning and they will not be able to see patients. Thank you so much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator and Dr. Anwar. Will you remark further? Senator Somers.
SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of the bill. I would like to reiterate what Senator Anwar has to say; however, this is not a requirement, it's permissive so out of the 50 hours which is unpaid by clinicians to go and take continuing education, should they choose one of these as a course, they have an option. I agree that the legislature needs to be careful what they mandate, especially because our clinicians are overworked and we have a shortage of them, but again, this is a permissive ask so I would ask the circle to please support the bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:


SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just want to say a thank you to Greta Stipple who some of you might have met. She's been a very strong advocate. She's been out in the hallways trying to get this bill passed. She has stage IV neuroendocrine cancer of the gastrointestinal tract and although she is sometimes very sick, she is here trying to make a difference and I thank her for that and if there is no objection, I would put this on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered. Mr. Clerk.
Good evening, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I move adoption and I believe the Clerk is in possession of an amendment, LCO No. 10925. I would ask the Clerk to please call that amendment and I be given leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10925, Senate Schedule A.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. LCO 10925, Senate A, I move the amendment and what it contains, oh, okay. I yield to Senator Sampson, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Senator Sampson, do you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much and thanks to Senator Looney. I just wanted to speak up at the start of this debate to let you know that pursuant to Senate Rule 15, I will be recusing myself from any debate or vote on this particular legislation. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. So noted and the record will so reflect. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Our public financing system, Madam President, has been now in effect for several election cycles and in practice, it has generally worked well, but there have been some relatively minor glitches and just issues that have come up in implementation of making the system work in a timely way given the realities that are faced by campaigns and it contains a number of changes agreed upon by all four caucuses to try to smooth out problems that have emerged and try to make the system work even more effectively in future election cycles so I would urge passage of the amendment which does become the bill.

THE CHAIR:
Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I echo what Senator Looney said. This is the power of bipartisanship right here that might not have been here before, but it's here now and also I would say all four caucuses have had their hand in trying to draft this piece of legislation to make the reality of the SEEC law match the reality of the campaigns so I urge adoption of the amendment and when the amendment becomes the bill, urge that we pass this bill. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would call for a roll call vote on the bill as amended.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. A roll call vote has been requested and will be made. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call the vote and the machine will be opened.

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 641 as amended by Senate A. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 641 as amended by Senate A. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill No. 641 as amended by Senate A.

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THE CHAIR:


SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move for suspension for immediate transmittal to the House, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 55, Calendar No. 631, House Bill No. 5002, AN ACT CONCERNING A GREEN ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9844).

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Witkos. Pursuant to Rule 15, I will be excusing myself from the Chamber and the vote.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. The record will so reflect. Good evening, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSE (7TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Again, pursuant to Rule 15, I will be excusing myself as well to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest. Thank you.
THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel. Senator Logan, good evening.

SENATOR LOGAN (17TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Pursuant to Senate Rule 15, I wish to recuse myself from the debate and consideration of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

