

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

The Senate was called to order at 3:00 p.m., the President in the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

All right, will the Senate please come to order. Members and guests would you please rise and direct your attention to our Guest and favorite Chaplain Kathy Zabel of Burlington.

GUEST CHAPLAIN KATHY ZABEL:

This is the beginning of a new day. We have been given this day to use as we will. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever; in its place is something that we have left behind. Let it be something good.

THE CHAIR:

Amen, thank you so much. Senator Maroney would you please lead us in the Pledge.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

I pledge Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which is stands, one Nation, under God with liberty and justice of all.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. And good afternoon, Senator Duff. Here we are again.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President seems like we never left.

THE CHAIR:

Indeed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President, I have markings for our "Go" List.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Madam President, on Calendar Page 39, Calendar 485, House Favorable Reports 211.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. We are marking that go.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 19, Calendar 445, House Bill 6594, I'd like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 18, Calendar 433, House Bill 6657, like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 13, Calendar 369, House Bill 5638  
would like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 19, Calendar 444, House Bill 5648,  
like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 29, Calendar 553, House Bill 6667,  
like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 28, Calendar 544, House Bill 5027,  
like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 28, Calendar 545, House Bill 6372,  
like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 26, Calendar 531, House Bill 6470,  
like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 19, Calendar 439, House Bill 6106,  
like to mark that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 33, Calendar 574, House Bill 6484,  
I would like that item, go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President and we can run through.  
This will be our first list of the day.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, it is up to you, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President, before the Clerk calls the first  
Bill, I would like to yield to Senator Maroney for a  
Point of Personal Privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Do you accept the yield, sir.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Yes, Madam President. I rise for a Point of Personal Privilege.,

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Today I would like to congratulate all of the graduates of Amity Regional High School. I'd like to congratulate my Intern Natalie Huber and thank her for her service. Unfortunately because of Covid, she never actually got to come up to the Capital so I hope all my interns will get the chance to come up here at some point.

I also want to take this opportunity to use my Point of Personal Privilege for one of the best privileges, embarrassing my niece, and to congratulate my niece Sarah Maroney on her graduation from Amity High School.

Almost 18 years ago on June 28th, we first met and it was love at first sight. I was on the way to see Aunt Jen whose grandmother just died and I stopped by Yale New Haven Hospital and saw Sarah and I am very proud of the young woman she has become, and I am proud of the woman that I know she will be. Right now I am wearing my grandfather's tie and my grandfather's cufflinks and I can't help think how proud he would be of all of his great-grandchildren. This prayer, the prayer that opened today, said that this is the beginning of a new day and my Uncle Bobby used to start everyday with saying "It's a new day" which become a bit of a family mantra, so Sarah

it's a new day and to all of the graduates I want you to make the most of all of your new days and go out and do great things in the world. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

That's awesome and Senator Maroney you neglected to tell us where she is going off to in the Fall.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

She will be going to the University of Vermont which is perfect because her father, my brother, and I, it's within driving distance and we can go visit her and some of the numerous establishments in the area near the University of Vermont.

THE CHAIR:

And all for legislative research of course, excellent. All right, Mr. Clerk, back to business.

CLERK:

Page 39, Calendar 485, Substitute for House Joint Resolution No. 211, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CLAIMANT, THE ESTATE OF KARON NEELEY TO SUE THE STATE (As Amended by House Amendment schedule A LCO 9108.)

THE CHAIR:

And are we getting that up on the board so we can see that, Mr. Clerk? All right and good afternoon, Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, good afternoon, Madam President. Madam President, I move Acceptance of House Joint Resolution 211 and adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you and you move adoption of this Joint Resolution. Will you remark on that Resolution, sir?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, Thank you, Madam President. This Resolution as Amended by the House will actually allow for the claimant which in this case since the Amendment has been brought to the state to recover damages as compensation for personal injury and I urge adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on the Resolution before the Chamber? Good afternoon, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. It seems like we were just here earlier today. I stand in strong support of the Resolution. Happy to join my friend and colleague the good Chairman of the Judiciary Committee and would urge my colleagues to support the Resolution as well. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on the Resolution before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Madam President, if there is not objection, I ask this be place on Consent.

THE CHAIR:

And I am scanning the Chamber and seeing no objections, we will put that item on the Consent Calendar. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 19, Calendar No. 445, Substitute for House Bill 6594, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS (As Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A") LCO No. 8789.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. I move Acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and Passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This is a Bill that as you know were in a year after experiencing what we experienced last year with Covid, we requested that the state prosecutors and the public defenders come together and not provide us with multiple proposals and this Bill is a result of that. So I'll just run through some of the things that the Bill deals with.

It deals with allowing the state to depose and individual whose infirmed and age 75 or older. It deals with pension revocation notices. It deals with voter fraud, vendor fraud, I don't want to get into other people's Committees, vendor fraud. It expands the definition of vendor fraud. It deals

with electronic stalking. It increase the penalty for electronic stalking. It deals with persistent offenders, limits the lookback period. It deals with fee waivers for diversionary programs. It also deals with expanding the eligibility for sentence modification.

This is Bill that was worked out between the two sides and the Judiciary Committee was very thankful that they were able to do that and I would urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further? Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I also stand in strong support of this Bill and its passage. Happy to be associated with the remarks of Senator Winfield. And I do know that the Division of Criminal Justice is very keen about having this matter move along in the process and happy to see that we are addressing it here this Tuesday afternoon. I would urge my colleagues to support the Bill as well. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further? Will you remark further?. If not, I will open the votes and Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly call the roll.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate, this is House Bill 6594. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6594. An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate House Bill 6594. An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6594. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, House Bill 6594. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6594:

Total number voting	35
Total voting Yea	32
Total voting Nay	3
Absent not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) And the Bill passes. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 18, Calendar No. 433, House Bill No. 6657, AN ACT CONCERNING HUMAN TRAFFICKING." (As Amended by House Amendment Schedules "A" LCO No. 8465 and House Amendment Schedule "B" LCO No. 8397).

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, Madam President. I move Acceptance of the. I just went blank, I'm sorry.

THE CHAIR:

The Joint Committee's.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

It happens, Madam President. I move Acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and Passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on Passage. Will you remark?.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This is a Bill that comes through us through Judiciary Committee and it came out of the House unanimous. It is a Bill that deals with the issue of human trafficking. I will talk about some of the things the Bill does.

It extends the vacatur relief. It allows individuals who have committed certain crimes to if they were human trafficked to seek relief. It establishes an affirmative defense for the trafficking of the victim. It narrows the elements of trafficking and places crime by including only the actions the person commits knowingly. It reduces annually to every three years of required frequency of DCF training, refreshing training in human trafficking awareness. It allow the court to compel certain witnesses to testify, to produce evidence in a delinquency procedure.

There were Amendments in the House. The Amendments added the Trafficking Persons Council to reporting requirements and also allowed for certain defendants who are convicted of misdemeanor offenses, Class C, D or E felonies to apply for vacatur relief. It is, the Amendments were worked about between both sides of the aisle if you will. It was a good Bill and is a good Bill and I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I also stand in support of the Bill that is before us. It is not always proof positive but it is always a good indication in my book when a Bill is voted on unanimously by our colleagues in the House on both sides of the aisle and then gets sent up to us. We have had various permutations of human trafficking Bills before the Judiciary Committee in years past.

We continue to chip away at this really heinous crime where, in particular young people get drawn into lives of crime against their will, sometimes unwittingly by people that don't have their best interests in mind and they are really seeking the almighty dollar unfortunately. And this causes great harm to these victims of this crime for many, many years both psychologically, emotionally, and financially. And so anything that we can do to make the world safer for individuals and to thwart the crime of human trafficking is a good thing and I would urge my colleagues to support the Bill. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Bill? Good afternoon, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I have questions for the proponent of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir and Senator Winfield prepare yourself.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you.

And through you.

I'm talking about Section 7 and it is Line 170, it says, "After the court enters a judgement of conviction for any misdemeanor offense or Class C, D or E felony or any unclassified felony offense carrying a term of imprisonment of not more than 10 years, the defendant can apply to the Superior Court to vacate such judgement of conviction on the basis that his or her participation in the offense was a result of having been a victim of conduct of another person" and so on. My question is can this person the day of the conviction immediately apply for, to vacate this conviction?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I was just orienting myself in the Bill. What line says at 170 where my attention was directed is at any time after a court enters a judgement of conviction. So that, I almost explain it with the words that are there. "At any time" after that judgement is entered.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further? Go ahead, Senator Champagne, sorry.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you again, Madam President.

Don't you think it would be relevant if we could do this before the conviction and save the state and the Criminal Justice System money if they are true victim shouldn't we approve this ahead of time and just save the taxpayer money?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Madam President, that is an idea but I believe that this is language worked out by our colleagues on both sides down in the House and it is what is before us. It's a concept I think we could potentially explore in the future but I don't know how relevant my opinion is to what is right before us.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I have no further questions. I have a problem with this part of the Bill. I mean this is like a roll of the dice. I try to beat this offense in court, if I don't beat the offense, then I'm going to try another form of defense. It doesn't hurt, why not. I've already been convicted, let's move on and see what I can do with this. You know, for somebody who is truly a victim of human trafficking, you know, I understand this, but this is just another defense to throw on

to try and vacate a conviction and this should have been brought out long before the trial that their a victim, take it to the court and ask for leniency there instead of putting, you know, spending all the money, resources to basically then put in for this. If it is a true human trafficking case then, you know, let's stop it before it goes to trial, let's stop putting the courts through this. I find this Section really difficult. I said this when this was going through Judicial and I'll say it again.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further on the Bill? If not, I will open the votes and Mr. Clerk, please call the roll.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, this is Senate Bill, House Bill 6657, as Amended by House Schedule "A" and "B". An immediate roll call in the Senate on House Bill 6657 as Amended by House Schedules "A" and "B". An immediate roll call in the Senate on House Bill 6657 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate, this is House Bill 6657 as Amended by House Schedules "A" and "B". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. This is House Bill 6657 as Amended by House Schedules "A" and "B". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Okay, Mr. Clerk is getting testy.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 6657. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6657 as Amended by House Amendment Schedules "A" and "B". An immediate roll call has been ordered 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:

This is House Bill 6657 as Amended by House Schedules "A" and "B":

Total number voting	35
Total voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	1
Absent not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) Legislation passes. Senator Winfield, you're on a roll.

CLERK:

Page 13, Calendar Number 369, House Bill No. 6538, AN ACT MAKING REVISIONS TO THE COMMON INTEREST OWNERSHIP ACT.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

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 WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, Thank you, Madam President. This is another Bill that comes to us through the Judiciary Committee. It allows the meetings of the owners and their votes at the meeting to be held by telephone, video, or other conferencing method. It also gives associations more time to produce records for maximum, for copying by unit owners or their agents, it allows the records to be presented electronically. It eliminates the requirement for the associations to send Hearing and Decision Notices by Certified Mail. And other than that, it does actually technical and conforming changes. I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I stand in support of the Bill but I do have a couple of quick questions for the proponent.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Through you, Madam President.

I guess just overarchingly I am concerned with adequate notice to the residents of the common interest ownership property, whether they're owner occupied or rented, but typically in so many areas of our government, and also in the private sector we are moving from paper notification being notified by notices in newspapers, and the like, to electronic notification and while there is financial benefits to that, there also maybe some shortcomings when it comes to providing adequate notice regarding important matters either a meeting, or change of policy or adopting something where a new fee would be added to replace I don't know, washers and dryers or something like that, roofs, typically at a certain point in time and so were there representatives or input from individuals representing folks that would be affected by these changes such that they felt comfortable that there still would be appropriate and adequate notice of these proceedings.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I will never be able to tell you whether people are comfortable with the Bill. I know that there were, to my memory and I am going off my memory, there was suggestion that included the concerns of Senator Kissel, this is a Bill that while I'm the Chair, it wasn't my direct work product to get us to this moment, so I can't tell you exactly how the conversations actually took place but I know that those interests were expressed during the work of the Bill.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you and there may be others in this Circle that have far more expertise and knowledge regarding common interest ownership properties, condominium properties and the like but that general answer swages some of my concerns and I feel that if there were any other issues that we need to be mindful of this afternoon, they would have been brought to my attention but thus far, the folks that have communicated to my office have been advocates in favor of the Bill as well as others and so that being the case, I feel comfortable enough to stand here in support of this Legislation. Would like to hear if anybody else has any other questions or concerns, but it is my intention to be supportive of the Bill and would urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further? Good afternoon, Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Just taking a look at this Bill, it's the first time I've seen it since we covered it in the Judiciary Committee and I'm just getting refamiliarized. I just want to confirm.

Through you, Madam President.

That the first two Sections which speak to the concept of electronic meetings, which are so common obviously in the era of Covid, are not replacing necessarily the public meetings. We are giving the

association the opportunity to make their own determination whether to meet in person or electronically. I just want to make sure that is correct.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Through you, Madam President.

The association could still have its by-laws suggest that the meetings would be in person if they decided to do that, that is still a possibility under the Bill.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I appreciate that answer. The larger concern I had was just looking through the rest of the Sections of the Bill, Sections 3, 4 and 5, I believe all have to do with replacing the requirement that currently exists that many notices are sent to unit owners by certified mail, return receipt requested and now under this language, if we change this, the new law will become that these notices can simply be sent by regular mail and in fact I don't know if there is something in here about sending them electronically also as was just mentioned.

I'll just state for the record my concern and I will give the Chairman the opportunity if he has a

comment regarding my concern that might change my mind.

But the big issue for me is many of these things are probably not a big deal, you could allow for receiving notices about various goings on as far as the unit owners association to come by regular mail or an electronic notification very simply, but I notice in Lines 108-117 it even applies to a situation where the association will be taking legal action against that unit owner. It just seems to be in a case like that, that you would want to have a paper trail that is significant enough to document that proper notice was given.

You know, everyone when they are looking at this type of Legislation I think the immediate reaction is that you are talking about a unit owner who happens to be an owner/occupant and, you know, therefor, you know, somebody that is in direct contact with what is going on for that condominium complex but there are a lot of investors who also may own, you know, multiple units and maybe hundreds of units in multiple states and it might be very easy for something to slip through the cracks in a situation like that and I just don't think it is appropriate to do away with a requirement that, certified mail with return receipt for something as important as legal action should be done away with.

So that is my concern. If I am misplacing my, you know, what I'm reading here or if I am misunderstanding this, the Chairman is welcome to certainly comment. Otherwise I am going to vote no on the Bill just to mark it that way because I see that as a problem going forward. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm not rising to disagree with Senator Sampson. I'm just rising, I thought it would be a little awkward if I sat down and to say that when I oriented myself in Lines 108-117 the conversation was specifically being held just now that it is accurate to say that the certified version of mail has been taken out of this statute and that it is only by regular mail that that process would happen.

Through 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 please call the vote.

CLERK:

House Bill 6538, immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6538. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5638. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6538. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate, this is House Bill 6538. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6538. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate House Bill 6538, immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine is locked. Please announce the tally, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

House Bill 6538:

Total number voting	35
Total voting Yea	32
Total voting Nay	3
Absent not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) The Legislation passes. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 19, Calendar Number 444, Substitute for House Bill No. 6548, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY SELECTION TASK FORCE. (As Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 8781).

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, 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 WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This Bill does a number of things. It beginning October 1, 2022, there is a requirement that the Jury Administrator compiled a number of jurors who are summoned from each town and who complied with the summons beginning July of the next year which is 2023. The number or jurors who are chosen from each town have to reflect a proportional representation of the population of the town.

The Bill also expands eligibility for jury service and requires additional questions on the juror questionnaire and the branch would be complying demographic information. There was an Amendment, a joint Amendment added in the House which shortened the timeframe from barring someone with a felony conviction from jury service, eliminated the provision within the Bill that, excuse me, that allowed felony defendants and certain individuals convicted to serve on a jury, dealt with compensating and reimbursing jurors and change the period of a year that we know in the calendar year through reflective of a court year. I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, I'd hand you a tissue if I could. Will you remark further? Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I do hope that my friend and colleague and Co-Chair of the Judiciary Committee is okay. Sounds like allergy kind of stuff and the crazy hours in this Chamber as well. Get that fan down that hopefully will cool us off. Circulation of air is probably kicking up some dust to a little bit or something, I don't know.

I can't say that I'm completely enamored with every single provision of this Bill. But I'm comfortable enough to see where it goes. Clearly we've, over the years, on the Judiciary Committee had concerns regarding jury duty, composition of juries, depending on the type of action whether it is a civil action or criminal action, we had different processes for weeding out jurors that may not be completely unbiased. We have voir dire, which is somewhat unusual to the State of Connecticut, I don't believe it is followed in a majority of our sister states but I'd have to Google that or Am Jur that to try to get to the bottom of that, but. Typically we have what many have considered to be a

very good system, in particular the only complaint over the years that I had heard was when someone was called in for jury duty and they were missing a day's worth of work and they felt like it was for naught but then the judicial branch incorporated the when you get that notification it is one day, and if you are not selected to serve on a jury then that fulfills your obligation and most folks feel that that is fair.

I myself over the years even while as Ranking Senator on the Judiciary Committee have been called in for jury duty, saw the video, I think it was done by, boy, it's years ago, I think it was Judge Blue was in this video that they presented to us, my recollection is Judge Blue also is famous for poetry that we weaves in and out of some of his written decisions. I think he just came up in the last few years for renomination, Senior Status, or something like that, but he is still out there, serving the good people of the State of Connecticut to the best of my knowledge.

So I think that we can do well by moving forward with this. It is my understanding that the Chief Justice has a particular interest in moving forward with a lot of these initiatives as well. So I don't think that as a general rule of thumb, it ever hurts to revisit program systems that you have in place and as I had indicated regarding another Bill, you know, the two great pillars that hold up our wonderful Democratic Republic here in Connecticut, the Constitution State, one of which is the jury trial and utilizing juries and we should never take that for granted because that is something so important in trying as best as mortals can with our failings to try to attend, to attain the ends of justice for those who are finding themselves confronted with a civil matter or potential loss of their freedom in a criminal matter.

And for that reason, Madam President with those caveats I will be supporting the Bill at this time. Thank you very much

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel. Will you remark further? Good afternoon, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Yes, good afternoon, Madam President. I rise in support of this Bill also which I understand to be high priority of the Judicial Department and of Chief Justice Robinson. Personally one of the key elements of it will be to try to make sure that the jury pools are more representative of all of the residents of a judicial district.

Right now statistics have shown that there tends to be more people in the pool who are residents of suburban town regions rather than the central city in that region. This is an effort to try and get at that disparity. As Senator Kissel said, over the years we have made significant changes going to the one-day, one-trial system as opposed to having people be committed to an entire month of jury service when called. In addition, Madam President we did away with the practice that used to exist years ago where people could volunteer to be on call for jury service and that lead in many cases to many elderly people almost as a hobby, to make themselves available for jury duty but it also let to sometimes some unrepresented juries where all the jurors would be quite elderly and the defendant might be quite young, so it raised some issues about the jury of one's peers.

But I commend the Department for its work in this study and just as Chief Justice Robinson is certainly committed to an improved process to try to make sure that the jury pools are actually more

representative the broader area of the entire  
judicial district. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further  
on the Legislation? Will you remark further? If  
not, I will open the votes and Mr. Clerk would you  
please call the roll call.

CLERK:

House Bill 6548, as Amended by House Schedule "A",  
immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.  
Immediate roll call in the Senate on House Bill 6548  
as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll in  
the Senate on House Bill 6548 as Amended by House  
Schedule "A". Immediate roll call in the Senate,  
House Bill 6548 as Amended by House Schedule "A".  
Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.  
Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, House Bill  
6548 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the  
Senate on House Bill 6548. Immediate roll call vote  
in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6548 as Amended by House Schedule "A":

Total number voting	35
Total voting Yea	26
Total voting Nay	9
Absent not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) Legislation passes. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 29, Calendar 553, Substitute for House Bill No. 6667 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. (As Amended by House Schedule "A" LCO No. 9988).

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield and we do need the, we just need a moment to get the Legislation. There you go, Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, Thank you, Madam President. I move Acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and Passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This is the I guess at this point, annual JJPOC Bill that came to the Judiciary Committee, it came there was a passage, a lot of stuff in this Bill and then there was conversation in the Committee about the Bill. The Bill was worked on with myself and the Ranking Member in the House to try and figure out where the Judiciary Committee could actually do as much as possible of the work in the package that was presented by the JJPOC.

What that meant was the we had a Bill that dealt with the education of the children who are in our system and I will tell you that there were a lot of reports that came under the Bill, the Department of

Children and Families was to create and implement a plan for an educational unit to improve educational outcomes for the children who are incarcerated or in a juvenile facility. The State Department of Education by August of this year is to assemble a list of people who may serve as reentry coordinators to help children obtain their records, local or regional boards of education are to award diplomas to students educated at the Department of Children and Family Education Unit who meet the requirements. There is also a way that if you are not associated with one of those boards, the Department itself would handle all that. The transfer of education records has to occur within five days after receiving notice of the transfer of a child.

And there is the Section that deals with the treatment of the children and so that raises the age of that a young person can be subject to the juvenile court delinquency jurisdiction from the age of seven which is where we are in Connecticut now to the age of ten and that was a part, one of the things that was part of the agreement. The attempt was actually to go to 12. It requires that CSSD Court Support Services provide written notice to a child upon discharge of the child's parent or guardians on erasure of the child's police and court records, requires the Department of Corrections, DOC Commissioner to review the Department's use of chemical agents and it required the Judicial Branch to develop and implementation plan to securely house anyone under the age of 18 who is arrested or detained.

The Amendment that was in the House took out part of the Bill that dealt with the issue of the chemical agent. It also dealt with part of the Bill dealt with the automatic erasure of records, that came out of the Bill and it delayed the effective date of the implementation plans that I spoke of. Madam President again this is the Annual JJPOC Bill, it is a good Bill and I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I also stand in strong support of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee Bill and it is, has become an annual event. Although I missed the typical visit that I would get from Representative Toni Walker, someone over here saying where is that Bill, but she does mightily hard on the JJPOC as well as so many others and also the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management. Prior to Covid I try to attend as many meetings as I could, that sort of put a wrench in the works for me juggling a lot of other things at the same time as well. But as life hopefully gets to a little bit more normalcy I look forward to participating more often at those meetings.

I have often believed very strongly that to the extent we can take a young people, a young person who was bumped up against the criminal justice system and helped turn his or her life around, that we avoid lots and lots of potential victimization if that young man or young woman ended up pursuing a life of crime. We hopefully give that individual the ability to make good life choices going forward, life's challenges and dreams don't get handed to one on a silver platter but to have the tools in one's toolbelt or toolkit however you want to carry your tools, so that you can make good life decisions and feel good about yourself as you go forward. That's good for all of us. That allows for individuals to be the best person they can be on this planet, attain for themselves things that make them feel that they are productive and fulfilled.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness being a foundation of this nation. Hopefully if it's in

God's plan or the cards or just as fate would have it, perhaps the individual forms of family or not, it's just however life unfolds but that pursuing a life of crime does not become a predestined option for that young man or young woman. And of course, rather than paying for incarceration down the road it would be much better to have people out there earning and being able to purchase things and, yeah the state does attain sales tax and income taxes and other revenues to help attain other goals that we move forward and regarding our society be they individualized programs or just health, safety of our citizenry. All of these things require some kind of revenue to some degree.

So the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee works year in and year out, looking at other states, utilizing the talent and brilliance of individuals from, I believe, the University of New Haven, and we try to learn from Best Practices here in the State of Connecticut and we've done well. You know, I've seen it from it's very early stages with a former colleague of ours then Senator Tony Hart also former Mayor of this City of New Haven but also Toni Walker and, you know, with formative initiatives such as raise the age, and changes to our laws such that are Statutes reflect those changes, we've made great progress in a relatively modest amount of time. And while not recently, I had the great good fortune to be able to go to National Conferences on behalf of the Legislature in the State of Connecticut in Washington, D.C. and Denver, Colorado and we have everything to be proud of when it comes to how we are addressing these issues.

And when it comes to our young people more often than not, it is bipartisan or nonpartisan. We all want what's best for the generations coming behind up. And we all know that while sometimes just individuals make terrible decisions and they have this moral turpitude and this for whatever reason, predisposition to do harm and ill to others, their

personal safety, their health, their lives and property, I do believe the great majority of individuals can be redeemed if they have made mistakes that have put them nose-to-nose with the criminal justice system and being sensitive to those changes and the changes that life has brought us technologically and in so many other ways if we can leverage some of all that knowledge that we have, every life that we save is, has wonderful ripple effect throughout the years and throughout our society.

So, I see nothing but good potential in the initiatives and they are rather modest this year compared to past years but still heartfelt, well thought out initiatives. One thing that actually makes me feel very good and then I'll wrap it up, a lot of times we've had some friction when it comes to a lot of these initiatives. Life always hasn't gone on swimmingly regarding Juvenile Justice Initiatives especially with the Department of Children and Families. I've often heard from the Judicial Branch that sometimes they're, because they're so good at doing a new task that they are constantly being asked to do more and more often times with less and less but they don't do it complainingly and when the legislature sees fit to give them more responsibility they are very earnest about getting their arms around it and building consensus and trying to do the very best they can to achieve those goals that we chart out for them so that our young people can actually succeed in an ever changing and a very demanding society.

So I, I believe that this simple Bill that we have before us this afternoon should pass and eventually be signed into law is the planting of some seeds, very appropriate for this time of the year. And we don't know what the blossoms are going to be down the road but I certainly do believe that there will be and we'll look back and we will be very pleased with the strides that we are making forward here, the beginning of summer in the year 2021 and for

that reason, Madam President I urge my colleagues to support this Bill as well. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, I will open the voting machine and Mr. Clerk will you please announce the roll call vote.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate House Bill 6667. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate as Amended by House Schedule "A".

