

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

The Senate was called to order at 3:51 p.m., the President in the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Will the Senate please come to order. Members and guests please rise and direct your attention to Ms. Kathy Zabel, our wonderful and repeat guest Chaplin.

ACTING CHAPLIN KATHY ZABEL:

May we always be mindful of the respect we owe to all beings in our lives and in our work.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much. And may our debates be so brief. Senator Formica, please lead us in the Pledge.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

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 Formica. And good afternoon, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and good afternoon.
Madam President, is their business on the Clerk's
desk?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Good afternoon, the Senate. The Clerk is in
possession of Senate Agenda Item No. 1, dated
Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk-- Oh, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move all items on
Senate Agenda No. 1, dated Wednesday, June 2nd,
2021, to be acted upon as indicated and the Agenda
be incorporated by reference into Senate Journal and
Senate Transcripts.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Thank you, Madam President. For our
markings.

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Senate Agenda

No. 1

REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, June 02, 2021

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

Report - Judicial Branch - Court Support Services Division, Use of Chemical Agents or Prone Restraints on Any Person Ages Seventeen Years of Age or Younger dated June 1, 2021. (Pursuant to section 46b-1331 of the Connecticut General Statutes.) Date received: June 2, 2021.
Referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE:

HOUSE BILL(S) FAVORABLY REPORTED - to be tabled for the calendar.

ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6413 AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF A MUNICIPAL ENERGY SECURITY AUTHORITY.

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6576 AN ACT CONCERNING THE NONDISCLOSURE OF RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEES UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

SUBST. HB NO. 6574 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6402 AN ACT CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION. (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 9688))

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6656 AN ACT CONFIRMING AND ADOPTING VOLUMES 1 TO 13, INCLUSIVE, OF THE GENERAL STATUTES, REVISED TO JANUARY 1, 2021.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HB NO. 6547 AN ACT CONCERNING A WORKING GROUP REGARDING THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

SUBST. HB NO. 6603 AN ACT CONCERNING TOURISM. (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 9634))

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SUBST. HB NO. 6429 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE EXPANSION OF PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR CERTAIN VETERANS.

BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE:

DISAGREEING ACTION(S) - to be tabled for the calendar.

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

SUBST. SB NO. 999 AN ACT CONCERNING A JUST TRANSITION TO CLIMATE-PROTECTIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT. (As amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 8860) and House Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 9659))

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 4, Calendar 154, Senate Bill 973, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 45, Calendar 279, Senate Bill 683, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 11, Calendar 288, Senate Bill 1055, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 43, Calendar 145, Senate Bill 711, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 2, Calendar 80, Senate Bill 856, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 6, Calendar 184, Senate Bill 858, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 38, Calendar 516, House Bill 5677, I'd like the mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

And on Calendar page 19, Calendar 389, Senate Bill 241, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 4, Calendar 154, substitute for Senate Bill No. 973, AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF RESIDENTS AND FAMILY COUNCILS.

THE CHAIR:

And, good afternoon, Senator Billie Miller, nice to see you.

SENATOR MILLER (27TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President, and nice to see you as well on the Dias. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill, and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR MILLER (27TH):

Madam President, this Bill grew out of a bipartisan task force looking at issues at long-term care facilities amid the pandemic. The Bill encourages greater input for residents and family members by requiring them to be notified of any proposals affecting care and quality of life at long-term care facilities.

Membership on task force addressing long-term care issues and when practical and permissible on the Legislative joint rules and agency procedures, virtual testimony by residents and family members. This Bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of a bipartisan Amendment LCO 8483. I ask that the Clerk call the Amendment, waive the reading and that I'd be given leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, kindly call the LCO.

CLERK:

LCL No. 8483, Senate Schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miller.

SENATOR MILLER (27TH):

Thank you Madam President. Madam President, this Amendment strikes lines 13 through 39 of the original Bill. It seeks to provide more timely and expanded participation from members of resident councils and family councils concerning policy changes that affect living conditions and care concerns at long-term care facilities, specifically, the Amendment does the following.

It reduces from seven to three days the amount of time a state agency is required to notify the State Long-term Care Ombudsman and the Executive Director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors Equity and Opportunity, a proposed Legislation or regulations affecting long-term care facilities.

The reason for this change was to provide, in the regulation review process, for greater an earlier input for residents and family councils within the 30-day public comment period.

It also, for non-emergency regulations, the Amendment also requires that the Ombudsman and the Executive Director immediately inform the councils that upon the request of 15 persons, a hearing on the proposal will be held within 14 days from the date of the regulation-- the date the regulation was filed on the E-regulation system.

The purpose of this change is to inform residents and family councils of their right to seek a public hearing when an agency is proposing or making a change to a non-emergency regulation and to provide them with a greater amount of time to make such request.

The third thing the Bill does is-- the Amendment, is that it further requires state agencies, rather than Legislative Committees to notify the Ombudsman and the Executive Director of the Commission regarding Legislative proposals that may affect long-term care facilities.

The Amendment provides that remote testimony be accepted when permissible under the existing rules of such agency or Committee. It removes any unintended consequences or requiring remote hearing testimony if not already part of existing rules of such agency or Committee.

Finally, Madam President, the Bill-- the Amendment requires the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Aging Committee or their designees be a part of any task force convened by the General Assembly or a state agency that studies issues concerning living or care conditions at long-term care facilities. Madam President, I move adoption of the Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on the adoption of the Amendment. Will you remark further on the Amendment? Will you remark further on the Amendment that is before the Chamber?

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

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber as amended?

SENATOR MILLER (27TH):

I'm sorry, Madam President. Thank you. Madam President, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the passage of this Bill. And if without objection, I would like the Bill to be placed on the Consent Calendar. If there are no objections.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objections-- We do have an objection? Okay, so we will make a roll call vote and I-- And right, I'm getting-- Sorry about that, we're getting to Senator Kelly. Senator Kelly, good afternoon, sir. Please proceed.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Good afternoon, Madam President. And thank you very much. I also rise in support of this Bill. I do thank Senator Miller for her leadership in not only working on this Bill in Committee, but also in working with me on the Amendment.

As to the Amendment, what I think is critically important here was that third piece that now will bring the Chair and Ranking Members of the Committee of Cognizance on Aging, to be part of the equation in any task force going forward, looking at the quality and living situations of residents in long-term care facilities.

That was one aspect that was missing over the summer and fall, with regards to the task force that studied the COVID impact, was that it didn't have the one Committee that is committed to the residents. That we don't have other issues like the Department of Social Services or Public Health or the fiscal application of the state budget.

As to the Bill itself, I think the Mathematica report bore out that while COVID was a very, very awful situation in nursing homes and led to many

deaths, social isolation is just as a critical issue as COVID was. And when people live in long-term care facilities, what we need to recognize is that, many of them, because of their critical care, are also experiencing diminished capacity.

And as a result of the diminished capacity, the family Member, the caregiver becomes vitally important to be their eyes and ears as to the making sure that the care and the-- what their quality of life is, is maintained.

What this Bill is aimed at is to make sure that those family members have a voice, and that those caregivers are given the proper venue and forum to bring those issues forward to the caregivers to make sure that we have quality and care that is commensurate to the individuals that reside in these facilities.

This Bill, I think, accomplishes that with the Amendment. And I do once again, thank Senator Miller for her leadership on this issue. And I look forward to its passage. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? And I will go back to the request that this item be moved to the Consent Calendar. And I'll ask again, if there is objection to putting it on the Consent Calendar.

And seeing no objection, we will move that item to the Consent Calendar. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 45, Calendar No. 279, substitute for Senate Bill No. 683, AN ACT CONCERNING HOSPITAL BILLING AND COLLECTION EFFORTS BY HOSPITALS AND COLLECTION AGENCIES.

There are Amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The Clerk is in possession of an Amendment LCO No. 9102. I would ask that the Clerk please call the Amendment and I would seek leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, and the Clerk-- Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly call LCO 9102, please.

CLERK:

LCO No. 9102, Senate Schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you Madam President. This is a strike-all Amendment, it combines -S- language, from S.B 683 with language from S.B 238 with some additional changes.

The Bill as amended seeks to update patient protections regarding hospital debt collection practices that are currently in statute. It expands these protections to include entities affiliated with a hospital or healthcare system.

It also adds some new protections, prohibiting reporting to credit agencies for a year, prohibiting action to foreclose on a patient's primary residence if the lien is due to medical Bills, and it prohibits garnishment of wages if the patient is eligible for the free bed fund.

In addition, the Bill as amended requires health care cabinet to provide Legislative recommendations on increasing oversight of practice acquisitions and mergers. I move adoption of the Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption of the Amendment. Will you remark further on the Amendment? Good afternoon, Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Good afternoon, Madam President. And I rise in support of this Bill moving forward. You know, this Bill has really changed from its first, I guess, the first draft of the Bill which I would not have supported. It was a bit draconian in its effort to prevent hospitals from trying to collect for services that they had rendered to individuals.

But I did have a question for the proponent of the Bill, if I may. We didn't have a chance to talk about this earlier. I'm wondering how those that have large deductible plans in their health care insurance will be affected by this Bill in particular. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I don't see-- I did not see in this Bill any reference to any deductible in terms of insurance coverage.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Thank you. And the reason I bring that up, through you, Madam President, is because in the original testimony we received through the Hospital Association They were concerned about the tenor of this Bill and the fact that, many times these high deductible plans that are marketed by insurance companies leave the consumer with a very large outlay of money that is required before their insurance actually kicks in, sometimes to the surprise of many who have purchased these types of high deductible plans. And that could leave the hospitals in a position where they're trying to collect a large sum of money from individuals that are insured.

And they were concerned on how this Bill may affect that process. But it appears, other than UConn, that the Hospital Association has signed off on this language. And although this is not the way that they would like to go, they are satisfied with the language of the Bill. And if my Co-Chair could just confirm that for me, that would be terrific. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you. Through you, Madam President, my good colleague is correct. This Bill is very different than the original Bills that were put forward, and it is the culmination of some very hard work between the Connecticut Hospital Association, the Office of Health strategies, and Senator Looney staff as well.

So I believe that, I've seen, actually, in writing that people are comfortable with the language and ready to move forward with it. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you for that answer. And that is why I rise in support of this Bill today. Because we do have the support of the Hospital Association, the ones that will have to adhere to some of the new requirements within this Bill.

Some are very, very important the idea of the disclosure in different languages, and also the collection of these facility fees that I know from a consumer standpoint, many times takes a consumer by surprise when they get their initial bill. Not only are they getting billed for the procedure or the surgery, but a very large facility fee that I think we can do a better job in addressing.

So, I rise in support of this particular Bill. And I hope that the colleagues of mine in the circle will also do the same. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. And we are on the Amendment. And will you remark further on the Amendment before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Amendment? If not, let me try your

minds. All in favor of the Amendment before the Chamber please signify by saying aye.

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Bill as amended before the Chamber? If not, we will open the voting machine. And, Mr. Clerk if you would please call the—

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

May I ask Madam President, if we can put this on the Consent Calendar?

THE CHAIR:

No.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Okay. Thank you, roll call vote. Thank you very much.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, this is Senate Bill 683 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, this is Senate Bill 683 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, on Senate Bill 683 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 683 as amended

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	1
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

And The Bill is passed. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 11, Calendar No. 288, substitute for Senate Bill No. 1055, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES.

There is an Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, Senator Moore. Nice to see you today.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Nice to see you also, Madam President. Could we stand at ease for a moment, please?

THE CHAIR:

And we can stand at ease.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Yes. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you. Would you repeat the LCO, please?

THE CHAIR:

Oh, we need to we need to call it?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Call the Amendment, please. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. And do you have an LCO No. for us, Senator Moore?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

LCO 7981.

THE CHAIR:

And Mr. Clerk, if you could please call LCO 7981, sir.

CLERK:

LCL No. 7981, Senate schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you. I move adoption of the Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption of the Amendment.
Will you remark on the Amendment?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you, Madam President. The Amendment corrects some language from Deaf blind as two separate words to one, and adds that language to Section 5.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Amendment that is before the Chamber? Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good afternoon, Madam President, is good to see you today. Madam President, I rise in support of the Amendment. I think this makes an important change in the language, and the inclusion of who we are looking to help and represent through this Legislation. So I urge adoption. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Berthel. Will you remark further on the Legislation on the Amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Amendments before the Chamber?

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

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? And the ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?
Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you. Madam President, this Bill, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES, makes various changes and updates to the statutes governing the Department of Aging and Disability Services known as ADS.

It consolidates redundant gift acceptance and use, provisions that allows ADS to accept gifts and bequests. It replaces the current assistive technology revolving fund, which makes direct loans with the program to make and guarantee loans for the same purposes.

It also updates the formal and required informational resource about voter application process. It eliminates required reappointments for eight ex-officio members of the Advisory Board for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing.

And it deletes an obsolete reference to the Department of Social Service taking over programs from the former Department of Aging. Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, Senator Moore. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you, Madam President. And I do also rise in support of the Bill as amended. As the good Chair spoke to this, some of the components of this Bill were requests from the agency and they're making good changes.

Sections 1 and 2 in particular-- excuse me, Sections 1, 2 and 3 in particular, are allowing some expansion for funding and access to funding that will help the agency to carry out its mission. So again, I rise in support and I urge passage. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

I ask for a roll call vote, please.

THE CHAIR:

And a roll call vote has been requested, so I will open the vote. And, Mr. Clerk, if you could announce the roll call, please.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. That's Senate Bill 1055 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 1055 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 1055 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1055 as amended

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

And the Legislation is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 43, Calendar No. 145, Senate Bill No. 711, AN ACT CONCERNING COVID-19 RELIEF FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND REQUIRING FEDERAL REGULATORY ANALYSIS FOR PROPOSED STATE REGULATIONS as amended by Senate Amendments schedule "A" LCO A236.

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, Senator Hartley, we'll find you a nameplate, we got lots of chairs, not to worry. And good afternoon, Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. It's pleasure to see you there. Yes, Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill as amended, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH):

Yes, indeed, thank you, Madam President. This Bill speaks to the fact that over 90% of the businesses in the state of Connecticut are categorized as small business, and actually just over 50% of our workforce works for small business, without a doubt, is the backbone of the state's economy.

And so as we have witnessed over this past year, in small business-- all business, but in particularly small business has been trying to claw its way back, has struggled through the pandemic.

And so, this Bill recognizes the fact that the employers of these small businesses worked rigorously to keep their employees safe, to keep their businesses opened, as best they could, and safe. And in so doing, without a doubt, they incurred exponential expenses at a time, undoubtably, when they were least able to absorb those additional expenses.

So, the underlining Bill, Madam President, would exempt for the period of this biennium, the small businesses and that is categorized as those having 100 or less employees from the sales and use tax on purchases of PPE, the personal protective equipment for use in the business setting. I urge adoption, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Legislation before us? Good afternoon, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

There we go. We got your microphone on?

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Here we go.

THE CHAIR:

There we go.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Good afternoon, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

I rise to support this piece of Legislation, Madam President. The good Senator summarized it quite well regarding these small businesses who helped out in this this long, long year regarding the pandemic.

The Republican caucus also put forward similar pieces of Legislation, but we're moving forward with this one here. I rise simply to urge all my colleagues to support and urge its passage. And if there's no objection, if we could put it on the Consent Calendar, that would be great. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? And before we vote, I do want to ask, since there's been a request to put this item on the Consent Calendar, if there is an objection to putting it on the Consent Calendar.

Is there an objection to the Consent-- putting the item on the Consent Calendar? And seeing no objection, we will add that item to the list. Oh, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

I'm sorry, Madam President. Can stand at ease for one second so I can clarify something?

THE CHAIR:

Yeah. We can stand at ease. And this item will indeed be added to our Consent Calendar. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 2, Calendar 80, Senate Bill No. 856, AN ACT INCREASING REPRESENTATION ON THE ENERGY CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT BOARD.

THE CHAIR:

And, good afternoon, Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good afternoon, it's so nice to see you today. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Yeah. Thank you, Madam President. This Bill seeks to add lower income representation on the Energy Efficiency Standards Board. This board writes up a plan that they then submit to DEEP and the recommendation comes from DEEP to add a-- to create a better representation on that board for a more diverse group, to make sure that what we're doing as we move on the conservation and load management plan is done effectively and represents all of the residents of our state.

As with many of our other Bills, this passed unanimously to our Committee, and I urge that we pass the Bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Needleman. Will you remark further? Good afternoon, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I rise in support of this Bill. This is adding, as the good Chair of the Energy Committee mentioned, position for-- two positions, I think, for the Board. I just do have one question for the proponent, just to kind of review for the record, the purpose of this Board and the importance of adding, you know, these two positions. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Through you, Madam President. The energy efficiency board assists the utilities in developing the conservation and load management plan. They then approve the plan before submitting it to DEEP for approval.

They also have a Joint Committee with the Connecticut Green Bank to coordinate programs. The Bill will help better align problematic-- programmatic approaches with the needs of the residents and low-income with the priorities of our municipalities.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator, I appreciate the clarification. Madam President, as you see, this is a good addition to the Board. A good addition to the Board moving forward, and this Board serves a good purpose. And I urge adoption of this Legislation. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Sorry, will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Thank you Madam President. I want to thank my good colleague, Senator Formica. Has often been said, our Committee works very collaboratively. This is important and I urge passage of the Bill. If there are no further comments, I would move this item to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

And there has been a request to move this item to the Consent Calendar. So I will ask if there is an objection to putting this item on consent. Any objection? If not, we will move the item to the Consent Calendar. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 6, Calendar No. 184, substitute for Senate Bill No. 858, AN ACT CONCERNING CALL BEFORE YOU DIG PROGRAM VIOLATIONS AND CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS TO GAS PIPELINES PROCESSES.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Thank you again, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This Bill seeks to clarify responsibility for the Call Before You Dig Program and put the responsibility not at the feet of the subcontractors who so often are small business owners who work for the utilities and make the responsibility-- make the utilities responsible for their work.

There are so many miles of pipes and wires that Call Before You Dig is such a critical program for all of our residents and for the workers to work safely on all of our properties and all of the lines that this is one more step to not have finger-pointing within

the industry between the different parties. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you Madam President. I rise in support of the Legislation. And a question for the proponent of the Bill. Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And please do proceed. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you Madam President. Good afternoon, Senator Needleman. We've had this conversation in Committee before with regard to this Bill. There is some language that's somewhat ambiguous in lines 15 through lines 21. And I just want to get, Madam President, through you, on the record, that this is a civil penalty, this language talks of a civil penalty.

And it seems a little bit, that it could be possible this language could mean a double penalty could apply. And I don't believe that's the intent of the language. And I want to clarify, for the record and for intent, that that is in no way something that's going to be collected.

