

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, everyone. Will the Senate please come to order? Members and guests, would you please rise and direct your attention to our Senate Chaplain, back by popular demand, Kathy Zabel of Burlington.

ACTING CHAPLAIN KATHLEEN ZABEL:

Thank you. First, I would like to thank you for graciously allowing me to begin your legislative deliberations this session with some small pieces of wisdom and grace. And for today, our final regular session, we ask that each day we have the patience to understand those that disagree with us, sensitivity to the needs of others, and the prudence to make decisions which work toward the common good.

THE CHAIR:

Very, very nice. Thank you so much, Kathy Zabel. And now I'd like to invite both Senator Looney and Senator Kelly, our distinguished Leaders to come up to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(MEMBERS):

(All) I pledge allegiance to the Flag of The United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senators, Kelly, and Looney. And Senator Duff, what awaits us, sir?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good morning. Good morning -- actually, good afternoon, Madam President. On our [inaudible] Day, Madam President, is there business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda 1. Regular session Wednesday, June 9th, 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move all items on Senate Agenda No. 1, dated Wednesday, June 9, 2021, to be acted upon as indicated that the agenda be incorporated by reference and Senate Journal and Senate Transcript placed immediately on our Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Senate Agenda
No. 1
REGULAR SESSION
Wednesday, June 09, 2021

BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE:

EMERGENCY CERTIFICATION -

HB NO. 6689 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND MAKING DEFICIENCY AND ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021.

HB NO. 6690 AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES, ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND 2030 BOARD, AUTHORIZING STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND MAKING REVISIONS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT STATUTES.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, for our markings for now then I have a, before we get to the first two Bills, I have a list I'd like to read for the foot of our Calendar.

But for our markings today on both --

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Both on Senate Agenda No. 1, Emergency Certified Bills. House Bill 6689, and House Bill 6690. Like to mark those items go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. If I can now read a list items to go on the foot of the Calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar Page 35, Calendar 49. Senate Bill 265, likes to place that item on foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 35, Calendar 55, Senate Bill 36, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 2, Calendar 56, Senate Bill 285, like to place that item on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Yep.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 35, Calendar 60 getting ahead of myself, Senate Bill 765, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 35, Calendar, 63 Senate Bill 853, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 36, Calendar 64, Senate Bill 854, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 1, Calendar 73, Senate Bill 697, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 36, Calendar 94, Senate Bill 935, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 36, Calendar 113, Senate Bill 876, like to place it on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 36, Calendar 116, Senate Bill 355,
like to place them on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Yeah, so ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 2, Calendar 119, Senate Bill 839, like
to place that on foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 36, Calendar 120, Senate Bill 880,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 36, Calendar 128, Senate Bill 877,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 37, Calendar 135, Senate Bill 268,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 3, Calendar 137, Senate Bill 838, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 37, Calendar 141, Senate Bill 48, like to place on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 37, Calendar 142, Senate Bill 49, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 3, Calendar 149, Senate Bill 899, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 3, Calendar 150, Senate Bill 922, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 37, Calendar 151, Senate Bill 934,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 37, Calendar 156, Senate Bill 984,
like to place it on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 4, Calendar 162, Senate Bill 651, like
to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 4, Calendar 168, Senate Bill 942, like
to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 4, Calendar 169, Senate Bill 1001,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 4, Calendar 170, Senate Bill 847, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 5, Calendar 192, Senate Bill 902, like to place them on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 37, Calendar 211, Senate Bill 981, like to place them on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 6, Calendar 219, Senate Bill 167, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 38, Calendar 221, Senate Bill 693, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar paid 6, Calendar 227, Senate Bill 851, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 6, Calendar 233, Senate Bill 1022, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 7, Calendar 236, Senate Bill 1044, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 7, Calendar 250, Senate Bill 570, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 32, Calendar 252, Senate Bill 845, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 7, Calendar 253, Senate Bill 846, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 8, Calendar 264, Senate Bill 926, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 38, Calendar 273, Senate Bill 353, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 8, Calendar 280, Senate Bill 834, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 8, Calendar 282, Senate Bill 605, like to place them on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 9, Calendar 283, Senate Bill 866, like to place them on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 38, Calendar 284, Senate Bill 761, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 9, Calendar 286, Senate Bill 1075, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 33, Calendar 302, Senate Bill 1074, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 38, Calendar 316, Senate Bill 1067, like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 7, Calendar 318, Senate Bill 1085,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 7, Calendar 321, Senate Bill 930, like
to place them on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 39, Calendar 324, Senate Bill 961,
like to place them on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 39, Calendar 326, Senate Bill 1024,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 39, Calendar 327, Senate Bill 1026,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 10, Calendar 333, Senate Bill 568,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 11, Calendar 337, Senate Bill 1066,
like to place that on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 13, Calendar 373, House Bill 6552,
like to place that item on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar Page 24, Calendar 524, House Bill 6568,
like to place that item on the foot of the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. And that was very impressive, Senator
Duff. I must say.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Cathartic too. Thank you, Madam President. Thanks. I got the thumbs up from Senator Looney. I was good.

Thank you, Madam President. The Clerk will now call the first Bill on our goal list.
THE CHAIR:

And I do believe that Senator Looney has a point of personal privilege. Senator Looney?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Yes, I do, Madam President. And thank you. Just like to remind that the Chamber that today is the 20th wedding anniversary of our beloved Majority Leader, Senator Bob Duff, and his wife Tracy, and unfortunately this year because the session has the latest end date of June 9. This year he is having to spend his anniversary here with us rather than with Tracy. Most years, he avoids that by a couple of days when we enter earlier than the 9th.

But Bob and Tracy have two wonderful sons. His oldest son Ryan just finished his freshman year at Villanova, and his younger son Colin will be a junior at that Norwalk High. And in fact, of course, with the college kids take a little bit of time to sort of readjust to a home schedule rather than a dorm schedule. Ryan was still up one night when Bob got home at about three o'clock in the morning after being here. And he greeted his father with a hug. So that's a great thing.

So Tracy, of course, is being just so wonderful and understanding, sustaining, Bob with love and understanding and patience and forbearance of all the years, and we all know that no one can survive in public life long if they're married without a spouse who is loving, supportive, insightful and patient, and Bob has certainly been blessed in that regard.

So I want to congratulate both of them on their anniversary, but especially Tracy, who I think is emblematic of all of the spouses who put up with so much and do so much to enable us to do what we love doing here. So, thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Congratulations, Senator Duff. And we all are getting excited about reminding our spouses who we are. So with that, Senator Formica

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good afternoon. I rise for a point of personal privilege if I may.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I do want to extend my congratulations to the Duffs. There's nothing better than having a loving relationship that supports each other, and so congratulations on that.

Not to change into a worse subject, certainly the town of East Lyme lost a giant last week in our education community, and in our regular community. Dave Costa was a long-time School Counselor, mentor, friend, and community leader. And, you know he and I went way back. Our children grew up together. And, you know there was nobody that gave more than David to the town of East Lyme, but specifically to the education system in the town of East Lyme. Madam President, then I would like to take this opportunity on the last day of our session, when we're sitting here contemplating matters of State to just ask my colleagues to share a moment of silence

for Dave Costa and his family. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. And the Chamber will take a moment of silence and reflect upon the life and legacy of Dave Costa, of East Lyme. Thank you. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just want to rise and just thank Senator, for making for his words, and my good friend and mentor, Senator Looney for his good words as well. And he's absolutely right. Tracy is a wonderful partner, got two great kids. And over 20 years, it's been a ride for sure, here in the Legislature as well. So we learn a lot from watching Senator Looney, and Alan who is his partner as well. And they make a great team, and we look to them for guidance as well. I'm sure we'll talk about this later today of how our better-halves really do help us do the work here. And we couldn't do without their support. So Happy Anniversary to my wife, Tracy. She said, "Don't worry about me. Just go spend it with your friends up in Hartford." But I know I'll be taking her out for a nice meal on Saturday night. But I'm very blessed to have her in my life and our kids. And thank you to Senator Looney again for your kind words. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 6689, "AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND MAKING DEFICIENCY AND ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021."

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, it's an honor to stand in front of you this afternoon. This has been a long time in coming, and very pleased to be standing in front of the circle today. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill as amended in concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I have before us the biennium budget, which obviously we do every two years, and this year being no exception. This year, however, is an historic document that is in front of you all today.

Clearly, this is a defining moment in history. The COVID19 pandemic demonstrated the vital importance of government investment in our social safety net, our health care system, and most importantly in the residents who live in our State. For over a decade, we have focused on making difficult decisions that have stabilized our budget, addressed our unfunded pension liability and put us on a path to long-term fiscal stability.

Our efforts have been recognized nationally with Moody's Analytics and economic nonpartisan think tank raising our bond rating for the first time in two decades. Our Rainy Day Fund has over 3.5 billion, a billion dollars, excuse me, the largest in state history and one of the best in the country.

This budget reflects our values. It maintains vital services and programs, makes key investments in health care, education, Justice related initiatives, and workforce development programs, all while remaining within our statutory spending cap.

It recognizes structural and systematic inequities experienced by our major cities, many of which have over 50% of their property as non-taxable and keeps finally our promises to municipalities by funding the tiered payment in lieu of taxes formula that was championed by Senator Looney and passed earlier in the session. This will provide over \$525 million in additional funds to our municipalities over the next two years by assuming the finally, the implementation of Mersa.

Overall, the Appropriations Committee budget includes appropriations in nine funds totaling \$22.7 billion in fiscal year 2022 and \$23.6 billion in fiscal year 2023.

The Amendment is under the spending cap by \$22.2 million in fiscal year 2022 and \$35.7 million in fiscal 2023. The fiscal 2022 growth rate for all appropriated funds is 2.6% over the FYI 2021 appropriation. The fiscal year 2023 growth rate for all appropriated funds is 3.9% over the fiscal year 2022.

This budget continues us on a path towards long term fiscal stability, including making large payments towards the unfunded legacy debt that has been hampering the fiscal competitiveness of various institutions within the state.

