

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

The Senate was called to order at 12:01 p.m., the President in the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Well, good morning everyone. Will the Senate please come to order? Members and guests, please rise and direct your attention to our resident Chaplain, Ms. Kathy Grant of North Haven. Kathy.

ACTING CHAPLAIN KATHY GRANT:

Grant our Legislators the ability to be of reasonable mind, to form a right conscience so that all their judgments will benefit our State's welfare.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much. And I'd like to invite Senator Henri Martin forward to please lead us in the pledge.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

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 so much, Senator Martin. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, and good afternoon, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon or morning or whatever.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

I think you gaveled the Senate at exactly 11:59:59, so saying good morning was appropriate for at least the last second. And now here we are in the afternoon. Madam President, is there any business on the Clerk's desk.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Good afternoon. The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda No. 1 dated Tuesday, March 30th, 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move all items on Senate Agenda No. 1 dated Tuesday, March 30th, 2021 to be acted upon as indicated and that the Agenda be incorporated by reference into the Senate Journal and Senate Transcript.

**Senate Agenda
No. 1
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, March 30, 2021**

**SENATE BILL(S) FAVORABLY REPORTED - to be tabled for
the calendar and printing.**

COMMERCE COMMITTEE

SB NO. 1020 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROGRAM IN THE NAUGATUCK VALLEY.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

SUBST. SB NO. 651 AN ACT PERMITTING MUNICIPAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONNECTICUT HIGHER EDUCATION TRUST ACCOUNTS.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

SB NO. 985 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN'S HEALTH.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SUBST. SB NO. 925 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT, SALE AND POSSESSION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANTS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, BLACK RHINOCEROS, WHITE RHINOCEROS AND GIRAFFES.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SB NO. 927 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE SEWAGE SPILL RIGHT-TO-KNOW STATUTE.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SB NO. 931 AN ACT CONCERNING EMISSIONS STANDARDS FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY DUTY VEHICLES.

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

SUBST. SB NO. 141 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY CANCER RELIEF BENEFITS FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

SB NO. 942 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ON-TIME PAYMENT OF WAGES.

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

SB NO. 1001 AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT REGULATION.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

SUBST. SB NO. 847 AN ACT CONCERNING NEWBORN INFANT HEALTH SCREENING.

REPORT(S) RECEIVED - to be referred to committee(s) indicated.

Report - Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund - American Legion, Quarterly Report of Disbursals for October 1, 2020 to December 1, 2020 (Pursuant to Section 27-140 of the Connecticut General Statutes.)
Date received: March 24, 2021

Referred to Committees on Veterans' Affairs.

Report- The Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development - 2018-2023 State Plan of Conservation and Development. (Pursuant to Section 16a-30 of the Connecticut General Statutes.)
Date received: March 25, 2021.

Referred to Committees on Environment and Planning and Development.

SENATE BILL(S) FAVORABLY REPORTED WITH CHANGE OF REFERENCE - to be referred to committee(s) indicated.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SB NO. 948 AN ACT ADDRESSING EDUCATION FUNDING AND RACIAL EQUITY IN CONNECTICUT.

Referred to the Committee on Appropriations

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

SB NO. 933 AN ACT EXTENDING TAX CREDITS FOR APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAMS TO AFFECTED BUSINESS ENTITIES AND TO ALL TRADES THAT HAVE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

SB NO. 953 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE LEARN, WORK, PAY PROGRAM.

Referred to the Committee on Appropriations

COMMERCE COMMITTEE

SB NO. 1038 AN ACT CONCERNING BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE

SB NO. 842 AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH CARE IN CONNECTICUT.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SB NO. 413 AN ACT WAIVING CERTAIN FEES FOR VETERANS FOR OCCUPATIONAL LICENSURE.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SB NO. 614 AN ACT EXEMPTING VETERANS FROM PAYMENT OF THE FARES FOR BUS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE

HOUSE BILL(S) FAVORABLY REPORTED WITH CHANGE OF REFERENCE - to be referred to committee(s) indicated.

COMMERCE COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6607 AN ACT INCENTIVIZING THE ADOPTION OF CYBERSECURITY STANDARDS FOR BUSINESSES.

Referred to the Committee on Judiciary

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SUBST. HB NO. 6535 AN ACT CONCERNING ISSUES RELATING TO SCHOOL SECURITY.

Referred to the Committee on Appropriations

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SUBST. HB NO. 6558 AN ACT CONCERNING ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT.

Referred to the Committee on Appropriations

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SUBST. HB NO. 6618 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING ISSUES RELATED TO PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT.

Referred to the Committee on Appropriations

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6617 AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND REVISIONS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS STATUTES.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6404 AN ACT FUNDING THE DEBT-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAM.

Referred to the Committee on Appropriations

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6406 AN ACT EXEMPTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FROM THE SALES TAX.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT
COMMITTEE**

**HB NO. 6407 AN ACT CONCERNING THE OCCUPATIONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL LICENSES OF MILITARY MEMBERS' SPOUSES.**

Referred to the Committee on Judiciary

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**SUBST. HB NO. 6481 AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL
REGISTRATION MARKER PLATES FOR VETERANS AND MEMBERS
OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO SERVED IN PERIODS OF WAR.**

Referred to the Committee on Transportation

**INTRODUCTION OF SENATE AND HOUSE LIST OF BILLS AND
RESOLUTIONS (LIST NO. 46) - to be waived and bills
and resolutions to be referred to committee(s)
indicated.**

THE CHAIR:

Hearing no objections, so ordered. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I have two Bills to mark today.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

We can call them in this order. The first Bill is on Calendar Page 15, Calendar 140, Emergency Certified Bill House Bill 6672. If you could mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

And on the second Bill on Calendar Page 12. Madam President, I would ask for suspension to mark go on Calendar Page 12, Calendar 139, substitute for House Bill 6610.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I'd like to mark that item go as well.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And we could mark all the other items on the Calendar as a PR?