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 6667 as Amended by House Schedule "A". An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate

Immediate roll call, in the Senate on House Bill 6667 as Amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 6667 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6667 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? Senator Flexor.

Have all the Senators voted. Have all the Senators voted. The machine is locked. Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6667 as Amended by House Schedule "A":

Total number voting	35
Total voting Yea	27
Total voting Nay	8
Absent not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) Legislation is passed and Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 28, Calendar Number 544, Substitute for House Bill No. 5027 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SAVINGS ACCOUNT, ESTABLISHING TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF CERTAIN ELIGIBLE COSTS, DIRECTING THE TREASURER TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MARKETABLE SECURITIES AND ESTABLISHING A FINANCIAL LITERACY TRUST FUND." (As Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9745).

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, Senator Kasser.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

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 KASSER (36TH):

Madam President, this Bill established a first time homebuyer's savings account with is a state income tax deduction for people who save money to purchase their first home in Connecticut. This Bill encourages two very important steps in building

economic security and equity. The first is saving and the second is homeownership.

This Bill give a leg-up to hardworking people who are striving for the American Dream which is to own their own home. Since the recession of 2009, first time homebuyers have decreased significantly as a percentage of the overall market from 47 percent to 33 percent. This Bill allows individuals and couples a deduction from their state income tax, \$2,500 dollars for individuals, \$5,000 for couples, for a couple with a ten year max. And this is solely for the purpose of purchasing their first home in Connecticut. And that home can be a condo, a coop, a mobile home, or a single family.

This Bill also, importantly authorizes the treasurer to establish a Financial Literacy Trust Fund to promote financial literacy in Connecticut residence which is an essential skill. Overall this Bill encourages and awards people to do what is in their best interest which is to save and invest and also within the best interest of our state as this Bill will increase once this program is established and underway, estimates show that it will increase transactions by as much as 6,100 sales per year in Connecticut. That is good for sellers and buyers and property values. So I encourage my colleagues to join me and support this Bill. This creates opportunity and equity and puts people on a path to financial growth. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kasser. Will you remark further?  
Good afternoon, Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good afternoon, Madam President, good to see you today. Madam President I rise in support of the Legislation. I thank the good Chair for her summary of what the Bill does. This Bill did come out of

the Banks Committee with an 18 to zero approval and I think it makes good sense for our economy in terms of what we know has been at least prior to Covid.

We've actually seen a, a very peculiar uptick in housing sales in Connecticut, I think primarily for people coming from other states to try to come to perhaps more stable ground, if you will, but this will go a long way in terms of helping those first time, first time homebuyers.

I do have just a couple of questions for clarification that I think would be good for everyone to understand Madam President, through you to my colleague and the good Chair on the Bank's Committee.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed sir, and Senator Kasser, prepare yourself.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you Madam President. Through you to the Chair, the, the tax deduction that will come from, from these accounts. Is this something that will be administered through DRS or is this something that someone will take as a deduction on their tax return? In other words, where did, how do they claim the, the deduction; how are they going to be eligible for that? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kasser.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

Through you Madam President, this program is administered by the Department of Revenue services.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you and I think that's an important.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND)

My apologies, Madam President. It's the rain, we're all hearing thunder and lightning and losing our way a little bit here as we get to the end of this, this long session. Thank you to the good Chair for the answer. And I think that's an important distinction that we're not just relying upon someone looking to take a deduction because they think they can. This is a properly administered program that comes through the agency that is responsible for offering those types of tax deductions.

And Madam President, through you to the, to the good Chair, can the, these accounts, do they have to be established with a particular bank or are the accounts available through any bank or credit union in Connecticut? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kasser.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

Through you Madam President, these savings accounts are available at a multitude of financial institutions, banks, out of state banks, credit unions or their affiliates or third party providers.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND)

Thank you. Again, I thank the Chair for the answers. I think that's important as well, that we are not going to, by virtue of this program, someone who is looking to participate and take advantage of this, that we are not requiring them to do, to do financial transactions and, and establishing a very important account, if you will, with a bank that they may not be familiar with or perhaps someone that they are in a financial institution that they may have had a bad experience with. So I think the freedom of choice there is going to help in terms of promoting this program as well.

And then, the answer may seem obvious. Through you Madam President, to the Chair, we say its first time buyers only. So if, if you have two people who are in a civil union, a marriage of some sort, if one person is on the mortgage and the other person isn't, but perhaps they both end up on the deed for the property. Is there any kind of restriction? How, I guess how will we, Madam President, how will we ensure that its truly a first time buyer that is, is taking advantage of this? How, what, what will be the checks and balances to make sure that that I don't represent myself, let's say as an example, as a first time buyer, multiple times or in a civil union marriage, one spouse goes and the other one doesn't? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kasser.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

Through you Madam President, the Bill does outline that this is for qualified beneficiaries for first time homebuyers only who have not previously owned or purchased either individually or with someone else's single family residents. Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND)

Okay, thank you for, thank you to the Senator for the answer. So I guess the other piece that, that maybe we don't know the answer to and this will be, perhaps this will require the Department of Revenue Service to be providing some insight. But how will a finance, if I go to a financial institution and I represent myself as a first time buyer. How will that financial institution know that I am truly a first time buyer and haven't taken advantage of this program before? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kasser.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

Through you Madam President, the homebuyer must represent themselves as such, and I believe there, could I pause for a minute?

THE CHAIR:

Certainly, we'll stand at ease for a moment.  
Senator Kasser. Senator Kasser?

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

Through you Madam President, the Department of Revenue Services is going to establish this program. So they are going to create the forms which aren't yet created, and those forms presumably will require someone to not only to state that they are first time homebuyers or they haven't previously purchased or owned a home, but to state so under penalty of oath, I would imagine, a penalty of false statement.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Kasser. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND)

Great, thank you. And I, and I appreciate the fact that some of the details may not have been completely ironed out on that. You know, there is a, there is, there is some thinking at least for me with this that while we're establishing this program for first time buyers, that there may be some merit going forward to allowing someone who might be looking at additional home purchases for personal use, whatever that may be, to establish savings accounts for, for home buying regardless if this is the first time or not, because this is a great opportunity to actually save and, you know, and prepare for, for purchase of a home, whether it's a first time or, or a second time. But I thank the Chair for the answers again, Madam President. I support the Legislation as it is before us, and I urge my colleagues to support the Legislation as well. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Thank you Madam President. Madam President, I rise with some.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. Could you repeat this item please?

THE CHAIR:

And we will do that, Mr. Clerk?

CLERK:

Page 28, Substitute for House Bill No. 6372, AN ACT EXEMPTING FROM EXECUTION CERTAIN FUNDS IN A JUDGMENT DEBTOR'S ACCOUNT as Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9541.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kasser.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

Madam President, this is a Bill that clarifies and secures a right that already exists. There is already in Connecticut statute, protection for the last \$1,000 in every person's bank account. Unfortunately, that protection currently under current law requires people to jump through hoops, and by doing so, they often lose the protection in the process. So this Bill amends existing statute, it does not create a new exemption, it just amends existing statute to protect, automatically protect the last \$1,000 in a person's bank account.

Now this protection is required because without it, without automatic protection, when that last \$1,000 gets frozen, the person cannot access their own funds, they can't take out money to buy food, they can't take out money to buy their medication and they are literally frozen and unable to survive. So this, and this is, this happens in situations often with elderly people, people who are living hand to mouth, you know, security, Social Security cheque, Social Security cheque. This is not in any way somebody who is spending frivolously or, or acting you know, irresponsibly. This is a protection, a protection for somebody who is in a desperate financial situation.

This Bill also removes a \$1,000 cap on the exemption for unemployment insurance, unemployment benefits, and child support benefits which are already exempt, but they are not automatically protected yet and it clarifies that there is no longer \$1,000 cap on protection of federal benefits. Now, this was already preempted by federal law, but our state statute conflicted with federal law. So this clarifies it. Again, this does not create any new exemptions and it does not remove the \$1,000 cap on directly deposited wages. I urge passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. And the question is on passage. Will you remark? Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you Madam President. Madam President, I just like to make a few comments about the Bill. So this, this Legislation comes back to us, and I made the joke earlier, it's kind of like a dandy lion, it comes back every year. And the, the trouble that I have with this Bill is that we are, while I understand that there, the existing laws are in place that are protecting a consumer. What we, what

we do have here and what we saw exacerbated particularly through COVID is we have small businesses that end up in a situation where they are unable to ultimately to collect for services that they've rendered, and those small businesses are not necessarily, you know, people think of maybe something like a landscape or a painter; but we're also talking about situations where medical practitioners, a dentist might have, have offered a service and, and has not been paid for the co-pay for part of their, their treatment.

So, I think that, you know, I think this, the law, as it existed prior to the introduction of this change was something that we were living with. It is something we had addressed, I believe in 2019, and possibly the year before that. We've gone through, through changes to this, this statute, so I don't, I do not believe that these changes are necessary as they're proposed in, in the Bill and I cannot support it as it, as it stands today. Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Berthel. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? And good afternoon, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you Madam President. Speaking in support of the Bill, I wanted to commend Senator Kasser in the, the Banks Committee for bringing forward this important piece of consumer, banking consumer protection. As Senator Kasser said, there already is a \$1,000 exemption. But the problem is, in order to take, take advantage of that exemption, the account holder has to be quite sophisticated to understand that, that he or she needs to go to court to claim that exemption. That really is a pitfall, which means in many cases the statutory exemption is not really accessible. People may not even know

that, that it's something that you have to take action in a court proceeding in order to secure. This will just make the exemption what it is supposed to be, a \$1,000 exemption without probably, who knows how many potential holders of that exemption never be able to actualize it and having the, the last penny in their bank account to seized and leaving them destitute, perhaps bouncing cheques and lots of other problems that they may be having.

So all it does is say that we're not requiring you to be quite so sophisticated, a customer and quite so familiar with banking laws and court procedures to actually let you take advantage of the exemption we claim we're already giving you. And that's what it is. Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Looney. Will you remark further on the Legislation before the Chamber? Will you remark further? If not, I will open the voting machine. And Mr. Clerk, if you would please announce the roll call?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6372 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6372 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6372 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6372 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6372 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6372 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6372 as Amended:

Total number of voting	35
Total number of voting Yea	30
Total voting Nay	5
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) the, the Legislation is adopted. Mr. Clerk?

CLERK:

Page 26, Calendar 531, Substitute for House Bill No. 6470, AN ACT CONCERNING HOME HEALTH, TELEHEALTH AND UTILIZATION REVIEW as Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9535.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Good afternoon Madam President. We're coming to a close end here. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is, sorry, please finish your sentence.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

In concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, and the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Yes, I will. Thank you Madam President. This Bill enables DSS to continue certain Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program known as CHIP, Home Health and Telehealth policy changes that were temporarily implemented as part of the agency's COVID-19 response pursuant to the Governor's public health emergency authority. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Legislation? Will you remark further? Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you. Thank you for that support also sir. Specifically, specifically Section 1 and 2 allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to issue orders for individuals to receive Home Health Services. Currently, only physicians may do so. Section 3 amend Subsection J of Public Act 21-9, which allows a telehealth provider to provide services from any location.

Section 3 as a clause that providing telehealth from any location will be subject to compliance with federal requirements and state licensing standards. Section 4 amends Section 6 of Public Act 21-19, which allows for audio only health telehealth and Section 4 clarifies the audio only telehealth shall

be provided. Section 5 authorizes the Department to relax specific utilization review criteria and procedures set forth in regulations. And this Bill has no fiscal impact and was voted unanimously out of the House of Representatives and Human Services. Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Moore. Will you remark further?  
Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you Madam President. I rise in support of the Legislation before us. You know, as the good Chair noted, we, we did have emergency orders that were put in place to allow telehealth to be used during COVID, which, I know we've discussed in this Chamber prior to today that this allowed for our medical professionals to interact with, safely interact with, with certain patients without having to risk the patient having an exposure or the medical professional having an exposure in the office. And you know, and that was important as we dealt with some of the, some of the more difficult days of the last 16 months.

So I think that this is good Legislation, essentially allowing telehealth to continue in the manner that we, for better or worse, we proved out that this works and, and it's a good way to administer medicine. Madam President, I do have just a couple of clarifying questions, if I may, through you to the good Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed sir.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you Madam President, through you to the Chair of Human Services, the telehealth rates, are those the same as the rate that a health care provider would provide in their office? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you. Through you, I'm, I don't know the answer to that. I know that Medicaid pays the same rates as, as for all Medicaid patients, and insurance companies have their own rate, but I don't know what the rate is.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Okay, thank you. And I was, I was actually a little confused about it myself, and that's why I thought I would ask. I did see that, that Medicaid does pay the same rates, and I guess it, it kind of leads to the, the second question. And again, I don't know if the answer is in the Legislation or if it's something that will need to check with, with DSS on or maybe Public Health.

But Madam President, through you, who decides, when a patient decides to interact with their medical professional, you know, if you go to a doctor's office now, you may be seen only by the RN who is in the office based on what you have called to be seen about, or you might see the physician's assistant in the office or you might see the, the doctor or any combination of those medical professionals in any given doctor's office in any type of, of practice. So I guess I'm a little concerned, but I'm more

curious as to trying to figure out if we know who decides what level of care is given when someone makes that telehealth call to their doctor's office? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you Madam President. In Section, Section 1C, it talks about the home health care services that can be received and the fee schedule, to answer your first question.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Okay.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

And the second question, I believe is answered in Section 8 where it says Department of Social Service policy or procedure that applies to physician orders such home health care services included related provisions such as review and approval of care plans for home health care age shall apply to any licensed practitioner.

And when I go further in Section B, through you Madam President, it also applies to a physician or who orders home health care services including related provisions such as review and approval of care plans for home health care services such as applied to an advanced practiced, registered nurse or physician assistant, who orders home health services. Madam President, through the COVID-19, we've found this to be very helpful to people who couldn't get to a doctor and it was extended to many more people as a way to addressing health. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you Madam President, Again speaking in support of the Legislation, I think it's important and I, and I appreciate the, I appreciate the Senator for providing the clarification. It's important for us to understand that the, the same type of decision is being made via a telehealth service as it is when you go to your doctor's office, because if I go to a doctor's office, they probably made a determination prior to my arrival, physically appearing in that office as to who is going to interact with me first, that person will make an assessment based on my complaint, my, my injury, my illness, and, and then maybe I get escalated up, up ultimately to the doctor from the APRN or the RN in that office. And I, I just think it's important to, to recognize that we are providing the same level of, of triage, if you will, for a patient who might come to a, a medical practice via telehealth.

And then, Madam President through you, the last question that I have and again in support of the Legislation, who makes the decision as to whether or not it's a telehealth visit or an in-person visit? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you Madam President, according to my notes in the Bill, prior authorization and utilization review come from the DSS Commissioner, she has the right to waive or suspend in part any prior authorization, because these are Medicaid and CHIP

patients, they're not private. Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you Madam President, again, I thank the Chair for the clarification. You know, we were, we heard some very good testimony in Committee on this Bill and how it, it absolutely continued to provide access to individuals who were either already ill with COVID or who were just like many of us in this room, probably all of us, at some point were, were truly terrified to have to go out and possibly be exposed, especially if we had to go to a medical office where despite their, their, the best efforts of, of cleaning and, and protecting people, you, you could possibly have an exposure incident.

So I think this is good Legislation that we are bringing forward today. Again, it came out of as the good Chair noted, it came out of the Human Services Committee unopposed and I believe it came up from the House of Representatives with a unanimous vote as well. So Madam President, I urge, I urge adoption and passage of the Bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Berthel. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

If there are no objections, Consent Calendar?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Madam President, could, if we could have a roll call please? Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

And we will open the roll call vote. Mr. Clerk, please announce that?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6470 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 6470 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6470 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, this is House Bill 6470 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6470 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6470 as Amended by House Schedule "A":

Total number of voting	35
Total number of voting Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

And the Legislation is passed (gavel). Mr. Clerk?

CLERK:

Page 19, Calendar 439, Substitute for House Bill No. 6106, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES AND NONRESIDENTIAL HYDROPOWER FACILITIES. There is an Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

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 sir?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes Madam President. This Amendment is a strike all Amendment. It deletes the underlying Bill and its associated fiscal impact. What the Amendment really does is it clarifies that certain Class I renewable energy sources that participate in net metering, metering are exempt from the property tax. I need to call the Amendment, I'm sorry, I believe the Clerk has LCO 9885, excuse me.

THE CHAIR:

And Mr. Clerk, would you please call LCO 9885, please?

CLERK:

LCO No. 9885, Senate Schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Thank you Madam President. Again, this is a strike all Amendment. This Bill one prior past or past in the past, there was a question as to whether the Bill meets its original intention. That intention was to exempt solar systems from property taxes even if they've fed electricity back to the provider. However, many municipalities have tax residential solar systems. So this Bill aims to clarify that situation so that it is clearly defined that it is to be a tax exemption. This is an issue that the Energy Commission, Committee, has also been discussing, and so I would like to yield to our Vice Chair from our Committee to the Chair of the Energy Commission Committee, Senator Needleman for further comment.

THE CHAIR:

And before we ask the Senator if he will accept the yield, I'd like to clarify, do you move adoption of the Amendment?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Very good. So the question is on adoption of the Amendment. Do you accept the yield Senator Needleman?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you Madam President and thank you Senator Cassano. This Bill does clarify an earlier version. It is a strike all Amendment. It actually narrows

it to apply to just residential solar. There has been although it doesn't seem as though there shouldn't be ambiguity in the original Bill, there has been some interpretive ambiguity by the part of different assessors throughout the state.

The intent originally was that solar, that is on rooftops for residential use, that is primarily used, roughly equal to the amount of energy consumed on the property itself should be tax exempt. It does not matter if it's a third party power purchase agreement or a lease agreement. This Bill attempts to clarify that, again for residential use, and it should clarify going forward any of the issues that the assessors might have an interpretation of the underlying statute. Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Needleman. Will you remark further on the Amendment? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you Madam President and good evening. I want to acknowledge and thank the good Chair of the Planning and Development Committee for taking up this Bill in recognition that there were consumer concerns in regards to efforts of community and individuals that want to support renewable energy, in this case, solar.

And the strike all Amendment that Senator Needleman has the Vice Chair articulated, through you, just a couple of questions to the, the Vice Chair, if it is okay with the Chair of the Committee.

THE CHAIR:

And please proceed.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you very much. Now, what's unusual about this is the fact that this being a House Bill, through you Madam President, upon our Amendment, it would need to be transmitted down to the House for revoke. Would that be correct? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you Madam President, and through you, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

I like those one word answers, they're clear and tight. That being said, this being a strike all Amendment, obviously, the, the proponent articulated the fact that the strike all focused on a consumer residential tax assessment basis. And I thought he articulated it very effectively that it is a legislative intent to, to remind the assessors that these kind of solar projects on a residential basis are intended to be tax exempt. Could I ask through you Madam President, to clarify that legislative intent for other assessors that may be looking at this differently? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you Madam President, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, and I appreciate that legislative intent. And I think this will impact and positively impact many of the consumers that have looked to adopt renewable energy in this case solar. Just for legislative intent again, Madam President, the strike all Amendment removed the non-residential component that was deemed to be not relevant. Could the, could the proponent and the Vice Chair of the Planning and Development and the Chair of the Energy and Technology Committee articulate why that section was removed for legislative intent? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you Madam President, I'm not sure why it was removed, and I'm not sure that that's relevant in this moment. But this is specifically addressing residential.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you. And I appreciate the, the honesty in which the opponent articulated that. That being said, you're right, it has no relevance in this Bill right now. But that being said, I also want to acknowledge all the advocates that have offered insight and, and support in moving this process along and fixing some of the technical questions that resulted in this strike all. So I, I want to thank both proponents for their actions. Again I,

as I repeat many times about our Planning and Development Committee, the great work that the Chair and Ranking Member does in the House. So I urge support of this Bill, and I want to thank the proponent for answering the questions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you Madam President, I'd like to thank Senator Hwang also for his work on this and his support of this Bill. And I'd also like to thank Senator Cassano for, for his work on this Bill as well as the Members in the House who worked on this to get this done. This has been a source of ongoing problems. And as we all know, we do want to incentivize renewable energy. This makes it a little bit easier and a little bit clearer. So thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

I rise in support of this Legislation and one clarifying question to either of the proponents of the Bill, Senator Needleman I think.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you Madam President. Thank you, good afternoon Senator Needleman. I just have one question: I'm in full support of this Bill. There was one clause that said that the user of, of the system cannot generate more electricity than they need to offset. Am I correct on that? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you Madam President, thank you Senator Formica, great Ranking Member on the Energy Committee. That is generally the case, it's got to be roughly compatible with the amount of energy that they use. For example, one would not want to have a 500 square foot barn with a two-acre solar array and try to get a tax exemption. This is a rough equivalence between what you generate and what you use.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much Madam President, and thank you sir, for the response. I just wanted to make sure that as these things are fluid a little bit, there is no way to really generate the exact total of power that you're going to use if you go over a little bit. I want to make sure that that didn't disqualify anybody. But my understanding with the solar arrays now that they're being sized 20% less

pretty much than the last year's electric bills output. So this solves a good problem. And I believe this is the, the residential owner is still protected to have their tax exemption. Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator. Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Through you Madam President, I hope so also that is the intent here to clarify that and to protect the residential solar customers. And I, I just hope for legislative intent that assessors understand what our legislative intent here is and to not try to figure out ways to tax people that we don't intend to have taxed.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you Madam President, thank you Senator. That really was it. I wanted to make sure that legislative intent was out on the floor just in the off shoot that something happened somewhere along the line, people can look at those. This as a good Bill, and I urge my colleagues to support and thank everybody for their work on this.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator. Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes. Madam President, if there is no objection, I'd ask that this be voted on.

THE CHAIR:

And I do see an objection. So I, I see you are requesting a roll call vote sir. Yes. Very good. We will have a roll call vote. I will open the voting machine. Mr. Clerk, please call the roll?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6106 on the Amendment, Senate Amendment "A" LCO 9885. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Amendment "A" of House Bill 6106. There is an immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Amendment "A" of House Bill 6106. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Amendment "A" of House Bill 6106. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Yes Madam President. House Bill 6106 as Amended by Senate Amendment "A":

Total number of voting	35
Total number of Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) and this is on adoption of the Amendment. So now, ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, we are on the Bill. So will you remark further on the Bill as Amended? Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes, Madam President. I would move that we vote for adoption of the Bill as Amended.

THE CHAIR:

Okay. And we are now on passage of the Bill as Amended. Will you remark further on the Bill as Amended? Will you remark further on the Bill as Amended? If not, I will open the voting machine. 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 House Bill 6106 just Amended. House Bill 6106 as Amended by Senate Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, we're voting on the Bill as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6106 as Amended. This is the vote on the Bill as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6106 as Amended:

Total number of voting	35
Total voting Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) Legislation passes. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. Madam President, I move for immediate transmittal to the House please on this previous Bill.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

And could the Senate stand at ease please?

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. Would the Clerk please call Calendar Page 38? I'm sorry, let me mark it go first. Calendar Page 38, Calendar 389, Senate Bill 241; like to mark that item go in our next item please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. It's marked go, and Mr. Clerk?

CLERK:

Page 38, Calendar No. 389, Substitute for Senate Bill No. 241, AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY AT THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY, as Amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9467 and House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9982.

THE CHAIR:

And Senator Haskell, we will go to you, but we would like to get that Legislation up on the board. And good evening, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Good evening Madam President, it's good to see you. We are nearing the end of the legislative session and we have debated this Bill once before us. So let me say Madam President that I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Sorry, and the question is on passage, didn't mean to interrupt.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

No, no problem at all. Thank you Madam President. Let me just say very briefly that the House Amended this Bill slightly to require the DAS Commissioner and OPM Secretary to jointly review and comment on certain Connecticut Port Authority reports rather than verify them as was the language previously passed through this Chamber. Any other changes made to the language in the House were purely technical in nature. I've already thanked many folks who have worked on this Bill including the good Ranking Member, Senator Formica, Senator Needleman, and Senator Osten, and basically the entire Eastern Connecticut Delegation. So I'll spare the Chamber from doing that again. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan Bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

And thank you very much. Will you remark further on the Legislation before the Chamber? Senator Somers, good evening.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Good evening Madam President. I rise in support of this very, very simple Amendment. We're

literally changing two words, one from comment, verify to comment, and I hope that the Chamber will support this Amendment. It's very important that we get this Port Authority Bill out of the House after all of the issues that we have seen. This will bring some validity and some ease of mind to many who are watching the Port Authority. Thank you very much Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you Madam President. I rise also in support. I was thinking that the good Chair of the Energy Committee might get up and beat me to the punch on that, that's what I was talking about. But I do rise in support. We did support this Legislation coming out and the Amendment of the House forced it to come back here with a small technical change. I appreciate the good Chair, bringing us back so quickly, and I urge my colleagues to adopt this Legislation. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, I will. Senator Haskell?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Madam President, if there is no objection, I would ask that this item be considered. No problem at all Madam President, a roll call vote would be just fine.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call vote now has been requested, so I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, please call the 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 241 as Amended by Senate "A" and House "A". Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 241 as Amended by Senate "A" and House "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, this is Senate Bill 241 as Amended by Senate "A" and House "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 241 as Amended by Senate "A" and House "A":

Total number of voting	35
Total voting Yea	35
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) the Legislation is passed. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. Two more items for our goal list please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

First will be Calendar Page 25, Calendar 518, House Bill 5088; like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Followed by Calendar Page 17, Calendar 425, House Bill 6665. Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Senator Osten. Good evening. Whoop, we got to get it through Mr. Clerk, I do apologize.