We finished with a surplus and reached the 15% threshold in our Rainy Day Fund, allowing us for the first time in 75 years to make a bulk payment of \$63 million towards our unfunded pension liability. This fiscal prudence will also result in a volatility cap for which we can thank Senator Fonfara transfer of more than \$1 billion at the end of fiscal year 2021 to pay down our unfunded pension liability. This has

allowed us to assume a savings of \$87 million in fiscal year 2023 in the general fund, and in the special transportation fund as our SIRs actuarial determined employer contribution.

We maintained the SIR's amortization phase in five years. We provide for the Department of Revenue Service to produce a tax incidence report. The last time this report was published was in 2014. In debt, strategically, we addressed our unfunded legacy debt, which has accrued after decades of prior administrations, both Republican and Democratic, underfunded the State Retirement System. And I would like to have a shout out to former Governor Malloy who insisted that we pay down our unfunded liability and would not sign a budget document without doing that.

In our passport to parks funding, we used to carry forward funds to pay a portion of the unfunded legacy debt assigned to seasonal employees within the passport to parks fund. In 2020 our State Park systems were record-breaking 11 million visitors. By using our surplus funds to pay for the unfunded legacy debt, we create room within the passport to parks account to invest the corresponding amount of funds back into our state park system.

Relative to higher education it also addresses unfunded legacy debt at our institutions of higher education, which has historically made it harder to attract federal research grants to support research, scholarships, and creative activity. To demonstrate the impacts of the unfunded legacy debt, the President of UConn made a one-time move to redirect funds to remove the unfunded legacy debt from federal grant applications for one year. And as a result, UConn faculty secured over \$19 million, or about 17% more in grant funding for a total of \$286 million, the highest amount of annual research dollars in UConn's history.

An economic impact study shows that for every research dollar that UConn attracts, and externally

sponsored research, and spends within the State, 80 cents in economic output is generated elsewhere in Connecticut's economy.

This budget prioritizes our future by investing in our youngest residents from birth to post-secondary education. This budget keeps our promises related to education funding and maintains the current rollout of the ECS formula. While holding harmless those who may lose education funding, providing an additional \$130 million over the next two years and holds harmless towns who would have otherwise lost funds. It also provides additional funding to school systems with higher numbers of low-income students and English language learners.

Senator Miller, a new colleague in the circle, came forward with a program called Right to Read, a very important program. This budget provides funding to staff in office in SDE, and provided over \$13 million in the American Rescue plan funds to support reading initiatives in priority school districts. Dorward thinking policy finally instituted after years of bringing it to our attention.

It also provides funding to increase the State per-pupil grant for vocational agricultural schools by \$1,000. It's important that we maintain providing education relative to agriculture as it's over a \$4 billion industry in the State of Connecticut. Relative to our Charter schools, we provide funding to increase the per-pupil Charter school grant from 11,250 to 11,525.

The budget also provides funding for grade growth within some Charter schools in the State. It also allocates additional support for Charter schools with English language learners. This will start a phasing of the weights to English language learners, and poverty levels that are considered in the ECS formula and now will be considered within our non-traditional public schools. As we all know, Charter schools within the State of Connecticut are public schools, and many of our young students and their

families choose to go to them along with our traditional public schools.

Debt-free college, Senator Haskell, another colleague around the circle, has been fighting for this initiative. And last year, we were able to fund it, but for the next two years, we fully fund it \$14 million in fiscal year 2022 and \$15 million in fiscal 2023 from the estimated fiscal year 2021 surplus. We also fund the unfunded liability to Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. We really wanted to fund the debt-free college program because we can now leverage federal dollars by the additional student enrollment. And we think it's an important initiative. We'd like our young people to get their higher education and stay here in Connecticut.

We provide funding of \$275,000 in fiscal 2022 and 900,000 in fiscal 2023 to establish an open choice pilot and Danbury in Norwalk, something that another colleague around the circle, Senator Kushner, has been fighting for. We also provided \$250,000 in American rescue plan act to implement the farm to school grant program, fought for by Representative Gibson. This will assist schools in procuring food from local farmers, nutrition, health, education, school, gardens, and education about local food systems. We also provide supports for students with dyslexia. This office has been supported by many people within the Legislature and provides four positions in corresponding funding to establish a dyslexia training compliance office within the State Department of Education, safe school drinking water.

I remember well when the town of Hebron came to me and said we have a problem with lead in our water. This will provide funding to us enhanced response to drinking water issues in schools undergoing construction projects, and one environmental analyst to assist the agency and its continued administration of safe drinking water. Many people remember Roberta Willis. This provides an additional \$20 million in fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023

to increase scholarships for students in higher education.

And then there's SB 2, a Bill that was talked about in this circle already, provides funding to reflect the elimination of fees paid by families receiving Birth to Three services, and expands coverage to children who turn age three on or after May 1st until the start of the school year.

It also establishes a youth suicide prevention program, providing certification and QPR Institute Gatekeeper training for direct, for District Health Department employees and expands the DCF care line to accommodate reports of child abuse or neglect made by text message. And then there is the backbone of our safety net, nonprofits, and nursing homes. This budget makes an historic investment in our nonprofit sector, and is the first step, only the first step in a seven-year plan to provide our nonprofits with the support they need to fairly compensate their workers invest in their infrastructure, and continue to provide top quality social services to our residents. Many of the dollars associated with this, but not all were used to support the administration's settlement of the group home strike.

We are working through this process to figure this out. Direct support for nonprofits, this provides \$50 million in support from the fiscal year 2021 surplus. In addition, it provides an additional \$30 million in fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023. With an additional \$30 million in fiscal year 2022 and 2023 and ARPA funds, I would remind people today, this will complete two of a seven-year rollout, and we need to stick to that rollout as we have with our rollout on education funding increases.

We need to do this because we have moved many services that were supported by State employees into the nonprofit sector. And a good friend of mine, David Burnett, used to run Reliance Health. He was

the executive director there. And he said to me, "We have spent years doing more with less and more with less." And now my workers receive food stamps. They are on state-funded health care programs. And they need heating assistance to barely keep their homes warm.

There is also increased rates for home health and nonprofits waiver services. By doing this, we are helping out our skilled and unskilled nursing and waiver services, which means that more children can go home from the hospital and have the necessary nursing that they need at home. We have done statutory increases for nursing homes, our intermediate care facilities, and our boarding homes. Many of the people that stay in our residential care homes or boarding homes, as they are called, would have been in our State psychiatric facilities where they still open. So we provide funding of \$1.6 million in both fiscal year 2022 and 2023 to support a minimum intermediate care facility rate of \$501 per day health care.

This budget recognizes the importance of access to affordable, high-quality, and inclusive health care for all residents of the State. It increases the basic rates for our local health districts, which we counted on during the pandemic who did the work without the funding. It's time that we support them. It provides funding of 2.5 million in both fiscal year 2022 and 2023 to increase access to mobile mental health crisis services throughout the State, through additional units and 24/7 services.

Mental health is a significant problem within our State and this nation, and it's about time that we brought it to the forefront and started to deal with this particular problem that we have. It is not something that we can continue to ignore. And this is just the beginning of the necessary aid for the services. It creates a Medicaid type experience for people with Husky A income eligibility from 160% of the federal poverty level to 175% of the federal poverty level through the Access Health exchange,

with a possibility of including another 40,000 people into our health care system. It expands Medicaid to undocumented children under the age of eight. It also expands postnatal care for women on Medicaid from two months after birth to 12 months post-birth. If you've ever had a baby, you know that the problem doesn't end in eight weeks. It often takes women a full year to recover from the consequences of labor and delivery. This finally brings women into par. It expands prenatal and postnatal care for undocumented women. And if that is an issue, I don't know why it would be. This is protecting those babies.

We finally, after more than a decade and a half, increase ambulance rates, successfully providing supports for ambulance system across the State. We provide funding of \$2.1 million each year for Planned Parenthood to help restore their lost money through the Title X grants. We provide funding of a million dollars in ARPA to local and district health departments to support tobacco prevention activities.

And because we know, we don't have enough health care workers, we provide a loan repayment program for primary care clinicians providing a half a million dollars for a loan repayment program for primary care providers, which includes physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurse midwives, funding which has not been appropriated in ten fiscal years. We have a health information exchange, and we provide the real dollars and the funding to support the activities here.

Many of us from Eastern Connecticut remember the Eastern Equine Encephalitis that struck our area. We provide funding for one technician position and three part-time positions associated expenses to expand the existing mosquito trapping site network by 15 new mosquito trapping stations.

And for many years, we worried about our chief medical examiner's office, and we were worried

because they were not meeting our federal accreditation, and we provide the support to continue that. We expand Medicaid coverage to additional services, providing licensed chiropractors and acupuncturists, and increased rates for podiatrists. We support our chronic disease hospitals, providing a 4% increase in particular to Connecticut's children's manacle.

We put money inside this budget for our tourism funds. We are supporting a statewide marketing campaign as well as a variety of arts and culture programs. These provide funds of \$15 million in immediate support for statewide marketing and continued throughout the biennium. I don't know anybody who's dealt with the unemployment system, who hasn't recognized that we needed to change things at the Department of Labor. But we provide funding to continue the operations of the Consumer Contact Center throughout the biennium.

We make historic investments in our humanities, including theaters, art, children's museums, and more. And if you know Joe Carbone, who is the Executive Director at our web on the far side of the state of Connecticut, we provide funding for his nationally recognized long-term unemployed program. He also manages a veteran seeking job opportunities program. Very important for us to come back from this, and these two programs have received national recognition. We also have on the eastern side of the State, the manufacturing pipeline, where we support those programs, putting people into jobs at Pratt & Whitney, Electric Boat, and Sikorsky.

We support domestic workers. If you've been around this Legislature over the last five or six years, we have seen these brave women come forward and finally were able to establish a domestic workers education and training grant program. We also support corrections officers in the Department of Correction, providing funding for the health improvement through employee control program

addressing some of the mental health and medical needs that happen in a 24/7 closed environment.

I know many people here have looked at the actuarial reports and recognized that the correctional officers' life experiences around 59 years old nationally, and this program is attempting to address that issue. Regarding justice and equity, this budget recognizes that for Connecticut to thrive, all of our residents need to thrive. We provide funding for staff positions to implement Jennifer's Law, brought about by a colleague of ours, Senator Kasser, for a grant program to provide legal representation to applicants for restraining orders. It also provides funding for another colleague of ours who brought the clean slate Bill forward to support staffing to implement that Bill. Thank you, Senator Winfield.

