

THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Wednesday, February 5, 2020

REPORT OF THE JOINT CONVENTION

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

At this point in time, ladies and gentlemen, we will begin the joint session. Typically the first step for us to start the joint session is to introduce the presiding officer.

It's with great pleasure today I stand on the Dais welcoming our great Lieutenant Governor, from the neighboring Town of Middletown, right night to Berlin. I'm A to Z and she's B to Z. But our great outstanding Lieutenant Governor, Susan Bysiewicz.

[Applause]

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Speaker A to Z. And for the record, I came up with that B to Z joke. [Laughing]

So, ladies and gentlemen will the Senate and the House of Representatives please come to order for this joint session. Members and guests, would you please rise and direct your attention to House Chaplain Imam Refai Arefin.

I have been informed that Rabbi Lazowski will be doing our first prayer. [Applause].

Rabbi Lazowski.

RABBI LAZOWSKI:

Let us pray. Our thought for today is from Psalm 145, Verse 18. "The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth."

Let us pray. Almighty God, as we begin the new session, we ask thy blessings upon our Governor, Ned Lamont, Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, the Senate and House of Representatives. Grant them untiring conviction, unrestrained energy to all work in

both Houses for the good of our beloved State of Connecticut. May they accomplish what they are charged to do.

Help us to see beyond the obstructions and differences that divide us. Keep us mindful of the deep values that unite us. Remove pridefulness from our lives, show us the path to humility and true service. Grant us the spirit of compromise; may we be determined and resolute in our willingness to find a way forward together.

Keep us mindful that we are dependent on one another. And where there is unity there is strength. Oh gracious God, give these people your wisdom, integrity and your blessing. Keep us mindful of our shared responsibility to govern wisely and effectively. Cause us to work together, Democrats and Republicans, for the good of all the people in our beloved State.

Bless our Nation, our State. Provide our President and our Governor and all who lead

with wisdom and strength. Keep our defenders of freedom under Your protecting care. Hear us as we pray and let us all say, Amen.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Amen.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Thank you so much, Rabbi Lazowski. Speaker Aresimowicz, would you please lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

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

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Please be seated. Mr. Clerk, is there any business on your desk, sir?

CLERK:

Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of Joint Convention Resolutions 2 and 3.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, good afternoon. Good afternoon to members of the two chambers, two bodies. Madam President, would the Clerk please call Joint Convention Resolution No. 2.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Joint Convention Resolution No. 2, Resolution raised in a Committee to inform the Governor that the Senate and House of Representatives are met in joint convention to receive his budget message.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor, please signify by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

All those opposed.

The ayes have it. At this time I appoint Senator Duff, Representative Fasano, Representative Ritter and Representatives -- and Representative Themis Klarides to the Committee. And while we await the Committee to fulfill its duty, I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome some of the very impressive dignitaries that are joining us.

And I want to start with our Constitutional Officers, our Secretary of the State, Denise Merrill. [Applause]

Our State Comptroller, Kevin Lembo.

[Applause]

And our Attorney General, William Tong.

[Applause]

And today we are joined by numerous Mayors and First Selectmen from around the State. Could you all -- and local elected leaders, could you all please raise your hands so that we can thank you for the great job that you do for our State. [Applause]

And I want to give a shout out to all of our wonderful Commissioners and Cabinet Members. Commissioners, raise your hands. You're doing a great job. [Applause]

All right. And since we have just one moment, I'm gonna take this opportunity to let everyone know the 2020 Census is fast approaching. And tomorrow, we are launching the [Connecticut.gov/census](https://connecticut.gov/census) website. So, thank you for your indulgence on that.

So, I see that the Committee has returned and I'm happy to report that having fulfilled its duty, it is discharged. [Applause]

It is my great pleasure to introduce my partner in Government, our great Governor, Ned Lamont. [Applause]

GOVERNOR LAMONT:

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Senator Fasano, Representative Klarides, or should I say, Klarides-Butler -- [Laughing] -- not yet. This is one public-private partnership we all strongly approve. [Applause]

My fellow State Officials, members of the General Assembly, Judicial Branch, Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz, Annie, Emily, Lindsay, honored guests and the people of the great State of Connecticut. Thank you, again, for trusting me for this office and inviting me back into the hall, the room where it happens. And thanks to our partnership. The state of our state is strong and it's getting stronger. [Applause]

But we're just getting started. We still have a long way to go. A year ago, I promised that we would work together to ensure that

Connecticut's future would no longer be defined by a fiscal crisis. We made a down payment on that promise by passing an on-time, honestly balanced budget that showed we could live within our means and hold the linen on taxes. We also boosted our State's Rainy Day Fund to a record level that will protect key services, protect our most vulnerable residents, and protect our taxpayers through the next economic storm.