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. And Madam President, if we can just stand at ease for a moment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And the Senate will indeed stand at ease.

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, will the Clerk please call the first item marked go please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 15, Calendar No. 140, House Bill No. 6672, AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC HEALTH AND CIVIL PREPAREDNESS EMERGENCIES DECLARED AND RENEWED BY THE GOVERNOR.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Good to see you this afternoon. And I would like to move passage of the Emergency Certified Bill, House Bill 6672 in concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Yes, Madam President. Thank you. As the Clerk read, the title of the Bill, the key provision is on Line 6, where by virtue of this Act, the General Assembly will be ratifying the declarations of the Governor of September 1st, 2020, January 26th, 2021 in response to the March 10th, 2020, September 1st, 2020, and January 26th, 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

And while those declarations are hereby ratified under this emergency certified Bill, Madam

President, we believe that the other significant provision, of course, is that it will also extend until May 20th of 2021. The Governor will be then hereby authorized to renew said public health and civil preparedness emergency declarations through that date.

So, it extends by one month from April 20th, which is the current expiration date of the last extension to, for another month from April 20th to May 20th, the emergency powers that the Governor has in place under those declarations will be in place for another month. That is the content of the Bill. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Madam President, just after it, I'd just like to further comment on the Bill after summarizing its content. Madam President, this Bill, it is interesting that just yesterday we received or late in the day yesterday received from the Connecticut Supreme Court a decision which is the fuller explanation of the holding back in December that upheld the Governor's use of these emergency powers as reasonable provisions and not an abuse of authority and also not in any way an Act by the Legislature in giving up excessive authority to the executive.

So that we have a significant quote from Justice McDonald, who wrote the unanimous opinion, he said, moreover, it is reasonable for the Legislature to conclude that the executive branch of government would be far better suited to respond to a serious disaster with the speed and flexibility needed to protect the public health and welfare. Specifically, the Legislature itself is not in session continuously and would not be well-positioned to

mount a rapid response to a serious disaster, especially one that develops and evolves quickly or unpredictably, and thus requires an ongoing and agile response.

So those are the key terms. I think that Justice McDonald uses speed and flexibility. The situation that may evolve quickly or unpredictably, and the requirement of an ongoing and agile response, that I think lays out precisely why enhanced executive authority is needed in a crisis. The General Assembly is a deliberative body that is not set up to act with the speed that the executive can act in the course of an emergency. Our process is deliberative and there are times when a degree of speed is needed in an emergency that the General Assembly is just not structured to provide.

It's critical, I think to keep that in mind and the Supreme Court has recognized the appropriateness of that in dealing with this pandemic. Also, it's important to note that the petition brought over the Governor's powers about closing down a restaurant, the court ruled, we conclude that the plaintiffs' cannot meet their heavy burden of establishing that the statute is a violation of the separation of powers provision of Article Second of the Connecticut Constitution on the basis that it impermissibly delegates legislative authority to the Governor.

So, I think that those two key provisions of the decision indicate why what has been done during the pandemic by the executive with the concurrence of the Legislature. And now with a specific ratification by the Legislature is appropriate.

There's also a quotation, a section of Justice McDonald's opinion that talks about the issue of legislative oversight. And there has been some discussion as to whether or not that has been adequate or not to this point. And the Governor, there's a quote where the justice talks about the

issue of a degree of review and what is appropriate under those circumstances and Justice McDonald points out that, said that the, excuse me, here it is.

There is although -- he has mentioned that there have been two times of course, where the Legislature has met to consider the Governor's powers as declared. So, in this case, the Legislative Committee with the statutory authority to disapprove the Governor Lamont's public health emergency declaration met on two occasions and declined to exercise its disapproval powers either time, although not the equivalent of full legislative ratification. This procedure should significantly ameliorate concerns regarding legislative oversight.

And that I think is the essence of what we're about today is providing that ratification. It is in fact the sort of a belt and suspenders proposal to make sure that we are now providing a degree of acknowledgement of the correctness of the Governor's actions going beyond the meeting of the Committee, the constituted Committee of Ten that twice met and chose not to disapprove the Governor's action.

This is a more positive rather than a response, a default response that does involve as the text of the Bill actually says ratification. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Looney. And before I turn to the next Senator for remarks, I do want to say before we begin that Senator Lesser has informed the Chair pursuant to Senate Rule 24, that he will be voting from outside the Chamber and that he is indeed present at the legislative office building or the Capitol and will remain present for each vote. And we may be hearing from several other Senators who are in this situation. Senator Miner, will you remark on the legislation before us?

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Thank you. Madam President, let me start by saying that I don't think there's a person serving in this Chamber that believes this is about an abuse of power. I think people that want to question whether or not this is the appropriate pathway for us to continue on, have questions. Our constituents have had questions. They've expressed concerns.

There's been a significant loss of life in this state. It's not like been lost on me. We all know significant loss of businesses. We all know. It's been a year. It's been a year that we have all struggled as a state to try and find a way to exist, try and find a way to get healthy, try and find a way to prosper. But the minute you ask a question about whether or not it continues as it has done for the last year, it's a problem. And that's what I don't get, Madam President. I don't get that it's either all on or all off.