The record will so note, sir. Good evening, Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Good evening again, Madam President. Thank you. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. The question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Yes, Madam President. Thank you. This bill is about building a good economy, providing good 21st century jobs for Connecticut. The bill fuels our economic engine and simply makes sense. Let me highly a few of the key points that will benefit our citizens and stimulate jobs in the economy. Not wanting to bore anybody, but I think there are 19 parts to this bill. I will not go through all of
them. The first part of it is it’s going to extend the existing procurements, the LREC, ZREC programs. It's going to continue the virtual net metering program. It's going to do a study on distributed generation so we have new procurement guidelines in the future. We're requesting that the state do a land inventory for DOT property so that we can install class 1 renewables on those properties. We're going to enhance the thermal energy portfolio standard. We're enhancing the state building construction codes for state buildings. We're going to allow DEEP to hire consultants on very sophisticated energy matters where they don’t have internal capabilities. We're going to allow some storage of energy by the electric distribution companies. We're going to extend the residential furnace, boiler and propane tank program that allows for more efficient boilers. We're going to provide a procurement for anaerobic digestion at animal feeding operations and we're creating a green jobs career ladder so people can access those green jobs. This is another major economic development initiative on the part of the state. It clarifies some of the issues that came up as a result of SB 9 in the last session so we will be allowing people to continue to work under those procurements for energy for rooftop solar as well as virtual net metering and I think that what we hope to get out of this is a future plan for how the state will procure energy so people will be able to continue purchasing distributor generation on their property. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Needleman. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Formica.
SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good evening, Madam President, almost morning, good evening. I rise in support of this legislation and to offer a few comments.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you once again to the leadership of the Energy Committee to put this comprehensive bill together. This is a good opportunity to kind of right some of the small problems that we've had in the solar industry over the last year or so and extend out some of the programs until we get into next generation of these energy efficiency programs and I look forward to the opportunity of growing solar in our state. This will give us that opportunity to move forward over the next few years along with a few other of the initiatives that the good Senator has mentioned and I strongly support the anaerobic digestion portion which I think is part of the future and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber? Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):
Good evening, Madam President. The bill before us has a great many sections and I think the majority of the bill is very well intended and beneficial to our state's future energy needs. I do have a couple of questions for the proponent of the bill if I could on section 15, though?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Through you, Madam President, I'd be curious to ask if under this section, an anaerobic digester on a farm needs a solid waste permit? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President, I'm not sure about that. I would not imagine that they would.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate that. My understanding is that a solid waste permit is intended to protect ground water among other environmental protections. Is that accurate? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, yes, it is, in most cases it would be.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. My understanding is that the water that comes out of a digester is known as an industrial discharge. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Can you repeat that sir?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The water that comes out of a digester after the process is considered to be an industrial discharge and I guess I'm just asking if that's an accurate statement and I'm
curious to know because in a typical situation with a discharge like that, DEEP certainly has some requirements about how that water is to be handled. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. I do believe that this qualifies for the same kind of discharge permit and don't believe that it's the same kind of discharge that you're thinking about with regard to commercial waste treatment facilities.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Yeah, I'm speaking very specifically because I have a significant business located in my district in Southington that is involved in this anaerobic digesting energy producing facility and my understanding is that the water that's discharged for their facility is considered to be an industrial discharge and they have to go through a process through DEEP to make sure that this water is hooked up to the sewer and they can only process certain types of things and I'm just curious if these digesters on farms will be subject to those same requirements. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. I can't answer that specifically, but given the fact that the animal waste that is on the farm already that may lie fallow in the field, this would probably not be under the same category as a commercial digester that you're thinking about that they have in Southington for food waste and the like.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I don’t pretend to know a great deal about this subject but I have been asked to get some of these items on the record and I do want to look after certainly a thriving business actually that's going on in my community and somebody that I know has invested a great deal of energy and effort in complying with all of the requirements that we place on them as a state you know both through DEEP and through other state agencies. And I guess the question is, how do we know that this water, this discharge from the anaerobic digesters on farms is not, that farmers are not just gonna put it back on their crops as water and that it's processed the same way it should be, the way my Southington guys have to do it. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. So again, most farms are not hooked up to sewer systems and they manage their own water on their farms and I would imagine that they would be using it locally. I think that this is very specifically directed for farm digesters and although I think that we would like to see more anaerobic digestion happening in the state because we have such a massive amount of food waste, I don't think that the same rules will apply, although I can't speak specifically because that question has not come up.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir Needleman. Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President and I appreciate the answer. I know these questions may not be simply defined right before us. So my understanding is in section 15 that farmers are limited to be able to only use 5 percent food waste. Is there a way that that's going to be tracked? Are they going to be required to keep records? Is DEEP going to track this? Are they gonna look at logs, files, records, anything like that? Will there be any sort of testing done to make sure that that is indeed the case? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.
SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. Yes, I believe that is the case.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So we are affording farmers a $2 million dollar benefit by foregoing the solid waste permit that is required in the similar situation that I already described. Are farmers fined today for over-applying manure to their farms? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. Can you repeat that?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

My understanding is that these permits cost as much as a million or two million dollars to be able to process this solid waste and I'm just asking if farmers are fined today for over-applying manure to their property? Through you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. I'm not sure that I understand the question about the over-applying of manure; however, again, they're not allowed to use more than 5 percent food waste. They're processing what they generate on the farm for use on the farm.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Understood. Thank you, Madam President. And I appreciate the answers to the questions. Was this bill heard in the Environment Committee or was it just in the Energy Committee? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. Just the Energy Committee.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):
All right. Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate all the answers to the questions. Again, I was given these questions to attempt to get them on the record. My goal here is very simple and that is to try and find the proper answers for the record to make sure that we're passing good public policy there that will benefit our state and when it comes to these anaerobic digesters, I'd like to make sure that the farms are complying with the same strict requirements that my business in Southington is just for the sake of fairness for one thing and also in a way to you know make sure that we're preserving our environment the best way possible. My understanding is that these permits that had to be purchased by my Southington business owner is very expensive to the tune of millions of dollars and they are issued by DEEP so the fact that this bill only went before the Energy Committee and not the Environment Committee, I don't know that it got the right review that would be necessary to make sure that they are in full compliance the way we would like them to be. I'm gonna vote no today. I wish that I was much more aware of this situation before it reached this Chamber today for final action and that's all I can do with it at this moment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of the bill. There was a hearing in the Environment Committee relative to digesters on farms and the
issue is that most of these large farms have either hit or exceeded the federal regulations for phosphorus loading on the land and so that's why it's important to try and create an incentive for digesters on farms so I would appreciate support of the bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Will you remark further on the bill before the Chamber? Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I also rise in support of this bill. It's important and I have in my district dairy farms and some of the other farms which are looking forward to an opportunity like this. This, if you look at the energy costs as well as the energy challenges that many of these farms have, they will become much more sustainable if we have these opportunities so it is in the best interest for sustainable farming and efficient farming to have a bill like this which will give that opportunity. So I wanted to thank the leadership of Senator Needleman and his team for getting it so far and hopefully, we will move forward and I would encourage everybody to vote for this too. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you, Madam President. So I want to thank all my colleagues for all their questions and they were
all good questions and I appreciate the comments. So I would like to move for passage of this bill. I think again, it is economic driver in the state. We're looking to do a lot of good things that provide for a more sustainable future for future generations and there are a lot of pieces to this. There are fixes to the prior bill and things to look forward to for the future. So again, like the wind bill, we're looking to build a 21st economy and these are the type of economic development initiatives that we need. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Needleman. Will you remark further on the legislation that's before the Chamber? If not, Mr. Clerk please call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5002. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5002. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5002. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.
House Bill No. 5002.

