

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

The Senate was called to order at 10:43 o'clock a.m., the President in the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will please come to order for the July 2020 Special Session. We will begin with a prayer by our guest Chaplain, and a jack of all trades [laughing], Tim Kehoe.

GUEST CHAPLAIN TIMOTHY KEHOE:

Understanding is one of the greatest accomplishments of life, and with it comes wisdom. Amen.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Chaplain. I would like to invite Senator Fasano to come forward and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, please.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

[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 Fasano. The Chair recognizes our distinguished Majority Leader, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Good morning, Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, when the [laughing] -- is there business on the Clerk's desk.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Yes, Mr. President. The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda Number 1, dated Tuesday, July 21st, 2020.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. I move all items on Senate Agenda Number 1, dated Tuesday, July 21st, 2020, to be acted upon as indicated and that the

Agenda be incorporated by the reference into the Senate Journal and the Senate transcript.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. And Mr. Majority Leader, once again, you're recognized for purposes of the -- the call of the Session.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. If the Clerk would read the call.

CLERK:

The Proclamation from His Excellency, the Governor,

WHEREAS -- WHEREAS, on March 10th, 2020, I issued a declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health recommend implementation of community mitigation strategies to slow the transmission of COVID-19, including cancellation of gatherings of ten people or more and social distancing in smaller groups; and

WHEREAS, the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 is higher for individuals who are 60 or -- or older and for those who have chronic health conditions; and

WHEREAS, the public health experts have determined that it is possible to transmit COVID-19 even before a person shows symptoms through aerosol transmission; and

WHEREAS, as a statewide primary election is scheduled for August 11, 2020, to select candidates for various state offices and for the 2020 federal presidential election; and

WHEREAS, a statewide general election is scheduled for November 3rd, 2020, to select candidates for various state and Congressional offices and office of the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, a significant portion of the poll workers and volunteers are 60 or older; and

WHEREAS, because elderly registered voters consistently demonstrate the highest rate of voter turnout, providing an alternative to in-person voting could be particularly helpful in reducing the risk of transmission during this voting among the population; and

WHEREAS, there is no approved vaccine to prevent or mitigate the effects of COVID-19, and there is not to expect to be such a -- a vaccine approved or widely available by November 3rd, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the public health experts have indicated that persons infected with COVID-19 may show -- may not symptoms and transmissions or shedding of coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may be the most virulent before a person shows any symptoms; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has recommended that people with mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19 be assumed to be infected with the disease; and

WHEREAS, public health experts have recommended that, to prevent transmission of COVID-19, and in light of the risk of asymptomatic transmission and a significant rate of false negative tests, everyone should assume they can carry COVID-19, even when have received a negative test result or do not have symptoms; and

WHEREAS, absentee voting offers a proven method of secure voting that reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19 by allowing individuals to vote by mail and by reducing the density of in-person voting at polling places; and

WHEREAS, on May 20, 2020, pursuant to my emergency powers under Sections 29-8(b) of the General Statutes, I issued Executive Order Number 7QQ, which modified state statutes to permit absentee voting for the August 11, 2020 primary by electors who are unable to appear at the polls because of sickness of COVID-19 while there exists no federally approved and widely available vaccine; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Connecticut and other state laws guarantee each person the equal protection under the law and freedom to exercise and enjoy civil and political rights without discrimination on the base of religion, race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, Connecticut has long struggled to make that guarantee a reality, especially with respect to people of color, extending as far back as colonial origins, through its years of legalized slavery after statehood, and continuing to the present time, during which a disproportionate number of law enforcement activities, including use of force, are black people and other people of color; and

WHEREAS, a Minneapolis police officer's killing of George Floyd has revealed, once again, that injustice and cruelty that black people and other people of color suffer at the hands of law enforcement, and -- and has thereby awoken the public's demand for reforms to our law enforcement agencies and progress toward a just and equal -- equitable society; and

WHEREAS, these recent events and the justifiable public anger over them once more has confronted us with what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called the fierce urgency of now; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly passed, and in more recent instances, has signed legislation promoting police accountability and transparency as well as broader reforms to our criminal justice system, such -- such as Public Act 11-71, Public Act 12-74, Public Acts 15-2 and 15-4 of the June Special Session, Public Act 19-59, and Public Act 19-90, but much more work remains to be done; and

WHEREAS, immediately adopting evidence-based strategies for producing quick and visible progress will promote public safety; and

WHEREAS, implementing and codifying more restrictive use of force policies, in combination with other measures, can reduce police use of deadly force and the likelihood that police officers will be injured or killed in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare providers providing services to patients need flexibility in testing, diagnosis and treatment while supporting adequate social distancing measures, and the increased utilization of the delivery of health care and other health services through certain modes of telehealth services has provided the needed flexibility; and

WHEREAS, insulin and other drugs, equipment and supplies are essential for many thousands of Connecticut residents who suffer from diabetes; and

WHEREAS, insulin and other drugs, equipment and supplies, though widely available and relatively inexpensive to manufacture, have become increasingly and unjustifiably expensive -- expensive and therefore unavailable to many diabetic -- diabetes patients who rely upon them to avoid severe illness or death;

NOW THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by the authority vested in me under Article III of the Amendments to the Constitution of Connecticut and Section 2-7 of the Connecticut General Statutes, in order to preserve orderly and decent government, do hereby:

Convene the General Assembly in Special Session in Hartford no earlier than Tuesday, July 21st, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. to:

(1) enact legislation to temporarily expanding absentee balloting for the August 2020 primary and November 2020 general election in -- in response to the COVID-19 pandemic so that voters may lawfully cast absentee ballots because of the sickness of COVID-19; and temporarily alter statutes governing the administration of elections to ensure local officials may administer such absentee balloting in a secure and orderly manner; and permit voters to register and vote on election day at more than one place per town and do so as long as they are in line to register to vote before 8:00 p.m.; and