Like everybody else in this Chamber, I worked very hard with the administration this time last year, as EOs were crafted. I understood the gravity of the situation. We were watching the numbers increase. We knew the severity. We knew the implications of large gatherings. We knew the implications of continuing business as usual.

There was communication, significant communication. I'm sure leadership on the other side of the aisle, communicated with their members as did our leadership with us. I got to know attorneys that worked for this administration that I did not know. And it wasn't just because we wanted to introduce ourselves. It was because we were trying to find our way in Connecticut to survive.

What did essential mean? That's where it all started. Who was essential and who wasn't essential?

Initially, it was going to be the federal definition. And that honestly, wasn't too long before we realized if everyone else was told to stay home, this state was going to be in big trouble financially. People were going to be in big trouble financially. And so, we tried to reach an agreement. Senator Cassano and Senator Looney, and a number of others worked collaboratively with the administration to make sure that this was no more difficult for our constituents than it had to be.

Wasn't my definition of essential. I didn't win on all of them, I lost on many, but when businesses were told they had to close, we actually participated throughout the year in that process as well. We help people understand the reasoning. I've got a constituent that ran a ski area was told to lock the door, leave everything in place and go home. It wasn't until I had a conversation with the administration last summer, that they were allowed to reopen for maintenance. It never occurred to anybody that that might happen.

You name it. Every single one of us has a story. I don't think the Governor did it intentionally. It was not intended to be abuse of authority. It may not have been top on their mind. People were dying at a rate of a hundred a day, but that doesn't diminish our role in this process in my view,

Hand sanitizer, you couldn't find hand sanitizer if you had a million bucks. I had a constituent that was making it. The Department of Consumer Protection sent him a letter and said mail back your distiller's license, you can't make hand sanitizer while you're making liquor. Called up the Governor's office. Within 24 hours, there was an EO straightened that situation out, and it's worked just like clockwork from then since now.

We had cooperation. We had communication. We were able to share with our constituents what the importance was of some of these decisions. And they

were able to communicate with us about whether they were hitting the market. They weren't.

I said to our caucus a little while ago, if you look at the map of the State of Connecticut, there are more red towns right now that qualify under the rubric of 15 people per hundred thousand, I think is the number, than don't. In Litchfield, that's less than a person. I didn't make that map. Is that the only color we have one red, red, that's it, red or white, red or gray. The public doesn't even understand anymore. And they have a limited voice.

And so, the concern I have with just a unilateral decision to extend the authority isn't so much about whether it's being abused in all cases or any case. It's about whether we've lost the ability to communicate with people, about whether an EO should stay in order, whether it should go away, what are the implications? I don't know whether we should be making hand sanitizer in a distillery any more than the man on the moon. I don't know.

But I have every reason to believe that absent a discussion between the Legislature and any executive branch, based on what I've seen over the last six months, you're not going to be guaranteed that conversation. It's going to be decided by someone else. And whether or not it benefits society in Connecticut may not exactly be the case when a decision is made. And so that's my concern about unilaterally extending to a period of time, all of these decision-making authorities with the Governor.

And lastly, I'll say this, in the Appropriations Committee, we had a conversation about the Governor's executive authority over federal funds. It was probably one of the most healthy discussions I've had with my Democrat counterparts this year. It was focused, it was measured, it was not accusatory. It was not lightly thought of and it was universally accepted by every member in this Chamber with a yes vote and in the House. And maybe I'll be corrected,

but I think one of the first comments out of the Governor's offices, we've never objected to a conversation about what we use federal funds for, certainly not around COVID.

So, there was a time in this conversation when we in this chamber have equally recognized that we have a role to play equally. So, it's not an on-off switch in my estimation. It's not all yes, all no. I think a willingness to have a conversation about whether we as legislators, we as elected officials have an opportunity to weigh in during a period of time. And so, Madam President, that's my objection to 6672. I understand the concern some people have about being able to make all decisions everyday. I think we showed in the Appropriations Committee that can be terribly deliberative, that we can actually do things in less than a week's time. I'm sure anybody in leadership here knows that it wasn't an accident. We can move swiftly. And I don't think there's a reason to extend this authority this long at this time. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. And before we move to Senator Witkos, the Chair has been informed that Senator Miller pursuant to Rule 24 will be voting from outside the Chamber and that Senator Miller is present at the LOB or the Capitol and will be present for each vote. Good afternoon, Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. It was a little over a week and a year ago when we were last in this building and I recall we were going to be away for a couple of days for a deep cleansing, and then we never came back and we concluded our session non-ceremoniously. The date came and went and we all went about our business trying to figure out what is COVID-19, how did it get here? How do we deal with

it? And how do we try to live our everyday lives as best as we can?

And the Committee of Ten as a good Senator had alluded to earlier in the opening remarks in bringing out the Bill convened and recommended that we authorize the Governor or the executive branch to declare a public health or civil preparedness emergency, and take the reins of government, take the reins and lead us through these unknown times, perilous and fateful at sometimes.

And it's something in my lifetime I had never seen where it brought me back to when I was a youngster going out on Sundays and the blue laws were in place. And really the only thing that was open was a grocery store and maybe a pharmacy nothing else was open. And it reminded me of those days in the first few days of the pandemic, driving my car down the street and being able to count the number of cars that pass by me on one end, count the number of businesses that were actually opened, stand in shock or dismay visiting my grocery store and seeing the shelves bare. People were afraid. People were looking for leadership. People were looking for a light at the end of the tunnel, a way to that was shine, a passageway to lead us through this.