And our successful efforts have made a difference for people. Our budget provided predictability to those counting on it most; I have heard from school principals. I heard from superintendents, city and town leaders, small businesses and families, all saying, thank you, I know what I can expect and we can plan accordingly.

But three years ago, just three years ago, the credit rating agencies downgraded our State. And you remember that headline in the

Wall Street Journal, "What's the matter with Connecticut?"

Well, today, the Wall Street Journal has a very different headline. Their tone in their last editorial was, "The State has dug a deep hole and maybe it has now stopped digging." Hey, it's the Journal. It's not perfect, but we're making progress, aren't we? [Laughing]  
[Applause]

Look, the rating agencies and the investors, they've upgraded our outlook for Connecticut, for the first time in 18 years, from neutral to positive. [Applause]

And as Treasurer Wooden would tell you, that is saving us tens of millions of dollars in interest costs. And by the way, economic growth picked up big time in our State last year, big time. And that means businesses and young families are now giving Connecticut a second look.

They're talking about Connecticut and we are responding. For a while in Connecticut,

it wasn't just Democrats and Republicans who weren't talking, it was that State government that wasn't connecting, it wasn't connecting with business leaders. It wasn't connecting with labor leaders. It wasn't connecting with educators. The Lord knows, we weren't talking to the hospitals. We had a failure to communicate.

So, first of all, I thought we needed to reset our relationship with the business community. So, in the last year, I have personally visited about 100 different companies, from our State's largest employer like Electric Boat, which now has over 12,000 employees working, the most in 30 years. The most in 30 years. [Applause]

And they've committed to hiring over 18,000 over the next 10 years, 18,000. I've also visited a lot of smaller start-ups, the ones I love to visit, like the Little House Brewery in Chester. They're one of 100 craft breweries that have gotten going in this stat.

And, yeah, you ought to come on some of those visits with me. [Applause]

Look, I come out of the business world. I've got to tell you, I love moving from the boardroom, to the shop floor, to the brew pub. I love getting to know these businesses, get to know their employees, what they proudly build every day and what it takes to keep them here in Connecticut, so they call Connecticut home. Look, our Commissioners are also reaching out every day to ask, what can we do to help? And I'm so proud of our Cabinet. It is -- [Applause] It's not only the most diverse in our State's history when it comes to gender and race, but talk about public-private partnerships, it also combines the expertise from leaders in the public and the private sector. They come from Hartford, they come from Waterbury, they come from Washington, D.C., they come from Washington State. My motto has always been, hire great people and

give them the freedom to make it happen and that's what we're doing. [Applause]

David Lehman and the Department of Economic and Community Development, they brought together more than 400 investors a few months ago, developers representing tens of millions of dollars, municipal leaders to launch [ctoportunityzones.com](http://ctoportunityzones.com), [ctoportunityzones.com](http://ctoportunityzones.com). Thousands of people, thousands of investors have taken a look at areas of the State that have been left behind too long, ready to invest in our State again.

Where's Katie Dykes? Katie Dykes, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection -- there you are. [Applause] Thank you. You are making it easier to take a brownfield site and transform it into a new business. And 95 percent of those complex decisions now happening in less than 90 days, less than 90 days, and all while maintaining the very highest environmental standards.

And there's Vanessa Dorantes, our Commissioner of Department of Children and Families, Vanessa. [Applause] Where's Vanessa? She rose through the ranks, started out in Waterbury, has dedicated her entire career to our State's children and thank you, you're working at DCF, you're gonna get us out from under the Juan F. legal decree. I'm trying to end this litigation one at a time. Thank you for what you're doing. [Applause]

How about Josh Geballe, Department of Administrative Services, he's still gonna roll out a one-stop process for all of our businesses that otherwise would have had to individually visit the Secretary of the State's site, DRS, DOL, DECD that alphabet soup of different departments we got. Now, you visit one site, you get registered and you are ready to go. [Applause]

I promised last year that you would be spending more time online, not in line, and we are just getting started.