We provide funding to establish the commission within legislative management on racial equity and public health, fully supported by many people around this circle to include Senator Abrams, who brought it forth, and Senator McCrory.

We have a community reinvestment section. And this I have to thank my colleague who is a co-Chair, Representative Walker, and if you have not met Representative Walker, you know that that woman is the backbone of making sure that we are investing in our communities. To make sure our minority children and all children are given an opportunity to be successful. We put \$14 million in fiscal year 2021 surplus to reduce violence and provide support for Connecticut cities. This also includes an increase in project longevity funding of \$250,000 in both fiscal year 2022 and 2023, bringing their total funding to over \$2.3 million in the biennium.

That is extremely important. And just a special shout out to Representative Walker, who herself had to deal with complications of health over this last year, recovering from cancer and COVID. I can't tell

you how brave this woman is and how important it was to have her by my side as we crafted this budget.

We finally addressed the issue of communications between those that are incarcerated in their families on the other side by providing cost-free communications. And we provide funds to support initiatives for homeless youth and make a large investment to support our homeless shelters and housing initiatives.

In the last summer, we had a special session in which we dealt with police accountability. But more important than the policies is to provide the dollars to support the policies. And we provide funding to hire one field program assistance to audit police training, training records. We also provide funding to finally establish the office of the Inspector General within the Division of Criminal Justice. And who cannot remember the problems that the medical services within the Department of Corrections had. The only way to address that is to provide the support for additional workers there. And we did so within this budget.

We provided additional support for consumer protections brought up to us by Senator Maroney and, of course, Senator Duff. An act concerning consumer privacy and we provide funding of \$239,517 in fiscal 2022 and \$287,515 in fiscal 2023, which provides for three positions to assistance Attorney General and one legal investigator.

Over the last few years, I can remember Senator Moore coming and saying we need to do something for nurse-midwives. This provides funding to reflect increase rates for nurse-midwives to the rate paid to Obstetricians and Gynecologists for similar services. We will, in this budget, remove the John Mason statue from the State Capital grounds and relocate it to the Old State House with an appropriate historical context.

In 1637, Mason led the attack on burning of a fortified Pequot village that killed more than 400 elders, women, and children and nearly wiped out the tribe. We don't want to get rid of John Mason; what we want to do is recognize what he did on all aspects. This budget reflects the importance of a strong social safety net. And we did that by providing funding to reduce the 9% copay to assist seniors and living home with critical needs such as bathing, dressing, and eating. We provide funding to reflect the removal of family caps for temporary Family Assistance. We were one of the few states that had these caps.

We provide funding to support an additional 50 individuals and two related program staff for autism lifespan waiver services. And I can't tell you the number of times I stood around this circle with a budget where people said to me, "What are you doing to help out?" People in nursing homes, when we were only giving them \$60 for personal needs allowance every single year. I want to thank Senator Kelly for his continued persistence in this where we move from \$60 to \$75 for Medicaid-funded residents and nursing homes. He has been a stalwart supporter of us finally supporting this at the level it should be.

We also provide funding for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services with pass-through grants to the states five independent living centers to support a full-time person to deal with additional staff to serve Deaf & Hard of Hearing consumers in their service areas. And we expand access to fresh produce for seniors and WIC recipients through the ARPA dollars of \$100,000 in fiscal year 2022, and fiscal year 2023 for the Senior Food Voucher program, and \$100,000 in each fiscal year 2022 and 2023 for the WIC Coupon program. By doing this it allows people to take part in our local farmers market, something that we authorized earlier.

Each particular budget area or department has increases here, and I think that I could go through each and every one of those. But I'd be happy to

entertain questions on the different agencies or any part of this budget. I'm extremely proud of this budget, but it wasn't done by one person. It was done by everybody on the Appropriations Committee, both Democrat and Republican, who came forward with their ideas, and we accepted the ideas from all pockets of the Legislature. I want to thank Representative Walker in particular, but I also want to thank Senator Miner, who is always willing to debate me on the different issues in a budget. I can't have a better person to hold in check my words and to make sure that we're listening, and I want to thank also Representative France.

I also want to thank the great staff that we have in nonpartisan office of the Office of Fiscal Analysis run by Neal Ayres. And I know I'll never remember all their names right now. And I don't want to leave anybody out. But the whole office, their nonpartisan staff, point out the good and the bad in a policy, give us the accurate numbers so that we can address the issues that we have. I can't thank them enough. Our LCO staff and our OLR staff, Nick Bombace in particular, who is helping us finish crafting the implementer, which will back up the documents here.

Susan Keane, our administrator to the Appropriations Committee, who tracks everything for us and make sure we don't forget anything that we're working on. Very important to have staff around to make sure that we know what we're doing. And I personally have to thank Manny [inaudible], Teresa Govert, who have been by my side during this whole process.

There are two cautionary things that I would like to talk about before I sit down, Madam President. And now also relative to what we're doing with making sure we're providing the real dollars for services. Most recently, we had a strike that happened in the nurse or threatened strike that happened in the nursing homes with a settlement negotiated by the Governor and his staff.

And then we had a subsequent strike, or a potential strike in our group homes. And for years, we have moved many of our state-funded surfaces, from the state employees into private nonprofits. I'm fully supportive of that. But we have to recognize that we need to provide the funding for these. Otherwise, we're putting services on to and providing poverty-level wages. And we need to do more than just provided because someone is going to conduct a work action against us.

And while I completely support the work action and the funding that was done in the nursing home and group homes, we have to remember that we have other private providers that need our services too, and I'm working right now, with my colleagues to make sure those other private providers as the intention was of the funding provided in the 2021 surplus in this budget in 2022, and 2023. And in the ARPA dollars, that we would provide broadly for all private providers, the services, and the dollars necessary for them to support their staff on all levels, so that we're not creating compression issues, and they're able to take care of the capital needs in the buildings that we are funding.

We need to recognize that while we removed everything into the private sector. Their funding comes from us. It doesn't come from any play cells. It comes from us and we need to pay that. And I also want to caution us each year. We deal with what are called accretions into the bargaining unit. And if we don't start recognizing that we have managerial employees that need to get fairly compensated in the State, we will continue to see those accretions. And we will continue to blur the lines between managers and employees. And we need to address those issues and stop ignoring them. And I'd like to see the administration come up with a policy to make sure that we're providing our private providers the services and the dollars I need. And the employees in the State of Connecticut get the dollars they need. Thank you very much, Madam President. I thank

Senator Looney for allowing me to be on the Appropriations Committee. Thank you so much.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Austin, thank you so much for your hard work and good afternoon, Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Good to see you today. Madam President, I rise to remark on the revenue projections on the Bill before us.

THE CHAIR:

And please do proceed, sir.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I'd like to begin by recognizing the work of my colleague who just gave a lengthy, very informative presentation on the Appropriations Proposal before us today. I could remember when Senator Austin was still a Corrections officer standing on the other side of the line, advocating for officers to be able to unionize. And she was a pit bull then, and she remains one today. And we're very lucky to have her in her dedication.

I, too, would like to thank Senator Looney for the opportunity to have what I think is the best job in the building other than his, and I'm not in the running for his. But Madam President, I also recognize the team that leadership of the finance committee that I work with Representative Sean Scanlon, Senator Henry Martin, and Representative Holly Cheeseman, and the staff that assists us up at OLR, [inaudible], Heather Poole, in OFA, Michael Murphy, Chris Wetzell, Dan Dilworth. There are others as well, but those are the folks who are primary.

And our LCO attorney Kumi Sato in Thompson, Ella who just, and his wife just had their second child, the

baby girl, and we wish him all the best and to his family, and Christina Pen. Madam President, I rise to remark on the revenue projections for the fiscal years 2022 and 2023. On Monday of this week, the Finance Committee adopted revenue estimates reflecting our concurrence with the estimates presented to us by the Office of Fiscal Analysis and the Office of Policy and Management. In that regard, the revenues projected to be realized in each year of the biennium are in balance with the policy recommendations that we just heard from the Senate Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. That means that by which we will achieve the revenue projected, and is a combination of sources, most traditional, some not. But we can all agree that this is not a traditional time.

It includes the use of several substantial federal funding in 2022 and in 2023, intended to in part to bridge the gap in revenue created by the effects of the economy brought to us to our knees for much of the calendar year of 2020. The revenues consist overwhelmingly of the consensus projections relating to current tax policy that includes decisions that delay some previously enacted policies scheduled to become effective, and it includes policy decisions that reduce taxes to many Connecticut residents resulting in reduced revenue to the State.

And due to the bipartisan efforts of the Legislature, and I do mean the bipartisan efforts of the Legislature, we will not be spending \$2.2 billion but rather depositing those funds into the budget reserve fund and maintaining a substantial balance in 2022 and 2023, and depositing over the next three years \$3 billion into the SIRs and TIRs account to address unfunded liabilities in those areas, fully 7.4% of the outstanding obligation. Madam President, there's a lot that has been done in this budget, in this package. But for me, it's about what we haven't done. That is probably the most meaningful.

Madam President, when I was a freshman in the House with a large incoming class. And the late State Representative Richard Tula Sano spoke to our classes. It was tradition to have, and still is, to have veterans come and speak to freshmen. He said a number of things, but one that stood out, and I remember to this day, he said you can talk about and make speeches about the things that you say you care about. But what ends up in that budget reflects your true priorities.

And I think that's borne out every year. Madam President in ten days, we will mark the anniversary that is celebrated Juneteenth that recognizes when African Americans in Texas were informed two years after President Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation. And it was one year ago that the Senate Democrats put forward a ambitious and substantial proposal to address a number of inequities in criminal justice, economic disadvantage, educational opportunities that flowed from the national, international response to the killing of George Floyd.

The Governor said at that time, "I look forward to working with the Legislature in the coming regular session to address long-standing racial and economic inequities in Connecticut."

There are those who will say that we're making substantial investments in the budget in these areas, and we are, but they are for two years. And from there, the budget in 2024 will be our priority. The murder of George Floyd generated an unprecedented response from many across the State. It did so primarily because of our ability to see Derek Chauvin's knee on George Floyd's neck for nine minutes.