And Governor Lamont began that track, began that leadership by issuing Executive Orders with the attempts of keeping our population safe and secure. And after some time, as the world began to learn more about COVID, how it's passed from person to person, what is the appropriate time to quarantine yourselves? I recall it was 14 days and then I've heard it was reduced to 10. We had a rapid, rapid pace in which vaccines were formulated, tested, tried, and now being dispersed. I don't think we've done anything like that globally.

But this COVID-19 knows no bounds. But as I said, we were learning a little bit more about it and some of the Executive Orders that came into place and some

have been reduced, some have been rescinded. But there are things that we weren't sure of why they were put into place. I'm assuming it's to protect me. It's to protect my family, my neighbors, all of us here, but I know that I've continuously sought answers based on scientific evidence and scientific metrics. And that should be driving the direction on our public health policies. We had policies in place that prohibited the gatherings of folks in a hall and even in a private home. The most intrusive that state government can do is to invade your privacy in your home and telling you, you're only allowed to have X amount of people within your home outside of family members.

We closed certain businesses down because we felt the information we had warranted that. And I say, we I'll say the executive branch because this body subjugated our responsibility to the executive branch because the argument was that one executive could move swifter and quicker than a full deliberative body on taking action.

And I'll say to you that at times I agree, but another times I certainly don't agree. And I'll bring an example that I share with our caucus earlier today at the beginning of Governor Lamont's term, where the federal government was in an extended period of shutdown, Governor Lamont wisely and courageously was able to unite the parties to come together with the banking industry and formulate a no interest loan for federal employees to be paid back. And I think from the date of that announcement, this body was here within four days and it passed unanimously in both Chambers inside by the Governor into law.

So, if there's a will, there's a way we can do it. We've proven that. And in fact, the Bill that we're voting on right now that is before this body is an emergency certification. Emergency certification means we're bypassing the rules. We've got some language we want you to vote on today. Didn't never

had a public hearing. Didn't go through the process. Didn't go -- It was vetted by all of the Committees. We have a process to move legislation along.

And Madam President, the reason why I'm bringing up some of these issues is because we now as a legislative body have taken the responsibility of extending the Governor's authority for an additional 30 days, moving away from the 10 panel process that began this pandemic containment. But there is -- but the emergency certification only moves to extend it by an initial 30 days. And Madam President, I think we need to go beyond that and make sure that we use today's example of this body, the legislative branch of government, the co-equal branch of government plays a part as a whole and not a fraction.

And with that Madam President, I believe the Clerk has in his possession, LCO No. 6253, I ask to be called and I be given leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 6253. Senate Schedule A.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The amendment before you is very simple and actually codifies what we're doing today. It says that if the Governor declares a public health emergency or a civil health preparedness emergency in excess of seven days, now we need to come back here as a legislative branch of government and either ratify it or reject it. I believe that is the proper thing to do. I believe

that we've -- we've given the Governor under the proposed amendment seven days to address any of those natural disasters that may come our way like hurricanes or nor'easters where it may cause the state to close or the highways to be closed for 24 hour period.

The Governor still maintains that authority only if the request is beyond a seven day period, this body shall convene and we shall ratify or we shall reject it. And that is exactly what we're doing here today. And I would ask the Chamber's support of the amendment and Madam President, when the vote is taken, I ask to be taken by roll call.

THE CHAIR:

And it will indeed be taken by roll, but I do want to ask you, sir, if you would like to move adoption of the amendment.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

I apologize, Madam President. I've been a little while. Yes, I'd like to move adoption. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

We're all a bit rusty. Okay. And the question is indeed on adoption, will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise in support of the amendment. The amendment is really rather simple. It reinserts this body in the process of making or advising decisions as we go forward. We all had an opinion last year. Some of us shared it. Some of us didn't. Whether it was accepted, was up to the administration. That's the way we entered into this process. I think what we're suggesting is,

as we work our way out of this process, it should be more deliberative. The language is rather simple.

As I said, either ratified or rejected. It doesn't allow a decision to be made about whether we come in to do it. I believe that says we will come in and do it. It doesn't allow one side or the other to choose to vacate that responsibility. One way or the other, we'll go on record.

I'm willing to go on record on any issue that has to do with COVID-19. If someone wants to know what my constituents think, I'm willing to share that any day we want to be called into session just as we did last week, I think we have an opinion. And I think that opinion is valid today. It certainly would be valid if someone wanted to extend this beyond seven days. And as we showed last week, I do believe can rally the troops, support it or not. We can come in here, do our business, share our voice and take back some portion of our responsible duty in this Chamber. That's the commitment we made to our constituents. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I too rise in support of the amendment today. We have been here a while. We have seen for over a year, the devastation of this pandemic to people, to places, to businesses, the changed, how many people did and operated processes throughout their families, throughout their businesses, throughout their lives.

And I think we all agree. There was a time when we needed one person to make emergency decisions. And that that has happened. I believe the Governor has

done a fair job, a good job of moving the state through this pandemic, no experience to draw from, and the opportunity for the challenge I think was met and has done well, but to the points that were made this morning, there were some things that we could have been doing better as we approach the tail end of this pandemic.

And by the tail end, I mean that it seems to be getting under control with more vaccinations, with people getting used to safety measures. And there's an opportunity that I thought this body missed by not taking a bipartisan effort to sit and to review those Executive Orders that need to live on beyond the time when the Governor's powers would cease and that's coming.