And if I may, Madam President, just read the Section, with your permission, so that the good Chair of the Energy Committee could respond. It says in line-- the end of 14, "Any civil penalty assessed for any violation involving the failure of a public utility other than an owner operator of a municipal utility to properly or timely mark any approximate

location or underground facility shall be paid by the public utility, to whom the notice is addressed."

That fine exempts municipal utilities, but offers the opportunity, Madam President, for a fine to be paid by such public utility whom the notice is addressed. It goes further to say, "If any such public utility recovers any portion of the penalty from any person, the authority,"-- I'm assuming that must mean PURA, "may direct such public utility to forfeit such recovery penalty as provided in such notice."

So, Madam President, the idea is for the public utility to pay the fine, and then if a contractor was responsible, and the contractor gives the public utility a reimbursement of this fine, this language could be read to hear that, "The authority may direct such public utility to forfeit such recovered penalty."

So, I want to make sure that if the penalty is paid once to the authority, that if the utility or anyone else recovers that from the guilty party, it's not a forfeited situation. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Through you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Formica, for bringing that out. In no way is this intended to create a double penalty situation. That's not the Legislative intent at all.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Needleman, I appreciate that. And my understanding of Legislative intent is that that's a fallback opportunity should this penalty, in this case, be asked for twice.

So, I believe I'm satisfied with that explanation. And I believe with that explanation I could support the Bill. And I look forward to any further clarification from the good Chairman that he might have at this time. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And to the good Senator, we want to be very clear about this, that it's the utility that's responsible for this, not the small contractor, and that in no way it should be a double penalty. And if there's no other conversation, I urge passage of this important Legislation and I would move this Bill be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Needleman. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. With all due respect to the good Chairman, I would have to ask for a roll call vote on this particular Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And we will, indeed, have a roll call vote.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further on the Bill? If not, we'll open the voting machine. Mr. Clerk, please announce the roll call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 858.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, on Senate Bill 858.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, on Senate Bill 858.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 858.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Bill 858.

Immediate roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 585

Total No. voting	34
Total No. voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Page 38, Calendar No. 516, substitute-- House Bill No. 5677, AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES UNDER MEDICAID, as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A", LCO No. 8780.

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I think that we all have seen throughout our state and in our communities an

uptick in violence, that's been very disconcerting. This Bill addresses that in three ways.

It defines what community violence prevention services are, and what a prevention professional does. It also requires them to seek certification as a certified violence prevention professional through training and a certification program that will be approved by the Department of Public Health.

And lastly, it compels the Commissioner of social services to amend our Medicaid plan to make community violence prevention services available to the extent permitted by federal law, and that they will seek any federal approvals necessary to implement this Section.

I think that this is something that we need. As we've looked more and held different hearings in different Committees, we've seen and heard from people who do this work, it's incredible work, what they do. They come in and work in the hospitals when there's been a violent crime, they support the families, they use de-escalation techniques so that the violence does not continue.

The Connecticut Hospital Association has been working with them as well. And I think that we see the fruits of their labor, and that we should continue to support these efforts. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Good evening, Madam President. I rise in support of this Bill. Enacting a community violence prevention professional is a critical role that we can take or the starting point that we can take to

help reduce the violence that we see here in the state of Connecticut, especially over the last year.

There's not one day that goes by that you don't read of yet another gun violent murder in one of our larger cities. The violence is on the increase here in the state of Connecticut, and I think it is very appropriate that we are moving forward with this Legislation.

We heard in our testimony from many of our medical doctors, some of them are in the trauma unit, some of them are in the emergency room, and they all speak to a pivotal moment, or a pivotal patient.

Typically, it's a young male with multiple gunshot wounds, that's what we heard repeatedly, who comes into their ER, and they are absolutely moved by the violence that these individuals have had to endure or are involved with at such a young age.

And they spoke to the fact that to date, there have been efforts made in our larger cities, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford to connect victims with services. But having someone who is a dedicated community violence prevention professional—professional, that's quite a mouthful, will be a critical role and a critical turning point in really connecting these individuals, that have faced such graphic violence, to be able to be provided with the direction, the treatment, and the support that they will need to make different choices in the future or to be able to go on with their life after being the victim of such violent acts.

We heard repeatedly from physicians at Yale, on some of the individuals who have been the victims of violence, whether it be female or male, young or old, and the trauma that is ensued upon being a victim in that way. And I think that it is critical that we have the availability to be able to help these individuals.

We are doing it now on a smaller scale, but to have a defined protocol and a defined certification process through the Department of Public Health will ensure that these individuals are trained appropriately and have the background necessary to be able to connect folks to the services.

And, of course, having DSS look at adding these individuals on to the Medicaid coverage is critical also in the fact that many of the services that can prove be provided would also now be covered and be able to have a sustainable method for the continuation of these programs going forward.

So I do believe that this Bill had overwhelming support in the House, and I would hope that everyone here in the Senate will join me in supporting this Bill. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I just wanted to share with the Chamber that this Bill passed unanimously out of the House, and I want to especially thank Representative Gilchrest for her advocacy on this work.

We know this work is being done and it's time for us as a state to honor that work by making it a professional certification and training and by looking in every way we can to help fund it appropriately. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Bill that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber?

And if not, I will open the voting machines. Mr. Clerk, could you please call the roll call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 5677.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5677.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, House Bill 5677.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 5677

Total No. voting	34
Total No. voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) The Legislation is passed. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 19, Calendar No. 389, substitute for Senate Bill No. 241, AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY AT THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY.

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. It's good to see you today. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. The Clerk is in possession of an Amendment LCO No. 9467. I ask that the Clerk please call the Amendment and I be given leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

And, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 9467, Senate Schedule "A". Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This Amendment is a strike-all Amendment and I will very briefly summarize.

It essentially requires that the Connecticut Port Authority submit a series of reports to the General Assembly on ongoing activities at the New London pier as well as any other ongoing projects.

There's also the requirement that the report, in conjunction with the Commissioner of Administrative Services and the Secretary of OPM, submit a report

on projects undertaken by the Port Authority in the preceding year.

Finally, well, not quite finally, but additionally, Madam President, there are some changes made to the Port Authority Board. Most importantly, I would say we are ensuring that the chief elected officials from the three municipalities, which has a deep-water port, those would be the municipalities of New London, Bridgeport and New Haven, have a seat on the Board.

We're also-- Important, I know, to many members of this Body ensuring that small harbors have adequate representation on the Connecticut Port Authority Board. So we're slightly changing the designation of the appointees to ensure that small harbors have additional designees and that the Governor's office is able to appoint three additional members.

There's a requirement, Madam President, that the SHIP plan, that's the small harbor improvements projects program, be reported on to the General Assembly with Committees having cognizance of matters related to transportation, that would, of course, be the Transportation Committee.

And finally, there's an extension Madam President, of the Attorney General's authority to defend members of the Connecticut Pilot Commission in the event that they are acting in all suits in other civil proceedings when they're acting on behalf of the State or in another official capacity.

Section 6 is very similar in that it that extends the shield from personal liability, which exists for most state employees, to those who work within the pilot Commission. I'm happy to answer questions on the Bill, but I do want to take a moment to thank my colleagues who come from Eastern Connecticut, Senator Cathy Osten has been a leader on holding the Port Authority accountable and ensuring that the

public has a voice in their proceedings and a view into their work.

Senator Somers and Representative Carney, as the Ranking Members of the Transportation Committee have been very helpful in getting this draft into good shape. Representative Roland Lemar, of course, my Co-Chair has been working hard on this issue since before I arrived in the Transportation Committee and frankly, before I arrived in the Legislature, and of course, Senator Formica, Representative Conley, Representative Nolan, Representative de la Cruz, all of whom-- and Representative Needleman, all of whom represent the eastern portion of the state, far from my district, but critically important, nonetheless, to the well-functioning of our small ports and harbors in addition to our deep-water ports, like the one in New London.

With that, Madam President, I'm happy to answer any questions. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their work on this, and I ask my colleagues to support the Legislation.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Good evening, Madam President. I rise in support of this Legislation. Years ago, my predecessor, Senator Andy Maynard is the one who was able to establish the idea of Port Authorities here in the state of Connecticut. And unfortunately for the state of Connecticut, over the past few years, our Port Authority, in my opinion, has lost its way.

We heard of all the different things that were going on, we read it weekly in the Day Paper. And for some of us, accountability has something that has, on some level, escaped us to this Legislation today. We

have a new Chair, and we have a new director. And I'm hoping that this will be a new page for the Port Authority here in the state of Connecticut.

And this Bill seeks to provide some more transparency in the happenings of the Port Authority. It requires that projects and current contracts, we get a status on those, and that they come back with the information concerning those projects to the Transportation Committee.

It also requires that the DIS and OPM get a report on all projects from the year previous concerning-- that the Port Authority has engaged in. It expands the Board to make the Board more relevant to those who are affected by our Port Authority, providing an opportunity for each of our large harbors to have a seat at the table.

And that would be with their elected official, their First Selectman or their Mayor or their designee. But it also gives balance to our small ports across Connecticut by providing them a seat at the table also.

It also requires that the Port Authority come up with a plan to be able to prioritize how the grants through our SHIPS program are designated or how they are dealt out to the different communities and to the different ports. Because in the past, we really haven't had that information.

So I think this is a good start, and I'm hoping that with the report and the transparencies that we will be seeing going forward from the Port Authority, again, a new Director, a new Chairman of that Board, that we will be able to, you know, put some of the controversial questions behind us, here in the state of Connecticut, and to be able to be proud of our Port Authority, and some of the new developments and the new contracts that they are going to be entering into, primarily for WIND, but that it will give us

an ability to be proud of what we see at our Port Authority.

And it will also help stop the questioning as to what the Port Authority is doing, what is considered in this contract, etc. And by providing this kind of transparency, I think that we all, in this circle, will feel more validated and we will be able to confirm that we have made the right decision in continuing with port authorities here in the state of Connecticut.

So I hope that my circle and the colleagues in it will be able to support this Legislation. Again, it's a first step, we will have to see what kind of reports we get and the information that we received from those reports. And it will be the first step in providing some great and needed validity to our Connecticut Port Authority. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Will your mark further?
Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. It's pleasure to see you tonight. And first, I want to thank Senator Haskell for working on this Bill. We told him, from Eastern Connecticut, this is of highest importance to us, to bring back that transparency on the work that's happening in the Port Authority.

Both Senator Somers and Senator Formica and I and our colleagues down in the House have been steadfast in maintaining that we believe that the project, relative to WIND is an important project. But we also believe that we can't lose the character of state pier, and we want to make sure that the dollars that are being expended are forwarding the

critical pieces of expanding jobs in eastern Connecticut.

We are very pleased to see this piece of Legislation come to this point. But as Senator Somers just said, this is a first step in our process of maintaining that transparency through this quasi-public agency. It was originally designed by Senator Maynard and had good intentions and those intentions are still good. We want to make sure that we provide the ability for the Port Authority to be as successful as we dreamed it would be.

We want to make sure that we're supporting the city of New London and the surrounding towns and all towns associated with deep-water ports or small ports. There were concerns when this, the quasi-public of ports became a reality because we thought that the small ports would be subsumed by the larger ports and all issues would be around them.

So for the last, I believe it's now three years, we have been looking to address this issue, bring it forward, make sure that we were doing the right thing, make sure that this very small agency that is handling a multi-million dollar project was going to be as successful as we need it to be for a variety of reasons.

Again, I can't thank my colleagues enough and I hope that people will support this option of finally having long term transparency, relative to the Port Authority. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Will you remark further?
Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to support this piece of Legislation. Back in 2019,

I was the Ranking Member of the Transportation Committee. And unfortunately, we had to deal with the Port Authority back then.

And as a Ranking Member and getting various emails as to what was happening down at the Port Authority and then followed up by the audit by the state, and what truly showed the deficiencies of the agency. And what was taking place down there.

When you talk about the salaries that were increased over a one year period to an exorbitant amount of money, the legal fees, the consultant fees that soared and very excessive, when you're talking about legal fees that, for one year, start at \$85,000 and then went to \$670,000. And then you add the consulting fees that went from 55 to \$470,000, you have to wonder what those expenses were.

And when we shouted for a-- and particularly, Senator Fasano shouted for public hearing, what we got was an informational hearing. And three individuals came from the Port Authority, the major players, and I won't name them. But we asked our questions and some were enlightening, I'll say, and others were very telling that they weren't telling us everything.

But in the end, we found out and confirmed the questionable spending and the operational-- the excessive spending that was taking place, along with lacking of operational procedures. And the accountability of the-- as an agency, totally lacked.

And what I'm pleased to see here is that the-- what took place back then was OPM stepped in, they started to develop the policies for the agencies. And I believe that might even be a footprint now for other agencies as well.

But that poor lack of judgment by the management, including, you know, the Chairman of the agency,

itself, the Board, as well as the Director, was really appalling, I'll say, to see the lack of management and accountability on their part. It resulted in three individuals resigning from their jobs or their responsibilities.

And now today, we have this Bill in front of us, which further improve that agency. So, I rise to support it, I think by having the Port Authority submit reports on all the contracts for all the small and the large ports is a great step. I think transparency is very important, along with any information on projects that are underway by CP-- by the Port Authority and submitting those projects to OPM, and the Department of Administrative Services as well.

And then the expansion of a Board, I think it lacked maybe some further accountability, maybe some individuals that could ask very pointed questions and maybe, sort of, dig into the details more than the previous board had.

So, I'm glad to see that the steps are taking place. And I want to encourage all my colleagues to support this. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I too rise in support of this Legislation and appreciate the intention in which it was put forward. And I'd like to thank the good Chair of the Transportation Committee, as well as Senator Somers, the Ranking Member, for the hard work here.

Again, this was a bipartisan conversation, Madam President, through members of the southeastern Connecticut delegation, but then it kind of encompassed its way down the shoreline and worked its way into a conversation.

Madam President, we all know and I've read the stories about the misdeeds, I will say, of the Connecticut Port Authority since its inception. We can talk about all of those problems. But, Madam President, I think and agree that this Bill gives us an opportunity to move forward to have the opportunity to focus on what we need to focus on.

And what that is, in my view, Madam President, is the opportunity to get the best out of all of the ports that we have here in the state of Connecticut. Kudos to Senator Andy Maynard, for his foresight in thinking of putting this together, because there are so many opportunities, both economic and recreational, around the state of Connecticut, to support all of the ports that we have. And, you know, I think arguably the best state in the nation and certainly, we have some of the greatest shoreline in the nation.

Madam President, I think, too, that the opportunities for this emerging industry of offshore wind gives us many economic opportunities, not only for the great port in New London, and Bridgeport, but for properties that go north from New London up toward Norwich, where I think we should take advantage of that rail line, we should take advantage of the opportunity that river gets us, so that eventually, Madam President, or hopefully soon, we will have support manufacturers and assembly plants providing support to this new and emerging industry along that corridor and my neck of the woods and New London up through Norwich, but also in the areas around Bridgeport, which is an opportunity to create not only support for turbines going out into those grounds into the waters off Massachusetts, but also surrounding areas of the

Bridgeport area to have these assembly and manufacturing plants to provide good jobs.

Madam President, this Bill provides for a number of opportunities to control the Port Authority moving forward. It does give seats on the Board for the Mayor of New London, Bridgeport New Haven, which I believe is a good opportunity, the pier in New London being the only state pier that's not represented, and it should be represented, so I think that that is a long time coming.

Madam President, we need to move forward economically. This Bill, I think, gets us there. This Bill puts to rest a lot of the problems of the Connecticut Port Authority, I think it's well thought through. And I urge my colleagues, Madam President, to support this Bill. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Amendment? Because we do have an Amendment before the Chamber. Will you remark further on the Amendment?

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

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?
Senator Haskell

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank my colleagues for their words on the Bill. Now that the Amendment has been adopted, I would once again urge my colleagues to support the underlying Legislation.

I thank all those who have spoken in support, and I understand that a roll call vote has been requested.

THE CHAIR:

And we will have a roll call vote. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? If not, I will open the machine. Mr. Clerk please call the roll call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 241 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 241 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 241 as amended

Total No. voting	34
Total No. voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) And the Legislation is adopted. Mr. Clerk—
Oh, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, for a
second goal list.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. On Calendar page 4
Calendar 158, Senate Bill 997, I'd like to mark this
item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Followed by a Calendar page 34, Calendar 492, House
Bill 6476, I'd like to mark this item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Followed by Calendar page 42, Calendar 50, Senate
Bill 266—

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

I'd like to mark that item PT for now.

THE CHAIR:

Oh, PT?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Yeah.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Followed by on Calendar page 13, Calendar 322,
Senate Bill 1037. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And how would you like to mark that last item, sir?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Go in the order of the day, please.

THE CHAIR:

Got it. Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 4, Calendar No. 158, substitute for Senate Bill
No. 997, AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENTS AND FACULTY
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF CONNECTICUT AND THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION.

THE CHAIR:

And Good evening, Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Good evening, Madam President, good to see. I move adoption of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill, please.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Yes, thank you Madam President. This is a Bill that this Chamber has seen in previous years. It's a rather simple Bill, and it seems, or it seeks, I should say, to lift up and empower the voices of everyone on colleges' campuses at the University of Connecticut and at our great state university system. And it does that, really by doing two things.

It increases the Number of Board of Regents for higher education members from 21 to 23. And it adds two additional-- and it does that by adding to additional voting Student Advisory Committee Members.

And then when it comes to the Board of Trustees, it increases the number, the UConn Board of Trustees from 21 to 25 by adding two additional trustees elected by the students and two elected by University Senate Members. And there are some restrictions from voting and participating when it comes to certain personnel matters, executive privilege, that kind of thing.

So, I stand in, you know, support of the Bill. I think that it does strike a good balance in terms of still allowing these Boards to be governable and functional. At the same time, we do want to ensure that students in faculty have their voice heard. It's an important voice, especially with all the changes that are going on both, you know, at the Board of Regents, and to some extent, at UConn as

well. I think it's very important that they have their voices protected and strengthened.

So with that, I would urge passage of this Bill. Thanks very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Slap. Will you remark further? Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good evening. I also rise in support of the Bill before us today. You know, it's interesting whereas we're increasing the Number of student representatives on the Board, that higher education is for the students.

You know, I mean, from all aspects the students, A, they choose that university or college, B, they sometimes live there on campus, they become a part of that-- their home away from home, if you will.

And while we're adding additional students to both Boards, it doesn't-- it's not a controlling interest. So, I started my career here in politics on my local Board of Education. We always look forward to the students report, because they are giving some of the best information that other Board Members may not be privy to, because they're in the classrooms, they're in the dorms, they're registering online, they're attending classes, they're paying the bills. So, those are the folks that we're serving. So that's one part of why the reasons why I support it.