CLERK:

Page 25, Calendar No. 518, House Bill No. 5088, AN ACT REQUIRING THE PAYMENT OF A REWARD TO PATRICIA "PIDGIE" D'ALLESSIO.

THE CHAIR:

And good evening Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Good evening Madam President. It's a pleasure to see you today. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Madam President, this is one of the most egregious things that I've ever seen passed through the

General Assembly. Patricia "Pidgie" D'Allessio has been denied payment for coming forward on a crime that had been committed where she was raped and a friend of hers was raped and murdered when she was a child.

This has been 70 years in the making and Ms. D'Allessio was promised a, a payment for coming forward on a crime that had been committed. The reward claimed by Ms. D'Allessio gave information that would lead to the apprehension of the killer. And the fact that 70 years later, we are still debating this issue is just beyond my understanding, the fact that this woman still wakes up every day and has not been able to forget what happened to her and her friend.

I just find it just disgusting, that it has taken the State of Connecticut 70 years to part with the great amount of \$3,000 and to put that into respect, the fact is, is that we have a more than \$40 billion budget that spans two years. And we have discussed this issue year after year after year after year, keeping this woman waiting for payment of \$3,000. If I had my way and if I could figure it out legally, I would make sure that she received interest on this reward that is not within the ability of the General Assembly.

So today, I stand here and I extend my apologies to Ms. D'Allessio for what she has had to put up with. I find it to not, to be reprehensible that we have not passed this and I am accepting of the fact that we can't provide the interest that this woman deserves, and I'm accepting of the fact that she had the bravery to stand forward and provide information that ultimately led to the arrest and conviction of someone who had raped and murdered her friend and raped her. So I just, I cannot say how I feel about this. I find this to be just painful beyond words, I feel for the woman, and I'd like to see this circle stand up and make sure that we provide the

amount of \$3,000 that we have been debating for years.

I just cannot tell you how I feel about this, Madam President, and I stand ready to accept questions on this issue. But I hope that everybody stands up and apologizes in the name of the State of Connecticut to Ms. D'Allessio. Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Osten. Will you remark further on the Legislation? Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Hi, thank you very much Madam President. I like to be associated with the remarks of Senator Osten. I do find this extraordinarily offensive that so many decades have lapsed and we're honoring our commitment to this woman, Ms. D'Allessio, known as Pidgie, not only if there was a way, I would have joined up with your Senator, try to figure out how to get this woman interest. But another way to look at this is what was the present value of this amount of money back in early 1950's. I bet you if we looked at the state budget at that time and compare to the state budget right now or not an exact apples to apples comparison, we can get an idea of what the fair, what the present value of that amount of money could have purchased for her back in the day.

My recollection is back in those days, that's almost like half the price of a house or maybe more than that. So we really dropped the ball. We had just the other evening these claims, hundreds of claims that are building up and God forbid decades start going by and, and we fall behind with those folks as well. But this is a true case of injustice. And we can't make this, this woman whole, certainly not for the commitment that we made and certainly not for the underlying crimes that took place to her friend and to herself. But there is one small thing that

we can do, as Senator Osten said, we all stand up and we honor this commitment, and at least we can do that now and there is some small element of justice in saying we messed up really bad as a State of Connecticut, we're taking ownership of that and we finally want to resolve this to the extent the law allows us.

And so I am happy to acknowledge, unfortunately the great failure of the State of Connecticut in this matter, and some small way that we can try to at least honor that commitment here in 2021, 74 years since all this took place. So thank you, Senator Osten for bringing this forward. And thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Good evening Madam President. Madam President, I rise in support of the Bill before us. Madam President, this is a story of two tragedies in a neighborhood that I grew up and in my brothers and sister grew up in, in the southwest end of Hartford streets that I played on, streets that I delivered the Hartford Courant and Hartford Times on, streets that I've now represented for 35 years in this legislature.

In December of 1953, the tragedies began, began with Irene Fiederowicz, 11 years old, who was playing at Mary Hooker School in the southwest, and she was stalked, grabbed, dragged through backyards, sexually assaulted, and murdered. Two weeks prior to that, Pidgie D'Allessio, 17 years old, who grew up in the southwest end of Hartford, was grabbed, dragged through backyards, sexually assaulted, but she lived. She lived to tell her parents and the police. But through the questioning, the police

determined that the marks on her neck were love marks and they did not believe her. And back then, the definition of rape was such that she had to be penetrated. She told the police that she had not been, and therefore she was not raped in her eyes in the eyes of the law. When the police discovered Irene's body, they then connected the story that Pidgie had told, but they did not believe, and were able to trace it back and bring to justice, the man who killed Irene Fiederowicz, and raped and nearly killed Irene.

This is story of attitudes and beliefs, not too long ago in our lifetime for many of us; attitudes about women, attitudes about young girls and what was and hopefully is behind us today.

But the second tragedy was with respect to when Governor John Davis Lodge had offered a reward of \$3,000 for the arrest and conviction of Irene's murderer. However, Governor Raymond Baldwin, former Governor Raymond Baldwin, former US Senator Raymond Baldwin, now Supreme Court Justice Raymond Baldwin, felt that because Pidgie's information came two days prior to the reward being offered, that Pidgie was not entitled to the reward. And he went on from there to say that Pidgie was unappreciative of the fact that it was her duty, her duty, her common duty to her fellow man to come forward not for the sake of a financial reward, but for the sake of mankind for the people in our community. That's the second injustice, Madam President, on top of an injustice.

Madam President, we will never know today and this world will never know what Irene Fiederowicz might have brought to this world. But because of the fact that the police chose not to believe Pidgie. They did eventually because they linked the commonality of the evidence between the two crimes. But if they had believed, if they had accepted hopefully as we do today, when claims of this nature and evidence is such that points to a crime, it may have led to finding this assailant and preventing the death of

an 11-year-old girl who never had a chance to be who she might have been. Her family never getting to see her grow up to be a young woman, and have a family of her own. In the neighborhood of where I grew up, someone I might have known. She is a little bit older, but someone that I might have known. I think about that, Madam President. And while the reward may be minor in terms of monetary value today, by the way Pidgie still lives, she is 85 years old, living in West Hartford. And her family, Pidgie may not be at this point able to appreciate what is being done here today, certainly her family I hope will and certainly the neighborhood and those who have fought to bring recognition and justice, and by the way with, with, with the reward comes an apology from the State of Connecticut, on the behalf of the State of Connecticut by now Governor Ned Lamont, which I think is just a small thing that we can do.

But I think what's most important is that in the record today and those here in this Chamber and those listening today, hear the names of Irene Fiederowicz and Patricia Pidgie D'Allessio. In some ways, they represent many more women than this, those two, who may have experienced similar things in life, similar tragedies. And let's hope and pray that going forward those injustices will not be repeated. Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Fonfara. Will you remark further? Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you Madam President. Madam President, as a Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee, I also rise in support of this Legislation. I can't remember what day it was, but I know we had a great conversation about our obligation as late as it was to try and make this happen this year. I did check

to what was my understanding, still my understanding that it was a unanimous vote in the Appropriations Committee. I think everyone was moved by the story.

Also as a matter of record, the vote in the House is 144 to nothing. So I don't think there is any debate about the unity of the legislature on this issue. I think we should move along today with this decision. Let's cast aside any question that there might be about whether we believe she's entitled, and I would urge support. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Miner. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, I will open the voting machine. Please, Mr. Clerk, announce the vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5088. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5088. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5088. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 5088, House Bill 5088. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5088. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine is locked. Mr. Clerk, would you kindly announce the tally?

CLERK:

House Bill 5088:

Total number of voting	36
Total voting Yea	33
Total voting Nay	3
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

(Gavel) the Legislation is passed. Mr. Clerk?

CLERK:

Page 17, Calendar No. 425, Substitute for Senate Bill No. 6665, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON OWNERSHIP OR OCCUPANCY OF REAL PROPERTY BASED ON RACE AND ELIMINATION OF THE RACE DESIGNATION ON MARRIAGE LICENSES as Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 7946.

THE CHAIR:

And good evening Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you Madam President. This is another Bill that comes to us through the Judiciary Committee, another one of those strange occurrences where the House Ranking Member and myself found out as I was working on similar issues and came together in a form of this Bill. Madam President, what this Bill does is it takes the unlawful restrictive

covenants that we've discussed in different ways over a number of years and people have seen stories written about on television that don't allow for people of certain demographics to live and certain communities. Specifically here, we're talking about race. And it makes those void.

It also allows for people who find information about the property that they actually own to sign an affidavit, give it to the town clerk and for a note to be put into the land records. The Bill was Amended so that the condominiums and common interest communities where these types of things happen and apply, similar provisions could be made.

Finally, the Bill deals with the issue of race as a demographic piece of information on marriage license and removes race from the list of demographic information. Madam President, it's a really good Bill and I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Winfield. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, Please announce the vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6665 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, this is House Bill 6665 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6665 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators voted, the machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, when you're ready, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6665:

Total number of voting	36
Total voting Yea	36
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The Bill passes (Gavel). Mr. Clerk, would you announce the next item? Mr. Majority Leader, Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Mr. President. Nice to see you this afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Nice to see you as well.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Mr. President, if we can mark two more, three more items for our goal list, please.

THE CHAIR:

Certainly.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Mr. President. On Calendar Page 29, Calendar 551, House Bill 6517; like to mark that, yeah, like to mark that item go. Followed by Calendar Page 28, Calendar 546, House Bill 6559;

like to mark that item go. Followed by Calendar Page 26, Calendar 527, House Bill 6558; like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Mr. Majority Leader. These shall so be marked. Mr. Clerk, would you announce the next item?

CLERK:

Page 29, Calendar No. 551, Substitute for House Bill No. 6517, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO ANALYZE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS GOVERNING DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING, as Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9914.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Mr. Clerk. Would you care to remark?  
Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you Mr. President. I move adoption of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report, passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Slap. Would you care to remark further?

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Yes, thank you. This Bill comes to us unanimously from the House and implements the recommendations of the Task Force to look at how we can better serve our students in the State of Connecticut, who have dyslexia or some form of dyslexia. And I should say that that by some estimates is nearly 20% of

students in Connecticut. And I do want to thank our Majority Leader, Senator Duff for his leadership on this initiative and Senator Osten as well. I anticipate that, that both of them may want to add to the discussion about this very important Bill.

It does a number of things, it helps to identify screen, train, and offer support for not only children and students who are experiencing dyslexia, but as well teachers and parents. And for those who heard the public testimony in the Higher Education Committee, much of it was heartbreaking. And that's actually how some of the parents described their experience when they met with their teachers of their, of their children and learned that their children were suffering from dyslexia, were having a very difficult time reading, and oftentimes, it was years later than it needed to be. And we know that every year is precious in the development of a child and their education and their ability to read.

So this is going to make a fundamental difference in helping to identify problems earlier, and helping to give support to educators. And so, and one of the things I want to highlight before I turn over to my colleagues, and I think this is so significant, is its renaming the Office of Training Compliance, it's renaming at this Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities. And you know, by identifying and really highlighting the dyslexia and, and it lifts it up as an issue that, that deserves our attention and support for all of the children across Connecticut. This is a Bill that we need to pass this evening. So I do urge my colleagues to join me in voting favorably for it. Thank you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Slap. Would you care to remark?  
Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you Mr. President, and I'll be very, very quick. You know, reading is, is the birth of knowledge and it's where the basis where it all begins. And as the good Senator had just mentioned, the Public Hearing testimony was very, very moving from parents that had to go years in helping trying to identify the issue and the problem in, in seeking assistance with their children that had difficulty reading and being diagnosed with dyslexia and making sure they had the, the right staff to, to do that.

And I know we've been working on this topic for a number of years here in the General Assembly. And this Bill just moves it as that much further down the road, and I stand with Senator Slap and Members of the Higher Education and all those in the circle who have been stalwarts and advocates for the dyslexia community, and urge strong support. Thank you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Witkos. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much Mr. President, it's a pleasure to see you there tonight. I stand in strong support of this piece of Legislation, which is a combination of some six or seven years of work to bring it to this level. We have changed the IEP forum to recognize dyslexia. We have worked on evidence based instruction on dyslexia. And now we are finally coming to the point where we are holding the regulators to account on making sure that the work that we're doing on dyslexia is not only helping the children who have dyslexia are out, but we are also helping teachers to make sure that they can identify dyslexia and identify other reading issues.

Without that basic foundation, it not only impacts the ability to read, it also impacts the ability to

participate in math and science. And of course, how does one learn about the history of one's people if they can't read?

Many people know that I worked in the Department of Corrections for 21 years. And thus, two of the single most issues that young men and women came in that had not been previously diagnosed with problems were dyslexia and autism. It leads to such a great amount of angst for the young people who suffer from these conditions if their help is not given to them when they need it. And that's really, it's, it's a tragedy to see young people not get the help that they need.

This first came to my attention a, a number of years ago and I met a constituent up in Heber in Connecticut. And she and her, she said that you know, my oldest son went to schools in Hebron and everything was great. Now my youngest son is going and he is still 2, 3, 4 years behind in his education and no one is seeming to recognize what his problems are, and I can't get anybody to listen to me and I can't get any help. And she developed into the most wonderful advocate that I've ever met in my life working on issues. She developed a system across the state that brought parents together and said that whose children all had dyslexia that were not receiving the proper care in the educational system that we have.

That is someone that you know is really working for children broadly. She pulled, ultimately pulled her son out of school in Connecticut and went to a private school where she had the wherewithal to do that. But she has never gave up on making sure that Connecticut addressed this issues revolving around dyslexia. She could have easily walked away, but she did not walk away. She said, "I'm going to see this through so that other children will not suffer like my son did." Well most recently, she sent a picture of her son graduating from high school and on his way to college. That's a wonderful thing to

see. And I can't thank Allison Querion enough for her advocacy in this issue.

It is not often that you see somebody who sees injustice that will stand up, work through it, face the problem straight on, come up with a resolution to the problem and then fight for the resolution for every single person who suffers from dyslexia. And I think that it's about time we give her a lot of credit for sticking to it, because right now she is not even a resident of Connecticut and could have walked away, but she did not. I, I think that that's the kind of person I keep encouraging her, no matter where you live, please run for office, because you are somebody who knows what it's all about, you understand the systems, and it's perfectly correct for you to take credit for what you have done for children with dyslexia so that those families who do not have the ability that she did, to gather the data, look and find evidence based programming, fight for it over and over and over.

This is what I believe that final piece, that final piece this, this office, which will hold schools accountable to make sure teachers are trained correctly, provide them with the resources that they need, make sure the parents understand what's going on with their children. And most importantly, absolutely most importantly, make sure that every child is given an opportunity to be successful. And the way they're successful is to get a good education that will show them the ability that they have, and most children can fly to the skies if we teach them correctly. And this is one moment where you can fly to the sky. And I want to thank Allison Querion for making sure we didn't let this go. Thank you very much Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Osten. Would you care to remark? Which you care to remark? If not, the vote will be.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Mr. President?

THE CHAIR:

Sorry, Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes, I just like to make a couple of comments. First of all, I want to thank Senator for bringing this Bill out. This isn't something that you have and that goes away. Dyslexia is a, a lifelong issue. I know that because I'm one of those that's dealt with it since I was four or five years old. My 3s look like Es, my Es look like 3s. If I'm tired, I still do that today. You see things differently, you write things differently, and it's not, it's just something in the back of your mind that drives.

But as a young kid growing up with it, I pity any child that has to go through this, because there is nothing worse than kids making funnier when you're young kids and when you see them. When you look at a sentence and you look what you wrote, you can't figure out why am I doing this? I know how to spell the word, but it's writing it.

We have known dyslexia for decades and have done nothing about it. Thousands of people probably have been victims of this. I hope to goodness that we find a way to deal with this because it is tough for a child and it's tough when you get older, when you're still doing those same things, there is just no magic lantern that makes it go away. This is a problem and I'm glad we're addressing it. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Cassano. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you Mr. President. I rise also in strong support of, of this Bill. This has been, as Senator Osten said a long time coming and I'd like to really compliment good Senator Osten for her diligence and hard work and effort in this behalf as well as the leadership of the Higher Education Committee. And I just really think that this is one of those great Bills that kind of goes unnoticed, but it is going to have a huge effect on a lot of people. And I thank everybody for putting this forward, and I certainly urge strong support. Thank you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Formica. Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark? If not, the machine will reopen. Mr. Clerk, would you announce dependency of a 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 House Bill 6517 as Amended by House Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Schedule "A" of House Bill 6517. This House Bill 6517 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6517 as Amended. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Members voted? Have all Members voted? If all Members have voted, the machine will be locked and Mr. Clerk, when you're ready, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6517:

Total number of voting	36
Total voting Yea	36
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Mr. Clerk, the item passes (Gavel). Mr. Clerk, if you call the next item?

CLERK:

Page 28, Calendar No. 546, Substitute for House Bill No. 6559, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD as Amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 8543.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Mr. Clerk. Senator McCrory.

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Good evening Mr. President. How're you doing this evening?

THE CHAIR:

I am well.

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

And I'm usually not saying Mr. Dean went up there, but it's good to see you up there today young man. Mr. President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorite Report and passage of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator McCrory. The question is on acceptance and passage. Would you care to remark?

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Absolutely. Mr. President, this is one that we always sees aircraft carrier bills is such a big aircraft here we probably we have to move, we probably going to do them back to back. 6559 has a number of sections, I'll briefly go through them. You know, this is all we see, so you know, everyone loves the kids, so we got to make sure we take care of them.

Section 1 talks about goals for school readiness programs, expands the list of goals with network of schools, readiness programs to include ethnic and social equity diversity of children, families, and staff.

Section 2 entails eligibility for school readiness, financial assistance and change in assistance program. Section 3 speaks to local school readiness council members. It requires that parents and guardians of program, eligible children comprise at least 25% of the local school ratings council. It also allows local councils to compensate parents and guardians with available appropriations to attend these meetings. It also requires that council be expanded to include representation from state finance, childcare providers, or workforce job training, community organization and or a local business.

Section 4 speaks to change the name of the [inaudible] family network to the Connecticut home visiting systems and modifying the program scope. Section 5 speaks to childcare facility development, expands eligibility for state contracts for grants and aid to development and childcare facilities. Section 6 speaks to childcare service monitors. Section 7a speaks to an employee's background checks, it expands the types of employees who may

undergo pre-employment comprehensive background checks to include positions involving unsupervised children.

Section 9, Section 9 is the Amendment and I'll get to that in a second, is strike Section 9 and placed it with the State, the State National Sex Offender database. Section 10 speaks to finger print waivers for background checks. It authorize to OEC to grant a waiver for the requirement, that the requirement to submit fingerprints as part of a childcare employment background check for those who cannot satisfy the requirement due to medical conditions. Section 11 broadens the scope of home visiting systems.

Sections 15 talks about our birth to three program and teaching permits. And section 16, the final section, it speaks to the youth camp operating without license. It creates hearing process for youth camps, the OECs operating without a license. It permits the OEC Commission to send a notice detailing that alleged violations by certified mail or by personal carrier.

Mr. President, the, the Clerk. I'm sorry. The Clerk is in the possession on Amendment LCO, give me a second, 8543 and I will ask the Clerk to please call the Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, would you please call Amendment? Senator McCrory?

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Yes, I'm sorry about that Mr. President. Actually, this passed in the House and we do not have Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McCrory, just, just to make sure that we do this correctly, could you restate your original call to pass in concurrence with the House?

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Okay. I forgot, I'm sorry. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much Senator McCrory. Would you care to remark further?

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Would you care to remark further?  
Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good evening Mr. President. Good to see you up there tonight.

THE CHAIR:

Good to see you as well.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Thank you sir. And I rise in support of the, the Bill before us tonight. As my, my esteemed good Chair of the Education Committee went through, this is a pretty comprehensive Bill. It makes some, some important changes to the operation of the Office of Early Childhood, allowing us to provide some clarification to the services and expansion of services that the OEC provides to children across

the state and in their care. So I urge passage of the Bill. Thank you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Berthel. Would you care to remark? Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you Mr. President. I, I have some questions for the proponent of the Bill, if I could?

THE CHAIR:

Senator McCrory, prepare yourself. Senator Berthel, I'm sorry, Senator Champagne, proceed.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you and through you Mr. President, I have a question on line 510. I'll give you a second. Thank you Mr. President, again through you, so, the, on 510, it removes the Chief Elected Official as the, to designate the Chairperson of the School Readiness Council. And I'm just trying to figure out why that change was made, were there some sort of problems or something?

THE CHAIR:

Senator McCrory.

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Through you Mr. President, I believe that the change was made because they want us to want to have more, everyday direct contact with the early childhood programs. Through you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator McCrory. Senator Champagne.

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SENATOR SLAP:

-- that is going on in college campuses all across this country, of course, but also here in Connecticut. And that is one key part of this Bill, and it is addressing campus mental health by creating coalitions. There's evaluation of the effectiveness of higher education, institution mental health services and programs. There's going to be a grant writer for mental health funding with the Board of Regents.

That's another very positive things in the Bill as well. There's going to be a study about a part-time -- for part-time Connecticut state system of higher education employees and retirees about benefits. So that's going to come back to us in the Higher Education Committee. We'll be able to do our due diligence on that piece.

There's also looking at a college credit for military training and prison education program office task force. So those are some of the things the Bill does. Also, a prohibition on the charge in graduation fees of public higher education institutions that primarily impacts just Charter Oak State College.

And then the last thing, as the Open Educational Resource Council reporting it adjust the deadline on that. But as I mentioned, the one thing that I want to delve into here a little bit more is an issue of fairness here on our college campuses for our student athletes. And this is -- you hear the acronym, and a lot of times I think people aren't really sure exactly always what that means. It's NIL, and its name, image, and likeness. And essentially it will allow our student athletes to enjoy the benefits of their name, image, and likeness.

And this was an issue that was originally kind of brought to the forefront decades ago by a UCLA basketball player who thought it was entirely unfair that the NCAA will be the only one to be able to benefit from his name, image, and likeness.

And the rules on college campuses, I'm not sure if everybody kind of understands how restrictive they are right now. So you can have a student athlete and, you know, a lot of -- oftentimes people will think of, well, you have the star of the basketball team or the quarterback of the football team, and they're missing out on being able to endorse a product, let's say. And right now they're not allowed to do that. They would lose their scholarship if they do that.

But not only can they not do that. Let's say the star point guard on the basketball team also happens to be a great guitar player, and that person wants to let's say put on a concert, make some money, right, in the off-season. Can't do that, would also lose their scholarship. They are treated, the student athlete, different than any other student on campus.

I have a daughter who's a pretty darn good cellist, and who knows, she may go to UConn and be a cellist and be in their Symphony. And if that's the case, she would be able to produce a record and be able to make money on that, right. Which would make sense. We think that people are entitled to benefit from their skills and from their name, image, and likeness. But our student athletes cannot do that.

Sometimes people kind of retort and say well, but they're on scholarship. The reality though, and actually UConn does a lot better than the national average, but many student athletes in other parts of the country do not finish, do not get their degrees, in part because of the strain that's put on them.

In addition, very, very few go on to play professionally. So this is really an issue of fairness and allowing them to benefit again from their name, image, and likeness. And it should be said -- I just want to touch on the equity issue here for a moment as well. Predominantly student athletes, especially in some of the big sports, are blind to minority populations, so they are of color and they are making oftentimes an incredible amount of money for the NCAA, billions of dollars, and they are really not able to enjoy the benefits as they should, I would argue.

And it's not just me arguing this, it happens to be UConn, and I congratulate them by the way for -- and really am so pleased that they began the conversation with some of us in the Legislature a couple years ago, and we had a Bill that did get a public hearing last year about this very issue. And I really commend them for coming to the table and being creative and trying to think about how we could tackle this.

At the same time, as I said, it's not just me, it's not just UConn, it's not just us here in Connecticut. There are 40 states across the country that are looking at this issue right now, 16 of which have already passed laws, and that brings me to a critical part of the argument that some might be asking, why now? They say, well, this kind of came out of nowhere. So why now? Well, here is the why now. In two weeks the NCAA is poised to meet and have their annual conference. And we been waiting, the whole country actually has been waiting for the NCAA to take action on name, image, and likeness. And they have punted, pun intended. Not only have they done that but Congress is also not taking action. We know that our good Senator Murphy has been a champion at the national level on this issue, but again, we're waiting for the NCAA, we're waiting for Congress. We have no idea if they're going to act, but we do know again, that the NCAA is meeting in just a couple weeks.

And one really possibly -- one real possibility is that the NCAA is going to say, "You know what? To the states that have already enacted laws," again 16, with dozens more poised to go into place here, "we will defer to you. If you have a law on the books, then go for it. You have name, image, and likeness."

So here's the problem if they do that in two weeks. What happens tomorrow at midnight? The Connecticut General Assembly goes Sine Die and we close up shop. At least I hope so. So it's possible if we don't pass this, that the NCAA takes action in two weeks and we are left with nothing for our student athletes. That would not be fair to our student athletes, that would also not be very good for our competitive balance.

We already have seen that there are schools in the Big East where UConn, and this is not just about UConn but where UConn participates that already passed name, image, and likeness Bill. So you can imagine the challenge that in this case UConn would have recruiting, or not only recruiting but even retaining their current student athletes.

So that's one scenario that the NCAA may take action and defer to existing state laws. So that's one reason we need to act. It's also possible then that the NCAA could adopt its own name, image, and likeness policy. And this language gives our schools the flexibility to then align their policies with the NCAA because if you look at it, they have until September of this year, so they'll wait, see what the NCAA does and then align their policies with the NCAA. If in fact they take action.