Today, we're talking about April 20th or May 20th, but the time is coming. And so, the time is short for us to prepare because there are many, many issues that we need to codify, that we all agree should move forward. There's some, I'm sure that we need to modify, and still move forward. And there are others that probably need to be eliminated, but to do that, there needs to be a conversation in my view, and there needs to be a process.

And that should be a bipartisan process, a conversation that is deliberate, measured, and let's take all of those orders that we all can agree and put them on one side, all the orders that we may disagree and put them on the other side and have the conversation moving forward on what we're going to do.

I think we should be able to do that. And I think that's been our argument that that has not been done as we've been asking to do that for some time now since January. So, Madam President, I think that this amendment is a good step forward. It preserves the Governor's opportunity to lead in an emergency when the situation dictates itself. But I think it also provides for the opportunity that Senator

Witkos mentioned and that is let us get back to work, give us the opportunity to get back to work.

We are a co-equal branch of government. And it's time for us to act that way. I stand in support and urge my colleagues to vote in support. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much, Senator Formica. Will you remark further? Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Speaking in opposition to the amendment. Madam President, I believe that this amendment while well-intended in terms of process actually would create some problems in the event of a true emergency.

First of all, it would leave the public, I think, in limbo for a period of time, not knowing whether or not the Governor's declaration would in fact be overturned by the Legislature or not. And you would have the issue where someone, let's suppose there was an issue ordering a shutdown of certain businesses or something and the owners of those businesses would not know how to react to that, not knowing whether they should take action immediately or wait for a legislative action to see whether something different might happen, thereby, undermining that the true capacity of the Governor to act to address that emergency.

Also, Madam President, again, a lot can happen within 14 days. Clearly just the logistics here. I imagine the Governor would not be anxious to call the Legislature back into session, so we might have to petition ourselves in to do so, now that's a process that takes some time and effort to get us into session.

And as Senator Witkos has pointed early, I'm glad he raised the example of the issue, and I think that the Governor and the General Assembly did take decisive action in 2019 during the crisis of the laid off of the furloughed federal workers, where we acted quickly to provide loans for those workers and also to suspend the municipal penalties and taxes for late filing of property taxes that were due in the month of January.

All the planets were aligned. Everyone was in agreement. I think there was only one no vote in the Senate on that Bill. It was almost unanimous in the House and still it took four or five days to pull everything together to get that done to go from the handshake agreement to let's do this.

It's important to actually getting it voted on in both Chambers. And again, Madam President, it's important to keep in mind that we were actually in session at that time, and that of course facilitates things because people know they're on call and need to be brought up here. It might take even longer to align everything if we were not in session at the time that the order was issued. So, I think that this, I think is certainly a legitimate goal, which is to make sure that there is legislative buy-in in participation.

And I think we were accomplishing that today by the measure of ratifying the Governor's acts. But I think as a practical matter this would undermine the capacity to respond decisively in an emergency and would leave people wondering whether the order truly was going to take effect immediately or whether it would not potentially again, since this would be an act of the Legislature potentially, then it is also something that the Governor could veto and then with the Legislature have to potentially come in and override the veto, thereby creating a much longer period of limbo before it was known for sure whether the declaration were going to take effect or not.

So, for those reasons, Madam President, I would urge rejection of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. If there are no further remarks, Mr. Clerk, would you kindly call the roll call vote and 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 LCO No. 6253. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on LCO No. 6253. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

The Chair has been informed that pursuant to Senate Rule 24, Senator Mae Flexer will be voting from outside the Chamber and that she is present at the legislative office building of our State Capitol.

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. And I would like the Clerk to know that I am in possession of the votes of a written statement signed by Senator Flexer who votes in the negative, and that I am in possession of Senator Patricia Billie Miller's vote, she votes in the negative and I am in possession of Senator Matt Lesser's vote. He votes in the negative. Mr. Clerk, kindly record those votes and announce the tally.

CLERK:

LCO No. 6253

Total number voting	33
Total number voting Yea	10
Total voting Nay	23

Absent and not voting

3

THE CHAIR:

And the motion fails. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before the Chamber. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Madam President. In conclusion, I'd just like to simply state and recall the good Senators' conversation with regard to the decision that he spoke of earlier Justice McDonald. And it does say also in that decision that at a minimum, we must continuously evaluate the necessity of the Executive Orders and to justify their continued existence.

Madam President, we've been saying here since January and again today that it's time to have a process. It's time to get together on these Executive Orders. It's time to understand where we're going. Let's accentuate and codify the good. Let's remove the outdated and let's modify what needs to be and do that together as a co-equal branch in the Legislature, and move forward. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further on the legislation before us? Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'd like to yield to Senator Osten, please.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten, good afternoon. Do you accept the yield, Senator?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I accept the yield and it's nice to see you today.

THE CHAIR:

Nice to see you.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

So relative to the Executive Orders that the Governor has placed there are a couple that I have some concern with and would like to make sure that we're addressing those issues. And one of them would be relative to municipal government to make sure that municipal government can go back to normal so that residents within each municipality has an ability to weigh in on a budget for their school, for their town government, and in the cases of regional high schools that they have the ability to weigh in on those particular budgets, which usually start in April.

So, my understanding is some of the Executive Orders relative to municipal government have lapsed. There is still some confusion out there concerning budgets for regional high schools and the individual municipalities. In addition to that, there are municipal government issues concerning ordinances and other things that require either a town meeting or a referendum. And I would strongly encourage municipalities to conduct referendums while a little

bit more expensive, give people some comfort to not sit into a hundred person town meeting or larger. So, I think that that's something that I would like to see the Governor put something out on relative to municipal budgets regional school budgets and local Boards of Ed budgets and town ordinances concerning a myriad of different items.