The second one is, during the public hearing, there was some pushback on the Board of Regents to allow two of the current non-voting faculty members to have voting rights. And it was interesting the reason why, because the comment was made, "Well, then they'll be able to direct policy."

But my thought behind that was, "Well, if they're already Board Members sitting there participating in the discussions, their voices are being heard." Alright, so they get to cast a vote now, but to state that they're going to change policy because now they have a voting right versus being a participant in the discussion, to me that just doesn't carry the water. That's why I'm supporting the Bill today.

But I wanted, for transparency sake, to offer the other side as to why some people may have voted against it in Committee and may have some concerns about it. While I do understand their concerns, I think that the overall intent of the Bill is worthwhile in supporting. So thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further on the Bill?

If not, the machine-- Senator Slap, would you like to remark on the Bill further?

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

No, Madam President, thank you. I'd ask for a roll call vote please.

THE CHAIR:

And roll call vote is requested. We will open the machine. Mr. Clerk Please announce the vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 997.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 997.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 997.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 997

Total No. voting	34
Total No. voting Yea	33
Total voting Nay	1
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

Bill passes. Mr. Majority Leader, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Good see this evening. Mr. President, for the next Bill, Calendar page 34, Calendar 492, House Bill 6476, I'd like to mark that item PT.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Next, I'd like the Clerk to now call Calendar page 13, Calendar 322, Senate Bill 1037, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 13, Calendar 322, substitute for Senate Bill No. 1037, AN ACT CONCERNING SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT.

There are Amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cohen. Good evening.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Good to see you up there. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Would you get a remark?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Actually, the Clerk is in possession of an Amendment, LCO No. 9775. I move-- Sorry.

THE CHAIR:

It's all right, take your time.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Will the Clerk please call the Amendment and I request to seek leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, would you call the Amendment.

CLERK:

LCL No. 9775, Senate schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cohen, would you care to comment?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Yes, thank you, Mr. President. This is a strike-all Amendment on a piece of Legislation that was passed decades ago. We have bottle deposit law in the state, it was passed in 1978.

At the time, we were incredibly progressive. Connecticut knew at the time that deposit return systems create more jobs, deposit return systems are big savings for municipalities, and deposit return systems clean up litter and beautify our environment.

But they need to be functioning according to the market, according to the times. And without an update in four decades, we are seeing the worst redemption rate of any Bottle Bill state in our country.

What many don't realize, and quite frankly, I didn't even realize until I really became intricately involved and dove into the subject years ago, when we throw our bottles and cans into our single stream recycling bin affectionately known as the blue bin, many of those items end up in incinerators and landfills.

And despite the fact that we don't have landfills in Connecticut anymore, we've done away with that

practice, some will be shocked to know that we are still exporting trash to other landfills because it has become more cost effective to do so. We certainly have a trash crisis in the state of Connecticut.

Many have heard me, around this circle, speak of it before. And it's all at the cost of our environment, a cost to our communities and to future generations. We have become fallen, woefully, behind. Our redemption rates are slipping as we watch trash pile up. Municipalities are losing money in redemption centers where we go to collect our nickel back.

Well, these businesses are really falling by the wayside. Why? Well, because we haven't changed our Bottle Bill in decades. Laws of this nature require updates, changes with the times, products and consumer behavior.

When we set out to create a deposit system, we didn't have all of the non-carbonated beverages, the single-serve beverages that we have today, juices, sports drinks, teas, bottled water. These now account for millions of containers that we have and consume here in the state.

If you go on a walk today, you will notice that the vast majority of litter on our streets and our waterways and in our parks are those that don't have a redeemable value. Nips, another example, those are the small and wildly popular containers, a quick shot of fireball or Jameson or some other liquor, they are literally everywhere.

I know I go on my daily walks and I see them in our streams, I see them on the trails, I see them on the side of the road. The litter is there, it's everywhere, but we have the ability to make a huge dent in solving this environmental issue.

And what about the jobs? Well, I talked about redemption centers. Redemption centers should be all

over the state making it easier to return our bottles and cans for the nickel that we deposit. But we have made it nearly impossible for them to do business in the state. With a handling fee that has not changed since 1982, this is a losing proposition for the small business owners who have overhead labor costs and the like.

As a result, centers across the state have been steadily going out of business. We've lost all but eight, that are still fully functioning. While we have others, there are add-ons working part time, not operating as fully intended. In fact, right now there's nothing from Stratford to the New York border because of the sheer expense of the operation.

If handling fees had followed inflation, the rate would be well over four cents. Beverages had followed inflation, wages and rental rates have all followed inflation, but we haven't provided the opportunity for these businesses to be successful.

And why is this important? Well, without redemption centers, it becomes more challenging for people to get their deposit back. There becomes an over reliance and a burden on our grocery stores that have reverse vending machine, and there becomes a financial burden on our communities without grocery stores, food deserts, our urban centers.

They don't have grocery stores or redemption centers nearby, as it is difficult to return their bottles and cans and redeem those nickels. So it becomes a real cost for these families.

And let me just briefly, I mentioned the waste crisis, and I just want to briefly address the waste crisis in the state, it will really help to illuminate the financial pressures our cities and our towns are feeling and how that translates into higher costs for our taxpayers.

The costs of managing municipal waste has skyrocketed. Tipping fees have gone up exponentially, 35% for our mirror member towns since 2018. And the blue bins have not escaped those costs.

Where towns used to benefit from recycling, they're now paying to haul and remove the material as international market forces have really disrupted the value of these recyclables. Our towns and cities are now paying to throw away thousands and thousands of tons of beverage containers.

To highlight this, I looked up a report, the Ocean Conservancy Cleanup Report. And just to highlight towns that are not my towns, Fairfield, for example, was making over \$50,000 on their recyclable products. And now they are paying \$525,000, upwards of \$525,000. And Bridgeport, another example, went from making over \$129,000 to paying approximately \$395,000. Our municipalities are suffering the impacts of this and our taxpayers are ultimately feeling it as a result.

So, I've mentioned the environmental implications, including environmental justice, I've mentioned the municipal hardships here, and I've mentioned the cost to our businesses and jobs by way of redemption centers. But let me just explain how the Bill addresses each of them through this extensive stakeholder process.

This is a bipartisan Amendment, we have all worked very hard on this Committee to make sure that everybody had a voice at the table. It's very difficult when there's so many stakeholders involved to get the Bill to 100% satisfactory for every stakeholder involved, but we believe we have a good Bill that addresses a lot of the issues here.

The Bill in the this Amendment seeks to increase the handling fee from one to two and a half cents on beer and malt Average is and from two to three and a

half cents on other containers, thereby providing an opportunity for growth for our redemption centers. Again, something that's not changed since 1982.

The Bill seeks to ensure that chain stores of a certain size that are selling a good portion of these deposit-able containers in Connecticut provide machines where the customer can go ahead and redeem their nickel.

The Bill will expand in January of 2023, the beverages that I mentioned that are not currently in the bottle deposit system, those are the bottles that we are most often finding on the side of the road and littering our streets, because they are not redeemable right now.

And in January 2024, the Bill will increase the deposit amount from five to 10 cents because we know in places that have these higher deposit amounts, this equates to higher redemption rates. The Bill would also begin to return a portion of the unclaimed deposits or sheets back to the distributors to cover some of these cost increases.

And also included are a couple of very important opportunities. One to deal with heavy glass that accumulates in our recycling bins from wine and spirit bottles by establishing a memorandum of understanding, whereby we can have this glass properly hauled to reuse those who can process it in to call it or buy product that really deals with the problem of the weight in those bins that I was talking about. This is why municipalities are having to pay so much to haul this product away, because we have those heavy wine and spirit bottles.

The other process that's laid out in the Bill is a stewardship model. This is a model that Oregon uses now and realizes the benefits of high redemption with minimal state involvement. In this Section, there's the allowance for the creation of a stewardship organization.

It's an extended producer type responsibility model, something that we've done in our paint stewardship program as well as mattress recycling. We've talked a lot about this as a Committee this year, talk to municipal leaders who want to see some solutions around extended producer responsibility as well.

And if such an organization is formed, that is allowed in Section 9 of the Bill, they would be required to seek input from many of the stakeholders to determine if a stewardship model is viable, and how it will work. Taking into account how Connecticut now operates.

We do have several redemption centers, we're looking to expand that further. And we want to make sure that those businesses are made whole. DEEP then has the opportunity to review this plan and determine if it is indeed a viable plan, if they've come up with a viable solution to move to a stewardship model.

And then DEEP has the ability to make recommendations to the Legislature, to the Joint Committee who can then act on making sure that we adopt a viable model going forward. If that doesn't happen, the Bottle Bill remains in effect.

Lastly, Mr. President, this Bill establishes a nip program, to deal with the litter they create and the difficulties they pose in properly incorporating them into our bottle deposit system.

So instead of a deposit with this Legislation, those nips will have a surcharge at the point of sale. That surcharge will be then provided to the municipalities by way of the wholesalers, for every nip that sold in that city or town.

These accumulated dollars would then be used for environmental purposes, either reducing our solid waste or the impact of litter. Our municipalities may decide to hire a recycling coordinator,

something that we've heard over and over again can be really effective in addressing our waste issue.

They could decide to install storm drain filters or purchase a street sweeper or hold regular cleanups, there are a myriad of possibilities all resulting in less trash on our streets.

So, the bottom line is, it has been a long time since this statute has been updated. It is long overdue. You've heard about the benefits to job creation and small business creation, you've heard about how this would be beneficial to our towns and cities across the state, you've heard about how this will be beneficial to our environment, both from an environmental justice standpoint, because there is litter in these areas we're incinerating plastics in areas where there are trash incinerators, therefore polluting the air further.

And it would help our environment on the whole, so that we don't have bottles floating down the stream so that they aren't sitting on the side of the road or littering our beautiful parks and trails. And so with that, Mr. President, I urge adoption of this wonderful bipartisan Amendment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cohen. Would you care to comment on the Amendment? Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise also for some comments on, I guess, it's LCO 9775. I would agree with Chairman Cohen, of the Environment Committee that this has been a long time in coming. I guess I view it a little differently, not negative versus positive, Republican versus Democrat, just different.

From my perspective, we've had an opportunity to make this change for quite some time. And from my perspective, having been in the Legislature for about 20 years, we've been in a bit of a stranglehold, in some cases by the system itself, in some cases by the General Fund.

All too often, we run to the fiscal note and say, "Well, if it's going to cost money, it's got to be bad policy." I would contend that sometimes a fiscal note is a direct relationship to a change in policy that in this case, I think, is a good policy.

The state of Connecticut has been wedded to somewhere between 20 and \$40 million a year in his cheats. So those are all the nickels that people do something other than redeem. They go on their garbage, as Senator Cohen said, they go out in the street, they may go into the blue bin, and somehow they're not picked.

But in any event, the intention of the original Bottle Bill, which was to try and create this circular motion of these containers being reused, the sheets number. is an indication, should be an indication, to anyone that cares about the environment, that it isn't working and it hasn't worked for some time.

The state of Connecticut has never, in my estimation, done the right thing with those dollars. We've done everything but fund environment. We've done everything but put resources into municipalities. We've done everything but create more reverse vending machines. We've done everything but incentivize the picking up of nips or anything else.

And so to my mind, when we started this conversation again this year, it seemed to me that changing the model was most important. This is not my model. If this was my model, the model would look differently, the model would probably look closer to the series

of Amendments that I offered as suggestions as to how I would change this language.

I would have been a little slower to increase the handling fees, not because I don't think people are entitled to an increase in handling fees, I just know that in business, it's more difficult to get someone to the table when you've made them whole than it is when they're a little hungry.

So my model would have been a little slower on the incentives to pay redemption centers and others. My model would have been a little quicker in terms of recognizing the potential of forming a nonprofit, although I think this most recent Amendment gets more in line with what my hopes were.

It's still, as Senator stated, and I can't remember her exact words, but it was something along the lines of, if we are successful in forming a nonprofit as opposed to we're going to form a nonprofit. Now she and I've had conversations, and I think we're more closely aligned than those two different approaches might indicate.

But I firmly believe that she recognizes, as I do, that, we need to step away from the state's dependence on the money and move towards putting all of these key into individuals, components, businesses together and have them come back to us with a much more responsive, a much more forward-looking bottle and container management program than the current Bottle Bill.

And so, I think she and I both want this Bill to be successful. And she and I both want a stewardship model to be successful for the next 20 years. We want more bottles and containers being recycled. We don't want an accumulation of cash, whether it's in a general fund or not for profit.

We want those dollars being put back into the environment back into the system, incentivizing

challenging, moving the population forward, so that we're not incinerating plastic bottles, so that we're not incinerating aluminum cans, so we're not doing things with those materials that are inappropriate, I would say, especially if I live next to one of the facilities that's burning them, but it's certainly not the best use of the materials themselves.

The other thing that I would do is, I wouldn't have put the 10 cents in this Bill. And I'll tell you why I wouldn't put it in this Bill. I think it was maybe 1:15 on a Friday night was the last person to testify before the Environment Committee via zoom, and it was a lady from Hartford.

And what she said to us was, this isn't a deposit. It's not a deposit to anyone that lives in the community that I live into, because I can't redeem it. It's a tax. And so, I would have put this outside, I would have left the next five cent increase for the nonprofit to determine when the appropriate time was to bring it to the table.

But you have to deal with what you have. And so I'm hopeful that as we move forward over the next year, that the nonprofit organization will be formed. I'm hopeful that the Commissioner of the DEEP will be as engaged after the passage of this Bill as she has been during the crafting of this Bill, because I think she recognizes that the stewardship model is a good model.

I think it is going to lead to more recycling, I think it is going to lead to better outcomes for glass. So instead of being on a conveyor belt as part of a garbage collection system that does almost nothing more than create more trouble because it's on that belt chewing up bearings and everything else, we'll figure out a different way, as is laid out in this Bill, to separate glass from everything else.

Maybe we never go to a dime. Maybe we do. Maybe the future Legislature when they come back and they talk about forming this nonprofit, is educated more toward the notion that we shouldn't be in a rush for the 10 cents, at least it should be timed to the ability of people all across the state to be able to get their money back, if that's what they chose to do.

Now, I'm told there's some money allegedly going to be in the budget to try and address one of my Amendments, which had to do with making sure that the six largest communities had redemption facilities in them.

Certainly, going down on the size of some of these retailers and obligating them to at least two machines will have somewhat of an impact, I think. So, instead of it being a redemption desert, you may just have to take a bus within the confines of the city of Hartford instead of actually getting on a bus and go to the city of East Hartford to get your nickel back.

When it comes to nips, I think what we found out was that there's no way to put a nip in a machine right now and get your nickel back. I can tell you, having been in the state of Maine for a Number of years, bounties are not a foreign subject in the state of Maine. Let me say that again, bounties are not a foreign subject.

It's not unusual for people to put a bounty on something. And when you do it, somebody actually comes to collect that bounty. And if you don't have a machine, having them be able to take a nip back to a park and rec-coordinator in the municipality, or take it to a public works department in a municipality, it seemed to me to be a pretty good approach.

So, there is money in this Bill to incentivize municipalities to become creative, especially when

it comes to an issue a very small product that no one has figured out how to run through a machine yet.

And so I'm hopeful that before they decide to buy a street sweeper, or before they decide to hire some fancy environmental engineer, somebody actually takes a look at what Senator Cohen talked about, is all the nips that are on the side of the road, and maybe we could have a competition across the state of Connecticut to see which town could recycle the most of all those nips that have been purchased. Maybe it's pie in the sky. I don't know.

So, I do rise in support of the Bill. I'm not sure that as I thought about today and the last week, that I ever thought I would see my name on a rewrite of a Bottle Bill. But I've got to say that the communication and cooperation between Chairman Gresko, Chairman Cohen, Representative Harding from the House, was an indication to me that at some point, it's important.

And so, I am here today advocating for support. It is not a perfect Bill, but given all the players in the bottle business, if somebody had a better Bill, I certainly would have looked at it as an option, but I'm not sure it exists.

So, once again, I'm thankful for all the people that kind of put their shoulder behind this effort and remain in support. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Would you care to remark on the Amendment? Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Great to see you up there.

THE CHAIR:

Good to see you as well.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

I strongly support this Amendment that becomes the Bill and I just have a couple quick questions for the good lady, Chairman Cohen, and then I'd like to speak on the Amendment itself.

And my question just goes right to that last portion, because I find that exciting. It's my understanding that up in Maine on the nips, and the nips tend to be the most prevalent litter that I see along the roadways, indeed, forest trails all over the place.

The idea of giving an amount of money to municipalities, proportionate to the amount of sales in those municipalities makes abundant sense to me. So I think that's a really good predicate. And I'm excited, and Senator Miner said, "Maybe pie in the sky," different municipalities competing against one another.

I was actually looking at it from a different perspective, would municipalities have the latitude if they wanted to, you know, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and literally teams, girls and boys, all these groups in municipalities are looking for fundraisers.

And back in the day, they used to go out, they used to collect cans, sometimes. They used to collect newspapers, all these different kinds of things. And I'm wondering if a town wanted to, through its municipal leadership, say, "Hey, we're going to create something where groups, like local groups can apply."

I mean, you on leash like 20 Girl Scouts in a different part of town, you're going to have no nips

on the sides of the road and they can maybe earn some money from the municipality to do something really good for their troop. I mean, to me, that's exciting.

You're creating environmental sensitivity with younger people, and the town gets rid of its litter along the roadways, and, you know, it's, I hate to use this hackneyed phrase, win-win, but so many good possibilities.

So my question really is, are there any limits or something as I envisioned it, possible for a municipality under this Amendment that essentially becomes the Bill? Through Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cohen a question been posed, would you care to respond?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Sure. Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, to the good Senator, there are limits such that they need to be using the monies for environmental purposes, either to reduce solid waste or reduce litter.

And so your idea about having paying some nonprofit organization, perhaps, to come out and clean up those bottles, cans, especially those little nips that we see all over and have grown to despise, because they are littering our roadways, I think that's a fantastic idea. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cohen. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much. So then that's the extent of my questions. I want to commend Senator Cohen, Senator Miner, the House Members, all the Members of the Environment Committee, and all the folks that came around the table to hammer out this Bill.

I've been lucky enough to be around this building long enough to know that you can't often understand the complexity of a Bill just by the words before you. There's a lot of dollars involved here, a lot of competing interests, a lot of visions for the future, and a lot of interest groups that may not have a financial stake in a Bottle Bill and redemption and deposits, but they care deeply and passionately about our environment.

And so, all of those folks should be proud, perhaps, some more than others. But I think this is a tremendous step in a very positive direction. I sat here listening to both the good Chairwoman of the Environment Committee, Senator Cohen, and the wonderful Ranking Member of the Environment Committee, Senator Miner, and it harken me back, you know, the longer you're lucky enough to stay on this planet, it's an interesting turning of the world.