Josh is also helping to plan for that tsunami of State employee retirements over the next few years, which he sees as an opportunity to show the government can do more with less. And we're already centralizing computer services and personnel to provide better services across State government at 20 percent less cost than just a couple of years ago. And talk about changing perceptions, Bloomberg News just recognized Connecticut as the 4th most innovative economy in the country. [Applause] I don't -- I don't applaud for 4th best, come on, we can do better than that. Let's go. [Applause]

Here in Hartford, I saw Luke Bronin over there, the capital region is home to companies that constantly innovate like Infosys, Ravi Kumar is here. That's a global digital company that has already hired about 600 Connecticut employees. [Applause] And how about 600 right here in the last couple of years, right here in Hartford. [Applause]

How about GalaxE Solutions, a pioneer in IT analytics. It just announced it is bringing hundreds of jobs to Hartford and jumpstart Cigna's next-gen personalized medicine? Tim Bryan, are you here? Tim Bryan? Thank you for calling Connecticut home. [Applause] Thank you for calling Hartford home. [Applause] And thanks for your conviction that this is a great place to do business.

And now it's just a short train ride away, New Haven. Yale New Haven Hospital is breaking ground on a state-of-the-art neuroscience center that's gonna transform medicine, commercial developers are connecting the downtown with new buildings that will offer modern lab and incubator space at a fraction of the cost of Boston and New York. And that means our STEM students and our PhDs and our emerging companies can achieve their dreams right here. New Haven is exploding with opportunity. Building permits there have more than doubled in the last year. And 2020 will

be the biggest year yet. Where's Justin Elicker? [Applause]

And right down the street, over in Guilford, serial entrepreneur, Jonathan Rothberg has created ButterflyiQ. It has all the preliminary FDA approvals right now to make sure that your smartphone could turn into a professional-grade ultrasound imaging device, making healthcare affordable to people across this State and around the world.

And Jonathan, I knew you grew up in Connecticut. Thanks for staying in Connecticut. Thanks for growing in Connecticut. Thank you for what you are doing. [Applause]

Mayor Martin, remember those headlines from Stamford a few years ago, oh, woe is us, UBS, the world's largest finance trading floor is now sitting vacant, no longer. World Wrestling Entertainment has taken over that trading floor and will turn it into the world's

largest digital production studio in the world.

[Applause]

I think you're just getting started. I'm told there's about \$6-billion dollars of other development going on in Stamford right now. Let's go.

All right, Connecticut, we got our mojo back. [Laughing] But that only matters if we have an economy that works for everybody, starting with a vibrant and growing middle class. So, neither Connecticut nor the middle class can grow, number one, unless we're preparing everybody of the next generation to get the job done.

And the revamped Governor's Council has assembled one of the most talented, ambitious state workforce boards in the country. Led by my friend, Garrett Moran, it includes our State's biggest employers and small. It includes educators, nonprofits, State agencies, and our unions to make sure that Connecticut

maintains the best training pipeline in the nation.

Look, I've said it many times, Connecticut has always had the best-trained, most productive, best educated workforce in the world, and it's getting more competitive out there, so we got to fight to keep up.

[Applause]

We have the best workforce in the world, do you know why, because we have the best teachers in the world. And our budget made the largest investment in K-12 education in the history of our State. And by the way, that takes some of the burden off of property tax, but also it provides teachers the resources they need to teach everything, everything from laser welding to computer coding.

Look, to ensure that all our kids get their opportunity at the starting line of life, we've worked with local philanthropists to establish the Partnership for Connecticut and focus on disengaged and disconnected kids and

young adults, doing everything we can to get them back on track. We can't afford to lose anybody. And we love you. And we're gonna fight to make sure that you get that opportunity.

And look, I come out of the entrepreneurial world, where you can often raise money to turn a good idea into a business. Well, the Partnership will provide funding for teachers and not-for-profits to turn their best ideas into more hope for their students. And we've already had hundreds of responses to our first request for information and we're just getting started on behalf of those kids. [Applause]

I guess somewhere out there is Commissioner Miguel Cardona, Commissioner of Education. [Applause] There you are.