In addition to that, there were many things that were stopped concerning visitation, concerning elder abuse and child abuse where many of the fact-finding sessions were done by a Zoom or Microsoft Teams or any other platform. And I think that it's time for us to get back to in-person viewing of situations that might happen. In particular for elder abuse, which was something that I questioned even when that Executive Order was first put in.

If someone is concerned with elder abuse and you do a video review of set abuse, that's going to be often within the confines of that person. And perhaps the person that is committing a set abuse. And no one is going to say, yes, I'm being abused by a family member or a neighbor or relative that is they're visiting.

So, I'm hoping that as we move farther along, as people become more vaccinated that we're allowing for an opening up and removal of some of the Executive Orders concerning these particular items. I would actually like to have a small committee get together and make sure that we're reviewing those Executive Orders and removing some that are sort of more onerous and not necessary any longer. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I'd rise to support the legislation before us. Connecticut's gone through a lot over the last year as our nation and our world have. And we have, I think all, both sides of the aisle worked hard to ensure that our residents are kept safe that we do everything we can to keep them healthy. And there are times where we may agree or disagree on the methods of how to get there. But I believe that through the work that the Governor has done in consultation with the Legislature and especially the legislative leaders that the Connecticut has been a model for states across the nation on how we have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

And as Senator Looney had said earlier that a Legislature, any Legislature, any legislative body whether it's a city council or a state Legislature, even the US Congress doesn't have the ability to work and change on a dime. We're a deliberative body on purpose that takes its time as we move through various pieces of policy and legislation, and it's designed that way, so that we don't -- we're not in a rush to judgment on issues.

Just as was when we had the Sandy Hook massacre literally that day people were emailing me, asking us to do something. And yet it was many months afterwards, and this was in a very intense effort to finally pass some laws that resulted in the strongest gun laws in the nation. But that was not something that could be done in a moment's notice or within one or two days, it took deliberation, compromise and working together in order to pass that bipartisan legislation.

So here we are today, a year after and many of us now see the light at the end of the tunnel. But we are still in that tunnel with our infections here in the State of Connecticut. We've seen more than 3,200 new cases of COVID-19 over the weekend, and we're seeing a thousand new infections almost every day. And unfortunately, we've seen nearly 8,000

Connecticut residents die of COVID-19 over the last year. And so, we know that our work is not done.

I will say that on these Executive Orders, the Governor has been very judicious. He has worked hard to collaborate and speak to not only those of us in the Legislature, but those on the local level as well, which is why I believe the State Supreme Court has upheld his ability to have these Executive Orders and the civil preparedness and public health emergencies.

The Governor, I believe again, has worked extremely hard at keeping our state safe, which is why the Supreme Court in their decision even said, if the Governor can have an emergency, declare an emergency during a snowstorm, he's sure to ought to be able to have the ability to have declared emergencies during a pandemic.

And so, while we can, again, debate some of these issues we are here today, the Bill, after this will codify his Executive Orders on restaurants and how it relates to our zoning. We have -- there's Executive Orders that allow people to delay paying their taxes until May. There's Executive Orders with regard to administering vaccinations. There's Executive Orders that ensure that we're able to bring in additional dollars in our state that help the very people, we're here to serve and to protect.

So, Madam President, there's a lot of work that still needs to be done. I certainly respect my colleagues who may not agree, but believe that during this time it is important that we put health and safety above all else that we still work in a collaborative way, and that we continue to allow the executive branch to have flexibility that it needs in order to meet the needs of our citizens during such a trying time that is unprecedented.

And especially with the new variations that are coming out, that we're able to help them get to the

end of the tunnel to meet that light, that where we're vaccinated, we can get back to some semblance of normalcy. But in the midst of being in that tunnel we are doing everything possible to keep people safe in the State of Connecticut. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Will you remark further on the legislation before us? Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President. In summation, speaking in support of the Emergency Certified Bill. Madam President, it is important to continue with these executive powers because as the Majority Leader said we do not have this pandemic in our rear-view mirror, as of yet. It is still staring us in the face. As our Majority Leader cited that just yesterday more than 3,200 new cases reported over the weekend, we're worried that variant strains from other places that may now be coming into Connecticut, the UK strain which apparently is more easily communicated than others and maybe more dangerous. And now it makes up a significant percentage of the newer cases in Connecticut.

We are still in the midst of this pandemic. Despite all of the care that we have taken Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that warn Monday of impending doom, her quote, from a potential fourth search of the virus in the pandemic, even as the number of US citizens being vaccinated increases. And I think that's probably one of the most alarming statistics is that we are seeing an increase in cases and increase in the positivity rate, even as more citizens are being vaccinated and even reaching their second vaccination. This is certainly, certainly disturbing and sobering.

So, all the more need for us to recognize that emergency powers may continue to be necessary for the foreseeable future. I think that the Governor is certainly to be commended for the prudent and measured way that he has handled his executive authority in dealing with the emergency declarations and the Executive Orders, under that he has been careful in consultative and as recognized that these are extraordinary times that the subject to potential abuse, if someone should overreach. And he has not done that as the court decisions both at the trial level and the Supreme Court decision that came out yesterday reaffirm. So, it is -- it is very important.