The very first protest I was ever involved in I was either nine or 10 years old. As I'm sure you're all sick and tired of hearing, I grew up in the first English settlement in Connecticut, Windsor, one of those grapevines is representative of the town of Windsor.

And if you know the town of Windsor, not too far away from here, you know where the town, Green, is and there's that statue of the eagle. And to the right, if you're looking at the statue, there's the town library and ahead of you is the Episcopal Church, I believe it's the Grace Episcopal Church, and that's Bloomfield Avenue right there going right through the center of town where the old Plaza theater used to be.

And so I think I was jeeppers, like a second or third grader at John Fitch Elementary School in Windsor, and I was asked by my teacher, and we had to get permission from our moms and dads or whoever was in charge of the family, "Can your son or daughter be involved in a peaceful protest march here in town?"

And so I gave the paper-- was pretty psyched, you know, "Hey, I get the march through the middle of town." And so my parents looked at that, and lo and behold, it was an environmental March. And again, we're talking, probably, I'm dating myself now, late 60s.

And we were assigned certain things, and it was our job to put them on poster board and to hold up signs, or anything else you and your family could come up with, maybe some-- I think some of the kids decorated wagons and things like that, it was not a huge parade, but the town was very supportive. So they stopped traffic for this little period of time, like on a Saturday morning, and a group of us, elementary school kids were marching down the street.

What was my sign? My sign was, "Boycott disposable bottles and cans." That's the sign I proudly held up. And by the way, before I went into the parade, my mom, being a former teacher said, "Do you know what this means?" And I said, "I don't know what the word, 'boycott', means. So she made me go and look it up in a dictionary, and it's like, "Oh, alright, I understand what this word means." So I learned some a new a new word, too. But it was cool.

First of all, who knows that set me on my course to end up here? I don't know, there's worse things, I guess, depending on your view of a particular Bill and how I vote. But it was exciting, I felt like.

And now to be here, decades later, I feel like I'm sort of part of that same sort of evolving trend. I mean, back then, when this little kid was out there

marching down, you know, Windsor Avenue, that turns into Bloomfield Avenue, there was no such thing as a Bottle Bill, none of that, hey, you could go get soda made with saccharin, the world was a different world.

The notion that we have over the years, implemented a Bottle Bill with a lot of fanfare back in the day and that it is worked actually, in my view, as much as we could have possibly expected over the years, I think we deserve a lot of credit.

Connecticut, land of steady habits, it's tough to change on a dime and it's tough to evolve. But here we are. And I think that we're going to look back and there may be some changes along the way, but I think this is another huge step forward from when elementary school children here in Connecticut were marching in the middle of road saying, "We need to boycott disposable bottles and cans, and we need to take a different, fresher look at our environment."

This is back in the day where we didn't have government agencies and, hate to say bureaucracies, but large government entities as looking at environmental issues from top to bottom to today. This is an important day, I think this is a milestone day in so many ways.

It's probably exhausting, having worked on the Bill and hammered out compromises and gotten half a loaf, or three quarters of a loaf, or nine tenths of a loaf. But that's how Legislation works, that's how we make progress. If everybody's a little unhappy, then you've probably got a good end product. I look at this as everybody should be a little happy moving forward.

I want to thank the folks for being mindful of those individuals that own and operate redemption centers. Lo and behold, turns out a lot of them live in my district. And they've been in touch with me over the last several days and I'm sensitive to their

concerns. They were not hesitant reminding me there hasn't been an increase in the amount of funding that's directed towards what they do, and of course, all the other pressures that are brought to bear and other businesses and trying to hire help is not lost on them as well.

Also the whole nip issue. While I'm extremely excited, and thank you so much, Senator Cohen, for your kind words regarding that idea I had about, you know, groups in municipalities, communities, like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and literally teams and anything else in a town.

I especially encourage the towns in my district in North Central Connecticut, that should this Bill become law and be signed into law by Governor Lamont, that they take a hard look at look in trying to incorporate young people into the program.

The young people could certainly use that financial shot in the arm, the roadways and, trailways, and everything else in a community could stand to be cleaned up. And I think everybody's going to win. And then we're going to help plant the seeds for another generation that will really want to be stewards of our environment.

And I also like the idea that there's a chance for people to weigh in on the front end of this process, and then in another chance for another review with people that might not otherwise be involved in the deposit portion of the pipeline, for lack of a more eloquent word.

And then finally, to the Commissioner, currently, Katie Dikes, but whomever that individual may be at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, review by the extraordinarily talented and hardworking Environmental Committee, our Committee on the Environment here in the Legislature.

And there's going to be lots of opportunity for people to weigh in and offer further opinions regarding how to make it, not only a great step forward, but there's just no reason why our program can't be preeminent in the United States.

You know, I've seen it time and time again, unfortunately, we've got our hands full in so many areas, we tend to fall behind a little bit of other states, but there's no reason with the-- you know, look at the statue, the genius of Connecticut, you know, one of our great symbols.

If anything, we don't have a lot of the tremendous natural resources that some of the largest states in the country has, but boy, oh, boy, do we have genius? Do we have hard work? Do we have people that are willing to really think things through and come up with great new ideas, invent things, consider different possibilities, and move forward.

And when we take into consideration everything, and sort of hold it up and look at it from every angle as the leadership of the Environment Committee has done with is very difficult Bill with a lot of moving parts, we come up with great, great solutions, and then all of a sudden, it's like, we've reached critical mass, and we take a giant leap forward.

And so I find this exciting. I'm not always delirious with excitement regarding some of the proposed Bills. And we're all entitled to our opinions, both philosophically and as well as how we perceive the will and wishes of our constituents are within our district.

And Connecticut is a very varied state, not just geographically, but philosophically and historically. So I'm belaboring this because I'm so happy to be supportive of this Amendment that becomes the Bill.

I've watched from afar and I've seen the folks that are involved struggle. The leadership has gotten involved on both sides of the aisle. This is one of those truly bipartisan efforts and I hope it all works.

And yeah, like any other piece of Legislation, it's going to have some tweaks and changes along its path, but the environment is going to benefit from this, and the generations behind us are going to benefit from this, and those that are involved in this process are going to benefit from this. And for those reasons, Mr. President, and I want to, once again, commend Senator Cohen, Senator Miner, all those involved in the Environment Committee, and all those individuals in this building and outside that worked so hard on this initiative. I know it's going to succeed. And for that reason, I would urge my colleagues to support this Amendment as well. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel. Would you care to remark on the Amendment before the Chamber? Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Good evening, Mr. President. I rise for a question to the proponent of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

You may frame the question.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. If Senator Cohen would be able to just clarify this for Legislative intent, because I have been contacted by some of my environmental groups and they are concerned about Section 9 of the Bill. And the question is simply, can another group or organization form and submit a proposal, or is that

avenue only open to the beverage industry? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Senator Cohen, a question on the Amendment has been posed, would you care to answer?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, as stated in the Bill, is open to any deposit initiator who wants to form a stewardship organization. So, they would in fact be a beverage company. This latest Amendment, bipartisan Amendment, ensures that our independent redemption centers municipal resource recovery facilities, municipal leaders, reverse vending machine operators and our wine and spirits distributors will have a voice at the table in the formation of any stewardship program, should it move forward. Thank you. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cohen. Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you, Mr. President. So I just wanted to verify that you would have to be a depositor to be able to submit a proposal. The other industry folks that may have an interest, whether it be a redemption center, etcetera, would have a seat at the table, but the only person that would be able to submit a proposal would be a depositor of somebody like Coca Cola, or somebody large would be, those would be the folks that would be able to submit.

I'm not using this as an example, there's other people. That seems to be of concern for some of my environmentalist, so I just wanted to verify that for Legislative intent. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senators Somers. Senator Cohen, a question has been framed, would you care to respond?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. To the good Senator, that is correct. Any deposit initiator can collectively form a stewardship organization. It doesn't necessarily have to be a Coke or Pepsi, it may be a beer, you know, manufacturers, we have a lot of craft beer companies, they could form a stewardship organization, but it does, in fact, have to be a deposit initiator. So, a beverage maker. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cohen, Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. And I would just like to ask why it would have to be a depositor or somebody who is of that nature? Whether it be our microbreweries, etcetera, versus someone who is truly a nonprofit environmental organization that may be looking, with all of the stakeholders at the table, to develop and submit a proposal to the DEEP? Why that was chosen.

And I'm asking this, again, for Legislative intent, because I have been contacted by many of my environmental activists and groups within my towns. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Somers. Senator Cohen, a question had been posed, would you get a respond?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President, and through you. This Legislation when the Environment Committee had, you know, set out to once again, attempt to modernize the Bottle Bill, you know, this has been done in numerous sessions before and long before my short tenure here in this Chamber, we were presented with a model that has been currently undertaken in Oregon, and Oregon does have a stewardship model.

It is an organization that is formed by Deposit Initiators, a nonprofit organization, whereby this consortium of deposit initiators essentially run the whole program. There is no state involvement, minimal if that, they're probably from-- perhaps, from a regulatory standpoint. There may be some state involvement there, I don't know the fine tune details of the program, but the Deposit Initiators run that program.

And so as we were reviewing this, obviously, the Deposit Initiators, you know, the manufacturers of these products are those that are paying the handling fee, contending with an increased deposit rate, and having, primarily, the financial burden associated with a Bottle Bill type program.

And so that's how it worked in the other state. It made sense as we were, you know, determining whether or not a stewardship program may be the right move for the state of Connecticut that it would be formed in a similar manner, made up or comprised of deposit initiators from across the state of Connecticut. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cohen. Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you, and thank you for that answer, I do appreciate having the background on that for people who are listening to hear.

I would like to say that I think that Senator Cohen and Senator Miner have done an amazing job at trying to rally all the different interests and stakeholders in this very complicated Bill.

The Bottle Bill may sound simple, it may sound simple, I buy something and I return it and get my five cents, or now in this case, my 10 cents, but it's much more complicated than that.

So, it is a Herculean effort to get to the Bill to where it is. And although it's not perfect, I do think it's a wonderful start in something that is significantly overdue at this point in time, and I am hopeful that the initiative to get the nips off of our streets will be successful.

And I would just like to say that, I would hope that there would be some consideration on proposals that, perhaps, we could look at proposals besides those who are just the depositor so that we don't have a situation where maybe one very large depositor comes in with a proposal and has total control over a system moving forward.

So, that's just some thoughts that I would like to share. And I commend everybody for their work on this, and I intend on supporting this Bill going forward, and hopefully we will become a state that is not, as you heard Senator Cohen speak, sending some of our recyclables to landfills, which is the absolute worst thing that we can be doing. And we can get back to the mode where glass and plastics etcetera have value and can be recycled properly. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Somers. On adoption, would you care to comment? Senator Cassano, you may frame your comments or questions.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to address my comments to Senator Cohen. I was listening in back with others to your presentation and felt I wanted to come out.

I go to the grocery store a lot. I've picked up that grocery card occasionally that somebody else brought in before I got there that probably had 20 or 30, soda cans or beer cans, whatever it might be, and they don't get very clean sometimes. I wonder how that works.

What kind of an impact on a grocery store will this Bill have? Environmentally anyways.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cassano. Senator Cohen, a question has been framed, would care to answer?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President, and through you. So, I mentioned the many stakeholders that have been involved in this process, and I would say the Connecticut food Association has been a member at the table in these discussions. And we have valued all of their input as they have, as I mentioned.

Redemption centers have really fallen by the wayside in the state of Connecticut, and that is because we have a handling fee that has not been increased since 1982, making it not a viable business model for our state and for those business owners.

And so, a lot of the redemption has fallen on the backs of our grocery stores, you know, making sure

that they have their bottle room staffed, making sure that they have reverse vending machines that are always in working order. And so we've done several things in this Bill to address that.

Number one, we've increased the handling fee so that redemption centers can begin to thrive, so that we do start to see redemption centers opening up across the state of Connecticut. The good Senator, Ranking Member, Senator Miner, mentioned, you know, the fact that we have urban issues being able to provide them with the opportunities to redeem their bottles and cans, largely because, as I had mentioned, there are food deserts.

So, there aren't grocery stores, and there aren't redemption centers, and so there is no real opportunity for folks to return their bottles and cans and get their nickel back in return. So, what we've done is, and Senator Miner, the good Ranking Member mentioned this as well, we've talked about and negotiated something that I hope will appear in our upcoming budget, should we reach an agreement, which would be a funding-- a grant program, funded through our budget, to provide grants to redemption centers that choose to open up in our urban centers, taking some of the burden off the backs of our grocery stores, making sure that we get operations up and running for redemption centers across the state.

We've also increased the handling fee, as I mentioned, more redemption centers will open as a result of that raise in handling fee. So we should start to see redemption centers popping up across the state, particularly, in our urban centers, and some of our environmental justice areas where we just aren't seeing them now, as well as Fairfield County, as I mentioned, from Stratford to New York, nothing. So that's all fall falling on the back of our grocery stores.

Another thing we did in this Bill that's really important is something we modeled after a couple of our other bottle deposit states, which is requiring reverse vending machines in stores that are operating chain stores, more than 10 stores in the state of Connecticut, and are over 7000 square feet.

So what that does is we'll start to see reverse vending machines in locations that are selling a ton of these beverage containers, these individual beverage containers, but not currently giving consumers a viable way of returning those beverage containers. We'll start to see those reverse vending machines in those stores, so we're relieving some of the burden on our grocery store owners.

I think this is, as I mentioned, a good Bill that takes into account that our grocery stores have really been handling this for us for a long time, and now they'll be able to share this with other stores and there'll be new opportunities for consumers to return their bottles and cans and receive their nickel or dime as the case may be back in return.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cassano. Will you remark further?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes. I want to congratulate the Committee, it's obvious that you have worked together as we should. Sometimes we can do that and sometimes we don't. When it gets to be an area that you're dealing with, here with the bottles and dollars and cents, and all the other factors that go in here, it's not easy.

I have a unique town in Manchester where I live in that we have a redemption center, we're fortunate. We have a great recycling program. We're probably one of the few places in Connecticut that we pay no fees to the town or anything else. Garbage is picked up every week.

And that's because we have a contract with the region that our landfill, one of the last few in the state, actually takes in all of the solid waste from the region, in turn, our trash goes to the incinerator. But that's not going to last forever.

And I think that's probably the significant impact of this Bill. This Bill is a door-opener, and I think we have to look at it that way. Environmental issues can't be dealt with in one mass time, it's not going to happen that way. But if it's done in pieces and it's done over a period of time, I think we can win the battle to keep the environment to what we think it should be and what we're trying to do. And this is a big step.

And I think that's important, because if we can come together on something like this, which is important, I think we can go to the next step and the next step. We need incinerators. We can't-- I don't think we can ship all the garbage to West Virginia at a reasonable cost. Those are options, the options that are out there for solid waste are terrible, and they're only getting worse. And so I think this is a major step forward.

People say, "Look, if you're doubling the price, you're doubling the price." And if somebody said to me, "It's not a nickel," I'd buy by the case. So it's a buck 20, it is a buck 20. But a buck 20 investment into a cleaner environment for all of us in the long-term and a safer environment is important.

As one it's had several knee operations and tripped on a nip getting into my car one time, I can tell

you, I'm glad to see the nips in the Bill. So, thank you for you, all of the Members of the Committee, the leadership that you brought forward here, it's wonderful to see such an important Bill, move on a bipartisan way.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cassano. Will you remark further on the Amendment? Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I did just want to say, because, you know, I mentioned some of the good Ranking Member's, comments on urban centers, and I just wanted to address that, again, because this is an environmental issue across the state, and it's become compounded by the fact that our market conditions are changing, our consumption habits are changing, and we're finding litter everywhere. And we really are contending with an environmental justice issue here.

There is litter in our streets, but particularly bad and environmental justice communities. Some of those environmental justice communities have skyrocketing sales, in terms of nips and no good way to dispose of them. And I want to address the fact that it is a cost to some of these consumers in our urban centers, who tend to pay more for a beverage because they are food deserts.

They don't have the luxury of going to the grocery store and paying a discounted rate, because the corner bodega has to sell it for a little bit more than the grocery store to make their profit. And so, folks in our cities are paying a little bit more for these beverages to begin with and then to have a deposit on top of it, you know, can be a burden.

And so, I just wanted to reiterate the point that that was a concern of ours from the get go and one

that we really, you know, put our heads together on and sought to solve for, and it's the reason that we don't immediately go to a ten cents increase, we wanted to make sure that we have an opportunity to get redemption centers up and running in our cities and in our environmental justice areas.

And we wanted to make sure that the increase in handling fee will take a fact and more redemption centers will want to open across the state of Connecticut. And we wanted to make sure that we were able to negotiate to put something in place, hopefully, as I said, in the budget, to incentivize redemption centers, to go into particular areas to make it easier for those in urban areas and are in our environmental justice communities to go and get that nickel or that dime back that they paid for.

So I'm really pleased with where we've landed with this. As Senator Kissel mentioned, this Bill doesn't make everybody 100% happy, but it makes most of our stakeholders, somewhat, happy. And most importantly, it takes care of a giant environmental issue that is long overdue and needs addressing.

As I mentioned, from the get go of my comments, Connecticut has been extremely progressive in developing a Bottle Bill in 1978, but we've really fallen behind here. So, I just want to thank my Ranking Member for his cooperation and collaboration on this with me, it has been a process by which we've been working very well together and working with all of the stakeholders, who also deserve our things for really coming to the table, describing what the issues are that they're faced with, so that we could come to some agreement and compromise about how to move forward.

And I really want to thank some of our House Members as well, my Co-Chair, Representative Gresko, as well as Ranking Member, Representative Harding, the House leadership who has been working on this and our leadership here in this Chamber, for all working

with us, and making sure that we get this Bill to a really good place to ensure that it crosses the finish line, gets to the Governor's desk for signature and, again, really pleased with where we are.

So, again, Madam President, I move adoption of this strike-all Amendment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cohen. Will you remark further on the Amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Amendment before the Chamber?

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

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The ayes have it. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good evening to you.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

I rise in support of this Legislation and in support of the way that the conversation came together today, I thought was an important part of the conversation for those of us on our side, for Senator Miner, Senator Cohen. Everybody has worked

hard on this initiative, we understand where we need to be moving forward.

And I just want, for the record, Madam President, to get a small conversation for Legislative intent, through you, with the proponent of the Bill, if I may. And, Madam President, that's simply as there's talk about stewardship and nonprofit, and I think for people watching, I'm not sure they know what that means.

So perhaps, the good Senator-- could the Chair of the Committee just explain to me what the stewardship portion of it is intended to do, and how it relates to the nonprofit. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and through you to the good Senator. So, as I mentioned, there is another state that runs their bottle deposit program through a stewardship nonprofit organization. Stewardship models are like extended producer responsibility.