[Applause] Look, Miguel, you and I have prioritized, you know, half the kids in our State are children of color, maybe 10 percent of the teachers are teachers of color. And we

made a big priority of recruiting more black and Hispanic teachers. [Applause] More black and Hispanic teachers. [Applause] Working with our historically black colleges, working historically with Hispanic colleges, making it easier for them to come and teach here. I want those kids to look up and say they can do it too. [Applause] And it doesn't stop in high school. More and more jobs require post-secondary training, and we are doing more to make higher education more affordable so no student gives up his or her dreams because they can't afford the cost. So, starting this year, UConn will eliminate tuition for all students of families earning less than \$50,000 a year. [Applause] And community college will be debt-free for recent high school graduates. Turco agrees to that, Hughes agrees to that. [Applause] Where's Will Haskell? [Applause]

And by the way, more and more of our Connecticut employers are beginning to pay down student loans, if you take a job with them.

So, Connecticut graduates, stay in Connecticut, we're making it worth your while.

Look, reducing the cost of education is just one way we are trying to make Connecticut a little more affordable for our middle-class families. We made it easier for seniors to stay in the State, thanks to you, by reducing taxes on social security and pension income. [Applause] And we've provided Veterans and volunteer first responders with property tax relief, thanks to you. And to help small business, we've removed the business entity tax. [Applause] And we've held the line on fees to make it easier for a plumber, an electrician, or any of the trades, we so desperately need you to be able to stay here in Connecticut and expand here in Connecticut. We're doing everything we can to make it easier for you as well.

And, I'll say it again, Connecticut, we adopted America's best \$15 minimum wage law. [Applause] The nation's best. [Applause]

It's already helped lift thousands of families out of poverty. Right now, as of October 1, a number of families working got a \$35 a week raise, that's what it meant. A \$35 a week raise. It lets them pay off the utility bill or some said, it just gives me a little more time to spend with my kids, maybe work one shift less. In the next five years, that law will help lift more than half a million Connecticut workers out of poverty. [Applause] Primarily women and people of color so they receive their fair share of a growing economy. Do you know that for the first time in American history, I think, we have more women than men in the U.S. workforce? More women than men working. [Applause] Get to work, guys.

So, we have to do more to make sure our workforce works for them. And that starts in the executive ranks. I got to say, where's Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz? She has worked with dozens of our major employers who have pledged that half of their senior leaders and

corporate board members will be women in less than 10 years, half. [Applause] We're already doing it for the State of Connecticut, now they can do it too and you'll be better for it.

[Applause]

And that's why together we also adopted a bold new paid family and medical leave program, bold new, that means no one in Connecticut will have to choose between a job they love and a sick child. [Applause]. Which makes it easier for people to work. It makes it easier for young families to work. It keeps our State going and it's the right thing to do.

[Applause].

And we've also, in terms of making it easy for people to work, we maintained and expanded access for affordable daycare with Care 4 Kids, so that more middle-income families can afford quality childcare. [Applause]

That means money back in the pockets of hard-working families. Where are the Rodriguez'? Jennifer, Richard, you know, you

just told me the story about how if you had taken that small raise, if you did a little more overtime, you would have lost all the benefits of Care 4 Kids and you would have lost money doing it. And instead, we've made it easier for middle-class families to afford it so that your beautiful daughter, you'll know, will have a great place, a safe place where you're hard at work. Thank you. I hope it makes a difference. [Applause]. That \$50 increase per year would have made a big difference in terms of what you had to do. That would have cost you thousands in affordable daycare.

All right. We've done a lot and we got a lot more to do. Having the best workforce and the best workplaces doesn't matter unless you can actually get to work. [Applause]

Too many people are wasting time on their commutes, not getting to work late, leaving home too early, not seeing their families. And, I know it's the elephant in the room, but

we also know and I think we all know this, that if we don't speed up, our economy's gonna continue to slow down.

And I think Republicans and Democrats alike agree, the scope of the job, what we've got to do. There's general agreement on how much we've got to spend to invest in order to get the job done.

I also know that it's a subject of some discussion, how we pay for it? All right. I'll cut to the chase. The Democrats have a plan, it includes a user fee on the big tractor trailer trucks that do most of the damage on our bridges. The Republicans have a plan that would redirect or divert money from the Rainy Day Fund. We've got two plans on the table. And you're in the room where it happens and that means, make it happen by casting a vote, making up your mind and getting this going.