The third option, and I just want to put all the cards on the table here. The third option is that the NCAA does nothing on this issue. So what happens then? Then we are still part of a growing coalition of states that have put a stake in the

ground for our student athletes, and for fairness and for equity and we are saying we're going to be pushing the NCAA and say we're taking a stand and we believe that your policies need to change.

And I'll be very frank. The NCAA would -- if they do nothing, they're an untenable position, but if -- for those people who are concerned about that. I want to allay some of those fears because we would be aligned with the Crimson Tide of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi. These are states that take their sports pretty darn seriously, so I think we're in pretty good company. And I am so pleased that we're going to be able to do this and create a fairer and more balanced playing field for our student athletes.

And the last thing I want to add about this is that I'm so grateful that I live in a state where our women athletes, our female student athletes also have a real shot at being able to benefit from their name, image, and likeness. And I remember reading a quote from Geno Auriemma just recently, of course, our great legendary basketball coach at UConn. I'm talking about what a unique state Connecticut is in that regard. And unfortunately, women do not have in professional sports the earning power that men do. Not always, but in many circumstances, but in Connecticut they really would have some great opportunities potentially to benefit from that.

So when we think about fairness that's something that I don't think we can forget about. That this is another way that we're going to really help our student athletes and in particular, our great females student athletes here in the State of Connecticut.

For those reasons then, I'd urge my colleagues to join me and to support this very important Bill. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I also rise in support of the Bill before us. And I want to commend the good work of our friends down on the House, Representative Elliott, and Representatives Hayes for sending the Bill up to us in such short order that -- and I say in such short order because it's a combination of several Bills that make this one nice fine product.

And the product does a quite a few things that I think are very interesting and very supportive to our veterans. You know, we often talk about workforce development and making sure that we have on the op -- I guess, in reverse order, that you have the skills and education to do the work but here we're saying you've had the skills and you've done the work, now let's see what fits in the education side of it. And I think that's so important that our veterans that go through all of their military training, perform the jobs that they do, and then come back and they want to further their official education, that they're able to do that. And our universities and our higher education institutions will look to see how that real work will fit into -- and give them credit for the work they've done.

This Bill does a lot for our mental health awareness for our students. And we -- that was a subject matter of a lot of Bills in the Higher Education Committee this particular year. Unfortunately, because kids are dealing with a lot and, you know, in light of the pandemic and I guess isolation, social isolation, we make sure that the universities are prepared to deal with the plethora of items and issues that our kids are dealing with by setting up accounts and make sure that they're reevaluating the

services they provide, hiring a grant writer to apply for grants to make sure that training can be done to all the different councils in all the different universities.

I know Senator Slap went over a lot of this but I just want to highlight a couple more things. One of the reports that will be coming back to us, which I look forward to reading next January is a report that looks at offering benefits to part-time educators in our system. I was really concerned. I felt bad for what was termed to be highway professors this particular year in Higher Ed during the public hearings, where and they had to go work at multiple universities in order to gain the number of credits that they had because maybe they couldn't teach more than one class there so they would teach one class on a particular day or set of days in one university and drive halfway across the state to teach another class a similar topic. So I'm looking forward to getting that information back, seeing if there's something that we can do over there. I think that will provide us with the information that we need.

And I'm not going to get into the NIL, which Senator Slap went over in depth, other than to say that, you know, I think with the passage of this Bill, it's signature by Governor Lamont, that I think we may actually retain our students a little bit longer in our universities that they -- with the ability to make some money because of the outstanding athleticism that they do and the work that they -- the GPA they must maintain to stay in their schools. Maybe the lure of making a few thousand dollars by going into a professional sports may be delayed in their mind because they can make it up most certainly doing the work they do currently at the school but being compensated for that.

And with that, Madam President, I urge the Chamber's adoption of the Bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Will you remark further on the Legislation before the Chamber? Will you remark further? If not, I will -- Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you, Madam President. If there is no objection, I would recommend that we put this on the Consent Calendar. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

So I am witnessing an objection, yes?

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

An objection, yes. Thank you. I am just not sure that we can do that. I can check if you can hold a minute but I -- you know, okay.

THE CHAIR:

Okay, so we will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, would you please call the roll call?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6402 as Amended by House "A". Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6402 as Amended by House "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6402 as Amended by House "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? We will lock the machine. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6402 as Amended by House "A":

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

And the Legislation is adopted -- is passed.

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. If we can go back to the previously marked item that was marked PT, Calendar page 26, Calendar 526, Senate Bill 1111.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 26, Calendar 526, substitute for Senate Bill No. 1111, AN ACT AMENDING A CONVEYANCE OF A PARCEL OF STATE LAND IN THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I move for 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 FLEXER (29TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the Bill before us, like a few of the other Bills we debated this evening have to do with a parcel of state land in the town of Fairfield. The Legislation before us represents the good work of the leaders of the town of Fairfield, the legislative delegation from Fairfield who I'm sure we'll hear from in a moment, and the department of transportation.

Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of an Amendment. LCO No. 10582. I'd ask that the Clerk please call the Amendment and I be given leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, if you could please call LCO 10582.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10582 Senate Schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption, will you remark?

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the Bill before us today as I -- or excuse me, the

Amendment before us is a change that's been worked out by all those who've been working on this Legislation, and it shrinks the parcel of state land that is going to be conveyed. The original Legislation identified several parcels of state land and this Amendment makes it -- Just a moment.

Madam President, I'd like to withdraw this Amendment, please.

THE CHAIR:

And we will withdraw the Amendment. Would you like to suggest a different LCO?

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Yes, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Excellent. What's the number?

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Madam President, I would appreciate it very much if the Clerk would instead call LCO NO. 10645.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, if you could please call LCO 10645.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10645, Senate Schedule "B".

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark on LCO 10645?

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the Amendment before us is identical to what I was just describing, Madam President. Madam President, it does make a change in the size of the parcel that's being considered here, but it is the identical parcel that was considered originally in the Committee in our public hearing process. It is a parcel that was considered by the Committee and given a joint Favorable Report from the Committee, and I'm hopeful that my colleagues will support this Amendment and the underlying Legislation. I move adoption of the Amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption of the Amendment before the Chamber. Will you remark? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this Amendment. I want to thank the good Chairwoman of the GAE Committee as well as the Ranking Member and also the House Chair, as well as the House Ranking.

This Bill did indeed have a public hearing, and through the good work of all the collaborators, Representative Devlin, Representative McCarthy Vahey and Representative Leeper, along with our staff attorneys we were able to facilitate and get the correct conveyance in this. And I again want to thank the efforts of the Chair for her help through this whole process. I urge support. Thank you, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. 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, 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 Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if there is no objection, I would move that we place this Bill on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

And seeing no objection. We will move this item to the Consent Calendar. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Good evening, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, is there business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Good evening. The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda item No. 1, dated Tuesday, June 8th, 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move all items on -- all item on Senate Agenda No. 1, dated Tuesday, June 8th, 2021, to be act upon as indicating and that the agenda be incorporated by reference in the Senate Journal, Senate Transcript.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

Senate Agenda  
No. 1  
REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, June 08, 2021

BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE:

EMERGENCY CERTIFICATION -

HB NO. 6687 AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE  
FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITHOUT HEALTH CARE  
COVERAGE.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would ask is as -- to mark go. And the next item of business, House Bill -- Emergency Certified House Bill 6687 from Agenda 1. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda No. 1, House Bill No. 6687, AN ACT  
CONCERNING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN AND  
ADULTS WITHOUT HEALTH CARE COVERAGE.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President,  
it's good to see you and, Madam President, I move  
passage of the emergency certified Bill in  
concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Madam President,  
as you know, we are in the midst of a global  
pandemic. And in that healthcare crisis, we have a  
health coverage crisis. At the beginning of this  
year and over last summer, we heard many Members of  
this Chamber declare that health equity would be our  
top priority. In fact, just a few weeks ago we  
passed Legislation Senate Bill 1 that declared that  
racism is a public health crisis. This Legislature  
has time and time again said that we will do  
something big this year on the issue of health  
equity.

This Legislation, Madam President, will do that. It  
will take a decided step to help close the coverage  
gap. Now I want to be clear, this is not the only

thing we are doing right now to help people in Connecticut afford the cost of healthcare. Earlier this spring President Biden signed into law the American Recovery Plan, which dramatically expands support for middle-class families and low-income families across the state. Striking the 400% cliff in the Affordable Care Act, capping costs at eight-and-a-half percent of income, providing real relief to families all across this state. And this is not related to the Bill directly, but if you haven't gone and looked at the price of Access Health plans since May 1st, go take a look because the price has come down as real relief is going out to working-class and middle-class families all across our state.

Separately, a budget that we're going to be hopefully discussing later will take steps towards expanding access to HUSKY. Making sure that low-income residents of our state who are covered up, who could potentially be covered by HUSKY, have access to increased support. We're raising the threshold, helping those too rich to qualify for Medicaid but too poor to afford a private health insurance plan the ability to get the coverage that they need.

This Bill, however, Madam President, goes for a different population. The folks who are really at the margins of our society. We're talking about immigrant mothers, we're talking about newborn children, we're talking about people in the first year of postpartum, we're talking about young children through the age of eight. Ensuring that every child in Connecticut, every child born in Connecticut has access to basic healthcare because we are the richest state and the richest country on earth, and that is the right and decent thing to do. And if there is one thing, Madam President, that we have learned during the pandemic is that the health care available to our neighbors affects the healthcare of our families because if they cannot go

to a doctor, Madam President, when they are sick that jeopardizes us all.

So with that, Madam President, I want to speak through the Sections of this Bill. This Bill does a few things. First of all, it expands HUSKY eligibility. So we are allowing children up to age -- through age eight to qualify for HUSKY on the same conditions as any other child regardless of how they got here, of what their circumstances are, of what their status is.

Second we're going to say that we are no longer turning away federal funding by denying prenatal care to women in this state. We will allow -- make sure that all women in this state have access to prenatal care. Something that states very different from Connecticut, states like Louisiana and Arkansas and Texas and Oklahoma long ago decided to do. We, Madam President, are catching up with them and saying that prenatal care is not just the right thing to do but is the fiscally responsible thing to do because we all pay if a child born in this state is denied access to prenatal care.

Third we're building on a proposal on an element of the American Recovery Plan, which provides up to one year of postnatal care to children born in the state -- to mothers after giving birth. And we are ensuring that that same prenatal care extends postnatal for one year because there's an enormous amount of evidence that says that that care is so critically important. And then we're directing, Madam President, we're directing the office of Health Strategy to come up with a plan to make sure that we're not just leaving kids when they're eight but we're figuring out ways to expand coverage up to 200% of poverty and that we're covering kids up to 18.

We are an anomaly right now in Connecticut. Surrounding us we have New York and Massachusetts, both of which already do this. We have an

opportunity and an obligation to take care of those around us. And I will say again, this is not the only thing we are doing this year on healthcare. This is one of a number of things but it is an important thing.

I will say that this is important but I'm also cognizant of the fact that we're all State Senators. We're in a wood paneled Chamber, we are in the State Capitol, we are all beneficiaries of privilege. And so understanding the difference that makes, the -- this Bill will make to families across the state may be difficult for us. I don't know every story, none of us know every story, but I do know one story and that's my family story because, Madam President, a couple generations ago a young girl crossed the border illegally. Her parents paid human traffickers to carry her across a border illegally. And that's my grandmother, my grandmother Sonia, who is still alive at the age of 91.

Each story is different, each person is different, but I know this, that children, whatever you think about immigration policy or whatever you think about global events, children, Madam President, deserve access to healthcare. This Bill doesn't do everything I would like. This Bill is a starting point perhaps for a future discussion about what more we can do but, Madam President, this Bill will help people. And this will -- Bill will help children and this Bill will help pregnant moms, and it's the right thing to do and it's the fiscally responsible thing to do and, Madam President, I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The -- it's still early isn't it?

THE CHAIR:

It's in the eyes of the beholder.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you. Through you, and I greatly appreciate the Chair of Insurance introduction and his sharing of a very powerful and poignant story about his family, and God bless your grandmother for her courage and her aspiration to come to this country and pursue the American dream. This is an important debate of consideration but also in regards to the role that we have in state government, the responsibilities that we have under the Constitution of this country and of this state that we as US citizens and Connecticut residents have the incredible honor and privilege and the responsibility set forth in being an American.

And through you, this has been an emergency certification. So through you, Madam President, if I could. What was the rationale for such an emergency certification to override potentially hundreds of other important Bills that have gone through a public Committee process and deliverance and engagement from many shareholders? What was the rationale and the justification for this Bill to now be emergency certified ahead of so many other Bills that we have deliberated through this legislative process? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I want to be very clear. Every part of this Bill,

every substantive part of this Bill that I can see had a public hearing, was considered by the Committee. It reflects the combination of Senate Bill 910, Senate Bill 911, and Senate Bill 956.

Typically, at this time of the year, as part of the budget process, you do see emergency certification as we saw with the budget as a whole. This is a budget Bill but because of the strong interest in this particular measure as a standalone item, it was emergency certified separate from the budget but I don't want anybody to get the impression, Madam President, that this did not go through the normal Committee process because it absolutely did.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Lesser. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I appreciate that point of clarification and I did do my best to try to note the various Bills that the good Chair referenced but my question is, why the emergency certification? Why did it merit - and it's an important debate - jumping ahead of so many other Bills that are sitting along the pipeline to give a precedence over? Look, every single Bill we're deliberating and that are waiting to be called and raised in the general assembly in the closing hours literally as I would say, we are almost 27 hours away from Sine Die. So why this Bill through emergency certification versus the countless others that we could deliberate and raise as an emergency certification if we're making these kind of decisions? I just want to understand what the justification was for this Bill. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I think the idea that a child born in Connecticut need -- being denied health care is second -- let me rephrase that. I cannot think of something more important than ensuring that newborn children have access to healthcare. The idea -- Madam President, I have a four month old son, as you know. The idea that there are four-month-old kids in Connecticut that don't have the ability to get medical care is an absurdity, and I think this Bill addresses both a -- as I mentioned, a fiscal and a moral problem, and I think that is important. If the Ranking Member of the Insurance Committee is concerned about other Bills passing, and I of course, we want to move this along expeditiously. I hope this is a brief debate and we can proceed to other important issues because this is certainly not the only thing before the Legislature but it is a very important thing.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Well, I very much appreciate the good Chairs offer but again, this is quickly thrust upon us and I do have many questions. First of which beginning with the fact from an insurance related basis, and I can only presume that is why the good Chair is raising this Bill. It is applicable only to the HUSKY, would that be correct? Not a fully insured program or self-insure program that may exist throughout the state? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, and are there parameters for these requirements under HUSKY that is different than any other individuals under the HUSKY program? Could the very good Chair site an example for me instead of just a yes or no answer? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, to the best of my knowledge, the Bill attempts to replicate the HUSKY program and eligibility for folks covered by the various sections of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I do want to follow up because he's absolutely right. We would never want any child to be denied service. So as the good Chair very powerfully said, and I agree, but has he known of any example of an undocumented four-year-old that has been denied service, healthcare service in the State of Connecticut? Because if he does, I think that would add a very powerful supplement to this discussion and the rationale why.

Through you, Madam President, if there are any examples what the good Chair just articulated and rightfully so, was there any child that he knows of, any incidents of an individual that have been denied care in the State of Connecticut? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, in fact there are and I would refer the Senator to the testimony received by the Human Services Committee on Senate Bill 956 this year. I would also say that the Insurance Committee has held hearings in the past on proposals to allow undocumented individuals in the state to purchase health insurance, and we also heard a number of personal stories there. And so their testimony speaks for itself, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to put my words in lieu of theirs but we heard many, many powerful stories.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Through you, Madam President. And I am appreciative of the examples at Chair, and indeed after this public hearing -- after our deliberations, I will go read those testimonies, but again, is the good Chair differentiating between acquisition of health insurance or receipt of care? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Madam President, I think those two things are hard to disentangle in a country where care is often dependent on one's ability to pay. And certainly, access to specialists in particular is something that is only available in most cases if one has insurance, whether it's a private insurance or in this case Medicaid, or as we call it in Connecticut the HUSKY program.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Through you, Madam President. And I appreciate the example that was shared by the Chair and I would also offer examples that I have seen where hospitals and care facilities have indeed provided care as well for those without insurance, those that are undocumented. So just as a good Chair cited the terrible, horrible stories, I can also share the fact that in the State of Connecticut our hospitals and our healthcare facilities have taken on patients that are undocumented, that do not have insurance. So I would want to make an acknowledgment of their tremendous and generous sacrifices to acknowledge people and not just simply single out the bad actors through this, but I will move on.

So in this it talks about a fiscal and the Amendment that is being proffered and adopted in the House. Could the good Chair share and explain for legislative intent in this circle what the House Amendment "A" did in changing as a strike-all Amendment to the original Bill? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. The strike-all Amendment does a couple of things. It moves out the effective date of the provisions relating to care for undocumented children. And that gets put out, and so as a result, leads to a savings in the state budget. Separately, it allows for the state to apply for a 1332 waiver to use our current access healthcare infrastructure to facilitate intake, and allows for the state to contract with another state to do that if the 1332 does not work. And also, rephrases the reporting requirements in Section 5. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, and that was exactly the interest that I had as I read through quickly on such a short time span, it's really not the best way to govern but we'll make do with what we can having such a short time to read such an important Bill. But the good Chair cites something that is quite interesting. The utilization of the 1332 exchange. The ability to use the Medicaid funding that's allocated that we're using in this formula to be able to provide care, to be able to reduce and manage cost of healthcare insurance coverage and delivery.

My goodness, I remember through our many debates that the Senate Republicans have pre-offered the idea of using 1332 exchanges and reinsurance proposals to be able to reduce costs and be able to provide accessible, affordable healthcare insurance cost to the general public. So I really want to thank the good Chair for acknowledging the effectiveness of using 1332 exchanges under the Medicare allocation.

So I want to thank the good Chair for pointing that out in our deliberations but also from a fiscal note, through you, Madam President, I'm looking at Sections 1 and 3 in regards to the allocation. I believe what I read in the statute is, "within available appropriations," but nevertheless from what my observations and listening into the House deliberations, that this has already been budgeted into our prorated budget proposal. Would that, through you, Madam President, be correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President. It's my understanding that it's in the proposed budget that will be considered by this body. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, so it is not within appropriate -- Appropriations, it's already been appropriated. So it is money that is allocated. It is not just simply wishful thinking.

For so many of our valuable nonprofits and entities that are waiting for money but haven't been allocated, but we indeed in a statement have said that we're going to commit money to this program. With that being said, could the good Chair explain to us what the progressive year of allocation is for these? I'm looking at numbers such as 700,000 for fiscal year 23, and 4.1 million in fiscal year 24 to support the cost of this medical assistance program. Through you, Madam President, would that be correct?

Would that be the fiscal note of a proposal under emergency certification for undocumented children? Which are equally critical in all of our eyes. So we've allocated the money already before this plan is even been approved. Would that be correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Actually, I would say that the money was approved for the Bill that before the House adopted the Amendment. So there is actually more money available than we actually need that could free up funding that could be useful as we work to address issues as they come up, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Through you, Madam President, that's really heartwarming to hear that we have access money that we could use in our budget to be able to allocate and provide critical services.

You know, I just listened to Representative Fiorello talk about the fact that in Danbury we have a charter school of American students, U.S. citizens that are begging for a million dollars to be able to have an opportunity to get an education, but our access allocations didn't seem to fit to go to them but instead we've allocated again \$700,000 dollars, and 4.1 million because we had excess funds. Again, it's all about a perspective of priorities.

But that being said if I may, from a fiscal note we look to the continuation of this program. I didn't really get a better understanding of what the continuation of the program, but through you, the proponent of this offer of the Bill is -- in this continuation, do you see a sunset to this or do you see this a continual obligation and policy moving forward beyond the fiscal year that's noted in the fiscal note? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President. I guess a question to the questioning Senator if I may, are you asking about Sections 1 and 3, or about the whole Bill?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

That's a very good question to the question to the question. Yes, I am asking the -- on the original allocation of the years set forth in this emergency certification. Through you are there intent to establish this as a policy moving forward or is this a two-year sunset based upon the fiscal allocation that's been afforded? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, thank you for that clarification to the good Senator. No, the Bill is not -- does not contain a sunset provision. As you

know, we are prohibited from binding future legislatures. And so any budgetary matters are subject to annual appropriations but there is no specific sunset in here, other than those subject to any future budgets by the Appropriations Committee and the future Legislature.

I will note that Section 5 in this Bill studies the expansion of this beyond eight-year-olds to cover all children, which is something that I personally hope we're able to do but I know that that subject as well to Appropriations and other questions as well.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you. And I appreciate the vision that the good Chair articulated. I'd be very curious to see the fiscal note on that as well. But moving on beyond the children under the age of nine that is under Section 1 and 3. There is a consideration in Section 2 related to postpartum care for women. Could the very good Chair explain what the purpose of that program, which I think is laudable, but also the parameter in which that program covers on postpartum care for women? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Madam President, that is intended to mirror a provision of the American Rescue Plan, which provides a one year postpartum coverage, along the terms of the existing CHIP program to women. There are all sorts of

health benefits and reasons why that's the case. Under current law, a woman could lose eligibility 60 days after the birth of a child, and there are some major policy problems that the Congress and the President saw with that. And so that's why they included that within the America Rescue Plan.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Through you, Madam President. I actually have two questions on that follow-up. One, it is appropriated under the ARPA fund. The ARPA runs out in two years, through you, Madam President, are these funds that are within the budget specifically from the ARPA allocations within the budget, and is -- and how would you distinguish that? Because as the good Chair just cited, that the postpartum care for women is a purpose of the American Rescue Plan. So is it documented and allocated specifically in the appropriated budget that we not yet seen. And is there distinguishing, are we using of their money to fund this program when the good Chair articulated that this program's focus was using funds from ARPA?

I just want a point of clarification that we're -- and I know it's difficult because we're talking about a budget we haven't seen. But what the good Chair just cited is this program of postpartum care for women is derived from ARPA funding. Will we see that specifically earmarked in our budget from the ARPA funds, and if not, how do we justify what was just mentioned by the Chair? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

My understanding, Madam President, is that the funding for this Bill is contained in the budget of the State of Connecticut. I will just clarify that although the funding for Connecticut may be for two years, there are various provisions of ARPA that have different time limits. The postpartum care, I believe, is for five years, so that's the current sunset date on that provision of the federal funding there.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, and I'm not sure that answered my question from a standpoint, are we using specific ARPA funds? But maybe we don't know yet because the budget has not been allocated, but my hope is, has the good Chair cited that this program is intended in using ARPA fund, that I certainly will hope that when we see the budget allocation that it will be earmarked from that and that we are not pulling funds from other programs equally important and needed throughout our state.

Another aspect of this Bill under Section 4 is for the unborn child option for prenatal care. Again another critical and important part of quality, preventive, healthcare for unborn babies and their mothers. Through you, Madam President, does this require allocation, and how is this program implemented? And through the good Chair if he could explain that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you. That is included under Section 4 of the Bill. The Children's Health Insurance program contains a program to allow all women in the state, who are income eligible to qualify for a prenatal care. Connecticut currently doesn't do that, and that means we are losing federal matching funds on the table. We are following well behind states that have not typically been at the forefront of expanding coverage like the ones I mentioned before Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. As well as those other states that are more frequently seen as peers.

Just ensuring that prenatal care is covered -- is available to all women is something that the federal government has for a long time seen as a commonsense policy, and it's appropriate for Connecticut to participate in that aspect of the CHIP program.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I'm just asking a question that just kind of popped into my mind as the good Chair is explaining. We're talking about unborn child and prenatal care that's using this funding for undocumented individuals in our country but for the unborn baby that is born in the United States, that child is considered a U.S. citizen. Are there parameters that would then now eliminate that child and put that child as a U.S. citizen into a different pool of care and allocation? Because if this Bill through its specific intent was to provide health care to undocumented residents, what happens to a child that is cared under this program that was unborn but then born as a US citizen, would that child be kicked out of this program and put into an alternative US-based state-funded program?

I'm just trying to figure it out because every child that has the great gift and opportunity to be born in this country is an American. Are we looking at this program that's specific for one category, that seems everyone that is a proponent of this takes great pride in, what happens to that child that is born as an American citizen, would he or she qualify for the care that is so important and articulated in this Bill?

I'm just wondering out loud, and I would welcome the good Chair's expertise and insight on my question. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. The Senator is correct that all children born in Connecticut are citizens of the United States and State of Connecticut, and are therefore entitled to all of the privileges that are attached to that. As it pertains to Medicaid, that means that once labor begins, we are on the hook. We pay for -- if a family is income eligible we will pay for labor and delivery and then for care after that, but we will not pay currently for prenatal care.

And that as a result, Madam President, we have a huge fiscal hit because a -- one of the dumbest decisions that we could possibly make is to deny pregnant women and kids prenatal care. It is a fiscally wacky decision because one child born underweight could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. And the good Senator is correct, just because we deny kids and pregnant women health insurance does not mean we don't have to pay for the healthcare costs. It just means that gets passed on to our local hospitals.

Are -- some of our hospitals, Madam President, are really struggling right now in the pandemic. And those hospitals have to absorb the cost, they have to pass it on to all of us. The cost is enormous of denying kids and pregnant women access to prenatal care.