(2) enact legislation to promote greater transparency and accountability for law enforcement;

(3) enact legislation to temporarily relax restrictions on -- on who can provide certain telehealth services and the modes through which such services are delivered; assist health care practitioners in issuing and pharmacies in

transferring prescriptions; temporarily make services more available to certain publicly and privately insured patients; and

(4) to enact legislation to promote more affordable access to prescription drugs, equipment, and supplies used to treat diabetes by limiting the coinsurance, copays, deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses certain insurance policies may impose on insureds for such drugs, equipment, and supplies; authorizing licensed pharmacists to prescribe and dispense emergency quantities of such drugs, equipment, and supplies; establish a working group to designed -- design certain parameters of program referring eligible individuals who have been diagnosed with diabetes to a federally-qualified health center, and authorizing the Commissioner of Social Services to apply for a Medicaid waiver, pursuant to Section 1115 of the Social Security Act; and more closely conforming various provisions of the general statutes concerning high deductible health plans to provisions of the -- the Internal Revenue Code in concerning health savings accounts and medical savings accounts.

Given under my hand and Seal of the State at the City of Hartford, this 17th day of July in the year 2020, Ned Lamont, Governor.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We will now recognize our Majority Leader for the purpose of introducing Resolutions from Senate Agenda Number 1.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I would ask the Clerk to call Senate Resolution Number 25.

CLERK:

Senate Resolution Number 25, RESOLUTION CONCERNING
THE RULES OF THE SENATE FOR THE JULY SPECIAL
SESSION, 2020.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, these are standard rules for the Senate for our Special Session. I would say the only changes is that it allows members to communicate telephonically so that -- with staff and others so that we are kept at more of a safe distance during debate. With that, I urge approval.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on Senate Resolution Number 25? If not, we'll call -- we'll try the members' minds. All in favor, please indicate by saying Aye.

SENATORS:

[All] Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? None. The Aye's have it, and Senate Resolution Number 25 is adopted. Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President would the Clerk now please call Senate Joint Resolution Number 52.

CLERK:

Senate Joint Resolution Number 52, RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE JOINT RULES FOR THE JULY SPECIAL SESSION, 2020.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. The Resolution has been -- been moved for adoption. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not --

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Mr. -- Mr. --

THE CHAIR:

All in favor --

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Mr. President, I just wanted to --

THE CHAIR:

Yes, you might explain the -- summarize the Resolution, Mr. -- Mr. Majority Leader?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I just want to mention that, again, these are pretty standard for our Joint Rules for a Special Session. And there are a couple minor changes, one that provides past and credentials for the media, allowing access to the building, and also -- and reflects the orders to close the building by the Speaker and the Senate President. So, with that, I would ask for approval of the Resolution.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. Will you remark further on the Resolution? Will you remark further? If not, we'll try your minds. All in favor, please indicate by saying Aye.

SENATORS:

[All] Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed. The Resolution is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, would the Clerk please call Senate Joint Resolution 51?

CLERK:

Senate Joint Resolution 51, RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE EXPENSES OF THE JULY SPECIAL SESSION, 2020.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

The Resolution has been moved. Would you remark further, Mr. Majority Leader?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, again, these are just boiler plate on our Special Session for expenses for the July Special Session.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on Senate Joint Resolution Number 51.? If not, we'll try your minds? All in favor, please indicate by saying Aye.

SENATORS:

[All] Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed. The Resolution is adopted. Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, if the Clerk would please call Senate Joint Resolution Number 50.

CLERK:

Senate Joint Resolution Number 50, RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PRINTING OF THE JOURNALS OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE JULY SPECIAL SESSION, 2020.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. The Resolution has been moved. Will you remark further? Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, these again are boiler plate of Resolution on printing of the journals for the Senate and the House for our Special Session.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the adoption of Senate Joint Resolution Number 50? Will you remark further? If not, we'll try your minds. All in favor, please indicate by saying Aye.

SENATORS:

[All] Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed. The Resolution is adopted. Mr. President -- Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I would ask that the Joint Resolutions be immediately transmitted to the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

The items have been moved for immediate transmittal. Is there debate on that motion or objection?

Hearing none, we'll try your minds. All in favor,
Aye?

SENATORS:

[All] Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? Thank you, the Resolution is adopted for immediate transmittal to the House. We call at this point for points of personal privilege for or for announcements. I would like to take just the privilege of the Chair for one brief but a very sad moment to announce that the -- the younger son of our Senate Clerk, our beloved hardworking Senate Clerk, Michael Jefferson's son, Malcom, died unexpected yesterday at the age of 23. And I'm sure that -- that all of us feel and share Mike's tragic loss as -- as any family would in that circumstance. So, I know he will be in all of our thoughts and prayers during this tragic and sorrowful time. So, at that point, if we might have our -- our traditional moment of silence in fellowship with our -- our friend, Mike Jefferson and his family. Thank you all very much. Any -- any additional points of personal privilege or announcements? If not, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. I also would just like to share the grief with you and others on the passing of Mike's son and know that he is in all of our hearts. I just also want to just take a moment to thank everybody who is pinch hitting today in a number of different roles including our Assistant Clerk, Tim Kehoe, Senator Fasano who has shown again to have multiple talents at multiple desks here and [laughing] did a great job. And it was good to see

my friend, Kevin Witkos as well. So, welcome everybody. We'll see you next week. And with that, Mr. President, I move that we adjourn subject to call of the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand adjourned for the July 2020 Special Session subject to the call of the Chair.

On motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 11:03 a.m. adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.