But when I think about our policies that fail to address the concentration of poverty on our State that failed to provide the necessary resources and ensure that every child can start kindergarten ready to read by third grade, like every other child in

this State, to provide skill development, capital for businesses and infrastructure, homeownership to give to create generational wealth by accepting these things, and when we have the ability, and the revenue needed to sustain these investments, and we do, Madam President, we live in a State with incredible, concentrated wealth on the part of a handful of families. And we can make these investments to change the lives of people who have been denied for decades of communities that have been denied for decades, that we said within the last year that we will change.

We can make those investments and not change the lives of those that were asked to contribute a little bit more. But Madam President, a status quo budget leaves us with status quo results. When our policies fail to address in a sustained way, it's as though we have our policies are a knee on the neck of the black community, in other underserved communities of our State. We can do better, and we must do better. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you for your work and for your words, Senator Fonfara. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Good afternoon, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I wasn't expecting to speak first from my colleague next to me. But I guess I'll take it. Madam President, thank you so much. And the budget that we have in front of us seems to be addressing a lot of our needs here in this State. We certainly have come far from the start of the session where we were pretty shocked with all the introduction of various tax proposals that were being introduced in different pieces of Legislation or Bills in front of us, you know they started from, you know, statewide property tax, attacks on commercial properties of values of assessments of, I think greater than \$300,000. There

was even one that I chuckled that, and I couldn't believe it, but a \$20 fine or fee, if you didn't vote, sort of looked at that kind of awkwardly.

There was an introduction of the digital ad tax as well as a consumption tax and, of course, the TCI. But we've managed here, I think with a lot of, I guess outcry, it's typical that the Republican Party will stand up against all these taxes, but I think the public as well stepped up when they were informed as to what was going on. They voice their concerns about, please. We've been taxed enough. Enough is enough. Our pocketbooks can't really absorb it in light of COVID, and the year that all of us have experienced. I think that this Bill heard that cry, and those that put this together heard that we really can't do this. And I think that's a very good and positive that we as Legislators are listening to what our constituents are speaking to us. And, that's why we're here. Madam President, I do have some questions for the proponent. I'm going to ask my colleague from the finance committee to address some of these questions.

THE CHAIR:

Please, proceed. And Senator Fonfara, prepare yourself.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I meant to start also, you know, it's my first year at being the ranking member on the Committee. It was everything I thought it would I expected and then some. And Senator Fonfara is great. We've always had some good conversations, whether it's face to face or on the phone. And Representative Scanlon and I know, Representative Cheeseman had a great dialogue with one another. So it's great that we're able to be able to talk to one another, as best as we can and share concerns that we've been that our constituents have spoken to us about.

And I know recently, Senator Fonfara and I, this unemployment insurance was worked on by our colleagues, the Chair, from the House and from as well as a ranking from the House. I know that they got together with the stakeholders, so to speak. A lot of hours were put into that, and a lot of back and forth. And I know it got out of here last night. I consent. And we have also realized that maybe not everybody was at the table regarding that.

And so looks like there's some tweaking while we know that there is some tweaking that needs to be done. We spoke with the Governor's office last night as well. And we have an agreement that listen, we are going to revisit this, and Senator Fonfara and myself have spoken about that as well. So hopefully, next year, between the end of this session and next year that we are going to be able to tweak that unemployment insurance formula, I call it that.

And it'll be a fairer system that we have in place, but some good things, what we did or what the group did, it's a great step, it's a huge step. And I think that most of the people that are going to be contributing to that or realize, okay, this is better than what it was. But with that said, Madam President, through you, we have a projected of surpluses here. And if the, I guess what, you know here we are, we went through COVID. And you expect the sales receipts would be down and we have, you know a lot of people were out of work for the first part of the year. And here we are a year later, and we have a surplus. Through you, Madam President, could the Senator tell me what his thoughts on, what drove that? What stimulated that? We've got such a big surplus through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President, as a good Senator, just indicated that revenues are up across the board in our State, some better than others, but revenues are up and is allowing us to realize this balance with a surplus of 64 million in year one and the 2.8 million in year two. And that's after the revenue cap, which requires us to not spend everything that we raise, some 274 prior to the revenue cap, and with the revenue cap brings it to 64 and 275 prior to the revenue cap and 23, bringing us to 2.8. So it's actually more of a surplus, but because we've created the revenue cap, which says I think we're at something like 99 right now, percent of what we generate in revenue, consensus revenue and policy decisions that have resulted in creating that amount in the revenue cap, and a surplus on top of it through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I guess I was looking for. You know what in our State, what's driving these individuals to be spending more money, I guess is what I'm looking for. I know that we had this injection, or with the federal stimulus money that were received, I believe was it \$6 billion and \$7 billion. And, you know we originally had \$2.7 billion sent to us, and now we're estimating to have more money.

But through you, Madam President. I know, in a real estate world, the last time I saw what I see today, and I think this is more, I'll call it ferocious to some extent, is the back into 1986, and 1987 real estate was off the charts. We would have a development, and I knew there was a pent-up demand out there, because we had an enormous amount of, the interest rates were at, we would borrow money at 21% in the early 80s. And after that, in 1984-1985, it started to just skyrocket. We had a development, and

we were still just breaking ground, and we had three or four sales.

So I realized there's a pent-up demand. We have to build so many new housing units a year throughout the whole country. And we had not done that because of interest rates being so high. So we had this built-up demand. And we got to a certain point where, okay, interest rates were starting to drop. And all of a sudden, we are starting to put plans, take our plants that were on the shelves. And we were starting to put a shovel into the ground, started putting up our marketing for sales. And all of a sudden, we had two or three sales and couldn't like, okay, in one day, like what is going on here. But today, it's just, if not more. The activity level is off the charts.

I've never seen, not having any inventory. I just spoke to you about new housing, but there's the existing housing in Bristol. As an example, typically, 200 homes on the market at any one time. We have maybe less than 70 homes. We put a house on the market, and if it's updated, the people who own the homes, have taken good care of the house, have did some improvements through the years, and now they've decided I'm putting my home for sale and they've painted the house, fixed up maybe of the backyard, we want to been wanting to do this shrubbery on this side of the house for years. No, we got to do it for putting that on the market, touching up some, maybe replacing some windows.

But the point that I'm getting to Madam President, is the moment that that house is listed, we're not getting one offer. Not two offers, not three offers, but we're getting five, six, seven different offers. And the appointments to see these houses is, it's all electronically done now. And it's all blacked out, and it's out for two or three days before you can get your client in. And then you're being told almost immediately, oh, by the way, if you call the agent because you want to get in before that blackout, or after that blackout period you want,

you want to get in before then, you call the agent. And the agent tells you, "Well, I've already got three offers."

And I said, "Wow." So, it's really exciting to see. But it has increased the value of our homes. So I guess regarding this, the increase in the surplus doesn't surprise me. I guess, if you start thinking about the amount of money that has been injected, in our State here, and it's that much different than the recession that we went through in 2008, when money tightened up, and this federal government was bailing out the larger banks, but there was no money, so they sort of tightened up by wrapping their hands around the funding, versus what happened during COVID is that they release money, and they made sure that people didn't lose their jobs, and made sure that they had money in their pocket. And by doing that, they continued to help out the restaurants that had to improvise in a very quick way. And they did, but those, and we continue to help those that still are not working. And we've made sure that they've had money, and they're able to use their unemployment. But we also provided individuals with, I think it was \$1200 a piece, we didn't do it once, but we did it twice.

But nonetheless, I think that had a lot to do with it. So we've got this ton of money coming into our State. And we're spending it, and as a result of that, we've got this surplus here in our State and to our, which works quite nicely with what we have today with their surplus. So, through you, Mr. President, I have another question for the proponent.

THE CHAIR:

You may proceed

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

So I mentioned how much I thought I was and I just needed it to be confirmed how much money have we received from the federal government? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara, or whoever would you get a response?

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Mr. President, I haven't said Mr. President in a long time. It's great to see you.

THE CHAIR:

Good to see you as well.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

In total, I'm not certain, Senator, but in terms of what we're applying to the budget this year, a \$554.3 million in FY 2022 and \$1.1 billion in 2023.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Mr. President. So, the number that I remember is we received an initial \$2.7 billion from the first funds from the federal government, and then there's another batch that we're expecting. So, the total amount that we're using to balances budget total together is how much. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara, respond.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Mr. President, \$554,000 in 2022, and \$1.1 billion in 2023.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

So we're about \$1.6-\$1.7 billion is what we're using. Sorry, Mr. President. So it sounds like we're close to the \$1.7 billion out of the 2.7 with a balance of, I guess, a billion dollars. What's the plan for that? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR: Senator Fonfara, would you care to respond.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Mr. President, I'm not sure what the plan is. I know that the Appropriations Committee has come up with a plan, the Governor's come up with a plan for funding, but that's not been addressed yet. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Mr. President. So maybe the good chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee can answer the question for me. Through you, Mr. President. I'll just repeat the question, is we receive about \$2.7 billion from the federal government. We're using about \$1.7 billion four this biennium budget. The balance of that first funding that we receive from the federal government for COVID. How was that used? Or what's the plan for the use of those funds? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten, would you care to respond?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President, and it's nice to see you up there. Thank you for the question, Senator Martin. It is true that many of the dollars reflected beyond the 1.7 billion are the dollar amount that we are using to balance the budget is being used for a variety of initiatives across the board, from the executive branch through every single legislative initiative, most of it relative to helping out the nonprofits fully \$90 million is helping other nonprofits and supporting that particular initiative.

In addition to that, we have some dollars going for the nursing home workers and those private providers that are not associated with the group homes. So there's overall about 110 million total relative to that. We have a number of workforce initiatives that are being done through the ARPA dollars, some of them for folks that are incarcerated currently to make sure they come out with skills relative to manufacturing relative to coding. There are some behavioral health programs within the department of correction that we provided additional dollars, one in the York Correctional Institution, which is the only female prison in the State, and the Cheshire Correctional Institution.