Madam President, this federal government is willing to pick up a giant chunk of the check -- tab, and that's why states across the country are doing this and that's why it is so hard to understand why Connecticut has not done that until tonight. But we have a chance, Madam President, to fix that problem and ensure that U.S. citizens born in Connecticut, who are American citizens who have the same rights as all of us, also have the prenatal care that they need for good and healthy outcomes. It's morally good but it is also fiscally essential, and that's what this will do.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I would even go further, that is morally essential that any child should be able -- and any mother-to-be is afforded and provided the care. And it's interesting, as I understand and as the good Chair kind of articulated, he did say that prenatal care is not guaranteed to mothers-to-be and child to be born in the United States as an American citizen. I believe I heard that. And I agree with him that that is absolutely unacceptable, but what I find interesting is that an undocumented, through this Bill, would have a greater privilege a greater opportunity of care that is not afforded to an American citizen, an American mother and American unborn child.

That seems to be an unfair and unequal treatment. If -- I find it interesting. We have found in this

Bill in the allocation of budgetary money that an undocumented mother-to-be will be afforded prenatal care that is not afforded, or what was cited by the Chair and I'm more than happy for him to correct, that there is ample and sufficient funding and coverage and care for every mother-to-be and every prenatal care of Americans afforded in our budgeting and in our prioritization, equal to what is articulated here. Through you, Madam President, I'd be very eager to hear that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, no, I think the gentlemen, Madam President, through you, has misunderstood my comments. There is no benefit in this Bill that is offered to any person that is not available to an American citizen. There is no extra benefit. There is the same benefit. We are not putting anybody on -- giving anybody some sort of special privilege.

We are just saying that if prenatal care is available to American mothers for children born in Connecticut, we should not be discriminating. We should not be asking a child-to-be, a fetus in this state to provide their papers when their mother needs to get prenatal care. That is not good policy. It is not fiscally responsible, and we are just simply providing one level playing field for everyone. And it is just this small category of people; pregnant women, kids up until age eight, and then one year of postpartum care.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, and I appreciate the good Chair's clarification. I just -- I just thought I heard him say that there are children that aren't afforded care and it was a tragic story. And I agree, that should never be but maybe I misheard but it seemed to me that there are American mothers-to-be and American prenatal unborn children that are not affordable the coverage that we are now articulating here in this Bill.

I hope I'm wrong but if I'm not, that would be a shame. That would be a travesty because the -- beyond what was cited here is a level playing field for all parties, which is a noble thought, it would be a horrible concept that of American mothers and American children were not given the same support and financial resources and care versus someone that is undocumented, and is not afforded the privilege and the responsibilities of being American.

I will be eager to hear other people's points of perspective. I will simply offer this. As a first generation immigrant, whose parents became naturalized citizens, who pursued the American dream, who did everything that was asked of them to become an American citizen, and taught me the important values liberties and ultimately the responsibility of citizenship. They gave me a privilege to be a sitting State Senator in this very elite circle. I do not take the privilege and the gift that I have in being an American citizen, as so many others.

And it's important for us to remember as we celebrated and remembered and honored our men and women on Memorial Day, those men and women that made the ultimate sacrifice and the sacrifice and loss of their family members to protect Americans, to protect who we stand for as a country, to protect the values and the principles and the ideal of being an American. That's what my parents did in making a sacrifice to be.

God bless all those individuals that have come to this country pursuing the American dream. And God bless that they may be the current state of being undocumented, that we do everything we can to give them a hand up and empower them to also pursue the American dream. But we don't give the same privilege to the English. We don't give the same privilege to Germans because they're not US citizens. We do not confer the right to vote to the English, to the Germans as much as we had shared similar values and culture and heritage. You know why? Because they are not U.S. American citizens.

These are privileges and resources, and in a limited world, we have to make decisions. And God bless if we were in such a world of largess in which we can provide the critical care that we're looking to provide every single child in this country, every single U.S. of A. citizen. Then I say absolutely, but in Connecticut alone we have failed them and we need to do better for them, but for us to now boldly say let's do it for others. Noble, but it defeats the purpose of those men and women who gave their lives in Memorial Day to protect the values and the principles of being a U.S. citizen.

These are great ideas, these are noble ideas, and I'm even glad that we've allocated money to take care of those important areas but my question to the proponents of this and people who have advocated for this, where is the money? Where is the prioritization for so many other American children, American mothers-to-be? If we can say with complete confidence that we have done everything we can for them, then God blessed, let's go forth with this. But we all know that there are people that fell through the cracks.

We all know that we can do better. But for us to do this when we've not taken care of those in need right now is putting the cart before the horse. It's doing a disservice, giving ourselves a pat in the back.

I'm eager to hear more about this but I got to tell you, I was always taught you're proud to be an American, you're proud to be a U.S. citizen and when you travel around the world, that United States passport means something. But I certainly wouldn't expect individuals with a different passport coming in this country to be afforded the same rights and privileges as an American.

So again, I'm eager to hear the rest of the debate, and I know there are proponents of this that pat themselves in the back and say this is an absolutely just and noble gesture. I agree, but I also find it difficult to ask them what would you say to American mothers-to-be and American children that might've fallen through the cracks? And if you solve that problem great but I don't think we have.

So I'm eager to hear the rest of the Chamber and thoughts and stories but it really is one that I am profoundly struggling with, is these are important things to do but have we done everything we can for Americans? For those friends and neighbors that have struggled, that can make use with \$700,000 dollars and \$4.1 million dollars for the next couple of years to take care of their needs. If we found that money for them, great but if we haven't, then perhaps we should reconsider. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang. Will you remark? Senator Slap will be followed by Senator Somers

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good evening to you. I have a few questions that I'll get to in just a moment for the proponent of the Bill. I am -- I have to say my jaw dropped at the suggestion that our veterans would somehow -- you know, that this

would be a disservice to them passing this Bill, and that it somehow, you know, violates the values that they fought for. That could not be further from the truth.

My grandfather helped to liberate Europe, and I could tell you if he was standing here right now, he would say that the values that this country are about is making sure that a baby has healthcare. That's what this country is about. This country is about the Statue of Liberty. This country is about empathy and sympathy and decency and mercy, and not flag-waving to separate between, you know, babies that are undocumented that don't have papers and babies that are American. That is not what our veterans fought for, not at all. Our veterans -- I know my grandfather and I know many, many veterans and say our country is about decency, and it's about taking care of babies regardless of their immigration status.

My criticisms of this Bill is it takes too long to do the right thing. And I know that politics is the art of the possible, and I give a lot of credit to Senator Lesser, to Senator -- to Representative Scanlon, to our Senate President and our Majority Leader for making this a priority and our Speaker of the House. So I have absolutely, I want to be very clear, zero criticisms to Senator Lesser here. I do want to ask the proponent through you, Madam President, a few questions but it was really, I think, just to highlight kind of some of the shortcomings of this Legislation. Again, only because it takes too long to offer basic health and healing to our children.

So through you, Madam President, to the proponent of the Bill. If this Bill -- when this Bill takes effect, how would this affect or impact the healthcare that would be available to a seven-year-old who would qualify for HUSKY? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President. First of all. I want to thank the Senator for his remarks and for his strong advocacy. I know the whole West Hartford delegation came out in support of a stronger version of this, and I want to thank them for their work in ensuring that this provision moved forward.

You know, a seven-year-old who is currently on HUSKY would not be affected but a seven-year-old under this provision, who is not currently eligible for HUSKY, would be permitted to be enrolled starting in January 2023.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH)

And through you, Madam President, substantively what would that mean for the access to healthcare that that seven-year-old would have? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Well, Madam President, as once receiving health insurance the child could go to a pediatrician, could get their vaccinations that are required to attend school. We just passed a Bill, as you know, requiring that students attending school in Connecticut be vaccinated. This will -- Bill would allow the child to go get that care. If the child gets sick they could go to a hospital and the hospital would be compensated. If they needed to see a specialist, there are certainly challenges

with a HUSKY program but they would be able to go see a specialist.

For two years from the time the child turns seven until the time that child turns nine, that child, assuming they're income eligible, would be eligible for participation in the state's Medicaid program, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And through you another question. So similar if a child who was one day past their ninth birthday, so just turned nine-years-old and this law had, you know, it becomes effective. Could you also through you, Madam President, describe the access to health care that they would have?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, unfortunately, I can. This Bill makes no provision for healthcare for a child in that circumstance. That would require future Legislation by a future Legislature, and so that's - that is one of the shortcomings of this Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, I'm wondering if looking at the Legislation and the

different sections if the good Senator could identify where and what section it is we are -- it's a -- prohibits by state law nine year olds from getting sick?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President. Madam President, there is no provision of state law that prohibits a nine-year-old from getting sick. A nine year old can't get a job, they can't get employer-sponsored healthcare. A nine-year-old who gets sick would be at the mercy of whether or not their parents have the cash to afford treatment, if they have employer-sponsored health insurance. If there is a federally qualified health center they may be able to get by coverage, they may get uncompensated care.

There not any great options unfortunately, Madam President. And there are real shortcomings on this proposal but I will say it's a start. And a start is important and that's why I'm moving it forward today.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

And through you, Madam President, is there anywhere, any section in the Bill that prohibits a 10-year-old from getting sick? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, no.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Is there any provision in this Bill that prevents taxpayers from paying part of the uncompensated care when a child who is undocumented and ineligible for the HUSKY program goes to the hospital? As we know, as you so eloquently said, most often times do. And I believe half of the cost is picked up by the federal government and the other is picked up by essentially -- eventually through Connecticut taxpayers. Is there any part or any part of this Bill that prohibits that or explicitly says that Connecticut's taxpayers are not going to pay the cost of that, which I believe amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars each year? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, no.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you. Thank you again Senator Lesser for answering my questions and for your leadership on this. I just have a few more comments but no more questions.

We hear that cost is oftentimes used as a reason to oppose this Bill. I think it's very well documented that we pay right now for the cost of uncompensated care, cost is not a good reason to oppose this. It simply not. We pay for it. We pay for it in the short term in uncompensated care and we pay for it in the long term. And the testimony in this Bill for folks to go back and read it, you can see that, you know, the numbers are there.

It was suggested that hospitals are an adequate kind of fallback position. It was the plan B. The problem with that one is cost as we just identified but also if you are a parent and you think about what it takes before you finally bring your child to the emergency room, you know, and you're trying to decide am I going to spend all night there with my child and how long do I wait. I mean, it's agonizing right. To rely on hospital emergency room for basic healthcare seems to me to be a cruel policy, as well as financially unsound.

And I guess the third argument that sometimes I hear is that well, you know what, we are a nation of laws and this -- you know, we are going to oppose because we have to kind of teach the parents a lesson, right, that they can't come here illegally. But this Bill is not about the parents. This Bill is about children. This is about children who are sick. And if you are a parent and you could think about what that's like when you see your child and they're helpless and they're shivering on a couch or in bed, and they're just so helpless, and that's what this Bill is about.

I mean, there's sound financial reasons to be for it but on a basic humanitarian level, this is about helping sick babies. That's what it's about. So I wish it went faster. I wish we did more right away because that's what I believe Connecticut's values are about, that's what our veterans fought for, and I cannot wait for the day that we get that Bill passed.

I commend Senator Lesser for his leadership on this. As I said at the beginning, I think it takes a tremendous amount of leadership to get this done and I look forward to continuing to support him in these efforts so we can make sure that no baby in this state goes without healthcare. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Slap. Senator Somers. Good evening.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I rise to ask the proponent of the Bill just a few questions this evening.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you. And I want to make sure that I understand this Bill correctly. We've heard some different comments made on the Bill. So I just want to make sure that I'm fully aware and that people that are watching tonight are fully aware of actually what's in this Bill. And when I read the Bill I see these words, "regardless of immigration status."

So the first question that I wanted to ask the proponent of the Bill is with that language written in the Bill, is it fair to say that these programs of prenatal care, postpartum care, and covering children under the age of eight could also be extended to Connecticut residents that are U.S. citizens? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH)

With the exception of postpartum care, all of those are currently in place for Connecticut residents for Connecticut citizens. Those are all currently in place. This would simply replicate the exact same programs that are currently in place for all residents of this state. All people in the state.

One additional note I will say that I made that exception for postpartum care, and the only reason I did that is because it's my understanding that the budget that we will be considering will extend postpartum care for U.S. citizen women in Connecticut as well, whenever that budget comes up for vote in this Chamber. So there will be the same treatment, not a special treatment. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you. And I apologize, it's a little hard to hear with the fan but I appreciate your answers. So what I heard you say, which is what I believe to be is true. We currently have these programs, what we're doing in this Bill is saying that these programs are available regardless of your immigration status with the exception that we're going to be adding postpartum care for up to 12 months because it's very important for women to have the care after they had a child and have to check up for their physical well-being, to make sure they're nursing correctly if they are, to make sure that their mental status is okay, they don't have postpartum depression.

So this is an existing program that we are simply changing the language so that regardless of your immigration status you will have access under certain financial conditions to be able to partake in this program with the addition of postpartum care, which I believe is very important. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. The gentlelady's characterization is absolutely correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you for that. So one of the things that I want to make sure that people that may be listening tonight realize and Senator Slap touched on it. Is that currently, and I would love the proponent to be able to weigh in if I'm correct on this. If I was someone who did not have healthcare insurance, regardless of my immigration status, and I had a sick child and I went to the ER, a hospital cannot turn me away and they will care for me and care for my child. And the hospital cannot collect any financial money. They can try to get me to pay but if I have no resources to be able to pay they absorb that as a lost to the hospital. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And does the good Senator and the proponent of the Bill have any idea in the State of Connecticut when we tally up that number at the end of the year, what is the number that our hospitals have to absorb in the State of Connecticut for those who are not necessarily undocumented we heard tonight but they don't have healthcare insurance regardless of whether they are here legally or illegally, a hospital still must care for them? Do we have that total number? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

I'm somewhat sheepishly going to admit, Madam President, that although we have that number, I don't have that number in front of me immediately but I understand it's in the many hundreds of millions of dollars. It's a lot of money, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you, Madam President. It's in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Every year our hospitals must absorb that cost. So what does a hospital do when

it has to absorb that cost. Can it raise its rate? Through you, Madam President. Does it cut services? Does it not have clinics available? Does it get rid of specialty doctors that it may be able to have that can no longer afford? How does the hospital make up that loss for those who have no insurance regardless of their immigration status? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. All of those things are presumably possible and certainly we all pay more because of uncompensated care. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

So that is what I understand from someone who works in the hospitals. That the hospital -- that magic number just doesn't go away. Those costs are passed on in some way shape or form, usually, to the people that do have insurance or through cutting back, not offering services, et cetera. The hospital cannot continue to accrue hundreds of millions of dollars of uncompensated visits, but yet they are required to provide care. So that is something that I think is really important in this conversation because we are paying for these services now. One way or the other, we are currently paying for them.

And I want to make sure that I'm clear on this so I don't misspeak. But if we pass this Bill, and we move forward with this program, through you, Madam President, is it true that, yes, we will be paying

using Medicaid dollars but we will also be able and eligible for a federal match on some of the -- on this program? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, so part of the Bill does have a federal match, and I would specifically highlight the prenatal care, the unborn child option through CHIP. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. And as I heard previously, there are other states, you know, sometimes being New England tend to look down on some of our southern states as being a little bit behind the times or less progressive or less -- having less availability of quality healthcare but yet, Louisiana, Arkansas and other states have already taken advantage of this federal match. Meaning the taxpayers in the State of Connecticut that are already paying are now offset from the federal match that we're getting from the federal government. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President. A lot of states have done it, including all of the states that the good Senator mentioned.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And the prenatal portion, which is the portion again open to anyone regardless of their immigration status is something that I think is very important for all of us to consider.

So I'm probably the only one in the circle right now who actually has been pregnant and we go through -- oh, I'm sorry. You're not actually in the circle, you are leading the circle. I know we just have some new moms that there -- congratulations. But you all know that it is visit after visit, it's how much do you weigh, which is always the dreaded getting on the scale but the prenatal vitamins, the ultrasound, the measuring your belly, all those things, and I'm going to share with you I just recently became a grandmother last year. And my young, healthy daughter, who is 30, went through this process of becoming a first-time mom. At the very end, the ultrasound picked up something unique, not positive, something worrisome, and it was a problem with the child's kidney.

As soon as she was born that child was whisked off to a pediatric neurologist at Vanderbilt University. She's fine now by the way thanks to the wonderful 30-year-old urologist at Vanderbilt University. A woman who did actually a miracle but she would have never known that this child had a problem unless she had the accessibility to those tests.

And if this child who's my granddaughter did not know she had this issues, nobody would've been

looking for it and it could be life-threatening. So that's just one example and it if this was someone who didn't have insurance and this child was born with this life-threatening condition, and then had to have an operation and was in the hospital with the tests with the no insurance regardless of immigration status, here in the State of Connecticut that could have cost the taxpayers millions of dollars, one child. But yet, if we take advantage of a program like this, if we decide to do that tonight and this child had coverage, yes, Connecticut would be paying through Medicaid dollars but there would be a federal match. And at some point, you know, the hospital is getting compensated, not at the rate that they would like to but they are getting something. That covers -- one child can be millions and millions of dollars if you think about it, and we are paying for that already.

We also think about the health of that child that is now a U.S. citizen or was always a U.S. citizen once they're born. I guess I didn't make sense. Regardless of the parents immigration status. And having that care of the parent, of the mother during that time can change the outcome for that child and for the mother moving forward, which also can help us all save money as the mom may not have complications during delivery. She may not have to have a cesarean section, which requires surgery and anesthesia and that long follow-up and possibly visiting nurses coming to the home.

And then it's the same story for children that are eight under. You know, I had a long exchange with Dr. Petit, and one of the things that we had talked about is that we're paying for this now and we're delivering really lousy and really expensive care because these folks are going to the ER when they have an ear infection. They're going to the ER when they have a cold and the mom doesn't understand whether it's serious or, you know, it's pneumonia or it's just allergies or it's asthma. And they're waiting in ERs.

I don't know if any of you have been to an ER lately but it is -- like you're going to wait for hours. Take a number, it's worse than the deli counter. Unless you go in and you -- something is really serious, you're having a heart attack they'll whisk you in. But if not, you're going to wait. Sometimes you're waiting in the hallway with God knows what's going on. You know, people are having drug withdrawal, you have people that maybe have been in a car accident while you're waiting there to see somebody.

That is not quality healthcare for anybody. An emergency room is called an emergency room because it's supposed to be for that, an emergency. It is not supposed to be the place where you get your average, basic healthcare on a regular basis but that's what's happening and it's happening to people that don't have access to healthcare. And the outcome of that is we are sending people regardless of their immigration status to the most expensive points of contact and costs for basic healthcare needs. And that doesn't make sense to any of us or to anyone.

We all -- if you're on a health insurance here in at Connecticut, they are encouraging you to not go to the emergency room unless, as I say, your bone is sticking out, you're bleeding or you're on fire. That's -- those are the three things that you should go to the emergency room for, but you shouldn't be going because your child is running a fever.

These folks are forced to do that because they're in a position where they have a young child who is sick, regardless of their immigration status, and their child needs help and healthcare. I think that many of us struggle because sometimes the way these Bills are presented, they're presented as this party should go this way and this other party should go that way but I think we all need to really think about what's happening in a pragmatic way. And for

our constituents that may say, "Oh dear, how can you be spending money on folks that are not here legally?" We have to remind them we already are. And this may be one way that we can help offset the cost that is borne by the taxpayers of the State of Connecticut by developing a program like this and being eligible for federal dollars.

And I'm -- I don't know how people are going to vote on this going forward. I can't say what the outcome will be but I think it's worth a conversation.

I wanted to make sure I understood this Bill correctly before I make my decision, whatever that will be tonight. But I think I have a better understanding now that the proponent of the Bill has confirmed these are programs we have now. We're just changing the access regardless of your immigration status but currently, in the State of Connecticut if you are someone who is undocumented and you go to the hospital, you are cared for and we pay for that service here in the State of Connecticut by the hospital absorbing that cost. And when the hospitals absorb those costs, they either give us less availability of healthcare, they raise their rates, they have to cover those costs.

If we can apply these programs to those that are undocumented, we have an opportunity to lessen those costs to the taxpayer of Connecticut and to obtain federal dollars to help offset that and also to help our hospitals.

So I just want to make sure I was understanding that correctly before I cast my vote tonight, and of course, I'm now going to ask the proponent of the Bill, can you please confirm everything I just said.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Madam President, I've never been asked a question quite like that before but I will say that everything that I heard the Senator say I agreed

with. I thought was absolutely correct. I thought she made the points much more eloquently than I could have, so. And I would gladly bow to her expertise on childbearing and on all issues related to pregnancy and I greatly appreciate her comments.

THE CHAIR\_

Thank you, Senator Lesser. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Senator Anwar to be followed by Senator Champagne.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to make a few comments on this Bill. First I wanted to align my comments with those of Senator Somers and also my colleague and my friend Senator Slap.

I have to share a few thoughts with everyone. I think what Senator Somers was alluding to was the cost that the hospital's bare. And according to the office of Health Strategies a 2019 report, the cost per year for the hospitals in the State of Connecticut is about \$806 million dollars. Those \$806 million dollars is something that we are all paying for, including the healthcare systems.

And I think it's important to recognize that by investing into what this Bill does, we're going to have a fraction of that cost. And this is already being studied. Office of -- sorry, the Connecticut Health Foundation and the Georgetown University have done a study, which showed that the cost, if we were to move in this direction is going to be a fraction of the actual cost. So those numbers are there, so financially, it is a very straightforward process.

And then this does not include the federal part of the picture. If you look at the federal part of the equation, it solves everything that make -- what Senator Somers was also alluding to as well. So

from a financial point of view, this is a no-brainer. I just wanted to make sure that that gets heard loud and clear. The parts that I think I needed to clarify further are something that one of the Senators earlier had spoken of. And that may cause a little bit of a confusion for anybody who's listening or anybody who looks at that video or something that comes out. And for that, Madam President, through you, I wanted to ask a few questions of the proponent of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

One of the Senators earlier had said and then was concerned that this Bill is not looking at Germans and British or English. And I'm trying to understand that a little bit, so from a clarification point of view if somebody was of German descent but they were here as undocumented, this Bill would apply to them. Is that a fair statement? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President. This Bill applies to people in Connecticut regardless whether from of where they're from. Whether they're from Germany or somewhere else.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. And then through you, because -- to one of the other person who was against this Bill was also concerned that the English were not included in this Bill. Through you, Madam President, if somebody is of -- from England and they are here and they're not documented, which means that they may not have the visa or the status, would they be covered under this Bill as well if their child was under this age and they needed prenatal care?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

A child under eight, who is English, absolutely would be covered if they're in Connecticut. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I wanted to clarify that because I think that particular issue was very critical to one of my colleagues that they wanted German and English to be covered somehow but I wanted to make sure that this Bill is looking at undocumented. But another comment that my colleague had made was that he made it sound like no American would be able to get treatment over here. I wanted to clarify because this Bill is not specifically saying anything to that because that laws -- those laws are already in place. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President. This is not about a special benefit, it's about equal rights. It's about treating children in this state the same at least until their ninth birthday regardless of how they got here or who they are. It's about ensuring that all women in the state have access to prenatal care.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Those are the only questions I had for clarification. And I felt it's important because my colleague was so passionate about these aspects, that I wanted to clarify this and I want to make sure there is knowledge on the facts around this Bill present in this conversation so that nothing is taken out of context and inaccurate information doesn't flow out further.

I think from a moral argument, what Senator Slap had said, I don't think anybody can do a better job than what Senator Slap said earlier from the moral arguments. So I would just ask anybody to keep listening to what my colleague has said because he said it probably the best way it could have been said.

I just wanted to add a couple of other thoughts to this and the questions are that there is a cost with this Bill but there's a cost of not passing this Bill. And the cost of not passing this Bill is not sustainable by the healthcare system and the hospitals and that's something very important for us to realize.