So, those who are manufacturing the products take some responsibility in what they're putting out and what's being consumed and that that responsibility could be financial responsibility, or some sort of agreement. In the case of the Good state of Oregon, who has a very successful stewardship model, albeit started very differently than we would be starting from in Connecticut, and certainly, we've written in the Bill here that any Connecticut stewardship model would have to take into account, our current redemption system, the fact that we currently have sheets in our general fund, and there are several items that they'll have to account for.

But the makeup, basically, is that this nonprofit organization in Oregon takes care of everything, they are the-- they hire the fleets that go around and pick up the bottles and cans, they sell the final product, you know, the final recycled product, those clean crushed aluminum, the clean crushed glass and plastic, they are responsible for the product from the moment it comes off their manufacturing line, the consumer drinks that product, and then they become responsible for making sure that it gets through, you know, to be redeemed, returning that customers nickel or dime, in the case of Oregon, and then making sure, again, that it goes through a clean recycling program.

The state doesn't have involvement in Oregon. To the extent they have maybe some regulatory involvement, that's possible, I don't know. And we don't know exactly what the stewardship program will look like here in the state of Connecticut either.

The idea behind this Legislation is that we are providing for permissive language for the creation of a nonprofit organization formed of deposit initiators to come to-- to go to DEEP and present a plan, which deep would then approve and present to the Legislature for consideration.

It may look very similar to the Oregon model, it may not. But in the end, the idea is that it's an extended producer responsibility program, and that the state would take a step back from running the show, so to speak. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And thank you, Senator, for that detailed answer. I think it's important to

have that opportunity on the, you know, on the record for Legislative intent and what we're doing.

And one final question through you, Madam President, is the Committee process, the Environment Committee involved in this conversation to help get this stewardship model and nonprofit and, kind of, bring everybody together, or is this the group that's related to the Bill? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Thank you, and through you, Madam President, to the good Senator. So, the stewardship organization can be formed with DEEP's approval, as written in the Bill. The Legislative involvement would happen later in the process.

So, various stakeholders named in the Bill will be consulted for input from any stewardship organization that's formed. That stewardship organization may or may not present a plan to DEEP, which DEEP would then approve and provide to the Legislature for final approval, and then certainly we'd have to go through the Legislative process. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you very much for that clarification. And once again, there are a lot of people who want to be in support of initiatives like this and sometimes it's those details in conversations that preclude people the opportunity

to support items that they could normally support because of those devil in the details.

So, I want to thank everybody involved in this, especially the good work that happened today, to get us to this point. And thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to share my opinion today.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Senator Miner. Good evening.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And just to be sure that everyone understands that we are not perfect. You know, there's already been some questions asked about what was the intention behind a name that's listed on line 472 or what have you.

Let me just say this, it is Wednesday, session ends next Wednesday and to the extent that this is not perfect, I think both Chairs in the Committee and Ranking Members are certainly willing to listen to anyone that may feel that somehow that title on a certain line didn't hit the target.

Municipal resource recovery facilities may be one such target, that in our effort to try and make sure that people had a place where they felt they were able to communicate, there may be some resource recovery facilities that are not municipally owned, they may be quasi-public, they could be anything.

If you can imagine, under the COVID environment, we've probably taken on one of the most difficult issues in the environment. Certainly, difficult issues in my tenure on the Environment Committee, and have, kind of, brought it around when most people didn't think it would happen.

So, I just want people to know, I stand ready to try and make sure that that doorway is open for communication. Certainly, to the Commissioner, there's nothing about Commissioner Dikes that would lead me to believe that she'd be unwilling to listen to someone that may have a valid concern or valid point they'd like to make in putting together this operation that I think we all hope is going to be wildly successful.

So again, thank you to the Co-Chair, Senator Cohen. And I would urge the Senate support for this Bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And good evening. I rise in support of the amended Bill and Legislation before us. I want to thank Senator Cohen and Senator Miner and our Chairs and Ranking in the House as well for their work and on this very important Bill. And obviously, the advocates have been working extremely hard on this, also, this session.

But, Madam President, this Bill really goes back to the last-- since I've been here in the Legislature for about almost 20 years now. And I think one of the first Bills that I heard about when I first walked in the building as a House Member, was the Bottle Bill.

This is the perennial Bill that has been in front of us for at least two decades, if not longer. And there has been a push all those years to, somehow, figure out how our state can do better when it comes to recycling our plastic bottles.

When the original law was contemplated, nobody ever thought that we would be purchasing water, that we would have products like Snapple, that we would have other products that are now in bottles that do not have a five cent deposit. And the fact that we now see our roadways and our areas littered with these bottles, not including the nips that are probably the bane of everyone's existence, in no matter what community you're in.

I walk my dog all the time, and they are just all over the place. And as fast as I pick them up, new ones continue to be-- come on the ground, and they're just litter all over the place. And it means that here in the state, we have to do better.

I just go back to, very quickly, that when I was younger, very young, I was probably seven or eight years old, I wrote a letter to Mayor Bill Collins at the time, and I was urging him, or I was kind of, I guess, upset probably because we-- I'm sure it was because we had a family discussion about it, which is probably what got me riled up, and I had written a letter to Mayor Collins about litter at Calf Pasture Beach, and that something should be done about litter at Calf Pasture Beach.

Now an eight year-old just as something should be done and that was probably where I left it. And he actually wrote back, which is very inspiring to me, which is probably help put me in this position today, wrote me back saying that, "You know, the state of Connecticut just passed their first-- well passed their Bottle Bill, which now we're going to have deposits on cans and bottles and that should help alleviate some of the waste and litter that you see at the beach. So, don't despair young lad, we will have this and we'll hopefully we'll be able to take care of some of the litter that's out there."

And it did at the time, but now fast forward all these years later and we are now behind the times when it comes to all the different products that are

out there with regard to bottles and cans and glass and everything else.

And I think that most people get very confused, I certainly get confused some days as, what is actually has a deposit on it? What doesn't have a deposit on it? What can I bring to my local marching band that has a redemption once a month and raises money from that? What can I bring? And, you know, how best can we keep our environment clean?

So those are-- you know, as much as everybody wants to be a good environmental steward, it does become difficult when all these new products come along and the laws can't keep up with the new products, almost like our technology.

So, I just, I am so glad that this Body has wrestled this perennial issue to the ground, and are in process of slaying it, so that we can have a cleaner environment in the future for our kids. And, you know, as somebody who lives on the coastline, and when I see those nip bottles, and I see the plastic straws, and I see the litter that's on our roadways, and I see those storm drains that send litters down the storm drains and into Long Island into our waterways, it just upsets me. It pains me to think that we're not being better environmental stewards.

And I know that this Legislature worked very, very hard to be better environmental stewards, and that we'll continue to make progress in those areas. But this one particular Bill will go a long ways towards helping solve some of the trash and problems that we have.

So, Madam President, I want to again, thank everybody for their involvement in this Legislation today. I think I saw Representative Gresko and Representative Harding here before, and again, thanks to Senator Cohen, Senator Miner and others who have been involved in us, of course, the

advocates and staff and everyone else who has put us here today. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

If not, I will open the machines. Mr. Clerk, please call the roll call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 1037 as amended.

Senate Bill 1037 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 1037 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, on Senate Bill 1037 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Bill 1037 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1037 as amended

Total No. voting	34
Total No. voting Yea	33
Total voting Nay	1
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) The Legislation is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, for a couple markings, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Our next Bill will be, Bill previously marked PT, Calendar page 42, Calendar 50, Senate Bill 266.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. And then for some additional markings for this evening.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. On Calendar page 2, Calendar 117, Senate Bill 694, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Followed by Calendar page 44, Calendar 227, Senate Bill 881, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Followed by Calendar page 43, Calendar 59, Senate Bill 763, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 34, Calendar 494, House Bill 6100, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Followed by Calendar page 13, Calendar 325, Senate Bill 971, I'd like to mark that item go. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Thank you, sir. And, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 42, Calendar No. 50, AN ACT CONCERNING NEW HOME
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS, HOME IMPROVEMENT
CONTRACTORS, TRADE APPRENTICESHIPS AND LOCKSMITHS.

There are Amendments.

THE CHAIR:

And Good evening, Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I move acceptance of
the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage
of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Yes. Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of
an Amendment, LCO No. 9795. I ask that he please
call the Amendment and I be granted leave of the
Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

And, Mr. Clerk, if you could please call LCO 9795

CLERK:

LCL. No. 9795, Senate schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. First, I want to start by thanking the Ranking Member, Senator Witkos for his hard work on this Bill. We have a great working relationship with all of the Members of the General Law Committee, but Senator Witkos really took the lead on this and put in a lot of effort to get this Bill to the point where it is today. So I wanted to thank him for that work.

This is a good consumer-friendly Bill. It's a consumer protection Bill. And I'm just going to go through and briefly summarize.

It requires the registration of new home builders, it requires that they apply online for their license and that when they apply, they provide a proof of at least \$20,000 of liability insurance. It sets that all of the licenses are renewed for everyone on March 31st. For anyone who watches Parks and Rec, that is a day that does exist.

The next, it says that new home builders can also be home improvement contractors. It lays out the specifications for a contract that has to be between a new home builder and a consumer. Any changes to that contract must be in writing, but are permissible.

It requires payment into the new home, contractor guaranty fund annually, instead of biannually. It does the same for home improvement contractors as it does for the new home builders. In addition, for the new home builders, it adds a further-- Home improvement contractors, it adds in alarm systems not requiring electrical work, tree shrub cutting or the grinding of tree stumps to items that must apply for that license. And again, the same requirements that they must be registered.

In addition, what it does for big box stores such as a Lowe's or a Home Depot, it creates one license

instead of requiring every individual person to be licensed.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Maroney. Will you remark further on the Amendment that's before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I want to start off by thanking Senator Maroney, for his leadership on the General Law Committee. It was a welcome addition this past Legislative session.

I've served on that Committee now for 12 years, and it's one of the Committees that I found to be the most rewarding, because we deal with such a wide variety of topics. And over the past few terms I've wanted to put my expertise, I guess, I'll say on that Committee to good use, in trying to modernize our statutes, make them more efficient, and have them replicate what's actually happening in the real world.

And I think that the Bill before us does as it relates to Home Improvement contractors, of which there are over 23,000 of them registered here in the state of Connecticut. As Senator Maroney had mentioned, it'd move all of our registrations to online now making it easier for the department to track not only new registrations, but renewals.

And in addition, I'm not going to go over all the parts of the Bill that Senator Maroney did, but I do want to add two other pieces to the Bill, which I think are very exciting. And there's so consumer-friendly, I guess, if you will.

And these are the ability to access the judicial department through the small claims court process. Under the current statute, if you have small claims,

they're only allowed up to a \$5,000 threshold, and other than that, you'll have to sue the defendant in a superior court.

But working with the judicial department, and thank you to all those folks over there, they agreed that we could-- may even provide a special docket and we can increase that amount to \$15,000, because you can only imagine, now you do one little thing at your home and you're already over the \$5,000 range. So we've allowed that to go up to \$15,000 pursuit if a homeowner has an issue with a contractor to do that.

In addition, it allows access in the guaranty fund increasing from 15,000 to \$25,000. And I thought that was very interesting in the testimony in that, folks that had to pursue going through to try to collect money. So a guaranty fund is, if the contractor does something, either doesn't complete the job or does something wrong, and the person can't seem to get it fixed, they can apply to this fund to get some reimbursement.

But often what happens is, you always had to go through an attorney, go to court, get a judgment, and by then you've already exhausted the \$15,000 on legal fees, so basically, you end up with nothing.

So we've accomplished two things in this Bill, you can actually take the case, if you will, to a binding arbitration panel who can make that same judgment the same as a court order. And then you have the ability to go up to a \$25,000 judgment or reimbursement out of the guaranty fund.

And the last Section I'll speak to is, Limited Licensing versus Unlimited Licensing. And this is just a clarification, has nothing to do with ratios. It says that if you are in a Limited License classification, and you're studying to get your Unlimited license classification, if you're on the job somewhere and DCP or DOL comes out, how are you counted?

Well, it depends on the work that you're doing. If you're doing your job and you're Limited License, you're counted as a Limited License. If you're doing the job in an Unlimited License capacity, that's how you're counting there. So it just kind of clarifies a question that folks had out in the field. And with that, Madam President, I urge the Chamber to adopt the Bill as amended. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much, Senator Maroney. Will you remark further on the Amendment that's before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I have a few questions to the proponent of the Amendment, please, if I might, through you.

THE CHAIR:

And please do. Proceed. Senator Maroney, prepare yourself.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So, am I correct that the-- at least a portion of this Amendment deals with the insertion of a dollar amount for the insurance policy that would be required of someone who was seeking a home improvement contractors permit? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you for the question, Senator Miner, and the opportunity to clarify. Yes, you are correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So, under our motor vehicle insurance requirements, if someone fails to continue their motor vehicle insurance policy, the insurance company notifies the Department of Motor Vehicles, and I believe they suspend the registration. If the good gentleman could tell us, through you, Madam President, what would occur if a contractor were to let their insurance policy lapse. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And thank you to Senator Miner for the question. It is not written in the Bill, but it does give the Commissioner the ability to promulgate regulations if necessary.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

And so, through you, Madam President, it's not actually written in the Bill that the Commissioner can promulgate regulations?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

No, I believe it was a, "May", on that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank the gentleman for his answer. Madam President, I've had a home improvement permit for a Number of years and, in fact, I have an insurance policy. It was a liability policy that I purchased a Number of years ago because I thought it was probably the best thing for me in my situation to guard against a claim that may arise out of an accident. I could drop a ladder on someone's table and damage it. It would be covered under a liability policy. I could hit a rock with a lawnmower and it could be covered under a liability policy.

I've tried to find an insurance policy for \$20,000. I don't believe they're available. It's an unfortunate flaw, I think, in this Legislation that the number that's been settled upon is so low, that the average individual might say, "Well, you know, this Bill really doesn't matter, I'll be able to get a policy. My insurance provider said you'd be lucky if you could find one for a quarter of a million."

And let me tell you why that's relevant, Madam President. It's relevant because I think the number was 25,000 permit holders or somewhere around that. If 90% of them don't have a policy, they're going to go into the marketplace looking for insurance and it's going to cost them somewhere over \$500. Mine is over \$500. I'm not complaining.

But for someone that wants to trim shrubs, as indicated in line 335, that may a bit of a sticker

shock. If you're billing somebody \$20 an hour. So, I understand this is a consumer Bill, I understand that the effort behind this was trying to make people whole if there was a problem. I honestly wish that there was more effort put in into pegging the number that an insurance policy actually would be available at so that people knew what they were voting on here.

It's not like the minimum requirement on an automobile policy, I think the Chairman has indicated that there's no provision in the Bill that requires the Commissioner to promulgate regulations. So in effect, we're saying that someone has to have a policy on the day they apply for a home improvement permit, but you can cancel the policy and no one's protected. The consumer is not protected. The contractor is not protected. There's none of the protections in the Bill that would have made the Bill, I think, a consumer-friendly Bill.

I have trouble voting against the Bill, because I think there's an attempt here to at least make a declaration that the Legislature thinks that there should be a policy. I just don't think that this language gets us to that point. And so, you know, I'll sit and listen if anybody else has any other comments, I can't believe I'm the only one that has stumbled on the fact that this policy, currently, no one has confirmed for me that this is available.

And so my expectation is that there'll be a lot of people that will wake up to the passage of this Legislation at some point in the future, and say, "Wow, I never knew, A, that I had to have a policy to trim somebody's shrubs and, B, that I had to have an insurance policy for liability. So, thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on the Amendment?

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

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The Amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I want to thank the previous speaker first questions and concerns regarding that Section of the Bill. And in the formulation of the Bill, we did have a round table with all of the stakeholders involved, and that was one of the questions that the insurance industry said, "We don't know if there's a market out there for that." And the conversations were, well, if we mandated that through policy, because we think it's a good idea that if you're running a business you should have some general liability insurance, and we require to operate a car in the state of Connecticut, if you have somebody working on your property, maybe they should have something. And the advocate said, "Certainly if that's what the will of the General Assembly is, then I'm sure that you'll create a marketplace for it."

And then we went to the task of it, what is the proper dollar amount? And I don't think-- I thought the conversation was that we shouldn't be determining what somebody felt should be the, I guess, the minimum coverage that they should have for their particular business depending on what they do.

As the good Senator said, Home Improvement contractors can range anywhere from a painter to somebody that is trimming trees, landscaping, and

so, working on a pool, all these different things that-- you know, depending on what you're doing in somebody's home, you may feel that the need for carrying a higher degree liability insurance.

And also depending on what you have for personal financial assets, if you, you know, you're a recent college grad or somebody out of high school that just bought a landscaping trailer and a mower, they don't have any assets, so maybe they'll get the minimum amount. But if somebody has a home and they've got vehicles and other things, assets they want to protect, then they'll go up for the higher dollar amount.

So that was the thought behind having the \$25,000 limit. We do require that as a minimum in Connecticut to drive an automobile. And I will share that, although we think that the insurance companies, if somebody doesn't pay their automobile insurance will notify the DMV and they'll suspend the registration, that doesn't necessarily happen.

I can tell you from my many years in law enforcement that, it's not until we're-- if somebody was involved in a car accident and you do the investigation, you find out the insurance was lapsed six months, nine months ago, or they paid the first month, they got the car, and then they cancelled it after that. And so, that happens, unfortunately, all the time. Not that it's an excuse, but that is something that you hope the individuals if they understand the state law, state policy, you get the policy, you keep it in effect until you're not doing the work any longer.

So I just wanted to clarify those a few points from the great questions of Senator Miner and, hopefully, we can have the support the Chamber for final passage. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And again, I want to thank Senator Miner and Senator Witkos for their comments. And as we can see from their discussion, this was a balance of trying to provide consumers protection, but also not unnecessarily burdening those small home contractors. But as with most pieces of Legislation, this is a starting point.

And I think in the future, it may be necessary to come back and increase the amount of insurance and to look, and potentially require different amounts of insurance based upon the work that someone is actually doing.

I would be remiss if I didn't also thank former Representative Kim Rose, who had been advocating for years for requiring home insurance for home improvement contractors. I was texting with her today and she shared her story of how, over 10 years ago, she had repairs done on her roof, a roof that is still leaking and is required extensive repairs, and unfortunately still has yet to be fixed.

And she was unable to recuperate any of the-- all of her expenses because her original contractor did not have the adequate insurance. So with that, I urge the Chamber to adopt this measure. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, I will open the voting machine. Mr. Clerk, could you please call the roll call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 266 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 266 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, on Senate Bill 266 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 266 as amended

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	1
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) The Legislation is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 2, Calendar 117, substitute Senate Bill No. 694, AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO PHARMACY AND DRUG CONTROL STATUTES.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. The Clerk is in possession of an Amendment, LCO No. 9798. I would ask that he call the Amendment and I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, if you would please call LCO 9798, please.