[Applause]

And we can do it right now. Can I have a show of hands? [Laughing] Don't worry, Marty.

[Laughing] I'll -- we'll get this done soon enough.

I want to say also in terms of jobs, that one off the real proposals we've got in this upcoming session is to redesign the State's economic incentive program to focus on new, good paying jobs in growing sectors, with a special emphasis upon those communities which have been getting left behind. And this is a change because some of the best investments we can make as a State are in companies that are already here. Rather than rely on risky up-front grants to lure out-of-state companies, we're going to -- we're going to provide performance-based incentives, rewarding companies as they add on jobs, right here. It's gonna save us hundreds of millions of dollars in bonding and a lot less risk to our taxpayers. It gives folks incentives to grow and expand right here in the State of Connecticut. [Applause]

All right. It's great if you can -- you got that job, but you also have to be able to find a home that you can afford. So, my administration is going to support those communities that choose to welcome transit-oriented development that provides families with access to good homes near good jobs and good schools. Let's make sure that our teachers and our firemen and our cops and childcare providers can afford to live in the communities they serve.

Families also need to be able to better afford healthcare. Look, Connecticut has some of the very best doctors and hospitals and payers in the world. So, no excuse, we got to take the lead on increasing access to world-class, affordable healthcare by shining a light on costs and quality. [Applause]

I'm proposing legislation that will curb annual cost increases, so doctors' visits and prescription drugs stop consuming more and more of your paycheck every year. [Applause] Look,

Charlie Baker, over in Massachusetts said, similar programs there have already saved his state billions of dollars.

I want to say something else. Right now the White House is cutting funding for programs like Planned Parenthood that keep the full range of reproductive options available and affordable. Our budget's gonna start making up that difference this year. [Applause]

With infectious viruses threatening our nation and State from overseas, now more than ever is the time for a thoughtful vaccination program, which is so vital to keeping our families safe. [Applause]

One last thing on pharma, we can also, we got a bill out there to do this, hold down prescription drug prices by seeking a federal waiver to join other states so we can purchase pharma from Canada at much less cost, much less cost to you, much less cost to the State, much less cost to your constituents. It's the right

thing to do. [Applause] Thank you, sir.

[Applause]

I'd also like to give a shout out to somebody who's gonna be saving healthcare in innovative ways by getting better care for our State employees at less cost, and that's Comptroller Kevin Lembo. Thank you for what you're doing there. You've been fighting for this for many years, Kevin. [Applause]

All right. Without, leadership from Washington on some of these issues, it's up to us and I love to work with my neighboring States to solve problems. Here in New England, we know that economic growth goes hand-in-hand with protecting our environment against pollution and climate change.

The White House may not believe in climate change, but you know who does, the Navy. I was recently there with the Admiral who oversees our nation's submarine fleet. And he told me that one of the big selling points for our new submarine base in Groton is our higher

elevation. New construction moving up the hill and they're moving their utilities from the basement to the top floor. I know, it seemed a little ironic to me, but if submariners are worried about rising tides, so should we.

[Laughing] [Applause]

Stayed on the environment. Look, early in my administration, the Millstone Power Plant contacted us to said that they were thinking of closing a plant that provides about half of our power and almost all of our zero-carbon power. Look, we negotiated in good faith a deal that keeps them open for about 10 more years, providing clean energy and providing about 15,000 good paying jobs in Southeast Connecticut for that period of time.

And along the way, we're planning for the future. And Connecticut make the largest purchase of wind power in our State's history. [Applause] You know, and I did it working with Gina and Charlie in our neighboring states and

we got the lowest published work rates in the country by working together. [Applause].

And you ought to see what that's gonna mean in terms of our ports, like New London and Bridgeport. We're jumpstarting those cities with the creation of thousands of new green jobs.