There are other reasons, other practical financial reasons to continue having the Executive Order in place. There were some -- there was some concern that certain FEMA grants and certain funding for SNAP might not be available unless we were still under the pendency of an Executive Order. So, these are all concerns that that we have to deal with as we look forward to getting additional federal funds to relieve us in this crisis, because obviously when there is a national crisis of this kind in terms of finances, only the federal government can act decisively because only the federal government is not subject to the requirements of a balanced budget as we are at the state level.

So again, for all those reasons, Madam President, I would urge approval of the Emergency Certified Bill in concurrence with the House of Representatives. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, if there are no more remarks, Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the roll call 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 House Bill No. 6672. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill No. 6672. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be closed. And the Chair is in possession of written statements from the following. Senator Mae Flexer who votes in the affirmative. Senator Patricia Billie Miller who votes in the affirmative and Senator Matt Lesser, who votes in the affirmative. Mr. Clerk, would you kindly tally those votes and please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6672

Total number voting	34
Total number voting Yea	24
Total voting Nay	10
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) And the measure is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 12, Calendar No. 139, Substitute for House Bill No. 6610, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF OUTDOOR FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE BY RESTAURANTS. As amended by House Amendment Schedule A LCO 6080.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. While we prepare, will the Senate stand at ease for a moment please?

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would like to now yield to Senator Cassano, please.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cassano, do you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes, Madam President. I do.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes, Madam President. I would move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House. I'd like at this time, however, to yield to Senator Norman Needleman, Vice Chair of the Planning and Development Committee for introduction of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage and adoption. And Senator Needleman, good afternoon. Do you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I accept the yield.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

I shall. So, this Bill is the -- it's going to codify until March 31st, the provisions of the Governor's Executive Order to allow food sales on sidewalks and outside of restaurants and adjacent properties. So that restaurants that are struggling that have struggled through the pandemic can continue to operate their businesses. This is grandfathering the restaurants and food service businesses that have been doing this up to now. There is a path that requires municipal approval to allow for new restaurants to be able to do this. And look, I think it's a great Bill and I think that we need to do this to help that food service industry. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I want to wish you a happy Passover and a blessing to those honoring this Holy Week leading up to Easter. I rise as the Ranking Member of the Planning and Development Committee, and was very proud to work in a bipartisan and collaborative manner on this amended Bill which can be a little confusing because it's LCO 6080 rather than the underlying Bill. And it was intended to support and enable restaurants as the good Vice Chairman said.

I wanted to kind of reemphasize because it obviously sustains the Governor's Executive Order 7MM, but also allows our new businesses that are applying to have an expedited, no fee application process. And I think the delicate balance that we had was during this COVID crisis, to be able to allow the local input while supporting and enabling our struggling businesses, especially the restaurant businesses.

Through you, Madam Chair, could I ask a good Vice Chair, the concept of balancing this kind of an extension of permitting of outdoor food and beverage services. Where does that kind of balance with the local municipal input? Through you, Madam Chair, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. I believe that this Bill does address those issues. It allows for local zoning or planning and zoning and local CEOs to work on an expedited process to get people approved so that they can do this. But there is a local control part and further to that, on state highways or adjacent state highways, there is some DOT provisions for expedited control also.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you. And I want to be on the record and acknowledging that it was a collaborative effort to recognize that during this crisis, there is an extension of efforts to support and enable our restaurants to sustain outdoor eating. And I believe

this will sunset on March 31st, 2022. Would that be correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Yeah. Through you, Madam President. I absolutely, I think I mentioned that it sunsets on March 31st, 2022, but I do support the idea that we worked collaboratively with all members. I believe this passed in the House in a unanimous fashion. There were amendments or revisions, JFS language being done right up to the last minute, so that we took all of those issues into account. And I believe that we have come up with a very good Bill that takes an industry. And this has been a lifeline to that industry that has supported it and helped them and this will continue to do that through the end of the pandemic or into the first part of next year.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And presumably, has a case with Executive Order 7MM. This Bill doesn't permit an applicant to request approval to conduct outdoor activities, unless the applicant is already allowed to provide food and beverage services as applicable. And that's important because obviously you want to be supportive of existing restaurants and those that have gone through the proper permitting processes and not allowing kind of quickly pop-up strong and unregulated food applicants or food industry organizations without regulation.

So, this Bill does give consideration to protecting the consumer aspect of unregulated food permitting organizations. So would that be correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President. It is, and further, it does not allow for alcohol sales without food outdoors either. So there has to be some food component.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I will also want to point out and just a validation that what this Bill does not allow is that it would prohibit an individual from submitting a complaint to a municipal authority, as it relates to curtailing rights, a municipal right to enforce conditions and requirements of outdoor activities.

So, what it means is it would not prohibit local municipalities to issue fines and violation notices and cease and desist orders for applicants and restaurant tourers that do not comply with municipal safety standards and food regulations. Through you, just the validation that this Bill does not give that free protection, and that it does give that affordance of consumer protection and local input to cease and desist bad operators. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang. Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you, Madam President, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you. As you can see, it was an exhaustive effort and a truly bipartisan effort and I like to give a big thank to the contributions of many who made this Bill possible. I want to recognize Scott Dolch of the Connecticut Restaurant Association, Governor Lamont, and his staff, as well as DECD Commissioner David Lehman, of course, Senator Cassano, the Chair and Senator Needleman as the Vice Chair in the Senate.

And I want to recognize Senator Champagne through his experience as the First Selectman of Vernon offers some perspective of the balancing between this legislative effort from the state to support our restaurants balanced with input from local municipal officials have been such a big advocate in this arena.