And I also want to say a quote, one of my friends Dr. Katherine Kennedy who spoke about this. In her

testimony she said that we are only as healthy as our least healthy members. And Madam President, the State of Massachusetts, New York, and DC and other states have actually already moved in this direction and they're already showing positive results for the well-being of the children and also making sure that the prenatal care and postpartum care has been provided, and there is no reason why we should not do the right thing going forward. It's a moral -- morally right thing and also financially right thing to do, and I look forward to supporting this. Thank you so much, Madam President, and thank you to the Chair of Insurance and Real-estate for your clear leadership on this issue. Thank you so much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Will you remark further?  
Good evening, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Good evening, Madam President. And thank you very much. I just want to get some clarifications on this Bill. I -- obviously, providing medical care to people living in Connecticut is very important but I do want to make sure that I understand the financing of this and how it's financed. So I do have some questions for the proponent of the Bill. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Section 1, is this being paid for out of HUSKY Medicaid funds?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President. I'm not sure I understand the question. It's being paid for by the state budget, through you, within available appropriations.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I will clarify my question. We are talking about a 50% match from the federal government, and in order to get that match, the first thing we have to do is change this law, correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Or adopt this law. I'm sorry.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President. No, there's no federal match for children under Section 1 of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Section 117B-261 talks about Medicaid here in the State of Connecticut, and that's why I assume that Section 1 Subsection 1

would use HUSKY Medicaid but if that's not the case, where does the 50% match come from under Section 1, Subsection 1? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President. The cost would be borne by -- subject to available appropriations. So that's a question for the state budget.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And through you again, so there is no 50% match on Section 1, Subsection 1 it's going to be borne by the taxpayers completely of the State of Connecticut.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Was that -- I'm sorry. I apologize, Madam President, was that a question?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Yes, it was.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, as I said earlier, there is no federal match so it would be subject to appropriations.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Section 1 -- or I'm sorry. Section 2, how is this being paid for out of the state budget, is there any type of match that we're going to be applying for? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

You know, Madam President, the postpartum care is a new program but I don't believe there is a match for Section 2 but it's really a question for what isn't covered by this new program that's starting April 1st, 2022, funded by the American Rescue Plan.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Okay. So that's the ACA Section 2, thank you. Same question for Section 3. How is Section 3 going to be paid for? I know it talks about 17B-292 I

believe that's HUSKY, which is Medicaid. Is that true? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

No, Madam President. That is the CHIP program. It's a -- but that -- but that again, would not be subject to a federal match, it would be replicating the CHIP program for an unmatched population. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Subsection 3 or Section 3, Subsection "A" says, "probably may be eligible for benefits under HUSKY." Is -- and HUSKY is a part of Medicaid. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

HUSKY is what we call the Medicaid program currently in Connecticut but the -- no, it says, "may be eligible for benefits under HUSKY, HUSKY B." So HUSKY B is the federal CHIP program, and as I just mentioned to the gentleman from Vernon, we would be replicating the CHIP program with its asset attached for folks who are not currently eligible for Medicaid.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Section 4, under Section 4, how was -- is this Section going to be paid for using Medicaid funds? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Section 4 is part of the federal Children's Health Insurance program and would be eligible for a federal match.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And under Section 5, are we going to be using any Medicaid funds to offset any cost in Section 5?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President. There is no fiscal note for Section 5.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So under this, we talked about the available appropriations and the only one that we're talking about that has any type of Medicaid or ACA funds is Subsection Section 2. Is -- was that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

I don't -- the gentleman -- you repeatedly used the phrase Medicaid funds. I'm not sure what he's referring to. If he's talking about federal funding, that's available under Section 4 of the Bill. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. The reason I keep saying that because of every time I look up the general -- the statutes that were cited here, that's 14B-261 and 14B-292 they talk about Medicaid. And it talks about the medical assistance programs established pursuant to Sections 17B-261 and 17B-292. And I'll -- you know, Section 1 talks about 17B-261 and this is why I keep -- this is why I brought it up. And if you continue down there, it -- that's what it keeps referring to. So I looked up these individually and they talk about Medicaid, and that's why was asking you if this is where the 50% match from the federal government is coming from? Is it Medicaid? Because I know I heard that spoken as we were talking through this. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Madam President, Medicaid is a joint federal state program that has eligibility criteria, and so this would be a program that would be identical in all respects to the existing Medicaid program but would be attempting to replicate it for folks who are not eligible for Medicaid with the exception of Section 4. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. You were talking about applying for a 1332 waiver. And that 1332 waiver is strictly for Section 4? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

No, Madam President. Madam President the 1332 waiver is in Section 6.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Section 6. I don't have Section 6. Can you tell me what line Section 6 starts at? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President. Through you, Madam President Section 6 begins at line 92 of the Bill as passed by the House.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I missed that. Give me just a second here. Under the Affordable Care Act, that subsidies for insurance plans, is it not? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Madam President, the Affordable Care Act covers a variety of provisions among which it has advance premium tax credits to subsidize the purchase of private health insurance but it has a number of other provisions as well.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. From what I understand it's premium assistance account based subsidies, risk stabilization, and adjusted plan options. Are -- is -- under this Section 6, what exactly are we

going to be paying for in this Bill? What are the sections if we do get this waiver?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. We currently have an intake infrastructure in Access Health Connecticut that is our state's health insurance exchange established pursuant to the Affordable Care Act, which we use to enroll people in certain classes of HUSKY, the state's Medicaid program. With the exception of HUSKY C.

We would be seeking a waiver under Section 1332 of the Affordable Care Act to use that infrastructure for the purposes of enrolling people into the sections of this Bill, and that is one of the options anticipated. We obviously don't know if the federal government would approve such waiver but that is one of the things that we allow pursuant to this Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So we are going to use the available funds to pay for insurance policies under the ACA and that's why we're using this waiver. Is the correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, no.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

I'm sorry. I missed that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, no.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well, under 1332 for the ACA, you know, it deals with policies and a lot of them are private policies. Typically it requires funding source to obtain matching federal dollars, funding is generally from taxes, the general fund, or assessments on insured members. Understanding 1332 waivers is the only option I could even stretch to fit this Legislation would be the APO waiver concept. The adjusted plan options. But we're not buying plans under this. Insurance plans for this, we're actually just covering the fees. Is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

No, Madam President. Again, the gentleman is I think a little confused about the proposal. We simply use the exchange website, the exchange infrastructure to enroll people both into exchange plans, the private plans that he's talking about, but also into our state's Medicaid program. And we would be seeking a waiver to allow the use of that infrastructure to enroll people into Medicaid via the existing computer architecture, the other resources of the exchange, the way they are today for Medicaid purposes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. From what I understand, and I haven't found a research that shows any different. The only state that applied for a waiver would be California but they withdrew their waiver in 2017 to cover undocumented immigrants in this fashion. Can you enlighten me to what other state is going to use this process to use a 1332 waiver to apply for this? through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. I'm actually very familiar with California's 2016 waiver application. That was a -- for a different type of program, but you're right that there was a waiver that was submitted and then subsequently withdrawn. I don't know at this time whether CMS would grant such a waiver. I think it is a good question to ask them. And I know that there have been some conversations with them but I haven't personally part of. It's a

good question for us to ask and that's what we're asking in Section 6.

We're also outlining a couple of other possibilities, including partnering with another state that's already set up an infrastructure to -- and that's in line 95 of the Bill. That anticipates contractual agreements with other states.

So there are a number of options for how we can move forward. One of the advantages to having an effective date pushed out. And I heard from Senator Slap earlier and from Senator Anwar their frustration that this Bill isn't doing more and doing more faster, and I share their frustration but one of the advantages to having an effective date that's been pushed out is it gives the state Department of Social Services the opportunity to investigate options working with the office of healthcare strategy and do this the right way, and one that results in the least possible impact to the state taxpayers. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I've been reading on the waivers and what actually has to happen in order to apply for the waiver. And it states that first the Legislature has to pass a law, which we've done. But I'm finding that we keep referencing the 1332 waiver, and this has to do with Medicaid in different portions. I'm wondering why we're not using a 15 -- 1115 waiver, an 1115 waiver instead, which is specifically for Medicaid plans. Is there a reason we're using the 1332 over the 1115? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, because as I mentioned before, the goal with this 1332 waiver authority is to explore the possibility of using our exchanged infrastructure for the purposes of enrollment and eligibility determination.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well, I can see you -- I can see us using the exchange because you don't have to put in the immigrant status in the exchange but the bills have to be paid, and is it the plan the State of Connecticut is going to pay the entire plan to go into this? Into the exchange? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

No, again, I think the gentleman is confused. The exchange website, the infrastructure that they use for enrollment does two things. One, for people above a Medicaid eligibility, it does offer them the ability to purchase a private health insurance plan. This Bill does not speak to that. It also separately allows people to enroll in traditional Medicaid. and this would be that, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Undocumented individuals are not typically allowed into Medicaid, and because this is not within the regular guidelines of the Affordable Care Act under 1332, this would be a unique waiver. And that's why I'm asking why we're not using an 1115 waiver instead, because we're asking for permission to enroll undocumented immigrants, which at present are banned from being allowed into the ACA.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, we're not looking for any Medicaid funding from the federal government for any part of the Bill, except for Section 4.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So we're not -- so Section 4 is the only section. And under this Section 4, are they, are they citizens of the United States?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President. And Section 4 is about providing prenatal care for children who will be born American citizens, and so that's the, that's

why the federal government has funded it through the Children's Health Insurance Program.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And so I think that the other sections are going to be paid for out of the general fund through the budget process.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

To the extent that they have fiscal notes, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President. I'm still not understanding the ACA part of this because if people can afford to, if they, if persons can afford to buy into the Affordable Care Act and they can basically state what their income is, it's adjusted for your income. So, I'm seeing this as maybe the, you know, we're covering the costs on this.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser. Oh, I'm sorry.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

No, that was a, that was a comment. It wasn't a question, ma'am. Thank you, Madam President, not

ma'am. So, I'm still a little confused on how we're paying for this. To me, it looks like it's all coming out of the general fund, and you know I believe in taking care of kids, no matter who they are, but I also know many, many senior citizens who can't even afford their medications.

And when I think of this, I think of everything in general and we should be helping is, you know, the residents of the State of Connecticut. I know that this is going to cost us money if they go to the hospital. Anyway, I'm going to have to listen to the rest of this, the rest of the conversation, because as it's written, I think the 1332 waiver is wrong, and we should be applying for the one, the 1115.

And because there is a, this law has to be passed, I just hope that when this is put forward that the law isn't wrong and we can't, we can't apply for that, at least get money for Section 4. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne. Will you remark further on the Bill? Good evening, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I rise for a few questions for the proponent.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Good evening. I just want to have some clarity regarding the different sections of the Bill in regards to, if we do in Section 1, we're addressing the uninsured children of under the age of eight and

the immigration status is not a factor. So I'm assuming then whether or not they were born here in the United States or not that all children under eight will fall under this. Is that correct?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Yeah, all eligible children, so that would be based on their income or their income and their assets, depending on where they are, but it would be the same test for all children.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Is it -- I'm sorry, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Okay.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

And part of that is that they can't qualify. They don't qualify for Medicaid. So we're going to provide the medical assistance. So how we -- is it insurance company that is going to be the, you know, the fiscal note has a cost to that. And are we buying an insurance product for these kids?

I guess, I'm trying to get my wrap, you know, have a better understanding of who's going to be paying for this because Madam President, you know, it's one thing to pay for the premium for the insurance and it's another thing that the state picks up the whole tab, whether it's a doctor visits or surgery.

So I want to know if are we buying a product from a third party, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

No, Madam President, we are simply providing a program that is identical in all respects to the existing Medicaid program for children eight and under. I will just emphasize there's been a lot of discussion about the cost that the cost in the biennium of providing a health insurance or health coverage, or for children eighteen and under is in the biennium is \$700,000 in a \$44 billion budget.

And I did some math and that I believe is 0.001% of the state budget, which leaves 99.999% of the state budget for other purposes. So it is a \$700,000 is a lot of money for families out, any one family out there, but in the context of our state budget it is a very small amount of money. About as -- about as much as we're about to spend buying a new radio system for the state Capitol police, for example.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I did some numbers too, and I tallied up each of the sections. It's going to cost us \$4 million. It's not a lot of money to cover 1,700 children, right, that are age of eight and under, and the prenatal women, their babies and, you know, the unborn babies as well as those post you know, after they deliver their, their babies.

So what I want to know is, are we buying an insurance policy for these individuals? Is that a third party? I just want to know, is it the state -- are they coming in underneath the umbrella of the state? I heard you say Medicare -- Medicaid, so are we in Medicaid is 50% reimbursed. So is it a Medicaid policy that we're buying or if it's, if it's something else, I just want to know what it is? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yeah. So the Department of Social Services directly administers the Medicaid program and they would be directly administering this program. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Okay. So, Section 1, if I hear you correctly, Section 1, we're talking about these uninsured children or all children under the age of eight, who are not insured now, where this is going to be through a Medicaid program? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

This would be, yeah, maybe we'd mirror it'd mirror the Medicaid program. You have to, and I will -- there've been a number of questions along these lines. There are strict federal rules, so we will

not be allowed to co-mingle federal dollars with state dollars for the purposes of any Section of this Bill, except for Section 4.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Okay. You said, you said fashion this program with the Medicaid program. So it's not, we're not, it's not 50% matched by the federal government then. So are we funding this? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, that's the, that's the \$700,000 fiscal note in the biennium that I mentioned before.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

If you break that down \$700,000, that's I think you're, are you telling me that the whole cost for the year is \$700,000. So through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

For Sections 1 and 3 in fiscal year '23, that's the only year in the biennium captured by the Amendment, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

So what happens if a child is needed surgery, it's found, or the doctors find that there is a cancer brain tumor. There is chemotherapy that's going to be required. That in itself could be \$400,000. So who pays, is that part of the \$700,000 that's being estimated here? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. You know, Madam President, as with any fiscal note, you never know exactly what could come and certainly we could be wrong. We are starting out with a very small population and by starting small, we limit the risk of the state. But those are the numbers that the office of fiscal analysis did, they estimated that the average cost would be \$2,200 per child.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Excuse me. Thank you, Mr. President. So what I'm hearing then is that without a definitive answer to my question is specifically regarding the example that I gave of \$400,000, should a child have brain, a brain tumor, there are surgery followed by

chemotherapy at a cost of \$400,000. Then we, and the answer that I got was not what I expected. what I hear through all this is that we actually are self-funding this. Through you, Madam President, are we self-funding this?

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Madam President, that line of question I think was asked previously by Senator Martin, but also by I heard Senator Champagne asked some more questions before. As I've, I've answered I think to a few Members of the legislature, Sections 1, 2, 3, and, no, Sections 1, 2 and 3 are all state funded. Section 4 has a federal match, but it's partially state funded.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Listen, I'm sorry for not having been around the circle, I was here, but I was called out. I'm sorry if I'm repeating the questions. I was told, I was told by staff that, that this is going through the exchange. Is that as much different than what is being relayed to me?

What I'm hearing, the good Senator say is that this is basically self-funded, but my staff just informed me that this is going through the exchange. So it's the exchange of a state policy. And I don't know enough about this. That's why I'm asking is the exchange of self-insured program? Are we paying for the, all those costs in that exchange or is that a private third party exchange? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Madam President, through you, this exchange as a quasi-public state agency, but the only purpose, the only involvement of the exchange in this proposal is looking at using the exchange for intake purposes. And, that's something we would possibly need federal a federal waiver for. There's another mechanism that again, is theoretically possible. We would have to explore the cost and benefit various approaches. The alternative would be for the exchange to establish a subsidiary for this purpose. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Section 2, it deals with the women who are pregnant and their postpartum care. Are we using the same program to pay for these as well? through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Are all women covered under this program? In other words, those that are documented and those that are citizens? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, Section 2 is for women who are not eligible for Medicaid. My understanding is that the budget will cover women who are eligible for Medicaid or those covering every woman who is income eligible in this state.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

So the answer is it's all women. That's all I need to hear. Through you, Madam President, Section 3, the uninsured children under eight, regardless of immigration status. So we are covering all children under this section. A little different than Section 1, right? But in this section, we're covering all children under that are under the age of eight. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Sorry, Senator Lesser. Could you just repeat the answer because I didn't hear it?

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Yes.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, Section 4 has to deal with prenatal care. I just want to find out is that a different program that the payments are going to be made or is it similar to all the other sections? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

No, Madam President, that provision is a little bit different because that is a part of the federal Children's Health Insurance Program. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Okay. So that is going to be paid through the CHIP program, through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. The costs that I mentioned before are \$4 million, I was wrong, it's \$14 million. So it's not, you know, based on our budget, it's not a lot of money to cover these individuals. And I asked these questions because I wanted to know whether or not if it's a third party that is paying for this. Are we buying, are we buying and paying a premium for these individuals to be covered, which I'm okay with? Or is it the State of Connecticut going to be on the hook to paying the fees or the cost of covering a doctor's visit, hospital visit, surgery?

I'm concerned about the hospitals, you know, Bristol Hospital. They have a lot of these individuals that come in and don't make their payments and they have very tough, tough decisions to make. And particularly with the example that I just gave you whether or not they are going to provide service. And we all know that hospitals are required to provide medical service, but they go through, they go into the ER, and is it better for them to go in into the ER? Or is this program, this policy, what, we're -- this Bill that we're trying to, we're having this debate about and vote on, is it better that we put them insured and take care of these kids, whether they are still in the mother's womb or after birth, and then up to the age of eight.

And I'm trying to decide whether or not, you know, is this good or not. It's -- numbers seem to be there, but I don't know if I still got my answer, whether or not we're still, this is still self-insured. And when I go back into the caucus room. I'll get some clarity on that.

So through you, Madam President, can -- if the good Senator could tell me the uncollected law says that

the hospitals have to deal with how do they recoup those losses, or is that something that they just have to accept and then hopefully it's not, it's not to a point where they have to reduce services or maybe even look for someone to buy, to buy them? Right. So through you, Madam Chair, how do the hospitals recover their, their losses?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I'm going to answer that question, but before I do, I just want to clarify some remarks I made earlier in response to the gentleman's questions. The language within available appropriations, I think is very important because the gentleman is expressing concern about whether or not a taxpayers would be on the hook if OFA is wrong.

There was another study referenced earlier by Georgetown that estimated what this would cost. If that study is wrong, what happens if you have a cost overrun? Because the number crunchers got it wrong. And the language within available appropriations means that we're not, in fact, the taxpayers are not on the hook, that the program would be self-limited by the available appropriation. So it will not eat into the state budget beyond the numbers that are right there. There is no further exposure.

Now specifically in response to the gentleman's question about what does a hospital like Bristol Hospital do when somebody comes in without health insurance? The answer is they raise prices on all of us, or they, they just continue services, they pay their doctors, their nurses less. You know, there are a variety of options but we all pay the cost of that.

And there is a cost borne by taxpayers directly in terms of assistance to hospitals for uncompensated care as well. I think one of our colleagues earlier mentioned that the figure was somewhere around \$900 million a year, just a couple of years ago, I forget the exact number. But it's in that, it's in that neighborhood. It's an awful lot of money that we all pick up that our local hospitals pick up and it's a burden on all of them.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Yeah. Thank you, Madam President. Yeah. Along with that as well as raising the negotiated rates with the insurance companies takes place somewhere in there as well. And just to correct the Senator, you know, all the money in the appropriations is, is paid for by the residents of the state. So, all right.

I know that Senator Formica still has some questions. You know, it is that we have some other Bills to get to. I'll address some of my other questions and concerns through our caucus. So thank you. Thank you, Senator Lesser.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Martin. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Senator Formica, good evening.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good evening, Madam President. This has been quite an interesting discussion for me and I appreciate the good Chair of the Insurance Committee, Senator Lesser patiently answering all of our questions. I may have one or two, but I want to summarize where I

think we are for my own edification. And I'm sorry that I've not been here, I've been kind of picking it up on TV here and there and trying to, trying to get a situation understood by me.

And the way, the way I understand it, Madam President, is and Senator Lesser, we have a group of children, both undocumented and some have good immigrations. I don't know what, some citizens of our state that don't have coverage for health insurance. And if they get into a situation where they need medical care and they go into a hospital, they can't pay through insurance. The State of Connecticut ends up, ends up paying for them.

Madam President, through you, would that, am I corrects so far, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And Madam President, it's good to see you up there. You know, the State of Connecticut will want to pay one way or the other, whether it's, whether it's through a direct assistance to the hospital or just with higher premiums. Yeah, we would pay.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So you know, the issue is that they need the care and as we are the greatest country in the world, they need the care and we're going to provide the care. The issue is some are undocumented, which may cause a problem with some people. Some are not. This Bill

encompasses both citizens and undocumented, and it offers an opportunity to find a way to be in a better fiscal situation for the residents and taxpayers of the State of Connecticut.

If we follow through on this Bill and ensure all of those, that population that I mentioned, some citizens and some undocumented, am I on the right path, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, the Senator is absolutely on the right path.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And so that solves the problem that we have now is in either case whether it's an insurance coverage payment or whether it's just payment to the hospital for those that need the care uninsured, is there money embedded in the budget of the State of Connecticut, both in the past and perhaps in the one that we're going to see maybe at 2, 3 this morning or, oh, we're going to see shortly. Is there money to satisfy both of those situations, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Through you, Madam President, yes, there is.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you. So it boils down to who we care for, how we care for them and at the best fiscal cost for the State of Connecticut. And this Bill provides that opportunity, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

I certainly think so, through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And in closing, thank you, Senator Lesser, but is there -- One last question? Is there anything else in the Bill outside of that, that I would need to understand that goes in conjunction with this? Because it looked like a very short succinct four-page Bill, through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

No, Madam President, there's nothing else that I can think of. The only thing I would just say is that there is companion Legislation within the state

budget that expands coverage for Connecticut citizens as well, because we know that there are children in this state who are here legally, who are citizens who also need coverage, and we are expanding coverage for families as well.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And then, you know, the fear for some folks is that, you know, we would become a haven for perhaps those undocumented, perhaps those citizens of other states that may want to come in to the state. But my understanding is that there's a finite number of dollars available, through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Lesser.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, as I said to a colleague earlier with Senator Martin, it says within available appropriations. So if the estimated number of children were to be exceeded, the program would be cut off. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And then we'll cross that problem when we get to that situation, which I, but I want to thank the good Chairman for his patience with me and for his patience for those of us that asked questions around the circle. And I

thank you, Madam President. It's nice to see you up there. And I appreciate the opportunity for the conversation. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes, Madam President, I just want to thank the Members for the conversation tonight. I just want to, before I conclude, any remarks I make on why you think this is a good Bill? I just want to thank a few people in particular. I want to thank my Yale School of Public Health Intern [inaudible] for identifying the fact that Connecticut wasn't participating in the unborn child option.

I want to thank Senator Looney for his leadership and making sure that this was a priority item for our caucus, for Claudio Gualtieri at the Office of Policy and Management, for Commissioner Gifford for the Connecticut HUSKY for all coalition in Connecticut students for a dream, all of the folks who really crunched the numbers who made the math work, the Center for Children's Advocacy that really helped kick off this project by doing that initial Georgetown study that really showed that the math made sense, that this was fiscally responsible and paid for itself in so many ways and my colleagues have said much more eloquently than I could have.

This is a smart Bill. It's a fiscally responsible Bill and it'll make us a better state. I just want to thank all of the folks who made this possible for moving this Legislation forward.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good evening, Madam President and good to see you. Thank you, Senator Flexer as well for presiding this evening. Madam President, I just rise very briefly to support the Legislation, that Emergency Certified Bill that was passed last night by the House, and hopefully in a few minutes by the Senate.

Madam President, obviously, as we know, healthcare is one of the largest, if not the largest issue for people all across this country and as a concern for really everyone. And as a government and as a policy we take that very seriously and because of the fact that federally our country, and we've talked about this numerous times over the years in the circle when it comes to our policies and what we do to protect those who need protecting or those who may be undocumented in this country, what we can do to ensure that they are part of our state and they are welcomed and they are treated equally and fairly in this state as well.

Because even without full citizenship, we have people who work, they pay taxes, they contribute to our economy. they're part of our communities. And we want to make sure that they are not in the shadows but able to participate as well in our society. But one of the issues that has long escaped our country because of a failure to pass immigration reform or immigration policy is this, is healthcare, especially for those who are undocumented.

And we know that if somebody shows up at an emergency room or a hospital somewhere, they're going to get care, but we know that that care is extremely expensive. And that is borne by all of us in the State of Connecticut at a much higher rate than if we take a much more proactive step which, which will, which I believe tonight's Bill does. It takes us in a step in the right direction, which

helps to provide healthcare for those who are up to eight years old.

And we see all the time where kids need to make, need to be in school. They need to have access to healthcare. In Norwalk, I know we have AmeriCares free clinic. We have the two community health centers. We have our school-based health centers. And we want to make sure that we're providing the tools in which that they can ably be able to provide healthcare, and in a way that's good for the patients as well.

And, you know, we're only talking about a children up to the, up to eight years old. And I don't know that anyone would want to see a child be unhealthy or not be able to see a doctor. And again, if they are to go to a hospital or into emergency room, the cost of that is much more than it would be had there was proper and preventative or proactive type of healthcare.

So, Madam President, I would urge my colleagues to support this. I think this is the humanitarian thing to do, this is the right thing to do. While we wait and wait and wait for our federal government to provide some sort of a path to citizenship for immigration reform and while we as a state work to take people out of the shadows and be members of our communities, we want them to be healthy as well because when everyone is healthy, our children are healthy, they do better at school, they're more productive and their families are more likely to be healthy as well.

So for all those reasons, Madam President, I urge my colleagues to support the Legislation, the Emergency Certified Bill. I do want to thank Senator Lesser for his work, Senator Looney for his advocacy, our caucus and those who support the Legislation tonight. Thank you so much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff. Will you remark further? Good evening, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I'm speaking in support of the Emergency Certified Bill. Want to begin by thanking Senator Lesser for his advocacy, as we know, early discussions on this on this Bill, had a much more limited scope of coverage about basically just prenatal care, postpartum care and for the mothers and perhaps up to age one for the infant.

But what we have here is substantially more coverage for children under the age of nine and this is part of a continuum, I think for further debate because under the Bill, there will be a, there will be a study. The Office of Health Strategy will study the feasibility of offering coverage for income eligible children aged nine to 18 regardless of immigration status.

So I'm hopeful that we will be able to continue to move in that direction to cover children above the age of eight as we move along and have further dialogue and discussion on this. As our Majority Leader said who was a strong supporter of this as well, this issue is one of the major issues in our society continues to be the issue of healthcare coverage. That is the grave differences between those who have good coverage and are secured in that coverage, and are not facing into the pit of possibly being ill and accumulating massive debt at the same time, as opposed to those who fear, not only illness but also, financial ruin or lack of access to care because of a condition.

So we know that in some cases, those who are severely ill will ultimately wind up at an emergency room and they will get care. Unfortunately, as we know emergency room care is often provided when a

person who has been desperately trying to postpone seeking care no longer can. And the situation is much more acute by the time that that person gets there.

We always have heard in the last several years when certain coverages were extended to those who had an eye conditions, who had -- who had coverage for annual eyecare visits in newer policies that they didn't have before. We heard from ophthalmologists that they saw very many cases of acute eye disease, glaucoma and severe cataracts and other things that had gone untreated for years until people had insurance.

The same thing is true with other cases where insurance has expanded and find out that there has been a significant postponement of care. So at least in terms of the, of our youngest and most vulnerable population children regardless of their immigration status they will be able to get that coverage now up to age nine, which of course will allow students, our children to be fully vaccinated with that first phase of vaccinations that students have to get in order to be in school.

There's a second wave of vaccinations that we know that that come at age 12 and we hope shortly to be at the point where those students will be covered as well as we continue this dialogue and move beyond it. But for this point, I think it's certainly a significant achievement to have this Bill as far along as it is in terms of coverage, given where the dialogue started.