And Connecticut will continue to take the lead in New England and beyond, as we set a firm timeline for carbon free, energy efficient future. [Applause] And there's a lot of talk about diversions. Let me just say, no more diverting from our energy efficiency programs, no more diverting from Green Bank. We are delivering on our promises. [Applause]

Now that we got all the good will going, let me change it. [Laughing] We are also working with our states, neighboring states as we consider regulating marijuana for adult use. [Applause]

All right. Like it or not, legalized marijuana is just a short drive away in

Massachusetts and New York is soon to follow. And I believe that a coordinated regional regulation is our best chance to protect public health by displacing illicit sellers and replacing them with trusted providers. And it's an opportunity to right the wrongs of a war on drugs that disproportionately impacted our minority communities. [Applause]

Right now, do you realize that what you can buy legally in Massachusetts, right across the border, could land you in prison here in Connecticut for up to a year. Look, we just marked the 100th anniversary of prohibition. How did that work out? [Laughing] That patchwork of cannabis and vaping laws, they're impossible to enforce. Look, during the last session, we worked together. We raised the legal age for tobacco and vaping products to 21 years of age. And we're gonna work with our neighboring states -- [Applause] -- and we will work with our neighboring states to make our laws safe, uniform, and enforceable.

Look, in a similar way, I want to work with you to ensure that together we stand up a responsible sports betting platform. A betting platform that promotes economic growth for our State and is fair to our tribal partners.

[Applause]

Mixed response. Together, let's work to ensure that we're not left behind by our neighboring states and we continue to move forward on gaming and do it in a way that avoids endless litigation. [Applause]

All right. And before I close, I want to tackle one more thing head on. No more badmouthing the State of Connecticut. The is an amazing State. This is an amazing State. [Applause] Everybody knows it's an amazing State. [Applause]

The rest of the country is looking at Connecticut in a new light, so should you. [Applause] Optimism is contagious. Optimism is contagious. Make a difference. [Applause] I don't have rose-colored glasses on. I know

we have a way to go. But we're making significant progress on your behalf every day.

And let me just highlight a few small things. Weren't you sick and tired of waiting in endless lines over at the Department of Motor Vehicles? [Laughing] I heard that wherever I went, so have you. Well, so was our new commissioner, Bongsi Magubane. Where's Bongsi? There she is. [Applause] Bongsi used operations research to cut those wait times in half. And by the way, Bongsi is one of the many immigrants whose success is Connecticut's success. [Applause] Bongsi moved here from South Africa, fleeing Apartheid, speaking only Zulu, graduated from UConn, rose to the top tech position at Aetna, and is now making DMV work for you.

How about, next up, license renewal from our iPhone, are you ready? [Laughing]  
[Applause]

All right. Here's my last mention of transportation, I promise, at least today.

[Laughing]

Have you heard about the smart technology stoplights? They're amazing. We are gonna be installing them as part of CT2030. We've all been heading home, it's late at night, there's not a car -- a car as far as the eye can see. You're creeping up a little closer, looking around the corner, right? Well, these smart stoplights are gonna see that. They're gonna see there's no cars coming in either direction and that red light will automatically go to green. And it will stay green a little bit longer. [Applause] Come on, that's pretty good, isn't it? [Applause] It's gonna make your commutes a little bit shorter, speeding up our highways, our exit ramps, speeding up bus service. It makes a difference.

Talking about speeding things up, remember a little over a year ago, when voters spent three or more hours in line, in the rain, in

New Haven, waiting to cast their ballot? Well, this year, Secretary -- yeah, you remember -- [Laughing] -- this year our Secretary of State, Denise Merrill is making a difference on that. She's put in a place a bill to streamline automatic and same-day voter registration. [Applause] Automatic, same-day registration. [Applause]. Not only does that reduce those long wait lines on Election Day and also we've got to build faith in government and faith in the integrity of voting and that's been jeopardized, boy was it jeopardized, two nights ago in Iowa. Well, we're not gonna let that happen here in Connecticut, I promise you that. Maybe the Connecticut Caucus is something we ought to think about in four years. We can get it right. We can get it right. [Applause] [Laughing]

So, anyway, I think that over the years, our government has had a bad case of the slows, and we are speeding things up. And we're also

fixing some of the larger problems that have been festering for years.

Speaking of never-ending litigation, we had that old lawsuit with the hospitals going back many years. That wasn't good for either party. And I've got to say, working with you on both sides of the aisle, working with the hospital association, they were a great partner in reaching a reasonable compromise that saves the taxpayers from paying hundreds of millions of dollars a year, it raises Medicaid rates so community hospitals can continue to serve those most in need, all the while, increasing eligibility for Medicaid in our budget, to make sure more families have access to health care, more families have access to health care. And by the way, we're working. We already have the lowest rate of uninsured in the history of the State and we can do better. That was a big difference, working with all of you.