CLERK:

LCO 9798, Senate schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This Amendment is a strike-all, which effectively becomes the Bill. Earlier when we passed Senate Bill 895, within one Section related to the prescription drug monitoring program, we had two different issues that we were looking to change, but it had only one effective date.

And so, what we are doing now is just changing the effective date for one of those issues. That issue was exempting veterinarians from having to report to the prescription drug monitoring program when dispensing insulin or diabetes devices for animals. It'll change that to be effective upon passage, instead of as it currently is at effective on July one 2022.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Maroney. Will you remark further on the Amendment before the Chamber? Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you Madam President. I stand in support of the strike-all Amendment. For the folks behind me in the room, just for clarification, this is something that had already come through our Chamber, we've debated the topic, and it's a fix of a date change only. And once the Amendment is adopted to become the Bill, I'm going to motion for my good friend over there to put this on Consent.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Senator Maroney-- Oh, okay. So, will you remark further on the Amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Amendment?

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

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?
Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Madam President, if there's no objection, I would ask that this item be moved to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

And I will ask if there is any objection to putting this item on the Consent Calendar. And there is no objection, so we will add that to the Consent list.
Mr. Clerk.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Can we stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

And the Senate can stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the Clerk please call the next item, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 44, Calendar No. 227, substitute for Senate Bill No. 881, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT as amended by Senate Amendments Schedule "A" LCO 9435.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Good evening, Madam President. The Clerk is in possession of an Amendment LCO No. 9807. I would ask that the Clerk call the Amendment and I leave of Chamber to summarize, please.

THE CHAIR:

And Mr. Clerk, if you could please call LCO 9807, sir.

CLERK:

LCO No. 9807, that will be set at Schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you. This is essentially a strike-all so I'm going to keep my comments on the Amendment relatively brief and I'll speak more broadly on the on the underlying Bill. But the Amendment does-- makes a number of changes.

Specifically adds in what was Section 9, which makes to the underlying Bill-- which makes some changes to how independent schools and colleges, their process for program approval for two years, that approval is waived for new programs. And then the threshold goes from 12 to 15.

It also makes some changes to Section 7, aligning the second part of that with the TRUST ACT, and again, I get I'll get more into that once we get to the underlying Bill. But I would move for adoption of this Amendment, please.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. And the question is on adoption of the Amendment. Will you remark further on adoption of the Amendment? Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I also move for adoption the Amendment and we'll be speaking later on the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Amendment?

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

(MEMBERS):

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? And the ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?
Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. This Bill has taken a lot of work and a lot of patience from a lot of different people.

And I do want to thank my good Ranking Member on Higher Education here in the Senate, Senator Witkos, who has been a tremendous partner on this. And I really appreciate his collaboration and his partnership, as well as Representative Farrar in the House, Representative Haines, as well as Representative Elliott. And then, certainly, the Governor's office and Mohid Aguwa, who has a wealth of information, has been really, you know, been a great resource for us.

This is a great example of a Bill where it's made better when we work collaboratively. We've been making changes on this Bill right up to, you know, today, in part because we are really taking the best ideas from everybody, no matter what letter they have at the end of their name. So I'm grateful for that.

Stepping back, I mean, this is not an easy Bill, at first, to wrap your arms around. There were many more Sections when this Bill first started and some of those have been removed and we're going to have our Education Committee deal with those and so, the parts of it that really are centered on Higher Education, appropriately, we're dealing with in the Higher Education Committee.

But this Bill is titled, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT and I think it's important to kind of explain what the connection is here. A few years ago, I believe it was in 2015, this Legislature passed, unanimously, a Bill that set some standards for our workforce. And it was based in the belief that, for Connecticut to succeed and for our economy to thrive, we must have the best workforce in the nation.

What does that mean? That means, it doesn't mean everybody has to go and have a graduate degree, it does not mean that everybody has to have a four-year degree. But it means we set a benchmark. And we said that, I believe it's 70% of people in our state, our workforce, would have a post-secondary degree of some-- a credential of some kind.

We're at 57% right now, that's above the national average, but not where we as the Legislature said we want to be, right? We want people to be highly trained, we want people to be able to get good jobs. And again, that does not mean they're all four-year degrees. It could be at a private occupational school, right? It could be-- who knows where.

But we want to have a skilled, educated workforce. And that's the value-add, right? For Connecticut. That's our bread and butter. And so, this Bill helps achieve that in two fundamental ways.

One, it reduces barriers and access to education to get these credentials. And I can explain in a number of different examples as to how it does that. But it breaks down barriers, and it does have more than a nod, it has an intentionality when it comes to equity, as well.

So I would say that the timing of this Bill is very important, because we're rebounding from COVID and from the pandemic, we have people out of work, we have high school students who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, and this Bill will help ensure that more of those high school students get post-secondary credentials. And it is really lifting people up and through education and using higher education. So that is a very important piece of the Bill. And as I think about it, I'm like that is half the Bill, let's say.

The second half is about data and business intelligence and analytics. And I know when I say that some people's eyes probably kind of glaze over.

But if you've ever heard anybody say that government should act more like business, this is your Bill. Because a good business uses data in business intelligence to make decisions. They don't guess they don't act on hunches.

And this is a perfect example of our institutes of higher education and government being good partners with the business community in understanding what our business community needs to thrive, and then adjusting our policies and adjusting our programs and what we offer in our institutes of higher education to meet those needs.

And it's not just from surveys, it's not just from a census that comes out once every 10 years, but it's from sophisticated data that will be protected, because I know, understandably, some people may be concerned about that. In many cases, the data is already collected, but it might be collected in a PDF, and we are just raising our level of sophistication. And that's what this Bill is also about.

The one other part that I want to mention is that, when we're talking about breaking down barriers to education, some of those barriers include transportation, and there is an innovative part of this Bill in Section 3 that creates that creates the Connecticut Pass Program, which would allow institutes of higher education, but not just those schools and colleges, but employers too, from working with DOT to get a pass, right?

And it's not at a loss of revenue for the state of Connecticut, but it's something where they can work with their employees and make it easier for them to use public transportation and get to work or school. So that's a good thing.

And, I also want to highlight the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program, which about a dozen other states do. States like Texas, big states,

small states, a lot of states are doing this. And we've seen in some states that have implemented this, a 5% increase in the number of high school students who actually go on to college, because in this case, it would immediately apply to Southern, Central, right? Eastern, and Western. And it would make it easier to-- not to get into those not to get into those schools, but through the application process to attend those schools.

And other schools in Connecticut could apply to be part of that program. So again, it's breaking down barriers. And that's a good thing. I won't run through-- you know, I'm happy to answer your questions and I look forward to that opportunity, and I want to give my good colleague, Senator Witkos and others a chance to remark on this Bill.

But I am, and I'll end my comments here, I am particularly gratified that this was something that was not only negotiated across party lines, but also with our business community and with our institutes of higher education as well. There is, some might know, and this is in Section 14, enhanced wage records that we are going to be asking our employers to provide, and they already provide quarterly filings for unemployment benefits and things like that, but they're going to be providing more information.

And this is something where the administration worked closely with the business community to make sure that it wasn't a burden, but instead, it's seen as an opportunity, because again, it goes back to us working in partnership with the business community to make sure that we are training the workers of tomorrow. So that's an exciting opportunity.

And we listen to our colleagues, in terms of the schedule for when those businesses would do the reporting, and one of the things that the Amendment that we just called and just passed does is change

that schedule a little bit to be more flexible, to make sure that businesses have time to do this.

So, you know, all in all, I feel like this is a Bill, I know that this is a Bill that is going to move our economy forward, it's going to strengthen our economy, it's going to help people who are not only in high school right now, but also who are searching for that next job, and it's going to help us achieve what we all passed. I wasn't in this Chamber at the time, in 2015, I know Senator Witkos was and others who worked on that Bill at the time, and set a benchmark, and said, "Connecticut, we should be at 65%, in terms of our workforce with post-secondary credentials."

We're not there yet. This Bill will get us there, and it'll help us have some bragging rights, so we will really be able to say and prove it, back it up with data, that we are the best trained, smartest, most talented, most capable workforce in the nation. And that's something I think we should all be able to support. So thank you, Madam President, for allowing me to describe the Bill, and I would hope that my colleagues would also support it. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Good evening, Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I also rise to speak in favor of the Bill as amended. You know, many times in this circle we talk about workforce development and making sure that we have the next generation of workers ready for when our businesses come calling and say, "These are the skill sets that we need that we're looking for, for our workforce." When we're trying to recruit businesses to come to the state of Connecticut, we reach out and say,

"What are you looking for, for not only diversification, but skill sets for your workers?"

As a matter of fact, not even two weeks ago, when this Chamber, we passed the Bill downstairs that said, "We're going to have a task force to look at what does the insurance industry look for, for the next generation of workers?" Because we want to make sure that we have those folks ready. That is exactly what this Bill does in many, many ways, as described by the good Chair of the Higher Education Committee.

And I want to, first of all, I throw out some kudos to the first Chair, Senator Haskell, for leading the charge in so many ways on a lot of the Bills in Higher Education. But then without even skipping a beat, there was some shuffling of assignments and then Senator Slap came in and it was like a heartbeat, you know, you didn't even notice a blip on the screen.

And all the comments he spoke about being a bipartisan product is very, very true, Madam President. This Bill, if I was a student in high school today, this is awesome. I would be calling up every Legislator, my State Rep and my State Senator, and say, "You better vote for this Bill." Because you can imagine the stress of students when it comes time to apply for colleges. Applying all over the place, and "Well, I'll have a fallback. I don't know if I'm going to get in." But then the parents are saying, "Well, your fallback, that's \$200 here, \$100 here, that adds up just for you to apply to see where do you want to go."

This Bill provides automatic admission into our CSCU system if you qualify. As a student in high school, you're going to know that you qualify. And it's based on certain criteria that's contained within the Bill, whether it's a percentile of your class rank or your GPA, that's determined by your local Board of Education, the qualifications at the

institution, and your local Board of Education will make sure that that data is available.

So a student knows, I may want to apply to this school, but you know what? As a fallback, I'm going to put Central in, or I'm going to put Eastern. And they know they're automatically guaranteed admissions through the program I just mentioned previously, Madam President.

We often hear in this Chamber how sometimes transportation is an issue for folks. And we have expanded the Connecticut Pass Program for our colleges that go up to UConn, back and forth between the campuses, and it's done tremendously. We've heard from Mayor Aaron Steward about how the fast track has been a tremendous boom in economic development right around and in all the communities and stops along the fast track lane.

But I believe that this Connecticut Pass Program allows employers to contract with the Department of Transportation. The Commissioner will work between maybe a multitude of people to say, "What do you need?" And they will help, because of the size of the state, negotiate the price at no cost to the taxpayers.

We're not going to subsidize that, the employer is, but because they have the full weight of the state of Connecticut behind them, it adds a lot more of opportunity opportunities for folks that may not have transportation needs that addresses those.

As the good Chair said that there's going to be a lot of data collection and analytics, and it goes back to-- if you're if you had a chance to read the Bill you'll see this thing called CP20 Win. Well, what the heck does CP20 Min mean?

Well, that means we're going to start tracking and getting data to make Connecticut better from preschool up until your doctorates degree. And we'll

be able to know, in the aggregate so we won't have anybody's individually information, but we'll be able to know, where did you go to school? What happened after you graduated? If from a public school or from a private school. Did you go to college? Did you go to a technical school? What is your now profession? What is your average salary in that profession? So much data, we'll know where all of the people that generated here in Connecticut, where they're going and what the expectations are.

That's the way you build a plan for the future. Because you can't build a plan without data. There really is no downside to this Bill that I foresaw, Madam President. As the good Chair said, there were some parts that were taken out as it moved its way through the Committee process and there was a lot of negotiations.

And sometimes it's hard to please everybody, but I think, indifference to the Governor's office, the House of Representatives, and the Senate Chamber, and all those that were involved in the negotiations of this Bill, I think we're in a good spot.

And when you can get the educational arm of government, the business arm or government, CBIA has already signed off on this. Everybody that's been involved in this has signed off on this saying, "This is what we need in Connecticut as the tool to figure out where we're going and what we need to offer and how we're going to get there." And I urge the Chamber's adoption on the Bill as amended. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Will you remark further? Senator Berthel. Good evening.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good evening, Madam President. I rise to ask a few questions to the good Chair, if I may.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you. And actually, Senator, I'm going to make a few comments first and then I'll have a question for you. So sorry, to get you to stand up so quickly.

You know, I think that, as my esteemed colleague, Senator Witkos, just spoke to, the Bill does have some good components to it that makes sense. And there are some, in my opinion, that do not.

You know, one of the things that stuck out to me in this Bill, and I know, I think it's gone through literally a dozen different versions of itself from the original Bill, and serving on the Education Committee, you know, we worked very hard to extract things that were truly Education Committee components out of the Bill.

But one of the areas of concern that I have is with respect to something that is actually a good thing that we're doing, but I think we may have fallen a little short. And that is with respect to the automatic applications for consideration into our State University System.

We are truly blessed in Connecticut with some of the finest private institutions of Higher Ed. You know, we have an Ivy League College right down in New Haven, we have many other private institutions. And I have to-- I guess, I won't question why, but I'll put the notion out there, the thought out there, as to why we did not necessarily include those private institutions in the discussion about having them provide thresholds and requirements for admissions?

And if we're going to open up the State University System for all students who meet a certain threshold, then let's let the private institutions come in and be part of that dialogue as well. They're clearly an integral part of, not only the delivery of higher education in Connecticut, but also part of our economy.

And I think that part of what this Bill, the great, you know, down shot of this, if you will, is that having more of our high school kids going to the State University System will also prop up our economy in Connecticut, because that will just be, I think, a natural occurrence and a good side effect, if you will, of that.

So I think that that maybe going forward, we need to engage those private institutions of higher education here in our great state in a dialogue and see how they might want to consider participation in something like this as we-- you know, if the ultimate goal is to improve workforce development, then I think that's an important part of the dialogue.

You know, I also agree that the automatic filing of a FAFSA, financial aid form is great. There are no reasons why anyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status, shouldn't fill out that form. You don't know what you're going to have access to as a college student-- an upcoming college student. If you're a senior right now, you don't know. There's a lot of assumptions that are made because of economic status, that maybe a student might not qualify for anything.

So I think that that's a good use of FASFA and applying that in this Bill is a good solution and a good thing. I also agree with what Senator Witkos just spoke to regarding see the Connecticut Pass, C-

Pass, or whatever, U-Pass, whatever we're calling it.

That will expand access for many students who do not have private transportation, maybe can't afford private transportation. I think that's a good thing. And I like the way that it's structured, that it will ultimately, ideally, have no impact to the taxpayers.

Madam President, what I do have a question about though, and I would ask the good Chair to respond to, I guess my question regarding Section 7 of this Bill. And this is something that I am having trouble understanding.

Section 7, essentially, restricts the release of identifiable student information that is provided to the office of higher education from being released. And I'm wondering if the good Chair might explain to me why we are restricting the release of this information. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And through you. That's a great question and I'm happy to dive in to the answer. There's two parts of Section 7. One addresses an issue that came to light from one of our state universities. And they articulated the fact that students are not protected by FERPA, which is, you know, this-- essentially protects students data and privacy until they have matriculated, until they've actually entered the school and they are students.

So, if you apply, if one applies to university and your, you know, college essay and application and all that, you know, is subject to, this is the fear,

is subject to FOI. And most people do not think, I would venture to say this, that their college essay is FOI-able. So, that's what the first Section addresses. Essentially, it says, when you are applying to schools, you still have some protection in terms of your privacy.

The second part, in Part B, really, addresses the fact that we do not expect, and this does not, is not occurring now, but we want to make sure that it doesn't, our Institutes of Higher Education from, you know, getting involved in immigration issues. And so there are certain conditions upon which that information can and must be shared, but we do want to ensure that all students have their privacy protected.

This Body, as well as the House of Representatives here in Connecticut, has over the past few years, have made decisions and enacted laws that have said that all students are welcome at our universities and colleges, regardless of immigration status in.

And I see Section B, as just affirming that, and saying that there is an appropriate time and in place to, you know, have those discussions about immigration status. But, you know, it's not on our college campuses. And so, it just protects that information, and that's what Section B gets at. So, through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you, Madam President. And I thank the good Chair for his explanation. I guess, I'm still uncertain as to why we-- you know, under the law right now, the Office of Higher Ed is required to release this information and I think that there's good cause for doing that.

So, Madam Clerk, the-- Not Madam Clerk, Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of an Amendment LCO No. 9377. I'd ask that the Clerk call the Amendment I be given leave at the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, would you please call LCO 9377

CLERK:

LCO No. 9377, Senate Schedule "C".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you, Madam President. Essentially, this is a very simple Amendment. It strikes Section 7 in its entirety, removes the restriction of the release of identifiable student information that is provided to the office of Higher Ed.

Under the current law, as we just spoke to the Office of Higher Education, is required to disclose certain information to law enforcement and other government agencies. We should not be restricting the release of that information from the Office of Higher Ed. And I urge adoption of the Amendment. And Madam President, I'd ask for a roll call when we vote on this, please. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Amendment? Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Yes. Thank you very much, Madam President. As I stated earlier, I believe that it is important to protect the privacy of our students in Connecticut, and Section 7 does that. And we have very carefully crafted the second part of Section 7B to align with the TRUST ACT, which is consistent with our existing state statutes.

So, I would ask that my colleagues vote against the Amendment and I would also ask for a roll call vote. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. So we've had to request for a roll call vote. So we will indeed have a roll call vote on the Amendment.

Will you remark further on the Amendment before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Amendment? If not, I will open the vote. And, Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly call the roll call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 881, Senate Amendment "C".

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 881, Senate Amendment "C".

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, on Senate Bill 881, Senate Amendment "C".

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 881, Senate Amendment "C"

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	11
Total voting Nay	24
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) Amendment fails.

Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I rise just for a few comments, not any questions to the proponent of the Legislation.

First, I want to thank Senator Slap as well as Senator Witkos for their tremendous work on this Bill. Representative Haines, Representative Elliot and Governor Lamont's entire Legislative team. I had the chance to work on this for a very brief period at the start of the Legislative session.

I want to rise just to say a few words about the auto admit program. And I want to steal my friend, Senator Witkos' word, this is an awesome provision. It's really an exciting thing that we can do for high school students across Connecticut.

We know, Madam President that 70% of jobs in this state are going to require some degree beyond a high school diploma by 2025. 2025 is now around the corner, but we're nowhere close to meeting that goal, we need to produce tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, more college graduates every year in order to meet the workforce needs of the 21st century.