The Governor had some work-related initiatives that fully \$70 million is associated with the Governor's initiatives relative to that. We also provided some dollars to continue to shore up the UConn Health state universities and community colleges for a variety of things like guided pathways to make sure that we're providing the supports for students to make the choices that maximize their use of the community colleges, that \$6.5 million each year for three years as this is over a two-and-a-half-year timeframe. I mentioned a little bit ago the right-to-read program that Senator Miller worked on along with some 20 people down in the House, including the majority leader. And that program will roll out with \$13 million in both the second and third years.

I'm trying to do this off the top of my head. I don't know that I've forgotten any. But in addition to that, there's some energy efficiency dollars that are going to help out energy efficiency programs in low-income housing, some \$7 million, and some other housing rehab dollars that will help support that.

Then there's the small things that this is helping support out. We have a pilot program to look at swimming initiatives through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in our urban areas, or to have young people to participate in that. It is \$500,000 each year, so to support that initiative over three years to start doing something as small as that. And the Governor also has some broadband expenses that are in this initiative, along with some IT upgrades, which are one-time expenses.

We tried to use the ARPA dollars that were either pilot programs or were programs that were a pilot in nature so that they're not an extension, creating that outward cliff. There are a couple of ARPA dollars that we're going to have to deal with. I could talk forever on the SIRs, amortization and the paydown of our pension debt, which will decrease our fixed costs, which will allow us to cover any extension that are in our ARPA dollars that would be ongoing in nature. So I hope that gives you a flavor of what it is, it's certainly not every dollar, but there is about, I would say about \$500 million in ARPA dollars above the, oh, I forgot the most important one, maybe not the most important one, because they're all have equal value, but \$155 million will go to the Unemployment Trust Fund to put us in a far better position.

And from my perspective, it's just the beginning of our dealing with the Unemployment Trust Fund, because we sincerely don't want to have what happened in the 2008 rollout of us having over a billion dollars in debt that businesses had to pay off. And we didn't finish paying that off until 2016. And my goal would be to come up with a plan so

that we can ameliorate some of those costs to our businesses who had nothing to do with a pandemic, but are certainly suffering the consequences. There is other dollars in there for the statewide marketing in the next two years above and beyond what was in surplus funding. And there's also a hospitality to look at our hospitality industry. The hardest-hit industry, relative to jobs, was the hospitality and arts and culture industry. And we put \$30 million aside for that. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Mr. President, through you. So was that for the leftover billion dollars from the 2.7 for the original, for the initial funds that were received? If that's, so we have some additional funds that we either received in part or going to receive. How are those funds going to be allocated? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten, the question has been posed, would you care to respond?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I didn't know that I could care to respond or not, Mr. President, but I do like the offer. So, we do have more dollars that have to be allocated, and we will be having other meetings. In addition to that, the expenditures have to be approved by the federal government as fitting into the confines of this. And any dollars in the Appropriations Committee on a bipartisan basis actually it was unanimous. The Appropriations Committee said that we want reports coming back. We want to deal with anything that's going to be reallocated. So we will have a say in those reallocation of dollars. So that would be

decided by the Appropriations Committee and then ultimately would be voted on by the General Assembly as we move through this process.

So there are additional dollars, plus there are direct federal dollars that have gone to specific agency, like the office of early childhood has received a lot of federal dollars that the Appropriations Committee will receive reports on, but we don't have anything to say with that. The Department of Housing has dollars. There have been some questions relative to the Department of Housing, and how fast they are getting the dollars out for rental assistance, because not only do the renters need assistance, but the landlords need assistance.

And in Connecticut, we have a number of small landlords who might not own a large number of rental units. But those two or three or four houses that they might own are really their support systems. And we need to make sure that those small landlords, in particular, all landlords with small landlords, are as stable as they can be. They are small business owners, and so those dollars are directly to different agencies, and other agencies receive like the State Department of Education to have received additional dollars, that we are not saying anything but to your direct question we want to make sure that we the Legislature is involved in any other ARPA dollars beyond what will be in the budget or the implementer coming forward. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Mr. President. And Through you, Mr. President, another question that I have regarding those funds from the federal government, is that a one lump sum? Or is that staggered out that we will

receive so much for in 2022-23? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President. We have access to all the dollars right now. We could spend all in year one. It's not our intention to spend all in year one. As a matter of fact, some of my colleagues are, if we reallocate dollars, maybe looking to reallocate them to any of the out-year deficits that we may see. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, Mr. President. You mentioned the various pilot programs. And it sounded like some of those pilot programs, if not all, and we're only temporary. Are there any other pilot programs that are actually receiving some of these federal funds for this current or this budget that we're all discussing about? And after that, if we head off into the next biennium budget, that they are not, we're going to may need to be funded from there? And if so, what are those programs? And what are their needs, or financial needs? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President, and through you. So this budget is really an intertwined budget with

surplus funds, budgeted dollars and ARPA funds. So oftentimes, they cross all three pieces of this budget. So in the programs that I would identify that will have, that may be supported in each one of these, for example in ARPA would be the Right to Read program that we're going to want to carry forward. But what we are requiring is in the last year of the program that we find, that we get to report back and see, is this program working, what do we need to do? What are the supports necessary for that program? We think it will have great value. But it is right, and it is something that we need to do, but we need to make sure that it'll work moving forward. So that's a direct ARPA-related program with an office that's supported in the general fund. And however we support that program in the future, will either require additional dollars or additional assessments on what we would be doing. Now that's a small program.

I talked a bit about the private providers. We provided dollars in the surplus dollars to general fund in our but for private providers. That I see as a long-term plan. And Representative Walker developed a seven-year plan for private providers that will require additional supports throughout the years in the out years beyond that of at least \$50 million a year moving forward. And then we have education. In our debt-free college program, we fund it for two years out of surplus funds. And I envision it being covered in the out years. And there is discussion going on in the implementer relative to the rollout of this beyond that is having additional dollars received out of the lottery cooperation either from iLottery are additional dollars, that \$14 million a year would come out directly relative to covering any expenses to debt-free college.

So what we tried to do in the budget is look at what the costs would be. Will that be our year implications? And how would we cover those out here implications? One of the biggest ways that we'll cover any out your implications in, I asked the

office of fiscal analysis through Emily Shepard to give me a review and an outline of any rate increases that we provided in this budget. Now rate increases are not for two years. They're long-term. So what we said was, what are those rate increases? How do they impact the out years? Give me that listing so that we can make plans for covering those rate increases in the out years and how I envision us looking at the rate increases relative to the Human Services and Public Health needs, and the educational concerns that are in the out years, those are the two biggest areas.

Human Services, which includes the private providers, the education which includes programs like Right to Read, but it also includes our rollout of the ten-year plan coming from the Bipartisan Budget relative to ECS, that we would do that by keeping our promise on the SIR's amortization. So, as you recall, or I know Senator Miner would recall this, when we first got the budget from the executive branch, there was an interest to push out the amortization another three years. We did not do that in this budget. We did not do that because, as a whole, all pieces of the appropriations, both Democrats and Republicans, said we don't want to do this any longer. We cannot continue to push it down.

What that does is, and again, I on the finance side of which you are the ranking member, you can thank again. I can't say this enough, Senator Fonfara's volatility cap. The volatility established the Rainy Day fund. Now that we have the rainy day fund, any additional dollars that come in are rolled over into payments on our pension system. And we will be paying down our pension system by more than a billion dollars at the end of this fiscal year, more than a billion dollars, which starts to decrease our fixed costs. As we decrease our fixed costs, we can assume some of the increases on education and the Human Services and some things, so there is not just a plan and concept, but a plan, in fact, that we can deal with.

And as this rollout of paying down our debt, which again, 70 years of non-payment is finally stopped. And we need to stay true to that. And we need to stay true to that so that we can have that delta of paying down our debt to cover some of the needs that we see relative to education and relative to Human Services. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Would you proceed with your question, sir?

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Yeah, thank you, Madam President. Through you, Madam President. So you're making music to my ears here regarding this long-term planning. And that was the purpose of my question regarding the pilot programs. You know, there's some of them that are going to use the ARPA money. And then we're not going to continue going forward. But you mentioned the reading program. That is a sound investment, in my opinion. And so I was trying to identify what are their programs? And how much are those pilot programs? How many were there? And how much, so that we could better plan going forward.

We know that in 2024 and 2025, that the next biennium budget, we are looking at a deficit of over a billion dollars. So, it would be nice to know if we had those projections, and it looks like you're on top of it. And it's encouraging regarding the 60, well, the savings that by paying down on the unfunded liability, if we pay down the billion dollars, I had asked, and I think their number was like we'd be saving 60 something million dollars a year. And I know that you mentioned perhaps using it to fund these programs. I'd like for you to keep in mind or to consider maybe re-applying, maybe to either the STF, or perhaps maybe we continue paying down on those unfunded liabilities.

And if the economy continues to do what it's doing, perhaps the next budget, we are going to see a surplus as well. You mentioned something, and it made me think, so we've allocated some additional funding for ESC to all our communities. And so all of them are going to raise their budgets. And I hear this ever since I've been involved in my community as a City Councilman, and then even here, it's the MBR and the Minimum Budget Requirement that municipalities have to fund, no less than what they did the year before.

And I'm a little concerned about us providing these extra funds through this budget. And what's the effects of that regarding MBR? And will the municipalities be held to the new minimum? Through you, madam.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And I appreciate the question from my colleague. Relative to ECS, it was a recommendation or request by the Governor that we hold harmless towns that we're going to see a decrease in funding, and that we be lay the payments to those towns that would have seen increased funding.

So what we did in the budget, originally was to decrease the funding as the 2017 bipartisan budget showed in the small towns, and we increase the funding in those towns that had not, we're not at one hundred percent of the formula. So in order to deal with the pandemic, we did hold harmless towns across the board. And relative to the MBR, I don't believe that that will impact that with the MBR. But those towns that we held harmless for these two years, will see a decrease in funding in the third and fourth year relative to their population, and

many of our smaller towns have seen a decrease overall in population.

And ECS is a population-driven formula. And there will be a point where some of those towns will see a decrease in funding through ECS. There has to be two different considerations. It's not just about the dollar amount. It's also about what that dollar is valued at in those particular communities. So if a community was losing \$500,000 in funding as an example, and they were a small town, and that \$500,000 was a quarter of a mil, that's not a devastating loss to those communities.