And I also want to recognize our House colleagues. Representative McCarthy Vahey, the Co-Chair of the Committee for her relentless and tireless work as well as Representative Joe Zullo, the Ranking Member, and the Vice Chair, Christine Goupil. And ultimately it is a huge thanks to all of our local municipal leaders who have made this effort possible in their input and collaboration, but also for many of our community members that have supported our restaurants during these difficult times.

This is one where I hope that we will be bipartisan and united in recognizing that our restaurants are such an integral part of our small business and community fabric. So, I urge support, but I want to acknowledge and thank again, especially to Senator Cassano and Senator Needleman for their tireless efforts and contributions to this. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Yes, Madam President. I want to reiterate what Senator Hwang said, first of all, thanking Senator Cassano and all the House members that worked on this. We have all pulled together to come up with a Bill that works for everyone that gives municipalities the level of authority and control they need, but also gave them a glide path for a refined, an easier process to get this done.

So, this is one that we should be grateful. We are able to come together and make sure that all the restaurants that have made it this far will continue to thrive through the summer and through the end of the pandemic.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Needleman. Will you remark further on the legislation before us? Good afternoon, Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Pleasure to be in the Chamber under your leadership as always. Madam President, I briefly rise in support of the legislation that is in front of us. You know, the

effects of this pandemic have been widespread. However, there have been some sectors that have fared fortunately better than others, but it is no surprise and it's very clear that plain and simple, the restaurant sector has been slammed and it's been reported that we have lost up to 600 restaurants during this pandemic. Hopefully most of them, if not all of them, will come back. But it has been a real struggle. And as my colleagues have indicated, many of them are the smallest of businesses, mom-and-pop restaurants who have really struggled.

You know, the Yankee ingenuity really manifested itself in particularly in the restaurant sector where we saw them really pivot, and move to outdoor dining, it created this new vibe in our business centers. You know, there were boots on the ground, feet on the street, but it didn't even make the difference because so many of them continue to be challenged and struggling. So, this legislation couldn't be more timely, essentially what it does it gives certainty to these businesses that they can continue to operate grandfathered in with the provisions on the permitting and the regulations to offer outside dining, which obviously we're continuing to look forward to as the weather turns nicer.

So, it's about certainty. It's about supporting a sector which is a very, very important part of the Connecticut economy. And so, I also want to thank the Chairman of the Planning and -- of the P&D Committee, Senator Cassano, and Senator Needleman Senator Hwang and all of the House colleagues who were very nimble in moving this forward, so that these restaurants know that they have an additional year by which they can continue to work and offer these outside opportunities. Thank you, Madam President. I urge adoption. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hartley. Will you remark further?
Senator Duff. Senator Formica, I think you won that
coin toss.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

We did. Yes. And I'm sorry for the indecision there,
Madam President. Thank you. I rise also in support
of this legislation and it just shows that when we
work together, we can do so much. And we have the
opportunity to do so much for so many in an industry
that has been devastated over this past year. We
can't bring people -- businesses back. We can't
bring people back, but we can say that we're going
to work together here as a Legislature to move
forward as we exit this pandemic and take care of
those things, codify those important opportunities
that we can and move forward. So, I thank you to
everybody who's brought this forward and I urge
adoption.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I just
want to rise briefly in support of the legislation
and certainly thank all the members of the Planning
and Development Committee, including our leadership
here in the Senate, Senator Cassano and Needleman,
Senator Hwang for their work. Of course,
Representative McCarthy Vahey and Representative
Zullo In the House for their work as well. And the
Governor's office for helping to tie this all
together.

I think this is an extremely important Bill for us
to continue for the next year. We've seen during the
COVID pandemic, how loosening of some of these
regulations that were done by Executive Order has

proven to be very beneficial in a very difficult time. And that by allowing these regulations to be waved to a certain extent and grandfathered in for for restaurants that have already had this provision, used the provision last year, will help them as we navigate the future. And especially as we go over the spring and the summer and the fall to try and help their businesses as much as possible.

So, I know that there was a lot of work done and it was done in very quickly. And so, I just like to take a moment also to, again, thank our Senators here. Certainly, want to thank our staff, Courtney Cullinan was instrumental in this as well as our other policy staff as well. And also want to take a moment to thank those in the City of Norwalk who helped review some of this as well, especially as it related to parking. So, our -- the Mayor's Chief of Staff, Laoise King and the Business Director Jessica Casey were instrumental as well. And I appreciate their input as well.

So, I think that we have a good Bill here that will impact a lot of businesses in a positive way. And I would urge all members of the Senate to support legislation. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us? If there are no more remarks, Mr. Clerk, would you please announce a roll call vote? And the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

House Bill 6610. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6610. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, House Bill 6610. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be closed. And the Chair is in possession of the votes of Senator Patricia Billie Miller. (Gavel) Could we have order please so that we can announce the tally. So, we have Senator Patricia Billie Miller voting in the affirmative. We have Senator Matt Lesser voting in the affirmative and we have Senator Mae Flexer voting in the affirmative. Mr. Clerk, would you kindly announce the tally?

CLERK:

House Bill 6610

Total number voting	34
Total number voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) And the Bill passes. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move for immediate transmittal to the Governor on both Bills that were just passed.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, that concludes our business for today, but I will yield for any points of personal privilege or announcements.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. I just rise to say that both Senators Kissel and Kelly had personal family business outside the Chamber today and could not attend today's action. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Madam President. Seeing no other points of personal privilege or announcements. I move that we adjourn subject to call of the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) We are adjourned, stay safe, go forth and govern.

(On the motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 1:52 p.m. adjourned Sine Die.)