[Applause].

A special thanks to Melissa McCaw, Bob Clark, our General Counsel, you put in hundreds of hours to get that done and it was worth it.

Last thing, look, results matter. And we've shown that we can government can work for the people. And I'm proud of what we were able to achieve together.

But what I love about Connecticut is not just what we've achieved, but also what we value. And we all celebrated Martin Luther King's birthday a few weeks ago. On a personal basis, I was particularly moved reading his letters home from Simsbury, Connecticut, where he was working on that tobacco farm as a very young man, I think he was 15.

And he wrote home to his daddy that he loved Connecticut because he felt so welcome here, at the restaurants, at the plays and the church. And he saw a contrast from what he was used to back home in Georgia. He felt that especially as he traveled in a train car where blacks and whites sat together from Hartford

down to Washington, D.C. And then in Washington, D.C., he had to step into a segregated car on the way down to Atlanta. And he wrote that experience in Connecticut was key to inspiring him to take up the ministry and the cause of racial and economic justice.

I'm not saying for a second that we are that good. But I am saying every day we try to be that. And if you look at the dysfunction in our Nation's capital. We were shocked by the hate speech and the parade in Charlottesville, some -- a couple of years ago. And I don't want to see any of that poison leaking closer to our home here in Connecticut. I've met with rabbis who fear attacks on their synagogues and Jewish community, wondering what happened to the country they love and felt so safe in.

I just remind people, an attack on your synagogue, an attack on your mosque is an attack on my church. We're family, we stand up against attacks like that. That's not what

Connecticut's about and that's not what  
America's about. [Applause]

As I travel, I talk to a lot of  
communities, they're asking for more police  
protection. I've met with many of the African  
American ministers who speak about fear in  
their communities, fear of gun violence. And  
some of them are actually wondering about the  
police and hope that they're there to protect  
them.

So, I got to tell you, I as a Governor,  
you as a Legislator, law enforcement we --  
every day we to rebuild that trust in all of  
our communities across this State, give them  
confidence that we're there for them.

[Applause]

And during those trying months, when our  
TVs were filled with pictures of the immigrant  
kids crossing the border, separated from their  
families at the Rio Grande, and I met with  
Hispanic families. I met with Hispanic kids  
here in Connecticut, and they were afraid to go

to school. They were a little worried about going to soccer practice.

And Connecticut knows immigrants and refugees enrich our community and make our State better and we're gonna remind them every day, thank you for being here in Connecticut. [Applause] Because these are Connecticut values. [Applause] These are Connecticut values. We're a family. [Applause] We're all in it together. [Applause]

I've be Governor for now a little over a year, look, and I celebrate so much good in our State. A State that can serve as a shining example for Martin Luther King and for communities around the country. And we're proud that you call Connecticut home and every day we'll work to earn your faith in our great State. And we're just getting started. We're much better when we work together.

God bless you and the great State of Connecticut. Thank you. [Applause]

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Thank you, Governor Lamont.

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Joint Convention Resolution No. 3,  
RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PRINTING OF THE  
GOVERNOR'S BUDGET MESSAGE.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Will you remark? Will you remark further? If not, let me try your minds. All in favor, please say, aye?

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Opposed? The ayes have it. The Resolution passes. And at this time, I would like to ask everyone to rise, please, for the Benediction and I'd like to invite House Chaplain, Imam Refai Arefin for the Benediction.

CHAPLAIN IMAM REFAI AREFIN:

May we leave this gathering in peace, blessed, unified with Connecticut values, humbled by the task ahead and resolved to govern with wisdom and grace.

Amen.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Amen.

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Thank you, Imam. Senator Duff.

[Applause]

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

I wasn't ready. [Laughing] I wasn't ready, sorry. [Laughing]

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

LT. GOVERNOR BYSIEWICZ:

Thank you, so ordered. The Convention is  
dissolved. Go forth and govern. [Gavel]

[Applause]

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 45 pages is a complete and accurate transcription of a digital sound recording of the House Proceedings on Wednesday, February 5, 2020.

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

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