So we have to combine both, what that equivalent of the mil rate is with the dollars that they lost. So we're not taking just the dollar amount. We're also recognizing what that dollar is valued at in that particular community. And those are things that we have to think about. But I also think that we've asked for in this budget, a recommendation and the office of fiscal analysis is working on a great report that is due January 15th, relative to how we handle education, what we're looking at for funding, what should we be doing? What are the ways that need to be happening? Should we treat charter schools, which are public schools, I can't say that enough. They are public schools. And we have traditional schools. So we want to make sure that we're looking at the different ways that we fund our educational systems and come up with a long term plan beyond just looking at a rollout of ECS for ten years so that we can address the issues of inequities in education but also not devastate any community.

And in my district, to where there are many small communities, we also have to look at what the basis that we will go down so that we recognize that there is a base level of educational costs that happened that are not necessarily about teaching children, about keeping the buildings open. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I think I heard the answer to my question regarding the impact with these new funds that we've allocated through ECS. And these monies would increase the municipal education budgets. So we've got a new threshold now. So I thought I heard and just want to confirm it, that that will be the new threshold. So, I want to clearly understand that with this insert of money that the municipalities are receiving, that is the new baseline now for the minimum budget requirement, and municipalities will be held accountable to that new threshold. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Federal funds will not be used in the calculation of MBR. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

That's good to hear. So the federal funds that they got an extra million dollars, that's not going to raise their minimum budget requirement. Perfect. Thank you. So you used the term, you're not holding the municipalities harmless? Could you explain that to me, because that's the first that I hear that I don't understand it? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And this is in 2000. This is a rather long story, and I'll shorten it as much as possible. Back in 2008, under Governor Malloy, many of our educational systems were removed from the formulaic output of ECS. And they were held harmless because we were in a recession. And as a result of that, once we finally came out of the recession, and I know that there could be a debate whether we have actually come out of the 2008 recession on relative to jobs. However, when we started, the economy started recovering, we look, we went to move our ECS back to the formula, and the formula is now enacted again, and by using that formula, there were towns that were receiving more than the formula when we went back to the formula, and there were towns that were receiving less than the formula.

And so those that were receiving more of the formula, if we had cut them down to the formula, they would have lost too much money and would not have been able to survive that immediate shock of loss of revenue. And the other towns who are receiving less than the formula certainly enjoyed finally getting up to the formula addressing the levels of educational need within their communities. Most of them happen to be the poorer communities in my neck of the woods Norwich in New London, certainly the larger urban areas, but some of the other communities, Willimantic, Windham, Killingly, those kinds of districts that had poverty, we're seeing increases.

There were some towns that, because ECS is a population-driven formula, lost population in their particular communities. And we're seeing a drop in the formula, because it is a population-driven, plus it has other what are called weights within the formula calculations, English language learners, poverty, and other such things. And they did not

have those, and so they were seeing a decrease in what the Governor asked us to do this year. And his recommendation on the budget was hold those towns harmless because of the impact of the pandemic, and not comply with a ten-year rollout of the ECS formula.

So it's a hold harmless. They won't see a drop in funding over the next two years. On the third year, in that out year, there will be a drop in funding for them, and we will have to address the formulaic changes, and that will, those communities will see a drop and should plan on it today. In two years, they should know that today they will see a drop in formula in the out years, just related to the regular formulaic aspect of the ECS formula. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. So I think I follow that, and you're holding harmless those communities for the next two years. The third year, that's it, and we'll address it at that time. But the impact of COVID and then being held accountable to the minimum budget requirement is what we're holding them harmless too. Is that correct? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

So you don't want to conflate the minimum budget requirement with them being held harmless, they still have a minimum budget requirement. But the minimum budget requirement, these extra dollars won't impact that minimum budget requirement, and

we're stopping them from seeing a decrease in their funding relative to the formula.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. So that is the hold harmless portion of that.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Correct.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST)

Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIR:

No worries. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I have a question regarding the ten percent surcharge on the corporations and through you. And this budget is extending the corporation tax surcharge of ten percent. And it looks like in fiscal year 2022 is \$80 million. And then in fiscal year 2023, it's about \$50 million. And is it the plan? Is it the out years? Are we extending it? Because it was a promise that we held, that we said to the corporations, we're only going to do this. It's a ten percent on the taxes that you're paying.

Through you, Madam President, I guess I'm looking for us to start holding, we say something a lot of times in this building, it's going to be sunset, I've given example of my world, you know being a real estate broker. You know, we were promised back, and I think it was in 1992. And I could be wrong. And don't hold me to this. But we had the conveyance

fee for a real estate transaction. It was supposed to be sunset in two years. And then it went, you know the two years came and went or went and came, but it was extended again. And then it was extended for another two years.

And then here we are, as real estate brokers and all the agents were coming up to the Capital, we're making phone calls, you promise this. But because of these reoccurring budget deficits, it was always continued or extended, I should say. And we just felt that, you told us this, we agreed to it. But yeah, you broke a promise. And then you broke it again, and you broke it again. And eventually, that conversation went to a conversation of, well, we're going to remove the sunset, so it's going to be permanent now. So now the conversation became "No, you need to extend it on our side, instead of fulfilling your promise," it became, "No extended."

While the other side of all this, what they were saying, "No, we're going to make it permanent." And that went on for a couple budget seasons. And then, eventually, it did become permanent. And I've seen this, and I've only been up here a short amount of time. And perhaps my colleagues in the circle here know exactly what I'm talking about, that there are promises that are being made and broken.

And I really believe that if we are going to turn our state economy around, and if we're going to build a part of that building or turning our economy around, is creating or instilling consumer confidence that the people of Connecticut building the confidence in them that, "Hey, we're getting our act together up here in Hartford." But if we continue to break promises, that negates and removes their confidence that we're really trying to achieve so that people will be here, want to live here in State of Connecticut.

So through you, Madam President, regarding this ten percent surcharge of corporations, I know this is important to them as well. These holding are keeping

our promises. Through you, Madam President, what's the future plans of this ten percent surcharge on corporations?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. Senator Martin, if I had that answer, I'd answer a lot of other things favorably, hopefully for all of us but I couldn't agree more with you in terms of our commitments and being able to live by them, and now fiscal issues. I marvel at how our office of fiscal analysis and OPM are able to project with an amazing level of accuracy. What will be a year out? There might two years out with revenue sources that are unpredictable, at best.

And so to address your question earlier about what's happened, and you did speak to what you're observing in your world, in terms of economic activity, coming out of COVID, but one of the reasons is because OFA has been, I think, OPM conservative in their estimates regarding the rebounding of the economy. And they're catching up, maybe not as quickly, but they're catching up with what's happening out there.

This is an art. They try to make it a science, but it's more of an art. And so there's two stories here. One is, do we believe that is better policy to remove that ten percent? Does that result in more economic activity? Are there more likely to be investments in Connecticut, either by new companies or companies expanding? Are we seen as business-friendly, those are considerations that should go into when we decide we're going to keep a surcharge, eliminate the surcharge as opposed to just solely we need money. And therefore, it's easier to do that. I'm not suggesting that the Governor and his recommendations are the secretary of OPM in their

recommendations to us at the beginning of the year to delay that elimination.

But it's revenue that we're getting. The payers are used to paying it. I think that opens up that opportunity. I can't tell you whether or not in 2024, the Governor will be back with another delay, or whether the Legislature would support or advocate for delay even if the Governor didn't. Our economics, I'd love to say we said we're going to eliminate it. And we do. So far, we haven't been able to do that in the last several budget cycles. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. It is an art, without a doubt, we'd like to think it's black and white, if we did this, this will happen. Or we did this, this will happen. But you nailed it on the head; it is an art. And it's also being agile, and flexible with the conditions in the environment that's taking place, such as COVID, and being able to adapt. I think with my coaching background. It's one of the things that makes a team unique or makes a team a very good team from a team that's not so good, or an excellent team from a team that is good, is to be able to adapt to what the situation is on the field regardless of what the sport is.

But I am concerned about the broken promises. And, you know there's another part of this Bill, and I'm bringing this up, I'm bringing up these broken promises, because it does impact our budget, right. If those weren't there, then it creates a hole or a deficit in the budget. And so that leads me to think, and I know, I didn't ask Senator Osten, you know our talk to her about the increases that are projected out, you know I think it's 2.3. And then

the 3 point something thereafter, so it's around 5%-6% increases over two year.

It's just, you know when you see these increases and the expenditures going out, you know what's the likelihood of us holding our promises? And it just for me, it just says probably not.

Another example of the broken promise is the phase how the capital base tax, right. Now it's been delayed to 2028. And in fiscal year 2022, it's roughly, and I'm rounding now \$21 million. And then the following year, it's \$29 million. So what is the likelihood that those are actually going to sunset as promise? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.
SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

I didn't want to interrupt the Senator; that was a rhetorical question. I prefer to have him finish.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Would love if you would answer it.

THE CHAIR:

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Through you, Madam President. Senator Martin, we are very much on the same page in terms of these commitments. I know that my former co-Chair, now majority leader in the House, Representative Rojas, has advocated for the elimination of the capital gains, capital base tax for some time. And for those that are not fully aware of the capital base tax, and what it's about is there are some corporations that don't earn enough to be able to be taxed, and the corporation tax in the State of Connecticut. And so what they may have capital they may have been

invested in, but not yet turning a profit, not enough to be taxed under the corporation tax.

And so what we'd say is you either taxed under the corporation tax in terms of your income, or the corporate capital base tax. But what that does is it discourages investment. And if anything, we are, we are primed and should be a leader nationally in the knowledge economy.

We're not Mississippi, where manufacturing or other states were manufacturing, we have a lot of manufacturing, but our future terms of the evolving economy, and by the way, the projections are, that technology will cost nationally \$70 billion, by the end of this decade, 70 million jobs, I should say, before the end of this decade. That's going to impact our society in enormous ways, if we're not addressing alternatives for work. Training, recognizing what will survive as robots and other technologies replace jobs, displace jobs. And so this capital base tax is one of those areas. My hope is that we can adjust it. If revenues continue to come in, then we can adjust it and have it be eliminated before 2028.