And I urge passage. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? if not, I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, would you kindly announce the vote?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6687. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6687. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6687. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6687. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6687. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

THE CHAIR:

On House Bill 6687:

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	26
Those voting Nay	10
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The Legislation passes. (Gavel) Mr. Clerk -- We will stand at ease.

Senator Duff, good evening.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Before we mark our next Bills, could we, I'd like to ask the Clerk to call to list items on our Consent Calendar for a vote on the Consent Calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk. Mr. Clerk, please announce the items on the Consent Calendar.

CLERK:

Four items on the Consent Calendar. Consent Calendar No. 1, Page 39, Calendar 485, House Joint Resolution 211. Page 31, Calendar 562, House Bill 6679. Page 23, Calendar 503, Senate Bill 1110. And Page 26, Calendar 526, Senate Bill 1111. That is the Consent Calendar thus far.

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 on Consent Calendar 1. 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. This is Consent Calendar No. 1. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

For the benefit of the Senators, our Members should know that this is not the last vote on the Consent Calendar. I know that some days the Consent Calendar means that we're done, but we have much more delightfulness to come before us. So please do not leave.

THE CHAIR:

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 on Consent Calendar No. 1. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

And we just want to let the Senators know that this is not the last item that you will be voting on. There is much more delightfulness coming before us. So please do not leave.

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

CLERK:

On Consent Calendar No. 1.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar is consented to. (Gavel)

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President if I can mark another item to go.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Oh, actually I think I need to adopt the Agenda first, Senate Agenda No. 2. Madam President, Clerk has Senate Agenda No. 2.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda item No. 2 dated Tuesday, June 8th, 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move all items on Senate Agenda No. 2 dated Tuesday June 8th, 2021, be acted upon as indicated that the Agenda be incorporated by reference into the Senate Journal and the Senate Transcript.

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Senate Agenda  
No. 2  
REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, June 08, 2021

BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE:  
EMERGENCY CERTIFICATION-

HB NO. 6688 AN ACT CONCERNING A HIGHWAY USE FEE.

THE CHAIR:

And so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the Clerk call as our next item to go on Senate Agenda No. 2, Emergency Certified Bill House Bill 6688, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda Item No. 2, House Bill No. 6688, AN  
ACT CONCERNING A HIGHWAY USE FEE.

THE CHAIR:

And good evening, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Good evening, Madam President. 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 HASKELL (26TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. Let me start this  
evening by just stating the obvious, Madam  
President, Connecticut's transportation system is  
desperately in need of an upgrade. We've got more  
than 350 structurally deficient bridges across the  
state. Our trains have gotten slower, not faster  
over the last 50 years and constant traffic jams  
slowed down our commutes hamper our economy, and  
frankly, our daily lives.

Having some minor maintenance needs is one thing.  
But the situation in Connecticut is more dire than  
that. If we don't find a way to fund our  
transportation system and make some transformative  
overhauls for our bridges or tunnels or trains that  
we're going to find ourselves in a losing race  
against time and deterioration.

Without real solutions, we're setting up future generations, our children, and our grandchildren with a genuine crisis. The Bill before this Chamber today is, is one admittedly small solution. This Legislation institutes a highway user fee on tractor, trailer, trucks in the State of Connecticut. This is in essence, a mileage fee paid by trucking companies for the miles that their trucks drive through the State of Connecticut.

Now some may ask why impose a fee on trucks? Because at this moment, Connecticut taxpayers are subsidizing the tremendous wear and tear that large tractor trailers have on our highways. Just maintaining and repairing the damage of large trucks, it costs us an estimated \$95 million a year. One federal study found that a fully loaded tractor trailer, it does the equivalent damage of 9600 passenger cars, 9,600.

Nearly every state on the eastern seaboard asks their trucking companies to contribute to pay for the outsized damage that they have on the roads. And they usually do so through tolls. Of course, here in Connecticut, we live in the land of steady habits. We don't have tolls. So instead we ask everyday taxpayers to foot the Bill for commercial trucking's impact.

This Legislation, it lessens that burden. It requires that those largest tractor trailers, those vehicles that have the most wear and tear pay back the Connecticut taxpayer for the damage that they incur.

And most importantly, Madam President, the revenue from this Bill, it has the potential to transform transportation in this state for a generation. The estimated \$90 million in annual revenue would allow this state to increase the transportation capital program by 1.15 billion over the next five years.

That's a staggering sum. That expanded capital program would allow us to tackle a litany of long overdue transportation projects. Those include, but certainly are not limited to easing congestion along I-95, something I know that many of my colleagues care deeply about improving the I-681 in Route 15 interchange, expanding interstate truck parking, modernizing the Stamford train station, purchasing new dual powered locomotives. They can connect the branch lines like Waterbury and Danbury directly to New York, a new local road safety program.

A rural transportation improvement program that will make historic and frankly long overdue investments in areas that are traditionally underserved by public transportation. So I look forward to answering questions from my colleagues tonight, and happy to engage in the discussion further, but let me just close by saying, Madam President, let's stop kicking the can down the road when it comes to funding transportation projects, let's stop giving these trucking companies a free ride while Connecticut taxpayers pay for all of the damage that they incur on our public transit.

This is a common sense Bill to enact a small mileage fee and in turn, invest billions in our transportation infrastructure. I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Good evening, Madam Speaker. I rise to say a few words. I don't know if I'll be asking any questions tonight, but Madam President, we're not kicking the can down the road. You know, the STF has been a problem for years and it started back as a very flush account. And when this was first implemented

in eighties, it was the general fund eventually ran into fiscal issues. Monies was flush in the STF, but we took, we transferred expenditures from the GF, the general fund, and we shifted them, we shifted them over to the STF.

And it began with the expenditures from the DOT with their wages and salaries, and then it moved over to some of their benefits. And then the Department of Vehicles also their benefit package moved over. And now what we have had is this reoccurring deficit in the special transportation fund.

So had we not diverted or shifted over some of those expenditures we would have a very flush account and monies that should have been placed in this special transportation fund that was diverted close to over a Billion dollars. So if we are not kicking the can down the road, this has been self-inflicted in my opinion.

And regarding this Bill, regarding the truck mileage tax, this is simply a tolls and disguise. Madam President, if we move forward with this piece of Legislation, we are going to do the same thing that we've been doing all along, we're using all strategies and that is, we need to raise revenue when this STF fund is in dire straits.

And regarding this mileage tax today, it's the trucks, but tomorrow it's going to be the vehicles. There's been a lot of work from a lot of people out in the public have been shouting back, don't do this, stop the toll tax, or stop the, we called it the gas tax. And regarding this piece of Legislation to stop the food tax. We know that the costs of the truckers are going to be paying on these the miles traveled.

And by the way, just to be clear, you know, I think people have the impression that this, the miles traveled, the miles traveled by these companies are going to be on route 8495, but highway -- definition

of highway and that is in the statutes, it makes it clear that a highway includes any state or other public highway road, street, avenue, alley, driveway, parkway place, or dedicated roadway for bus rapid transit service under the control of the state or any political subdivision of the state dedicated appropriated or open to public travel or other yields.

So, basically, Madam President, the truckers are going to be paying for fee from the moment that they crossed the borders of the State of Connecticut and then into any town in our state.

So Madam President, I'm not going to say anything more. I've, you know, you've heard me probably quite a bit starting back two years ago regarding the tolls and this, I guess exchanging the tolls to this truck mileage tax, I know it's a disguise. Eventually, we will be, it'll be vehicles after this.

So Madam President, I will not be supporting this Bill.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I will be brief, although some of my friends and colleagues chuckle when I say brief, because brief to me is sometimes different. I get carried away with the passion of the moment.

I stand in opposition to this for a variety of reasons, and I think my good friend and colleague, Senator Martin nailed a lot of this on the head, but it's been a distinct pleasure for the last several years to serve on the Transportation Committee.

Clearly, we have issues regarding funding for our special transportation fund, but a lot of that can be laid at our feet and I'm not going to pick on one party or another, but the legislature as a whole does not often fund the special transportation fund the way it should be funded. Sometimes there's revenues that are being directed towards that fund that don't get there. And sometimes there's things that are distinctly on the horizon that we wait unfortunately until it's right on top of us before we respond.

But fundamentally, this is a tax in my view. One can ascribe it to the wear and tear on the roadways by these trucks, the various sizes of the trucks. But I don't feel that that's an appropriate way to address this issue. And clearly, it's my understanding that truckers already keep meticulous track of the mileage that they do and that all of this gets pooled in one central database. And then this information is disseminated amongst all the states. So, there's already a system regarding part of this.

If I'm trucker and I've just gotten through this pandemic and it's, and the economy has been very difficult, some of these smaller businesses are hand to mouth. I have no choice. I have no choice, but to as quickly as possible pass these costs so long. So when we hear certain individuals out there protesting, and I was one of them along with probably 40 to 50 people up in north central, Connecticut on Route 5 and Field Street in Enfield, protesting the gasoline tax, which thankfully our friends on the other side of the aisle and the Majority Party have determined, lacked sufficient support to put into any kind of a finance package, this biennium and that's great news and I applaud that.

But this you know, has been considered a food tax, but it could also be for home heating oil. It could

be for retail goods. I mean, the trends move the products, and I can't absorb this additional cost being in the trucking business, I have no choice. I can lay off my employees, which that just drives businesses into the ground, or I can pass these costs along as best I can. And if I pass them along to a grocery store, larger small chain or family owned, to a retail establishment, you name it. Those costs are going to be now, this tax is now going to be embedded in the price of these products.

And the people in my neck of the woods are struggling. A lot of them, their hours were cut way back and they're, they're really looking at how to pay their Bills. The tax rate in Connecticut, we all know is very, very high. The cost of living in Connecticut is extraordinarily high. The last thing our economy needs is for the working families, the middle-class families in particular, in our state to have additional burdens, just to put food on their table and just to get the necessity of life for their families and their children.

And that's what's going to happen. It's as easy as one plus one equals two. I represent a lot of towns in north central Connecticut, border towns. I'm always frustrated because not only are they border towns, but we're in competition, up in my neck of the woods with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And you know, it doesn't take rocket science to figure out if they have cheaper taxes for gasoline, for cigarettes, for alcohol and other commodities, people are just going to take that 5, 10, 15 minute ride up the road up 91 or whatever road, Route 20, and they're going to go into the Commonwealth and do their purchasing there.

So not only do we lose all that retail business, but we lose all that revenue to the good Commonwealth north of us. Hey, we're a smart state. You know, that statute out there of genius of Connecticut, we're really creative, hardworking people. We can do better. I want Connecticut to be the shining

city on the hill. I want us to be an island of growth and prosperity where truckers want to come here and gas up and do everything that they got to do, not avoid us like the play, because there's going to be this additional tax.

And if they are compelled to drive through the state of Connecticut, then they're just going to have to pass it along. And as Senator Martin pointed out, we're not just talking about 84, 95 and 91 and the other major interstate highways, you know, we've got a lot of secondary roads that are classified as state roads that would be dragged into this as well.

I mean, how do you get the products to the stores? How do you get the home heating oil to the residences? How do you do all this? You got to truck it. And if people think all this stuff has done by rail, there's a lot by rail, but rail is typically like large scale stuff, not refined products, things that are easily put on trucks. I think somewhere between 80 and 90% of everything that gets transported as far as goods and food are in trucks.

And so I don't want to see this tax and call it what you will, some sort of user fee, tomato, tomato. A levy on people's wallets is a tax by any other name. This is bad public policy in a state that is just brimming with resources and funds between federal monies that we've never seen in our lifetime in response to the pandemic, revenues for an economy that's slowly inching up and finally turning itself around, people going back to work. our rainy day fund, larger than I can ever imagine.

The last thing we need to do is dip our hands in people's wallets. And that's what the gas tax or this trucking tax will do. Wall it a highway fee, but it's a trucking tax and it's going to go right to the products, which is going to go right to the prices, which is going to go right to people's

budgets at exactly the wrong time as if there's ever a right time.

So I would urge my colleagues, take a step back from this proposal and vote no. Our working class families and our middle-class families and the good people of the state of Connecticut pay enough already and they do not deserve to have any more money lifted out of their paychecks and pocket books. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to ask a few questions off the proponent of the Bill, if.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir. Senator Haskell, prepare yourself.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I wanted to ask through you, is there a mention of tolls in this Bill?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank my good friend for the question and through, you know, the Bill does not mention tolls.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. So when somebody says that this is a toll Bill, is that inaccurate?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

This Bill does not in any way bring tolls to Connecticut or change the status quo, which is that we are the only state on the eastern seaboard without tolls. So I guess the answer to the good Senator's question is that it would not be accurate to say that this Bill impacts tolls in the State of Connecticut.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. And the Madam President, through you, does this Bill talk about any tax or any costs or any revenue generation from cars?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

No, Madam President it's far more narrow than that. Not only does it not apply to cars, it also doesn't even apply to all trucks. It applies only to the

heaviest trucks on our road. In order to qualify for this highway use tax, a truck would have to weigh more than 26,000 pounds and be a class eight truck or above.

For those who aren't familiar, class eight truck is a single trailer, three or four axle trucks. So we were talking about the very heaviest commercial vehicles on our roads and highways.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, Madam President, for somebody to suggest that theoretically in future at some point, in the history, sorry, in the future that somebody may actually talk about car tax or revenue, is that a way to make a decision about a Bill now? Is that a usual thing? I just want to clarify is there, because I could not understand that, that somebody made a comment that this means cars are going to be next and then therefore we should not do the immediate need for what needs to be done.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Again, I appreciate the good Senator's line of inquiry. I would say that the slippery slope argument comes up frequently in this building. I'm generally, I personally don't find it to be very convincing to any change in the land of steady habits is hard-fought. This Bill is quite narrow in what it authorizes, which is asking those very heaviest commercial vehicles on our roads, those trucks that weigh over 26,000 pounds,

which do the equivalent damage of 9,600 cars. It asks them to contribute. It does no more and no less. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, Madam President, can the good Senator share with us about the special transportation fund and its status and its future if we do nothing.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This is a question I've been dying to answer, and I should have mentioned it in my opening remarks. So thank you to my friend, Senator Anwar for raising this issue. The special transportation fund relies primarily on gas tax revenue, as well as revenue from the sales tax on motor vehicles.

Now the problem is, and it's a really great problem to have, cars are becoming more fuel efficient, more people drive electric vehicles. I know some friends in this circle drive electric vehicles. People are visiting the pump less often. And as a result, gas tax revenues are not the reliable source of source of income for the STF that they once were.

All of this means, Madam President, that the special transportation fund is unfortunately not going to -- it is rapidly approaching insolvency. In fact, by 2025, the fund will be in deficit and by 2026, the situation will become quite bleak. All that is to say that we've got a few more years, perhaps if we

do nothing where we could fill some potholes, we certainly couldn't tackle major transportation investments.

And after that, Madam President, I'm not even sure how this state could afford to do the bare minimum. And that's a problem, of course, regardless of what side of the aisle or what political party or what candidate you prefer, everybody in this state wants to see a more modern 21st century transportation system that allows them to get to work a little bit sooner in a manner that's efficient and most importantly, to get home to their families and to their kids a little bit sooner, and to not sit in traffic.

Everybody wants transportation improvements. I know the harder part of the conversation is how we pay for those transportation improvements. But I think a really productive place for this conversation to go is to look at the actors that are doing the most wear and tear that are doing the most damage to our infrastructure and ask them to pay just as they pay into other states.

And by the way, I didn't mention this in my opening remarks, but what we're asking about, Madam President is minuscule. Across the entire State of Connecticut, it might, it might cost a fully loaded tractor trailer 10 or \$15, now to get across the GW bridge in New York, it's going to cost that same truck one way over a hundred dollars.

So this is a very small amount of money that we were asking them to contribute, given the tremendous impact, negative impact that they have on our infrastructure.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Haskell. Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you so much, through you, for answering that question. And I think that brings me to the next question right now. I got scared when I heard my colleagues say that if this Bill passes suddenly the cost of all the foods is going to go up and then we will not be able to afford the food. But when I look at the numbers that were suggested that it's \$15 for the State of Connecticut, as opposed to just George Washington bridge, it's a hundred dollars for that.

So if -- let's say there was food being transported from Florida to Connecticut, can the good Senator walk us through, how is the cost going to be included all the way to the borders of Connecticut and then with the Bill and without the Bill going forward, if you -- through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Sure. Thank you, Madam President. Let me start with the current situation. And I thank the good Senator for his question. Connecticut, of course, stands alone in not asking out of state drivers or trucking companies to contribute to the upkeep of our roads. We generously, I think foolishly decided to pay for that all by ourselves.

But of course, a truck that travels up from Florida, for example, pays a user fees as it uses those roads and highways all along the way. Now, there isn't any business that I'm aware of that decides to add the cost to pass down the cost of those user fees, exclusively to the states that charge them. In other words, if a truck travels from Florida and pays user fees and red states and blue states all along the eastern seaboard, well, then when they drop off their goods in Connecticut, Connecticut

consumers are already paying the cost for those infrastructure improvements because they're not, they're not passing it down just to one state.

That business of course is going to pass it down to the entirety of their customer base. So in many ways we're already paying here in Connecticut. But let's, let's look at the numbers if this Legislation actually were enacted, Let's take, for example, a truck, a beer truck that's bringing cargo through Connecticut. Let's say they travel through the entire state without dropping off any of their cargo along the way.

So they're fully loaded a beer truck. I've learned Madam President, when fully loaded weighs 78,000 pounds that carries, let's see, 43,000 beers, 43,000 beers in a fully loaded truck. Now to get from one side of the state to the other, let's do east to west, for example it would cost that truck \$9.86, \$9.86.

Now take that \$9.86 and divided by the 43,000 beers in the truck. It is true. The business could decide to pass along that cost, but if they do so, it will, it will add 150th of one penny to the price of each beer. I don't think that this is a significant given the fact that that truck, as soon as it crosses through my district, crosses over the New York border and travels over the GW bridge is going to pay over a hundred dollars. They're going to pay a highway use fee or a toll in nearly every other state.

It's time that Connecticut gained some of the revenue rather than simply subsidizing the infrastructure improvements elsewhere.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, I just want to clarify 150th of one penny. Is that what I heard?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

So this is just one example. We could do it with eggs or bread, but if you just look at beer and you look at the 43,000 cans or bottles of beer, that that average truck carries, and you look at the \$9.86 that it would cost. And yes, the answer to the good Senator's questions that it would add to each beer, 150th of one penny. I think that most Connecticut residents would gladly pay that on their next beer in exchange for trains that arrived on time and roads that weren't jammed with traffic.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I can only imagine the credit card machines going to that level of one out of -- 150th of a cent. That will be a lot of, it's like cryptocurrency by that time.

I wanted to also clarify Madam President, if one of these trucks, the heavy trucks, which actually destroys our roads like 9,000 vehicles, if it is going from Massachusetts to New York and beyond, and it just crosses Connecticut, do we get to get some of the revenue from that as well?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate the good Senator's questions. So the highway use tax as proposed by this Bill essentially looks at the weight of the truck, the gross weight of the commercial carrier and multiplies it by the number of vehicles traveled, even if cargo isn't dropped off in the State of Connecticut.

Of course, I think the good Senator makes a great point. We are a pass through state. It's hard to avoid Connecticut as you're traveling up the eastern seaboard, if you're traveling between the major metropolitan centers of New York and Boston, it's really challenging to avoid the State of Connecticut. Right now, they get a free ride if they were to cross through, they would pay for the miles traveled under this Legislation.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I just wanted to mention before even when my colleague Senator Haskell brought this Bill out, he asked me what my views were. I said I'm not sure if I'm going to vote for this Bill because I needed to clarify some things, because I had heard these sound bites and these sound bites were very concerning to me.

And after learning about the sound bites that we will go broke the, we will not be able to afford food. There's going to be a drought and then all sorts of things that I heard, it was scaring me. I was just worried, what's this Bill going to have? I started to read this Bill. I couldn't find that.

So there's no mention of the car. There's no mention of the toll. There is actually 40% of the truck traffic, the heavy truck traffic that goes from the State of Connecticut does not even stop at the State of Connecticut unless they're getting gas or unless somebody wants to use the restroom. And most of them are passing through and we are actually subsidizing their journey and the destruction of a road by having our community pay for it.

For how long? And I think that's the issue. Do we want to give this for a specific lobby that somebody wants to satisfy to say, "Okay, Hey guys, abuse our roads and then you have a free ride. No problem. We will continue to pay for it." And we will be the only state in this entire region that will pay for it. And that's not a sustainable model.

Now, there is obviously, the people take a political position and they want to sell their idea, but the food part, let's look at those numbers, it's not fair to give misinformation in my mind when people are saying that there's going to be a cost to the food to the level, that people will not be able to eat anymore for like one for, for one beer or one egg, probably it's going to be 150th of a cent. That's something that I think maybe we need to be more accurate in some of those understandings.

And this is very helpful. I'm glad I was able to ask and clarify those questions. I truly appreciate Senator Haskell's leadership in that. Thank you, Madam President. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Good evening, Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Delivered to the caucus room was a sheet, it's got a lot of different trucks on it and I'm not sure where it came from, but I'm assuming it's a description of what is going to be, well, it says non-tolled vehicles and tolled vehicles, and it lists all the classes one through 13.

And I'm understanding here in the white section is class eight through 13. And those of the classifications in which they would pay a mileage tax. Is that correct, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Yes, I thank the good Senator for his question. Let me just very briefly reiterate the motor vehicles, I'm sorry, the carriers that would be subject to the highway use tax. They would need to weigh more than 26,000 pounds. They would need to be a class eight or above, and they couldn't be exempted as this Bill was Amended by the House as any carriers that are transporting dairy products to or from a dairy farm.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So with that, I do have a couple questions I'd like to ask the proponent of the Bill for legislative intent and for clarification. And the first question I have is the highway use tax will apply to vehicles that have a gross weight each end carry a classification between class eight and 13 as determined by the federal highway administration. Is that correct, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

That's correct. Madam President, through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And can the good Senator confirm that truck's utilized in the waste and recycling industry specifically garbage trucks that serve residential customers, a dumpster hauler or roll-off trucks and front loaders that pick up and empty dumpsters do not fall into the category of a class eight or above

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So that industry itself is not explicitly exempt under this Legislation. However, it depends just like any other industry as to what type of truck, the hauler or other, other type of commercial vehicle is driving. If it's a trailer and not a single unit truck, well then perhaps, but some, some of the haulers, I think it might, I think many of the haulers are not class eight. Many of them are single unit class seven or class six, based on my understanding of the industry and therefore they would not be subject to that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And if a hauler or any business in the State of Connecticut wanted to, based on the answer, to get a legal opinion or what they believe they'd like to know what their vehicle is classified as, where would they turn to, or what agency, could they present the vehicle or a picture of thereof and say what classes this fall under? So we know ahead of time, whether it's going to be subject to this mileage tax or not? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank my good friend for his question. I am certain that our Department of Transportation could quickly and easily advise us to what class the vehicle is, whether it is a class eight or above. At this point I think, you know, we could sit here in the circle and define each of the classes. So it wouldn't be a hard, a hard determination to make.

After that though, Madam President, the program will be administered by the Department of Revenue services. So I think that more detailed questions about a specific industries, potential tax obligations, should this Legislation being acted should be directed to that state department.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. Well, I understand that. I understand why we would ask those questions of the agency that's, that will be responsible for running the organization, but I'm not sure that they're expertise in motor vehicle classifications, is up there with the DOT.

So if this Bill becomes law, would there be time for the various businesses in the state to go to the Department of Transportation and get a ruling if they're not sure on, I mean, sometimes it's very clear, but there may be some instances where they don't know if this particular vehicle in their fleet meets a class eight or above or it's below. Would they go to the Department of Transportation and then maybe get a letter that they could hold or how do they have proof that whatever the classification is? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Through you, I would say for the purpose of legislative intent that I'm sure that the FHWA as well as of course, our Department of Motor Vehicles would be happy to weigh in on the individual circumstances. It would be the responsibility of the Department of Revenue services to issue a ruling.

This highway use tax, if enacted by this Chamber and signed into law by the Governor would not come online, so to speak until 2023. So there would be time for these businesses to determine the right level of classification for their carriers.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And the Bill provides the term carrier that we're talking about. The vehicles does not include the state or any political subdivision of the state, the United States, or the federal government.

But my question is when a carrier is a party to a contract with the state, quasi-public agency, political subdivision of the state, does the highway use tax apply to the carrier when the carrier is rendering services to public pursuant to the contract? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. As the good Senator mentioned, specifically exempted in this Legislation are carriers that are either carrying mail or in some other way, can conduct into public's business. So I would have to seek greater clarification in a moment if a carrier contracting with the state would specifically be exempted, but any truck owned by the State of Connecticut, the federal government or town the postal service, for example, would be exempt.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I believe that if, you know, the carrier is stepping into the shoes of the -- working for the public entity, they have a contract. Well, my presumption would be that the tax would not apply similar to when those services are rendered like other taxes would not be

applicable, but I'd be happy to stand at ease for a moment while the good Senator can have that research, so we can get this on the record. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

We can stand at ease for a moment.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Oh, that's okay, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell, please proceed then.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you. Through you, I was able to find the relevant portion of the Bill. So I thank the good Senator for his indulgence. The short answer is if the truck is delivering goods to a state agency, then they would be subject to the highway use tax. If they were performing a public service and actually carrying out the business of a state agency through a contract or some other mechanism, then they would not be subject.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And thank you to Senator Haskell. I believe that clarifies the intent for me and that's all the questions I have at this time. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Good evening, we are just on the cusp of morning. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you. Madam President, If we wait for a few more ticks of the clock, I can say good morning to you. Thank you very much. I rise for one question for the proponent of the Bill if I may.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good morning, Senator Haskell. May I ask sir the projected revenue anticipated for this policy, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Absolutely, Madam President. The projected revenue is \$90 million per year.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. I have no further questions. Madam President, this is, you know, again, another tax. We all know we need to do something about transportation. We all know that we need to fix roads and bridges. The conversation was far more robust last year than it

has been this year, but the fact remains that we still need to have the opportunity to do better on our roads and bridges and our infrastructure.