The problem is, college enrollment is declining across the country, but it's especially declining here in Connecticut. Nationwide, there is a 2.5% decrease in college enrollment this fall, Connecticut saw a 3.5% decrease in college enrollment. What can we do to get more students into the classroom to fill those empty seats and to make sure that Western and Central Connecticut State University, that they're creating as many graduates as they possibly can each and every year, so that those folks can become Connecticut taxpayers?

Because by the way, Madam President, of course, we've got amazing institutions of higher education, Yale and Wesleyan and Connecticut College, but no institution does as much for our workforce development as our public institutions of Higher Ed, because those are the students who statistically are the most likely to stick around, 76% of CSU graduates are still in this state nine months after graduating, working in Connecticut, paying Connecticut taxes.

These are the future entrepreneurs who are going to start small businesses in Connecticut. These are the future small homeowners, the folks who graduate in this state and then decide to stick around to start their careers, to start their family, to start their small business.

So, what can we do? Well, the best part of this job is that we get to look at other states, examples for what works and what doesn't work. And as Senator Slap, so eloquently noted, 12 states across the country already offer some sort of auto admission program, a guarantee to every high school student, that if you do reasonably well, well, then you get a spot.

It's one thing to say that every kid should have a chance to go to college, it's another thing to actually make that promise from the outset, so that when they're staying up studying for that chemistry

test, reading that book for English, they know that there's an end goal in mind, a guarantee, a promise, a seat for them at Western Connecticut State University, a seat for them at Central.

That's why I'm supporting this Bill. There's so many great provisions in here, but it's the auto admission program that I think is just awesome for so many Connecticut students. I'll just close, Madam President, by saying that I view this policy as being aimed at two different sorts of students.

There's the student who never thought that college was possible, who did pretty well in high school, studied, but just didn't think that they could ever afford it, didn't think that they could go through the hassle of applying. Too often it involves, you know, jumping through a million hurdles just to get your application in, and then you have to cross your fingers and hope for a good result.

This policy is aimed at them because that student is going to get a letter in the mail saying, "Congratulations, you did pretty well, we've got a seat for you at Western, just sign here. You don't need to apply, you don't need to write your essay, you don't need to take your standardized tests, we know that you're going to be a good student, because you've performed so well in high school, we want you to be a part of this campus." And we get that student who might not otherwise have pursued a higher education to sign up for classes in the fall. And that's a win for Connecticut.

But the other one is for the student who's probably going to go to college, but they might go out of state, they might go to a school that's not nearly as good as Western Connecticut State University, but they're going to go to a school in another state because those are the recruiters who came to their school because they like their sports team or for whatever reason, they're not going to think to apply to the Connecticut institution.

And if we can attract that student to stay in state for their education, then we've got a much better shot, Madam President, of attracting them to be residents in the long-term, to be Connecticut taxpayers, and small business owners and homeowners.

So, I'm so excited about what this policy means for the next generation of Connecticut students, the next generation of Connecticut residents. I'm so grateful that Senator Slap has made this a priority as the Chair of the Higher Ed committee and I urge my colleagues to support the Bill for all of the many reasons that he mentioned, all of the provisions that both he and Senator Witkos spoke about, but especially the auto admission program, because I think this is a promise worth making to the next generation of Connecticut students. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good evening, I rise for a question for the proponents, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

And then a comment. Except I just lost my-- Thank you, Madam President. I'm almost wondering if we want to stand there. I was going to say stand at ease for a minute while we get a teenager here to help me with this computer, but I think I've got it back on track. So thank you very much for your--

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell was moving in that direction.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

I know. Unfortunately, I think I have shoes older than Senator Haskell. But that being said, thank you, Madam President, and thank you, Senator Haskell, I appreciate it. Good evening, Senator Slap, lines 545, 551 talk about some reporting requirements. So, I just want to understand, for the employers out there, the implication of these reporting requirements.

551 begins the conversation, "Commencing with the third quarter of 2024 unless waived, any employer subject with 100 or more, shall include in quarterly filing submitted all of this information." As you know, Senator, we business communities file quarterly 941s with a lot of information in terms of wages, which is used to calculate any number of things.

This talks about two things, and my question through you, Madam President, is the early part of this chapter talks about the requirements of businesses 100 or more, and the middle part of it, on line 565, talks about quarterly filings for employers of 99 or fewer subject to 2026. 100 or more in 2024, 99 or fewer in 2026.

So, through you, Madam President, is there any difference between the information required in this Section on quarterlies filed by employers than is handled now through the quarterlies that we do? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Yeah. Thank you, Madam President. And through you, we have added 15 data fields to the enhanced wage record report, and the information that is going to be requested is in the lines that my good colleague identified, and I don't need to, you know, list them all, but I would add that some of the information that has been requested, I'm very pleased that were, I would say, Legislative ads, in other words, things that we work collaboratively on. Because we want to know, let's say, how our veterans are doing and make sure that we're doing right by our veterans.

So that's one of the categories in there. Folks with disabilities. We know that folks with disabilities have a much higher unemployment rate, and we know that we, as a state, can do better by them. So, there is some information-- I'm just highlighting two, that is in those enhanced wage records.

And just to-- in further kind of explanation for this Section for the good Senator, I would also add that we did make adjustments working with the business community to make sure that this would not be burdensome, and that part of what we did was make different benchmarks based on both date and number of employees. And then we, just actually, today extended them out just a little bit longer to make sure the businesses had an opportunity to comply with this.

And, you know, I'm pleased that we were able to do this in collaboration and in concert with the business community. So I hope that answers the good Senator's questions. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, thank you, Senator Slap, it does and mostly answer my question. The only follow up that I would have would be, such employees' identity, age, race, ethnicity, veteran status, disability, highest education, etcetera, I think that's what you referred to, that's in line 558.

And then down in 571, "Nothing in this sub-paragraph shall be construed to require an employee to provide information about a number of those things we just mentioned above." So it seems to be contradictory to me in that, unless I'm missing something in this paragraph. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Yes. I think the-- through you, Madam President, the statute or the, I should say, the language tries to be sensitive to the fact that it's not requiring an employee if they do not want to report on some of this information. The language allows that to happen. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

My apologies. Thank you, Madam President. My apology, Senator Slap, but I missed part of what you said. This says the employee is not required, and above it says the employer seems to be required.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

And I know you just explained it and I'm sorry, I didn't quite get it.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

No. Through, Madam President. My understanding is that the employer is going to be seeking that information, the employee in the certain examples that are given is not required by law essentially to answer that.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Okay.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So thank you, Senator. So that means that should the employee say no, the employer does not have to include it on the quarterly filing, if he can't get the information or the employee does not want it shared?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

That's how I'm reading it. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you. Yes, through you, Madam President, that's my understanding as well. Thank you.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Perfect.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate the answer. I think this has some great opportunities in it. I have no further question, sir.

And to Senator Haskell's point, you know, we do have a great state, we need to have college educated, but we also need to have people go through the community college program to learn trades. We've spent a lot of time and money over the last few years to develop training programs for the trades there, and I think, Madam President, that that's every bit as important as the statistics, as quoted by Senator Haskell earlier, about the need for college educated employees moving forward.

So, I thank you, Madam President. Thank the good Senator for his work and thank, Senator Witkos for all his work on this Bill as well.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. It really is good to be back in our own seats, and be back in the circle. I rise in support of this Bill. And I want to commend

the good work of the Chair of Higher Education, along with the Ranking for shepherding this Bill through its various iterations.

I also rise in support, as a Member of the Governor's Workforce Council, which worked collaboratively across the many Members and made these suggestions.

I think it's important to note, as even though it is coming out of the Committee on Higher Education, it is also critical to note that it is not simply a higher education college oriented workforce development initiative as other people might have talked about, because that would be only half of the story.

I think the other half of the focus of this Bill is to raise awareness that vocational occupational schools, vocational programs, not everyone is inclined or suited or preferred to go to a four-year or two-year college. Vocational programs, apprenticeship programs, are another important element of workforce development.

And this Bill accounts for that by collecting data points from various occupational schools to ensure various participants and engagement and the end result of the school. So that's important.

I want to emphasize that this is a workforce development initiative that is 360 degrees in its assessment, it is not purely higher education focused. It's important, because we need to tell our constituents and our residents in Connecticut that they can craft and aspire to any career path they choose to, and succeed, and stay in Connecticut.

Another important characteristic that I think we should be concerned and be very, very vigilant on is the fact that we are collecting significant amount of data. One of the primary focuses of this Bill is talking about data collection, utilizing data to

create pathways and better understanding of how we can craft plans and policies to adapt to a changing workforce demand.

But I want to caution for Legislative intent. That the collection of that data and every effort need to be made to ensure the privacy, the security, and the respectful use of that data. That's important. And for Legislative intent, I want to emphasize, many parts of this Bill addresses those concerns. We are collecting data, but we must recognize and respect that there are privacy and security concerns that must be sacrosanct.

So, as we talk about this, I rise in support of this Bill. But there are important considerations as we look to implement this Bill. And I hope that in future discussions and future Bills that we can reconsider and fund properly the Office of Workforce Strategy, that we can have a comprehensive office that cuts through the various department bureaucracies and create a truly uniform as well as universal application of workforce strategies.

So I again, rise in support of this Bill. But I hope that this is one of many steps, and that we as a Legislative Body find the appropriate funding, appropriate mission and support to ensure that we are crafting a policy that is sustainable and viable in crafting and developing a workforce to the 21st century.

So I thank you for the indulgence, I urge support, and again, I want to thank for the advocates for their support of this Bill. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise in support of the Legislation and just want to take a moment to thank Senator Slap, Senator Witkos, Senator Haskell on this brief moment, this session of carrying the Higher Education Committee and all the others who've worked on this Bill, including the Governor's Council, the Governor's Office, and Members of the House as well.

As we always talk about Connecticut leads the nation and has the best workforce, the most highly educated workforce, and the most productive workforce in the nation. That is our natural resource. We don't have oil wells, we don't have gas fields, we don't have other things that states have out west or even down south that have those kinds of natural resources.

So our natural resource is in our people and continuing to have a workforce that is second to none, that is highly educated, that leads in patterns that ensures that people are able to do the work that needs to get done in an ever changing and highly competitive world is very, very important.

It doesn't mean to say that we're minimizing anybody who works in the trades, because those are obviously very important too, very good well-paying jobs as well. We need people with skills in order to be able to make it in the 21st century, and especially here in Connecticut, where the demands are high.

Because of the types of employers that we have here in the state of Connecticut, this Bill will go a long way into helping that as well and to bringing forward as, Senator Hwang said, a 360 of really, of what we want when it comes to education, the opportunities for education, and opportunities for workforce data sharing, data collecting, and making good decisions for policy going forward.

So again, I want to really just say thanks to the folks of the Higher Education Committee, the

leadership of the Committee, everyone who worked on this to get us to this point, and urge my colleagues to support it. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, I will open the voting machine, and Mr. Clerk, if you would please announce the roll call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 881 as amended by "A" and "B".

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 881 as amended by "A" and "B".

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, on Senate Bill 881 as amended by "A" and "B".

Immediate roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 881 as amended by Senate "A" and "B"

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	30
Total voting Nay	5
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) And the Legislation is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. I'd like to ask for suspension for previous Bill that we had voted on, Calendar page 13, Calendar 322, Senate Bill 1037, I'd like to ask for mini transmittal to the House, please.

THE CHAIR:

And so ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On a Bill that we previously marked PT, Calendar page 34, Calendar 492, House Bill 6476, I'd like to mark that item go, please, from PT.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 34, Calendar 492, substitute for House Bill No. 6476, AN ACT CONCERNING A DISPARITY STUDY.

THE CHAIR:

And Good evening, Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This Bill will require that the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities prepare, develop and issue a request for proposal for a disparity study. It includes requirements for evaluating proposals and requires an analysis of existing data concerning the state's set aside program.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Bill that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Senator Sampson. Good evening.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Good evening, Madam President, and good to see you up there. I rise in support of the Legislation before us. But I do have a couple of remarks. The Bill before us is simply a request for a study, where we are compelling the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities in consultation with the Department of Administrative Services to establish some criteria to create a study by setting parameters and selecting a firm to carry it out.

And just reading from the Bill, it says the study, on line 17, shall provide an analysis of existing statistical data concerning the state's set aside program. And the set aside program that they are referring to has to do with set asides that we have for awarding contracts to minority and women-owned businesses.

Just reading forward, lines 25 through 27, catch the eye. Because essentially what this study is charged with doing is to determine whether or not, based on available data and analysis, there is significant

statistical evidence of past or continuing discrimination in the awarding of state contracts.

And forgive me, Madam President, again, I am going to support the Bill before us, it is just a study. And I do believe it's valuable in the sense that we should be determining whether or not there is discrimination going on in our contract awarding process.

But that language is somewhat ironic, since the whole purpose of the state set aside program is to discriminate and to award contracts to people based nothing more than race and gender, not that they are not measured on their merit as well.

I would just caution this Body going forward, that it's not lost on thinking people, that when you create set aside programs, that you are doing it in a way that is not based on merit, necessarily, and that is potentially unfair and unjust.

Our country is founded on the value system of merit, and treating people equally under the law, and these programs are a direct affront to those things. And essentially, this policy is based in discrimination. So, I can't imagine what they're going to come up with when they do a study other than to determine, yes, in fact, they're following the law established in the state which requires them to discriminate based on race and gender.

And I just hope my colleagues, going forward, start to take measure of the policies that we pass and their long term effects on our society and how people view each other. And I will once again encourage my colleagues in both parties to begin viewing one another as nothing more than fellow neighbors and human beings and judging them on merit alone.

Because the longer we carry on policies that pay no attention to people's value as human beings based on

their life experience and what they offer, and rather just their race and gender, the problems that face our culture will continue. I long for the day that we can put that aside, Madam President. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Sampson. Will you remark further? The Bill before the Chamber? Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just want to say a couple of words about this, because I think this is a really important Bill. And well, it's late in the evening, and we've been at this for a long time and working on important Legislation, I don't want this to be, sort of, glossed over in some way.

I think for many, many years, there has been an effort to have a disparity study to examine if, in fact, the work that we did in establishing a set aside program that would level the playing field for small businesses and for minority-owned businesses, whether, in fact, that which we did was working.

And this Bill, this study is really critical to make sure that when we take an approach like this of a set aside, when we intentionally pass Legislation to improve and level the playing field for minority-owned businesses, for women-owned businesses, for small businesses, that we're living up to the Legislation that we pass.

And I think it's really amazing that it took so long to get it done. Because I'm told by people who have been here much longer than I, people who've worked on this Bill, like my Co-Chair in the Labor Committee, Representative Porter, like Senator Doug McCrory, who's been a strong advocate for this, like newly-elected Senator Pat Billie Miller, who's been a strong advocate and a strong voice for it, people

have been saying to us for a very long time, we need to make sure that what we're doing is working. And that's what this Bill accomplishes.

And I think that everyone in the Legislature has passed unanimously out of the Labor Committee, which I think is notable, and I think everyone in the Legislature, when we do these programs, wants to make sure that our Legislation is going to work. And now what we're saying is, we're going to do the study to make sure that it's effective and it's intentional. And that we are trying to level the playing field and make sure that our state, the incredible state of Connecticut, is doing right by small businesses, women-owned businesses and minority-owned businesses.

And I think that's really something we should all take pride in. And so I do want to thank-- I want to thank the Majority leader, Senator Duff and, President of the Senate, Senator Looney, I want to thank the House for passing this was such a high, you know, with so many people voting in favor of it, and I look forward tonight in this Chamber that we will have final passage of the Disparity Study, that's been so long awaited. So thank you, Madam President. Thank you, to all my colleagues who've worked so hard to make this happen.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, I will open the vote, and Mr. Clerk, if you could please call the roll call.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 6476.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, on House Bill 6476.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6476

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) Legislation is adopted. Mr. Clerk-- Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the Clerk now call the next item, please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 43, Calendar No. 59, Senate Bill No, 673, AN
ACT REQUIRING DRIVERS OF PARATRANSIT VEHICLES TO
REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE, NEGLECT, EXPLOITATION OR
ABANDONMENT OF ELDERLY PERSONS.

There is an Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

And good evening, Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Good evening, Madam President. I don't think that
there is an Amendment, is there?

THE CHAIR:

I don't see one.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

We're not calling the Amendment. Thank you. Madam
President, I move acceptance of the Joint
Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the
Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. So, this Bill is
really self-explanatory. It adds para-transit
vehicle drivers to the list of mandated reporters
who must report, to the Department of Social

Services, when they have reasonable cause to suspect that an elderly person needs protective services or has been abused, neglected or exploited or abandon.

A para-transit vehicle is a motor vehicle, is a bus, motor bus, taxicab or other motor vehicle in livery service that is operated under the Department of Transportation certificate or by a transit district and on call, or demand or use for transport passengers for hire. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore. Will you remark further on the Legislation? Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good evening, Madam President. I rise in support of the Legislation before us. I thank the good Chair for her explanation. The only thing that I would add to this is that, in addition to this requirement, one of the things that we did consider in the Bill and we determined, and I think that speaks to the Amendment we are not calling tonight, that we recognize that during the last 15, 16 months as COVID was upon us and was affecting the ability at some times for these para-transit companies to provide their services, they had employees who had either been exposed or had fallen ill, that there was actually, I believe there was an Executive Order in place that allowed Uber and Lyft type services to actually be reimbursed by the State of Connecticut for providing the service.

And we did have the foresight to attempt to include those services in this Legislation, but at the end of the day, we determine that they are not covered under the statutes that para-transit providers are covered under. So, we will address that next session, hopefully, and make sure that we're providing that same level of protection and

reporting authority by those Uber and Lyft drivers going forward.

But this is a great Bill, this will, hopefully, allow us to provide better care at the end of the day. These drivers in our para-transit companies are sometimes seeing things or hearing things that are important that can be provided to health care workers or law enforcement.

And again for issues like abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment, these are pretty serious crimes and bad things that may be happening to our elderly persons in Connecticut. So, Madam President, I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Berthel. Will you remark further? Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you, Madam President. I'd like to thank my Ranking also for his support and working on the Amendment in the future. He has my commitment to do that. I just want to mention, by law, mandated reporters who fail report are subject to a fine of up to \$500.

Intentional failure to report is a class C misdemeanor, for the first offense punishable up to three months in prison and a fine of up to \$500 or both. If there are no objections, I asked that this be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

And we will ask if there are any objections to placing this item on the Consent Calendar. And seeing none, we will move that item to the list. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 34, Calendar No. 494, substitute for House Bill No. 6100, AN ACT CONCERNING DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT, ANTITRUST ISSUES AND THE PALLIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA AND REVISIONS TO THE LIQUOR CONTROL ACT as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A", LCO No. 8153.