I hope that we can intervene if the revenues are strong enough to be able to eliminate that revenue source for us. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Yeah. Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I'm going to wrap up here. You know, I highlighted some things here, because I think in order for us to really turn our economy around you, and I don't want to belabor this, we all have heard and have read, where we stand in national economic charts. And there's an array of them. But I'm a firm believer of, listen, I'm a realistic individual, I'm

realistic about expenditures, can only be held to a certain point.

Meaning that, you know, we can try to cut our way through this economy. But in reality, if we caught as much as we possibly could, eventually, you are going to have some increases. And for me, I always try to minimize those increases, knowing that, you know, I want more money at the end. And that I'm able to spend, as I choose, and that when I came here, my goal was to encourage, "Hey, let's do what we can. We know that we are running these reoccurring deficits, you know, five of the last ten years. And even prior to that, realizing that my constituents that I represent are just tired of taking money out of their pocket, and they're telling me enough is enough. When is this going to stop?"

So I want to work with my colleagues and try and put a harness on our future expenditures, knowing that those communities that minimize those expenditures are able to attract businesses and individuals because we've minimize taxes.

And as a result of that, it encourages the people and the businesses to want to live where that is happening throughout the whole country. And I just want to have my colleagues here keep that in mind when we are planning for the future. I began this by talking about the unemployment insurance, and it's not perfect. We need to help those that are going to be paying the considerable amount of increase in that fund. And I was glad to hear Senator Osten mentioned, she sounds like she has a wealth of knowledge regarding that, and maybe she could help us next year tweak that. So it is better than what we have for what we approved last night. So Madam President, I want to thank Senator Osten and Senator Fonfara for answering my questions.

I know that there's a lot more questions that my colleagues are going to have regarding the budget.

So, thank you, I appreciate your answers. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Martin. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber? Good afternoon, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Madam President, I rise for some comments on the budget, and perhaps some questions, but let me just start with some comments. So March 12th, 2020, we put the key in the door of the Legislature, so to speak, because we weren't sure where we were headed with regard to COVID. We weren't sure what public access we would have. We weren't even sure whether we would be meeting again after that date. The deep cleaning had yet to occur. And I think we all realized within a month or so this was going to get worse before it was going to get better.

To say that the budget last year was left kind of on autopilot is probably a pretty accurate statement. We had significant budget reserves. There were opportunities for adjustments. There was some federal aid that was beginning to come to the State of Connecticut. And so we didn't have the kind of what I would call cash crunch that we've had in years past. Generally, when we've gone into a recession, I think the Chair of the Appropriations Committee talked about this a little bit. Our revenues fell so quickly that our ability to withhold payments, reduce expenses, just wasn't at the same rate of acceleration.

And so, we very quickly developed a deficit. I would say we became cash strapped. Some people may not agree with that. But the reality of life back then, versus now or the last year is that we've had some safeguards in place over the last year, some of which is a very robust Rainy Day fund.

I think the facts as we know them are that something north of 8000 people have died as a result of COVID or COVID-related issues. We've had somewhere on the order of a third of small businesses that closed during that period of time, some not to reopen. Some are still attempting to reopen. Unemployment, I can tell you that my office, every person's office around this circle, dealt with phone calls over the last year from people that were unemployed desperately in search of some lifeline.

So the reason I mentioned all of that is that this year we, I would say we doubled our efforts to communicate about our spending levels and our revenue levels in a way that since my last, I call it stint with the Appropriations Committee leadership was really very different.

After some time not serving in leadership on Appropriations this year, I rejoined Representative Walker and Senator Osten. This case it was House member, Mike France. And we began to talk about expenditure levels to my mind in a way we had not done so in the past. The subcommittee process, though done by Zoom, was really much more robust, much more in-depth. Maybe it was because people were able to do it from the comfort of their home, and it wasn't crammed into an office up on the fourth floor of the legislative office building.

But nonetheless, I heard questions from Democrats that I can tell you quite honestly, I've never heard last, certainly not to the level that they were asked. They were generally reserved in the past for Republicans to say, why are we spending that money? Why are we spending it at that level? Is there some other way we can do it? And to be quite honest with you, Madam President, it was refreshing.

This budget is not the panacea. This budget, to my mind, is a reflection of a number of things, some which Senator Osten spoke about, I think are somewhat troubling and bear watching. Others that

are a recognition that we are still in some cases trying to find some level of stability, some level of normalcy, both at the State level and the local level. And so that's kind of the backdrop that I wanted to put on the record here in terms of my observations with the budget.

So without question, in the 73 pages of the budget, there are allocations that, in some cases, are going to cause reoccurring expenses. So for those of us that operate budgets at home, it's almost like your monthly mortgage payment. It's your monthly payment to have cable television or the phone Bill. When you build your annual budget, and those allocations are increased, you choose to get the sports channel, or you choose to do something else. Those aren't one-time expenses. They don't go away. They come back every month.

And so, in this budget, there are a number of areas where, to my mind, the budget has been constructed in such a way that it's a fair representation that there is a cliff. And it's a significant cliff. It's a cliff that is currently, at least in some ways, created by expenditures, using revenues that we will not have two years from now. And Senator Fonfara talked about OPM and their ability and OFA to project what our future revenues might be in all six different categories. And that they lag behind and they lag behind naturally, it's not a bad thing. It's a reflection of not wanting to get out too far ahead of perhaps growth in this case. And therefore, in my estimation, the spending levels in this budget.

Those that I agree with, those that I would rather we didn't make cumulatively, I think put us in a position where two years from now we will have some risk at being able to balance this budget, or at least someone will have some risk at trying to balance this budget. And so I have one question to start off with through you, Madam President, to the general lady from the Appropriations Committee. Ballpark. What is that number of reoccurring

expenses on an annual basis that exceeds last year's expenses, that if we were to look two years from now, probably don't have an equal and offsetting budget revenue that would create balance. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President, and through you, at a minimum, it's about \$200 to \$220 million relative to the two bigger pots, Education and Human Services to rate increases, private provider, rollout. And the education is relative to the. I think it'll be the seventh and eighth year of the ECS rollout. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

And beyond those two estimates, if I were to go through this budget and pick pages, there seem to be categories of expenditures to me that in some cases are as little as 6 million in some cases, probably greater in that they speak about tens of millions. Those appear to be first-time expenses that. Is it assumed that those expenses will continue? So for instance, well, let me just ask that question. Is it assumed that those would all continue? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And in some cases, without knowing the specifics, some cases

those will not continue. The ones that I know specifically that will continue are the rollout of the ten-year plan relative to ECS, the private provider. Well, the private provider rollout of the seven-year plan, I believe morally, should continue and is good public policy. And the rate increases that we have in here are expected to continue to roll out. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you. And if I could through you, pages 46, 47, 48, 49, again, these in some cases are rather small numbers, kind of embedded in Section 31. Those are a commitment for both years of the biennium. Yet, there's no commitment beyond that. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. That would be accurate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank the general lady for her response. So, in creating the budget, I think we've heard that there are some circumstances where we as a committee had what I would call rather long conversations about our obligation to one group of individuals that the State of Connecticut historically is cared for might be seniors, might be

people with disabilities, maybe some combination of the two. And in those cases, I think we very definitely agreed that we needed to do something.

And so, I would say that I'm somewhat culpable. And so, like other years, when I've helped put together a budget, I think it would be only fair for me to say that these circumstances, in some cases, have been brewing for some time. These circumstances, because of COVID, I think, become more acute. I would ask people to remember that, for all of the 100s of 1000s that had the opportunity to stay home, and be safe, some of these folks had no such opportunity. There was no one else to go to work. And so we heard from many of these people during the process of the Appropriations Committee, not necessarily out of frustration or out of anger, but more a kind of a rebalancing with what they had been saying previously. Look, this is not the first time we've had this conversation. We have not had a raise in quite some time, and therefore is there something we can do?

So I think most of us, at least on our side of the aisle, felt very much that this was an important time for us in the State of Connecticut to recognize our responsibility to those populations. Senator Austin spoke a little bit about a fund which Senator Kelly has championed for years, having to do with very limited expenses for senior citizens that are generally confined to nursing homes. And that number in this budget has moved. I think it's from \$60 to \$72, \$73, can't remember. But nonetheless, it's a \$75. Thank you.

And nonetheless, it does allow, I think people that are in that age group that are represented in that category, to believe that we've heard them, believe that we recognize that even though we've kind of wrangled about how it would be done for the last five years. I think, finally say, enough is enough. And let's come to some agreement and put that in the budget.

Madam President, my read of the budget is that there are some changes since the Governor's proposal, I think Senator Martin touched on some of the revenue changes. Since the Governor's budget, there was, I guess, a proposition that maybe some of the tax credits that had been in place previously as part of a Joint Budget adopted some time ago that we couldn't afford to do those anymore. And so those have been restated in this budget, both with regard to pension and social security. The budget also is reflective of ECS, expenditures for each municipality.

And I would argue that in some cases, those expenditures have exceeded kind of a formula that we had agreed on many years ago, that clearly was laid out and would definitely have cost municipalities some money in these years that we're currently talking about. And I think because of the last year, perhaps their inability to collect property tax, perhaps because people weren't paying their rent. I think when we spoke about this item, I think we very much wanted to make sure that municipalities were held harmless in terms of education cost-sharing.

Senator Austin and I have talked many years, spoken many years, even when I didn't serve in a leadership role about vocational agriculture, and is one of the first charter schools in the State of Connecticut, that was very effective and still is very effective in providing people an opportunity to get not only a good public education, but a good public vocation that has served, I can tell you in the district that I serve many of them very well, and they've gone on to be florists, dairy farmers, veterinarians, you name it. But this is a type of charter school that has always had, in my mindless ability to be fair in terms of the relationship between the sending community and receiving community than some of the other education programs that we have in the State of Connecticut.

We heard requests from many of the agencies in the State of Connecticut. I think there was still a lot

of interest on the part of our community college in the UConn system, the university system in terms of us putting more money into the budget, frankly, that's not an area where I might have been as aggressive as this budget is, not because I think people necessarily had the ability to make up the difference. But I think we heard in terms of Federal Reserves, the amount of money that came, not necessarily to the ARPA program, but a predecessor of the ARPA program, that many of them were held harmless during the last year, and therefore they're forecasting use of reserve funds probably wasn't really going to be required.