Total number voting 33
Those voting Yea 32
Those voting Nay 1
Absent and not voting 3

THE CHAIR:


SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the Clerk, can I mark an item to go, please. Calendar page 36, Calendar 504, House Bill 5524, and I'd like to mark that item go on our next item of business, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 36, Calendar No. 504, House Bill 5524, AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR THE SALE OF FENTANYL.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, good evening, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.
THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This is a bill that aims to increase the penalties for sale, possession or manufacturing of fentanyl. Currently, there's a conversation going on about fentanyl and its impact on society. Some people feel that if you do not increase fentanyl to a narcotic, thereby increasing its penalties, that we will be doing something that we don't want to do. There are other people who feel differently. It's a conversation that's going on. There's been a lot of conversation in this building. I do believe that this bill will pass. There are concerns that need to be addressed about that increase in penalty and so I've had a conversation with my ranking member and should the bill pass, when we come back next session, we'll be looking at trying to make sure that even though we've increased the penalties, we take the discretion we give and make sure that it's applied appropriately. I urge members to vote as they would like.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Winfield. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I'd like to be associated with the remarks of Senator Winfield. We have indeed entered into discussions regarding this. It's my understanding that should this pass, it would not be effective until October 1.
Therefore, it would only be on the books a few months prior to us God willing going into the short session next February where we could continue to fine tune this particular legislation should that be necessary. I would urge my colleagues' support of the bill. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on the bill? If not, Mr. Clerk kindly call the vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5524. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5524. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5524. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5524. An immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5524. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill No. 5524.

Total number voting 36
Those voting Yea 33
Those voting Nay 3
Absent and not voting 0

THE CHAIR:


SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Could we stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I would like to call a number of items for our Consent Calendar, please? Place a number of items on our Consent Calendar I should say.

THE CHAIR:

Yes, please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 21, Calendar 374, House Bill 6403, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 25, Calendar 412, House Bill 7168, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 27, Calendar 425, House Bill 7229, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 32, Calendar 479, House Bill 7378, I'd to place that
item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 36, Calendar 506, House Bill 7130, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 37, Calendar 511, House Bill 5455, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 38, Calendar 521, House Bill 7093, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 38, Calendar 537, House Bill 6927, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 40, Calendar 602, House Bill 7165, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 50, Calendar 605, House Bill 6916, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 51, Calendar 606, House Bill 5125, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 51, Calendar 611, House Bill 5779, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 52, Calendar 612, House Bill 7291, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 61, Calendar 66, I'm sorry, Calendar page 660, I'm sorry, Calendar page 61, Calendar 660, House Bill 7212, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Senate stand at ease please.

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):
Thank you, Madam President. One more for the consent calendar please?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Calendar page 61, Calendar 659, House Bill 7063, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if the Clerk can now read back the items on the Consent Calendar followed by a vote on the Consent Calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:


THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly call the vote, the machine will be opened, sir.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1.

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<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Those voting Nay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absent and not voting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
THE CHAIR:


SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move immediate transmittal of all items needing further action to the House of Representatives, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, does the Clerk have Senate Agenda No. 4 on his desk, please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda No. 4 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President, I move immediate all items on Senate Agenda No. 4 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019 be
acted upon as indicated and the agenda be incorporated by reference in the Senate journal and the Senate transcript and immediately placed on our calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So noted, so ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

I'd like to move all the items onto our Senate Calendar as well immediately, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, that concludes our business for today. We have 23 hours and 56 minutes to go but who's counting and our intention is to come in at 10 o'clock for caucus, 11 o'clock for session and let's all try to be as prompt as possible since it is our last day of fun and sun here in the Capital. Thank you and I will yield for any point of personal privileges or announcements. I don't think so.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Safe travels. We are adjourned.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

I make a motion what we adjourn subject to the Call of the Chair. Thank you, Madam President.
THE CHAIR:

We are adjourned and see you later today.

On motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 12:10 o'clock a.m. adjourned subject to the Call of the Chair.