Madam President, you may remember when Republicans offered an opportunity to improve roads and bridges through a plan, we call it faster Connecticut, and that was widely panned at the time, and people, you know, kind of ridiculed us for, you know, taking money proposed out of the budget reserve fund, but, you know, hindsight is always a little better served than foresight.

And I just want to share a few numbers if I may. Madam President, had we done the program as suggested back in 2019 by taking 1.5 billion out of the budget reserve fund at that time at 2.5 billion, it would have left this with one, a little over \$1 billion. By investing that per statute into the liabilities, we would have saved a 126 million in the general fund and debt service. So we would have had the opportunity to put that money toward transportation. Madam President, we would have exceeded by \$30 million, the projected revenue for this tax.

Madam President, in addition to that, the deposits that would have occurred since that time would have brought our rainy day fund to its present level. We would have added over 1.6 billion in fiscal '21, which is 2.6 billion and then the projected 22 proposal that we're going to put in would have, would have replaced it.

So Madam President, and I say that because there are other opportunities than just taxes and I wanted to have it on the table. We understand that and appreciate the efforts that everybody has to want to improve our infrastructure. But if we could sit and talk with each other and have conversations with each other solutions, sometimes I think are better served. And I will be opposing this tax. And I thank you, Madam President for the opportunity. And

it is now good morning to you and I only took a few minutes, so thank you. Thank you, Senator Haskell for your help on my answer.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. And good morning, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good morning to you. Good morning to you. Good morning to everybody in the Chamber. As we have less than now 24 hours to go in our legislative session, Madam President, I rise in supportive Legislation. I want to thank Senator Haskell for his work on this and bringing what are any time we propose pretty much any type of a fee or user fee in transportation always a difficult lift for sure. Because in this country we view our roads as uniquely American and that should be free.

But we know that that is not the case and that we see time and time again, where the lack of investment based on use ensures that we will have gridlock and we won't build our economies. Matter of fact, one of the ways in which we build a strong economy, a number of ways is having housing for the people of this state, an affordable housing, workforce housing. We have a good education system and a transportation network, a transportation system that is reliable and consistent.

We have anything but that in Connecticut, we do not have a reliable and consistent transportation system because of the fact that we have not made the proper investments in transportation for many decades. We have worked hard at this. We have spent more money in over the last 10 years than we have previously, but that has still not been enough.

And the transportation investment needed in this state far outweighs the resources that we have to

pay for those. And so we then have to look towards ways in which we can pay for those transportation investments and look to those who use transportation the most, or have the most bearing on the costs and, and the infrastructure in our state. And that comes down to some of our heaviest vehicles.

And so Madam President, I think that this is a fair proposal to ask those who actually contribute to the decay of our transportation system to actually help pay for that. We know that in Fairfield County traffic and congestion costs the average motorist about \$1,700 per year. It's a little bit less than that in the rest of the state. But nonetheless, if people say they don't want to pay for upgrades, that's the cost per motorist in our transportation system, around the state.

So that's the tax and that's a hidden tax because they're sitting in traffic, we're not able to invest in our roads and our highways, our transportation system, our trains, and our buses, our bike ways, and other ways to get people around this state. And that is, that is the tax that people don't see, but they feel it each and every day. When you can't get around the state because of the lack of investment that we have.

In this Bill there will be a number of good investments that this state will be making to help continue to move our state forward. We have to view transportation as a priority, as a way to build a better economy, as a way to grow jobs, as a way to grow our state's population, and as a way to make sure that Connecticut is moving forward.

We have in Norwalk we have a railroad bridge that is the walk bridge that is over a hundred years old. And when that, when the swing bridge opens and it gets locked because it is so old in the open position and the trains can't get across, whether it's Amtrak or Metro north. And the Northeast corridor is stopped. That is a hundred million

dollars per day to the regional economy. That's a tax because we have not invested in our transportation system.

So we're -- now we're trying to fix that with the billion dollar investment, not only on the walk bridge, but bridges around that, that have literally been around for hundreds of years. They probably are historic bridges, but they don't work. So we have to fix it. We wonder why other countries around the world are growing our economy faster than we are, is because they're investing in transportation and we're not, we have not been.

This country needs to invest in transportation if we're going to grow our economy. The state needs to invest in transportation for going to grow our economy. And Madam President, this is a very tangible step in order to do that. And I am just appreciative of Senator Haskell and his work to Transportation Committee, the Governor and others who are bringing this forward because while some may say that this is a fee that will, that will increase prices in one ways, the fees and taxes that people are paying right now by sitting in congestion, inhaling pollution, not being able to get to point A to point B, sitting in trains because the bridges are in a stay open in a stuck position mean that we're not able to get people back and forth where they need to be, and we can't grow this economy.

So Madam President, I urge my colleagues to support this Legislation. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Good morning, Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Good morning, Madam President. The reality is simple, Connecticut is unaffordable. And I don't

care where you go, who you run into, or how many times we've heard it, people in Connecticut realize and experience this underperforming economy, the financial burdens, and the expenses of living in our state that just make it unaffordable so much so that people are leaving Connecticut.

And when our youth grow up and graduate from school or go off to college, they find jobs elsewhere because other states are more affordable. We're the second, second, highest taxed citizenry in the country. And initiatives like this, I guess the focus is trying to become number one.

We have the highest electric rates in the continental US. So we're high in taxes, high in the cost of electricity, but dead last in job growth, dead last, dead last in personal income growth. These jobs and money raises those are what make living in Connecticut more affordable. We lost 122,000 jobs last year during the pandemic. And we never got back 119,000 jobs from the great recession.

So when this Bill comes forward and calls this a highway use fee it's a tax, you can call it whatever you want, however many times you want, whether it's a fee and assessment, whatever, but if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, quacks like a duck, it's a duck. And any time government puts its hand in people's wallet, it's a tax, plain and simple.

This is a tax that will be get passed onto Connecticut families in the form of higher grocery costs, more expensive home heating oil, higher prices on goods transported in our state. It's not just trucks coming from out of state in New York, going to Rhode Island that are using our roads for free. It's trucks that originate in Bridgeport, make deliveries all over Connecticut and return to Bridgeport or New Haven or Stratford or Hartford.

And when we put a tax on their, their job, first of all, it makes it more difficult to grow more jobs, but that cost gets passed along. That's how the economics work. So this plain and simple putting an easy to understand sentence is a truck tax.

According to the Connecticut Food Association, the truck tax will increase the annual family grocery bill on average by \$500. And we know based on COVID and what's been going on that the costs at the grocery store have been going up, going up significantly. And depending upon what you choose in the grocery aisles, you may experience a higher price than other items.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the grocery prices are increasing across the country, and they're going up. A professor from, or a professor in some practice supply chain management at Syracuse University, and I'm not a fan of Syracuse. I graduated from UConn, so bear with me. Okay. He said earlier this year that he expects prices to steadily rise over the next several months. We had a suspicion that prices were going to go up. But I don't think we realized how bad it was going to be.

The whole supply chain is increasing and nobody wants to absorb the cost. So unfortunately, the person or people that are going to bear it are the consumers. That's Connecticut's families. We put a cost onto the delivery of goods. It gets passed on to the consumer. How many times have we called? You name it. You do online now because of our COVID behavior. You do Instacart. You make your, your order, and there's a service charge, and it's passed on to the family to have that delivered to your door, to think that the company's going to absorb this and eat the cost. Is just not, not true.

Nestle, the world's biggest food company warned it won't be able to hedge all its commodity costs and it's raising prices. And now here in Connecticut, the majority is moving forward to tax trucks that

bring these groceries to our state and within our state. The very people we praised as frontline essential workers during the pandemic who went above and beyond to transport necessities to us, when we could not go very far ourselves would be the target of this tax.

And the tax will be passed on, as I said to our families, touching all lives in very, very, I'm going to say difficult ways.

Now, turning the focus a little, we've heard a lot from the majority that says the trucks use our roads for free. Again, let's be clear, trucks already pay \$40 million in tax to the State of Connecticut, 40 million. Where I come from, that's not free. That's not a free ride. That's a pretty expensive ride. And the money grabbed that's going on here tonight is 90 million. So it's more than doubling what those trucks already pay.

So to say that they're not paying their fair share, isn't being straight and the tax we're putting on them isn't fair either. This isn't just a few cents on a few beers. It's a lot more than that. And I think across Connecticut, when you say \$40 million or \$90 million, people will say that's a lot of money. It's not just a small tax. It's a pretty big tax.

So this truck tax is a move towards tolls by any other name in any other format, but it's a move towards tolls and attacks on our roads. It's being done also at a time when Connecticut is sitting on a \$500 million surplus. We are awash with over \$7 billion in federal money and a historic high \$4.5 billion rainy day fund.

Madam President, we do not need more taxes. We do not need more financial burdens on middle-class families. Now, what we do need is a financial break for those families. What we need is leadership to make our state more affordable, and Connecticut

Republicans have proposed a better way that can make the needed investments in infrastructure, but doing so without new taxes and new financial burdens and new costs on Connecticut's families.

We must make our state more affordable. We must improve our economy, grow jobs, and make Connecticut the place where people can afford to live, afford to work, and afford to raise a family. New taxes like this \$90 million tax on our food only make it that much more difficult for Connecticut families to survive in our state and puts that belief of working, living, and raising a family that much further out of reach.

I would urge my colleagues to focus on that and dwell on that when we cast our vote on this truck tax. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark further? Good morning, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good morning, Madam President, then it's good to see you stalwart at your post as usual, whatever the hour. Madam President, I rise in support of the Emergency Certified Bill and want to commend Senator Haskell for his work as Chair of Transportation on this issue and on, on so many others.

First of all, the reality is although we have a temporary infusion of federal money in the next couple of years for this biennium and perhaps some of it to extend into the year beyond the biennium. The reality is that long-term planning for transportation needs, requires revenue streams going beyond that. And that is why this proposal I think is necessary. We do have a need for a stronger commitment to infrastructure repair.

Now I think if the Republican proposal to raid the budget reserve rainy day fund and use it for transportation purposes had been acted upon, we would have run into a severe problem during the pandemic and would be in far worse shape than we are today fiscally.

What I think is fair and equitable about this proposal as that it does not establish a flat rate on vehicles of all kinds, but we are looking at is to try to apportion the burden to those vehicles that plays the most burden and wear and tear on our roads and bridges as they travel. And this Bill accomplishes that establishing a per mile tax rate that begins at two and a half cents per mile for vehicles weighing 26 to 28,000 pounds up to 17 and a half cents a mile for those weigh more than 80,000 pounds and placing the greatest weight burden. There is, there is equity in this.

And Madam President, I think that those of us who were always interested in looking for equitable progressive ways to meet the state's revenue needs can find that in this proposal because of the portions, the greatest burden to those who caused the greatest burden in terms of wear and tear.

Also Madam President, it's important to note that the vehicle is not subject to this fee includes classes one through seven motorcycles, passenger cars, pickups, panel trucks, and vans, buses, single unit two axle trucks, single unit three axle trucks, single unit four plus axle trucks. And those subject began only with classes eight through 13, single trailer, three or four axle trucks, single trailer, five axle trucks, single trailer six plus axle trucks, multiple trailer five or fewer axle trucks, multiple trailers six axle trucks and multiple trailer seven plus axle trucks.

Those are the heavyweight vehicles that impose the most burden and wear and tear. And this is targeted in that way. It will raise additional revenue for

the special transportation fund, which is in need of sustaining revenue beyond the period of the temporary bonanza that we are seeing from the federal funds in all categories that creates a somewhat skewed picture for the next couple of years only.

So Madam President, I urge support of this proposal as a responsible contribution toward supporting our special transportation fund. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark? Will you remark further? If not, I will open the voting machine and Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the roll call vote?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6888. This is House Bill 6688, an act concerning a highway use fee. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6688. This is an act concerning a highway use fee. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, House Bill 6688. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 6688. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6688. 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. This is House Bill 6688. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6688. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

On House Bill 6688, AN ACT CONCERNING A HIGHWAY USE  
FEE:

Total Number Voting	36
Total voting Yea	22
Total voting Nay	14
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The Legislation passes. (Gavel)

Good morning, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good morning, Madam President. Madam President, I'd  
like to mark Calendar Page 18, Calendar 432, House  
Bill 6633, mark that go and put that on our Consent  
Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Can we now have a vote  
on the Consent Calendar, please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar 2, Page 18, Calendar 432, House  
Bill 6633. Immediate roll call vote has been

ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 2.  
Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Consent  
Calendar No. 2. This is Consent Calendar No. 2.  
Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Consent  
Calendar No. 2 as House Bill 6633, Consent Calendar  
No. 2. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate,  
House Bill 6633, Consent Calendar No. 2. Immediate  
roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, can we  
just pull this item off our Consent Calendar and  
we'll have a vote on the Bill, please. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Yes. So we will cancel the vote on the Consent  
Calendar and we will -- Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Madam President. Madam President, would  
the Clerk as our next item to go, can call Calendar  
Page 33, Calendar 574, House Bill 6484?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk

CLERK:

Page 33, Calendar No. 574, House Bill 6484. AN ACT  
CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION.

THE CHAIR:

And good morning, Senator Duff. I mean, Senator Haskell, excuse me. It's late.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

No problem, Madam President. I move -- 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. I very briefly let me just say that this Bill makes a variety of technical changes to our statutes that were requested by our Department of Transportation. I want to start by thanking the good Ranking Member Senator Somers as well as Representative Carney.

The process has been truly bipartisan of course, Representative Roland Lemar in the House. The House Chair of the Transportation Committee has been an incredible partner in shepherding this Bill through. And of course, I did this the other night, so I'll be much briefer because the hours early. But this Bill would not be in the shape that it is in without the tremendous help from our nonpartisan staff, Katrina, Heather, Patrick, and Phil who helped every step of the way.

Let me very briefly run through some highlights of the Bill and of course, happy to answer any questions that my colleagues have. First of all, at the request of our Department of Transportation, this Bill prohibits crossing a bridge with a vehicle that exceeds the posted weight limit, and it increases the penalty for driving under bridges while exceeding the posted clearance.

We know that very often, this causes not only tremendous damage to our infrastructure, but can also cause major backups on our highways creating greater clarity and also a little bit stronger enforcement is going to help to ease congestion and make sure that are very many more than 350 structurally deficient bridges remain standing.

We also prohibit in this Bill, smoking and vaping in any area of a platform or shelter at a bus or rail facility. Previously, Madam President, there was some lack of clarity as to whether the smoking ban at public transit facilities applied only to those that were partially enclosed. So in Section 14, we clarify that issue.

I'll also add very briefly Madam President, that an issue that's near and dear to my heart is the New Canaan and Danbury branch lines, which of course run through the 26th District. I've been very honored to work with Senator Kasser, Representative Dathan, Representative Tom O'Dea in including a provision in this Bill that requires the Department of Transportation to regularly report to this legislature, to the Committee of Cognizant, which is of course the Transportation Committee.

On the status of installing a long overdue side rail on the New Canaan line that will allow for passing paving the way for greater frequency in terms of service on that branch line and greater frequency of direct service into New York, which so many commuters are desperately waiting for.

Also included in that report, Madam President, the Department of Transportation is going to have to provide an update to the legislature on the status of direct service along the Danbury branch line, directly into Manhattan. We know that there are a very limited number of trains the travel directly into Manhattan every day. Under this Bill, as well as the highway use tax that this Legislature and this Chamber just approved. The Department of

Transportation will be empowered to buy six dual powered locomotives, enabling trains to ride directly into Manhattan, perhaps even to Penn station. This Bill will ensure that the legislature is keep -- is kept apprised of those developments.

I also want to thank Senator Marilyn Moore, who represents Trumbull and Bridgeport for working so hard on an issue that's been before the legislature for some time, which has to do with the Kennedy Center, a nonprofit, which does excellent work in Trumbull and Bridgeport.

This Bill requires the Department of Transportation to establish a two year pilot program that would allow certain service vehicles owned or under contract with nonprofit organizations, transporting seniors or people with disabilities to use the parkway under certain conditions. Of course, they must meet the size requirements that I mentioned earlier to pass under those sometimes narrow and low hanging bridges on the merit.

But Madam President, what we've heard from this nonprofit over the years is that it's incredibly burdensome the prohibition from their vans, being able to use the merit given the location of their facilities.

I will just close Madam President by thanking Senator Cohen for fighting so hard for a provision in this Legislation that allows small towns, specifically land trust in those small towns to enforce municipal ordinances against the use of all-terrain vehicles. These can prove dangerous for pedestrians, for hikers, trying to avoid -- trying to enjoy our public lands in Connecticut municipalities with more than 20,000 people are allowed to enact municipal ordinances and seize ATVs in the event that a municipal ordinance is violated.

Under this Legislation municipalities with fewer than 200 -- than 20,000 people would have the very

same rights. So thank you to Senator Cohen and thank you to Representative Candelora for their work on that provision.

There are other elements of this Bill, things that are near and dear to my heart, like the Office of Innovative Finance and Project Delivery, which is going to allow our Department of Transportation to accelerate the pace with which we transition to a 21st century green infrastructure allowing that department to tackle major transformative investments that they currently are unable to do under the glacial pace of our status quo, a street race. And of course it's something that Senator Looney has worked on in Section 504, incredibly important to crack down and ensure safety on our streets, particularly in our urban areas.

And I'll close Madam President by saying Sections 505 to 533, have a variety of road namings that are important to all four caucuses. The Senate Republicans, the Senate Democrats, the House Republicans, and the House Democrats have all come forward to nominate individuals in their community, who they believe made a truly special mark on the towns in which they served and making sure that those names and that those legacies are remembered. With a few road namings is an important provision of this Bill. So thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who contributed to making those sections of the Bill so strong.

With that, I'm happy to answer any questions, but I certainly urge passage of this Legislation.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Good morning, Madam President. I rise in full support of this Bill. I would also like to thank the other folks who are in leadership of the Transportation Committee, our Chair, Senator Haskell, Representative Lemar, Representative Carney, all did a great job on this Bill, putting everything that the DOT and many of our colleagues have wanted in passage.

I know it's a large Bill with many sections, but Senator Haskell has done a great job at going through most of the sections. I just wanted to highlight, there is also an Eastern Connecticut train study, and this will require DOT to do a feasibility study on extending the shoreline east to Rhode Island, hopefully to our airport in Rhode Island and establishing new passenger rail service from New London to Norwich, looking at establishing a train station in Groton, which we used to have, and also in Stonington and extending ground transportation in Eastern Connecticut region of the state, which really could use that because we don't have much as far as public transportation. So that's something that I wanted to mention.

In addition, I think it would be helpful. There have been some questions in certain sections of the Bill. One Section was put in by Representative Bolinsky. It has to do with seatbelts and also the ATV Section that you heard Senator Cohen and Senator -- and Representative Candelora have requested. I was hoping that the good Chair could clarify some of the intentions of these two sections for legislative intent and be able to answer some questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed with your questions. Senator Haskell, prepare yourself.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

The request is for a little bit more clarification for legislative intent on the seatbelt section and also the ATV. And I'm sure there will be some additional questions. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Certainly, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Sure. Thank you, Madam President. There is a provision in this Bill that has to do with seatbelts. I look forward to continuing the conversation with my colleagues as to how that legislation can be, can be best implemented and perhaps revised. I am grateful for their thoughts on the matter.

Let me move to the ATV section, which was referenced by the good Ranking Member. This is for those following along Section 538. This allows all municipalities that regulate all-terrain vehicles use by ordinance rather than just municipalities with the population of greater than 20,000 people to do so and to provide for their seizure and forfeiture by ordinance as well.

The crux of the matter, Madam President, as I understand from my good friend, Senator Cohen, is that there are some smaller towns in Connecticut that truly struggle in their public parks with the use of ATVs. And this legislation is simply enabling, of course the municipality would need to go through a public process in order to pass an ordinance.

But it allows municipalities of all sizes to have the very same rights when it comes to, not just passing an ordinance, preventing the use of ATVs in certain areas, but also in some cases, allowing for enforcement of that ordinance through the use of a seizure.

This is a problem that typically rears its head in urban communities. But we also know that certain land trusts on the shoreline in Connecticut have had a real problem with ATB. So that is the source of this of this provision in the Bill. I hope that answers to good Senator's questions.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes, thank you for the clarification. And I'm glad that you're standing ready to answer. I'm sorry, it's late. Ready to answer some questions. Thank you, Mr. Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good morning, Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Good morning, Madam President. Just clarification on two sections of the Bill if I may. The first one has to do with Section 504 the street racing, and as I'm reading the summary from the Office of Legislative Research, it says that modifies the definition of illegal street racing, specifying that it means driving on a public road for any race contest or demonstration of speed or skill.

Now, I happened to be aware and I think we had a conversation earlier about this thing called poker runs in Connecticut. What it is a, it's a benefit where oftentimes you'll get on a motorcycle, it could be a snowmobile or a boat, and you drive generally a 50 to 75 mile radius, you get a playing card and whoever at the end of the final destination, whoever has the best poker hand wins. But they are charity events.

And there's one this Saturday, the Pink Ladies Annual Poker run out of New Haven Raccoon Club. The Purple Heart Poker run ride for hope 2021 30 annual CVM, a Purple Heart Poker run fourth annual law enforcement suicide awareness. Poker run and bike ride for the benefit of St. Jude's Hospital. So these are going on and on and very popular.

And through you, Madam President, for clarification purposes to the good Senator, these poker runs that I just mentioned would not be illegal in the sense as defined in Section 504. That is not the intent. Am I correct, through you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well, I -- let me just say to my good friend across the aisle given that he's a former law enforcement officer, I certainly wouldn't want to in any way try to do their job from this Chamber. So it would be the discretion of course, of local law enforcement as to whether or not those drivers are obeying by local ordinances, speed limits, and other state laws.

That being said, I don't see anything in this Legislation that would necessarily prohibit that activity so long as they were following the posted speed limits and all other driving regulations.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. Madam President. That's the answer that I was hopeful for because these folks come from all

over and they, they do great work and they absolutely abide by all the rules of the road. But there was just a little bit of a change in the definition. I wanted to make sure that it was really encompassing to people that are on the bikes ripping up and down the streets, violating all kinds of public safety laws.

And the last section has to do with Section 538. I just wanted to dive into that just a little bit more if I may. I know that the statute changes it to any town or municipality that wants to with the population of under 20,000 population or less. But I would believe that the intent of this body would be that there would be some type of a progressive discipline, maybe a warning the first time. I don't envision, I want to get a little bit of clarification that somebody is out riding a snowmobile. They crossed the street and all of a sudden, they're stopped. And the snowmobile is seized and sold. And I can't imagine -- it's, it doesn't speak to that in the Bill.

They certainly have the power for the enforcement, but I would hope for legislative intent that we would urge all municipalities to do some type of a progressive discipline, maybe a couple of warnings at a time, postings, and then if the final action has to be that there's a seizure and a sale, then that would be the ultimate end goal. But it's not something that we would want to utilize on the front end. And I'm hoping that I have a good clarification if the good Senator could speak to that, through you, Madam Speaker.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Haskell,

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the good Senator's question, far be it from us in this

Chamber to tell local officials how to do their job. But I certainly, if I were a local official would hope that we could adopt a system that provides for plenty of warning in advance of any confiscation of an ATV.

For the purposes of background, by law if a municipality confiscates an ATV use in violation of an ordinance, it must sell it at a municipally conducted public auction. The sale proceeds must be paid to the municipal treasurer for deposit into the municipalities general fund. I would imagine that in addition to the posting requirements, making sure that that municipal ordinance as well advertised within the community, I would certainly hope that that individuals be given a warning before seizure is utilized as a first option.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I thank the good Chairman of the Transportation Committee, oftentimes municipalities may look to the legislature for what it was our intent when we put something in writing, authorizing them or an opt-in version if they wanted to do that. And I think the conversation between the two of us just kind of set the guidance for the municipalities say, you know, let's we, you have the end game, but let's look at some kind of a progressive discipline, so maybe some warnings up at the front end.

Thank you. That's all the questions I have. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

further? If not, I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally -- the roll call vote rather, sorry.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6484 as Amended by House "A" and "B". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6484 as Amended by House "A" and "B". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6484 as Amended by House "A" and "B". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

This is House Bill 6484 as Amended by House "A" and "B".

Total Number Voting	36
Total voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	2
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The measure is adopted. (Gavel) Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. We're going to go back to the other item that was on a Consent Calendar for another vote on that. Calendar Page 18, Calendar 432, House Bill 6633. Like to move that item to Consent Calendar and then have a vote on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 2, Page 18, Calendar 432, House Bill 6633. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Consent Calendar No. 2, Page 18, Calendar 432, House Bill 6633. The only item on Consent Calendar No. 2. Consent Calendar No. 2, immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 2. 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.

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar No. 2:

Total Number Voting	34
Total voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar is consented too. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I will yield to any points of personal privilege or announcement, but seeing that there are none. It is our intention to reconvene later today at 11:30. We would hope that people will be on time, so we can get on the floor as close to that time as possible.

And with that, I move that we adjourn subject to call of the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

And we are adjourned. Go for sleep and we'll see you shortly.

(On the motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 1:05 a.m. adjourned Sine Die.)