THE CHAIR:

And good evening again, Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This Bill combines several of the department Bills and it's another consumer-friendly Bill. I will go through and try to summarize, I know it is a rather large Bill. Sections 1 through 37 of this Bill came from, originally from House Bill 6100.

Among other things, these Sections require contracts for work on private residential property by licensed trades people to meet certain specifications, so we lay out what a contract should look like, make several changes to the mobile manufacturer at home park, licensing laws to increase DCPs enforcement authority, make several changes to the laws regulating Certified Public Accountants, including changes to conform the statute to the AICPAs rules of conduct concerning fees. It also specifies the

locksmiths' registration, applicants criminal history check must be a state, and national criminal history check.

Sections 38 through 42 are from Senate Bill 693, which was AN ACT CONCERNING CHANGES TO STATUTES CONCERNING HEALTH CLUB CONTRACTS IN THE AUTOMOBILE LEMON LAW. So it changes the fees in regards to a manufacturer not properly stamping a vehicle that was bought back for the Lemon Law and make some other changes regarding the Lemon Law.

Additionally, the Bill requires health clubs to allow members to cancel their memberships by email. So again, trying to modernize with a number of these statutes, and requiring a notice before automatic renewal. It should be noted that that was negotiated between the Department and the concerned parties.

Sections 43 through 47 are from Senate Bill 694, which was AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO PHARMACY AND DRUG CONTROL STATUTES.

This allows a pharmacist to issue EpiPens, up to two EpiPens under certain conditions. It also changes notifications related to sterile compounding facilities and it exempts from registering with the DCP as a drug wholesaler retail pharmacies that provide limited quantity of drugs for emergency use to hospice facilities and pharmacies within a hospital.

Sections 48 through 52 are from House Bill 6099, AN ACT CONCERNING ANTITRUST ISSUES IN THE PALIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA AND THE SALE OF HEMP AND HEMP PRODUCTS. And so, we've seen a lot of integration in our medical marijuana with some of the producers purchasing dispensaries, and this simply requires a noticing to the Attorney General when this is happening so that we can look and make sure we are not running into antitrust issues.

Additionally, it requires hemp products to be tested in a Connecticut lab, and it also prohibits Hemp or Hemp products from being sold or distributed within a medical marijuana dispensary.

Sections 53 through 106 and 109 are-- and Section 109 are from Senate Bill 6459, which was AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION AND REVISIONS TO LIQUOR CONTROL STATUTES, among other things.

It allows cafe permits that are nonprofit clubs to receive an additional permit to allow alcohol sales at outdoor picnics, allows nonprofit theater permittees to also hold a coliseum permit, increases the number of alcoholic beverage retail permits. Currently, those are at five, it increases them from five to six.

Prohibits minors from being at certain consumer bars without a parent guardian or spouse, reauthorizes Airport cafe permittees to serve alcohol at the hours they were allowed to prior to the enactment of the 2019 ACT, where we did a major revision of the alcohol statutes.

Allows concession permittees to sell up to two drinks at one time, so if you're attending an event, it'll allow you to purchase up to two drinks for one person at one time. Allows drug is permittees to deliver alcohol. Allows out of state shipper permittees to sell outside of Connecticut.

In Sections 107 and 108 are from House Bill 5306, AN ACT ALLOWING CERTAIN PERMITTEES TO SELL ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR FOR OOF-PREMISES CONSUMPTION.

These are actually codifying Executive Orders that prove to be quite popular. So one of them is to allow restaurants to sell alcoholic beverages for off-site consumption. So if you want it delivered, it has to be in a sealed container and the seal

cannot be one of the tops that has a straw hole through, it has to be an actual sealed container.

That sunsets in three years for that provision. And then the other one it allows, it allows for breweries to deliver. And with the breweries when they deliver, they are not required to deliver with food, whereas restaurants, if they are delivering an alcoholic beverage are allowed to deliver with food and only during the hours that a package store is open. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Maroney. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This Bill is like the game, Candyland. If you look far enough and wide enough in the Bill, you're going to find something that you like. And I want to thank the Chairman of the General Law Committee for the great summary of all the different Sections in the Bill.

And every year in General Law we've always tried to focus our attention to certain things and just not open up to everything under the sun, and believe it or not, that's what we did this particular Legislative Session.

But throughout the course of our public hearings, things came to mind and that's why you see a lot of these Sections, while they-- people may be aghast and go "109 Sections of a Bill that's ridiculous." Some of them very small changes, but they're important to the industry or the people that asked for the changes.

They've had the public hearing, and the people have weighed in. I don't think there's anything in this Bill that is controversial, Madam President, and

that's why the House was able to put them all together and it passed by a very, very large majority on a bipartisan basis. And I'm hoping that we can do the same in this Chamber. And I urge my colleagues to support the Bill. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I want to thank the good Chair and the Ranking for explaining the new amended Bill, which was a significant addition to the original 37 Sections.

As I was listening to the good Chair, I noticed that he did cite certain other Bills that were incorporated into this strike-all Amendment. Through you, Madam President, to the proponent of this Bill, what was the rationale to add a number of these Bills, even if they had a public hearing process to incorporate from 37 Sections to 109 Sections and incorporating a number of Bills that had the public hearing process under different Bill numbers?

What was the rationale, through you, Madam President, of including in such a big volume of Bills and consolidation through one vote, yay or nay? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And thank you to Senator Hwang, for the question. All of these Bills were department Bills, and so we were looking through the

leadership of the General Law Committee, got together and we tried to look in consolidate Bills around similar themes or similar issues where we could. And since I believe the majority of these Bills came from the department, we felt that they all fit within one Bill. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Through you, Madam President. The good proponent cited that these were consumer protection Bills, and I do agree there are many components of it. But not all of them apply to the Department of Consumer Protection. I could be wrong, but there were many other components of this Bill.

Again, through you, Madam President, I just want to be able to understand a little bit better, the process and the rationale to incorporate an additional supplemental Bill and Section into a strike-all Amendment that would have been on their own merits as offered by the proponents of this Bill, on their own merits worthy of support. But to put it all into one Bill, is a significant point of concern about process. Could the good Chair explain the process? Is this typical? Is this truly representative of the process of representative and transparency? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Through you, Madam President. Thank you again to the Senator for his question. And all of these Bills did receive a public hearing, almost every item in here

either received a public hearing or came to us in a public hearing. So an example of something that came to us in a public hearing was, we didn't realize this, but Litchfield distillers, they are currently only allowed to produce 50,000 gallons if they're going to sell on site, but they produce now-- one of the popular things is to produce cocktails in a can, and so, in a cocktail in can, so it may be vodka and orange juice, or, you know, something in seltzer, a gin in tonic, actually.

So the whole 12 ounces of that can is not alcohol, but the whole 12 ounces were counting against their 50,000 gallons of production. And so, we changed that from gallons to proof-gallons, which means you only count the actual alcoholic content in there.

And that's just one example of something that, actually, while maybe it wasn't included in an initial Bill, it did come in a public hearing, you can watch that on video, and the rationale behind why we combined things is we decided this more than a month ago, and we still weren't sure where we were going with the pandemic at that time.

So our concern was to make sure that if we had to eliminate, or had to abbreviate the session, that we were able to get all of the important Bills together in limit the number of times that we had to bring them out. So, through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you. Through you, Madam President, I think the good Chair articulated a component, a Section of that Bill, but through you, if I may, how does that alcohol consumption of Litchfield distillery coincide in germaneness to palliative Use of

Marijuana? That's another Section of this Bill.
Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you again for the question. And thank you,
Madam President. Through you, these are all issues
that are regulated by the Department of Consumer
Protection. And they came in DCP through their
agency Bills. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you. Again, if the good proponent of Bill is
saying that any Bill that comes through the
Department of Consumer Protection could be fit into
a single Bill process, why do we have, through the
Committee good work, have a deliberative process in
which every Bill has an opportunity to be debated
and have input?

My struggle with this Bill, although it contains
many important components and many consumer-friendly
basis, out of 109 Sections, if I don't support two
or three sections of this, am I put into the
position of throwing out the baby with the bathwater
by such a large Bill? What would the good proponent
and Chair offer to that kind of dilemma that I may
have on a Bill of this size, this capacity, this
vast array of differentiating Bills?

So, if I may, seeking the counsel of the good
proponent of this Bill, what would he suggest to my
dilemma that I just described. Through you, Madam
President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And through you, Madam President, to Senator Hwang, thank you for that question. And many times in this Chamber, we are brought-- we are asked to look at large Bills, and there is often, the majority of the Bill that we like, and very often there is something in a Bill that we may not like. And we have to make that decision. And we all have to make that decision on a large number of Bills throughout the year.

Again, when we decided to combine this for efficiency, it was-- we still weren't sure where we were going with the pandemic. And thankfully, thanks to the vaccine, and thanks to the Governor's leadership, and thanks to the good citizens of our state, we are in a much better place than we were.

But again, because of the uncertainty, we wanted to make sure we were able to get these consumer-friendly items into one Bill and passed as efficiently as possible. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I want to thank the good Chair for his patience with my dilemma and offering some insight to it. But I will close by saying this, the good Chair cited the uniqueness of the COVID environment that we're in. And for me, I will be a no vote on this because of those exact concerns, because we are under a COVID environment in which

this building is not open to the public, and that we've had zoom meetings and public hearings on individual Bills that we are now simplifying the process, taking multiple Bills and inserting them into one, yea or nay vote.

I think it is important for us as a Representative and a transparent government to recognize that when we pass Bills out, that we know the exact content, the exact implications of these Bills. We talked a lot about budgets being formed at the last minute and being presented.

And we as a Legislative Body in a bipartisan basis said, we now require 12 hours of review of any budgetary process. We are now in the midst of a COVID environment, passing out a Bill and a strike-all Amendment that increases 37 Sections to 109, I think it's a reach too far. And I think it is a disservice in these COVID environments to a transparent and accountable government.

So, even though the merits of many of these components are important, I think the process is significantly flawed. And I will be voting no on this because I will challenge and raise my no vote that this process is one that we should never pursue. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just wanted to thank my Co-Chair, Representative D'Agostino for his good work on this Bill, as well as the Ranking Members, Representative Rutigliano and Senator Witkos. You know, throughout the process, they did take suggestions in the public hearings, we talked with

each other and incorporated those changes into the ultimate Bill.

I also want to thank the Department of Consumer Protection for their work on this Bill and their responsiveness to concern. They did work with the health clubs, I verified with the health clubs tonight, they worked with-- attempted to work with the manufacturers. And so, they really did try to work with the public to get out the best Bill possible. So thank you for that. Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, we will open the voting machine. Mr. Clerk, please announce the roll call vote.

CLERK:

House Bill 6100.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6100.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6100.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6100.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6100.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6100

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	29
Total voting Nay	6
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) The Measure is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 13, Calendar No.325, substitute for Senate Bill No. 971, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE TREASURER AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND COASTAL RESILIENCY RESERVE FUNDS.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. When I looked at this Bill, let me introduce the Bill, first of all, Bill 971. And it's concerning the state treasurer and climate change and coastal resiliency reserve funds. When I looked at the Bill, I just went online for the heck of it to see coastal resiliency reserve funds, because I knew it hit a bell. It was only two years ago that actually we passed that Bill.

And as I looked at it, it says it's that in Branford, Connecticut, and as I looked at that, Senator Cohen was involved in that. So I would like to yield to Senator Cohen, who has been a pioneer in this to speak on the Bill. Through you Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cassano. And do you accept the yield, Senator Cohen?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

I do Madam President, thank you. And thank you to the good Chair of the Planning and Development Committee for raising what I consider to be a very important Bill.

As the good Senator mentioned, just a couple of short years ago, we passed PUBLIC ACT 1977, which will-- which does allow municipalities across the state to establish these funds, climate change and coastal resiliency reserve funds.

The idea being that as we experience climate change, we also experience sea level rise in our shoreline communities, we experience storm surges in our inland communities, and we need to be preparing for that.

We know from rating agencies that they are considering preparedness and resiliency as one of the aspects when they take ratings into consideration. And, in fact, I've been told by our state treasurer himself, that when he and the Governor of our fine state were first elected, they sat down with a couple of these rating agencies, and these ratings agencies actually asked the question, "What are you doing in the state of Connecticut to shore up and become more resilient against climate change?"

So, we know it's an important thing. We want to encourage our cities and our towns to be investing in resiliency. And how do we do that? Well, first, we enabled the creation of these funds, which allows, under PUBLIC ACT 1977, allows them to invest a bit more aggressively in equities, which is incredibly important.

We want to grow these funds fairly quickly as we look to strengthen our communities and make sure that they're able to invest in infrastructure, living shorelines, things that will help them protect against climate change.

But as cities and towns are becoming more and more eager to invest, more and more eager to make sure that they are shoring up the infrastructure and protecting our cities and towns, they're recognizing another roadblock, if you will.

And so, what we know is in the town of Branford, I'll use the town of Branford, for example, we have now \$1.6 million in these coastal resiliency funds. But we don't have a pension manager in Branford, we don't have a Committee set up to approve investment of the funds. And these can be costly.

What we do have in the state of Connecticut is the Office of the State Treasurer, who invests funds like this all the time, and is very good at it, I might add. We have things like CHET, right? Our 529 program. And the Office of the State Treasurer invest these funds for folks on a regular basis, and they can watch these funds grow into robust college savings for their children and grandchildren alike.

And so the suggestion here, in this Bill, what's proposed, is to allow the Office of the State Treasurer to invest on the municipalities' behalf and really help these municipalities grow these funds and take away the roadblock of needing to hire a pension manager, needing to form a Committee, and

allowing that all to happen in collaboration with the Office of the State Treasurer.

So I would urge this Chamber's adoption. I am really excited about this Legislation as we move forward and we look to new innovative ways to protect our state against climate change. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Cohen. Will you remark further?
Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this Bill. And it's important, because as the good Chair, and the good Chair of the Environment, as an advocate, and citing the example of Branford, this is about protecting our current environment of climate change and coastal reserve fund.

We just added the word, "Resiliency", in recent legislation so that is changed. But again, it's about coastal resiliency. And I rise for two particular points in addition to my support. One is to ask the proponent in Branford that it was an impressive number to know that Branford has accumulated 1.6 million in regards to the specific reserve fund.

I'd like, through you, Madam President, find out how were these funds accumulated in Bradford's example?
Through you madam president.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And through you, in this particular example, in this case of Branford, Branford had the reserves available, they weren't sure how they were going to invest the reserves. We created this fund in 2019, with the hopes that they would be able to vote on and then more aggressively invest the funds.

When they went to actually invest the funds, they realized that it was going to be very costly to do so, they needed a certain level of expertise to understand market conditions, what they should be investing these funds in, for how long, how aggressively, and they could really use the expertise of our State Treasurer's Office.

Other towns are looking to do the same. I understand that actually, the good Chair of the Planning and Development Committee's town of Manchester has looked into putting aside funds for this purpose as well. I suspect that if we can pass this Legislation, I suspect we will start to see more and more towns vote to put aside some of the funds that they may have in reserves already or perhaps begin to start to think about saving reserves for this purpose and then have the ease of those funds being invested through the Office of the treasurer. Through you, madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I appreciate the good Chair of Environment articulating the goals, and indeed, it is important to note that it is not just about coastal communities, it's about any towns in recognition of the impact of climate change affecting our state and its residents.

That being said, I'm really encouraged that the component of this Bill in setting up the reserve fund allows, and it's important, it is the authority of the local municipal leaders, through their municipal allocations and reserve funds that make that decision to set away the reserve fund.

It is important, and that's why I wholly supported it from the context. This was a local control. It was a local municipal decision to do so. Not from the treasurer, not from the state, not from a state mandate, this was one where local municipality and Home Rule made a financial determination to put aside money into reserve fund for an area of concern that is important to that community.

The other important reason for my strong support of this Bill is, in our conversations through the testimony with the treasurer for his support of this Bill, is quite clearly, this was an opt-in. This was an opt-in, where any municipality and setting up as a reserve fund set up by their own municipal leader can opt-in and utilize the financial investment resources of our state treasure, it is not an opt-out.

Again, it is another example where this Bill affords Home Rule, affords local control in determining what to do with their financial resources, what to do with their specific reserve allocations, in collaboration with our treasurer and state government, to make the best use of it.

It is not the state and the treasurer telling our towns how to invest. It is not the state telling our municipal leaders how to spend their money. It is a wonderful example of the state and the treasurer listening to municipalities, understanding and respect Home Rule and local control and financial decision making, and allowing them to opt-in.

So I strongly support this Bill for the concept that it reaffirms that Home Rule and local control is the

best way to create solutions to addressing issues in our state.

And I want to thank the good Chair of Planning Development for his collaborative efforts and his leadership. And I want to also extend my appreciations to the House Ranking, Representative Zullo and the good Chair, Representative McCarthy Vahey, for the effort on this Bill. And I want to thank the treasurer as well for his leadership on this. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes. Madam President, seeing no other comment, first of all, I'd like to thank our Ranking Member, Senator Hwang, for his contribution here. I think the discussion is important to have on the floor, simply because others from other towns will see that it's a possibility.

Manchester is looking at exploring this possibility. We get a little river that runs through the town and one lake. We don't have to be on the ocean to do this. So, it's something that hopefully people will start talking about and exploring.

Seeing no opposition, I would ask if this could be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

And is there any objection to the request of the Consent Calendar? Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I appreciate all the good work put into this but I do need to ask for a roll call vote on this. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Not a problem. So, will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further?

If not a roll call has been requested, so I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

This is Senate Bill 971.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is the Senate Bill 971.

Senate Bill 971.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 971.

THE CHAIR:

Ladies and gentlemen, I just would ask you to stay close to the Chamber because shortly we will be voting on the Consent Calendar. And we will be doing this quite shortly.

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 971

Total No. voting

35

Total No. voting Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff-- Oh, and I do you want to say that this Legislation passed. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. Madam President, before we do our Consent Calendar, I'd like to move Calendar page 34, Calendar 494, House Bill 6100 for immediate transmittal to the Governor, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And would the Clerk now call the Bills on the Consent Calendar followed by a vote, please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1, page 43, Calendar 145,
Senate Bill 711.

Page 4, Calendar 154, Senate Bill 973.

Page 2, Calendar 80, Senate Bill 856.

Page 2, Calendar 117, Senate Bill 694.

And page 43, Calendar 59, Senate Bill 763.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Consent Calendar No. 1.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1

Total No. voting	35
Total No. voting Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes. (Gavel) Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I don't think I need to yield any points of personal privilege or announcements. So, we'll move on from there and we will reconvene tomorrow at noon. And I would move that we adjourn subject to the call the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. (Gavel) We are adjourned, go forth and govern.

(On motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 10:15 p.m. adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.)