So that might have been an area of the budget that I might have been less aggressive in terms of expenditures. So when Senator Martin talked about cutting expenses, I think that's been an area where I've always felt, maybe we could do a little less, and they could do a little more. Senator Osten spoke about. I think it's two and a half million dollars that being spent towards trying to balance what is really a bookkeeping entry in the Passport to Parks program. That was probably one of them. I was having a conversation on the way in with the Deputy Commissioner of DEEP this morning. And it really is part of the DEEP's portfolio that most people can identify with. It's whether they can go to a park, or they can go to a forest or whether they can go to a trail. But because of the way we do our budgeting, every person that works in one of those facilities that's paid for through Passport to Parks, also gets assessed a retirement obligation, even though they never collect.

Most of them never collect benefits. They never collect retirement benefits. And so, as part of this budget, there's a recognition that perhaps at least for the next two years, we can help them when it comes to their budget.

There was a discussion early on about ARPA, the federal program. And what people may not realize is that months ago, the Legislature took action on

House Bill 6555. And that inserted the Legislature in the process of how we would allocate federal funds. And, again, Governor had put forth a budget that had about a \$50 million projected revenue, I mean an expenditure to try and offset some of the debt accumulated in Unemployment Trust Fund, that's 50 million against, I think, what is almost 1.2 billion by now. And this is another area that's gone through some changes, we had recommended out of the Appropriations Committee, I think a \$350 million expenditure in that area over two years, but ended up in this budget at \$155 million.

Not what I would have liked. I'm not the only one that gets to choose these numbers and some you win, some you lose, some you get part of what you wanted. But this definitely will go in some way to try and reduce the obligation of employers large and small, as they try to deal with the assessments of unemployment, because certainly people have been laid off and still will be laid off, perhaps for some time to come.

MRSA, it's an acronym that we use around here. There was certainly a recognition of Senator Looney and his efforts to try and make sure that municipalities had an opportunity to get more revenue based on taxable inventory of real estate in one municipality over another, because in some cases, they don't have the same ability as other municipalities to raise revenue.

And so I know in this budget there has been significant funding put into this area. And if I could just touch for one moment through you, Madam President, the funding and the expenditures in that area of the budget have to my recollection then part of the spending cap, and outside the spending cap. And if the Chair of the Appropriations Committee could remind me in the last budget, was this under the spending cap, or was it outside of the spending cap. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And this is one of those stories that started in 2015 before we were in real negotiations, relative to this particular issue, and in 2015 MRSA was designed to be outside the spending funded with a half a percent of the sales tax revenue going towards municipalities and a half a percent of the sales tax going to the special transportation fund. That was the design of MRSA. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Through you, so in those cases, in terms of our cap, they were under the cap in terms of our cap consideration. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. To be clear, those were outside the cap, not under the cap. That was the design of the 2015 statute.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And so the reason why I asked that question is one of the things that we concern ourselves with here in the Legislature,

because we have made certain representations to those that we borrow money from, is whether we're going to adhere to certain principles of budgeting, and whether we are going to begin to develop offline expenditures in an effort to not change that representation, so to speak. But there's really this little budget over here, which in this case is hundreds of millions.

And so, based on the answer, the proposal that is before us is consistent with at least the last iteration of the budget. And it's my understanding that because of growth in revenue, our spending cap has gone up slightly since the Appropriations budget. It was passed out of the Appropriations Committee. And because of some allocations within the budget, we've maintained a certain level of spending cap appropriateness, which I think the general lady spoke of earlier.

And I can't remember what the numbers were. But I want to say that they're about 25 million in the first year and 60 million or so in the second. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And I believe those numbers may be accurate. But to be clear, while MRSA is outside the spending cap through a negotiation with the executive branch, some of those numbers have been reverted to under the spending cap. And to be clear, when we moved pilot outside to MRSA, because much of it had been under this, had been under the spending cap, we had to rebase that spending cap to make sure that we were accounting for that.

So this has been a complicated formula that we have attempted to devise. And it is not an attempt to be

not transparent. It's actually very transparent, because we still include the numbers relative to where we are. And I may not be able to state off the top of my head, the numbers that are under the spending cap, and I believe that we moved back under the spending cap about close to \$200 million dollars a year relative to the MRSA payments.

And so there will be this complicated way of doing what was a very straightforward bipartisan piece of Legislation in 2015, that was kept inactive through 2017. I would say that because of financial conditions, we had not been able to fund it at the level it should have been funded. But we are finally meeting that obligation. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I thank the general lady for her comments. And I guess, at least for the moment, lastly, part of our ability to deal with the last couple of years of budgets, I think, is a relationship between how we have segregated revenue, and what we have done with it.

So, back in 2013, a young guy named Representative Candelaria down in the House came up with a recommendation that we established a budget reserve fund and that budget reserve fund be funded, at least in part with some revenues that we just couldn't bank on, on a regular basis. And I think it was kind of that idea, that conversation that was probably part of the Finance Committee, even back as far as 2013, that has created this situation where this year we're going to make a contribution of over a billion dollars to our unpaid liabilities. And certainly, Senator Fonfara was the catalyst behind having us as a body over the last couple of years, really start to look at that as a way to create a

solid foundation under our future budgets, because certainly without that support of those types of ideas from the majority, they would not have occurred.

I think, at least, my recollection was they were almost futuristic back in 2013. And may not have because of a whole bunch of reasons, the kind of consideration that they did later on when the finance committee kind of doubled its efforts in that arena, but without question, through the leadership of Senator Fonfara, and others, our ability to maintain a certain level of stability in our budget, and balancing our budget is a result of that revenue in the State of Connecticut.

And so one of the things that I've always, I think, brought to the table with regard to our Appropriations budgets is that when we begin to spend money at a rate that it outpaces our ability to pay for it, people that have money, have other places to go.

And again, we were looking at an exodus, probably four or five years ago from the State of Connecticut, to other states. And they weren't people that were just retiring. They were people of wealth. And they were people that we got a lot of money from back when a lot of this resource came onshore. I can't remember what the year was. But it certainly gave us that first injection into this savings account, where we could say, "Boy, we actually could do this," we could actually begin to minimize our obligations, at least our unfunded obligations, in retired, in pension, and in health care.

And so, I know that Senator Osten had mentioned how important that was, and I do think, even though he's not here, he's downstairs, it is appropriate to remind people that this idea, even though it was maybe green at the time, started quite some time ago. And that it has been, I think, contributory to where we are today. I do know, Madam President, that

there are some members of our caucus there probably are of the other caucus that have some questions about expenditures in this budget. I may have some other closing comments as we get toward the end of this process. But for now, I think I'll just sit in the Chamber and listen.

And I do appreciate all the effort that has been put into this proposal, from all the people that Senator Osten spoke of, not the least of which is Representative Walker, who she said is not only working very hard, and has worked very hard to be a part of this process, but to deal with some issues that she has on her own. And so these are the human parts of government that most people don't realize actually exist, and that we do have compassion for each other. And that she, in addition to many of our nonpartisan staff, have been very helpful in constructing this document. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. It's delightful to be before this Chamber on the final day of the legislative session, taking out, or carrying out rather the most important business of the entire session, which is the state budget. For reference, this is House Bill 6689. And it's LCO 10550, which is a relatively new document.

Over the years, Madam President, I've heard the State budget described in many ways. Some have called it a blueprint, even a vision of the party and powers plan for the future. Today, I heard it described as a reflection of our values. And I don't disagree with that. I think that's accurate. It's definitely true that a budget is a symbol of our priorities, and properly crafted, it should have a vision for the future, and to plan.

I got my first look at this budget document last night, really more of a summary. And I received the actual document around noon today. I mentioned the Bill number. I think one of our problems is that our Bill numbers have four digits. I would much rather serve in a Legislature that has Bill numbers with a maximum of two digits. I think we would do a much better job of representing the public. Our LCO numbers are now up to five digits. And these are the numbers that reflect different documents that are crafted in the form of Amendments. And it's a lot, Madam President. And I think that's part of our problem is that our state government has grown far too large and unwieldy.

This particular budget is a really short document. It's only 73 pages long. In contrast, we've just voted on a Bill to regulate recreational marijuana that was nearly 300 pages long. And if you compare this budget with the budget from 2019, which I was looking back at, my notes were 572 pages.

So, I think it's important to discuss the reason why the budget is such a different document this year. And it's really clear, if you take a look at this document, you realize that this document doesn't have very much in the way of policy associated with it. If you look at it is nothing more than a lot of spreadsheets and a lot of numbers.

But little direction on just how those dollars will be spent. The policy that tells us how that money will be spent is going to come in the form of another document called 'A Budget Implementer.' And I'll say right here for anyone listening, beware the implementer.

That's something that's worth a thoughtful discussion by itself. And we will no doubt debate the document when it comes. My understanding is that it's not going to come to us until a special session, which I think is unfortunate and a failure of our duty since we had the entire legislative

session to come up with a budget and implement it. And yet we are not going to finish our work on time. That budget implementer has been changed in its implementation and how it's been viewed and used over the last decade that I've been here. And more and more, I see it being used as a catch-all document.

Some people might use the term [inaudible] to describe Legislation that sneaks its way in there that might not have gone through the legislative process. There's a money for a program to train female democratic candidates for office that I expect to see in that document that's funded in this budget. Savings from closing prisons, extending CBACK benefits to nonpartisan government employees, and a lot more things that I don't think are clear looking at just numbers in a spreadsheet.

But my biggest issue with this process, and having a budget that doesn't include the implementation language along with it, is that it allows the majority party to do things they should not be doing, reviving dead Bills, for example. We have a legislative process where Bills come before various committees. They're put up for a public hearing to allow for input from our neighbors, the people we represent. And then they are voted on in Committee, and they're supposed to be fine-tuned. And then they come before the House and Senate for votes. Only then should things become law.

This implementer that comes is going to contain items that were never heard before. It will contain items that failed to pass both Chambers properly. And I believe that's wrong. And I'm going to call attention to it even before it happens. But just moving on, even without the implementer language, from what I can tell, this budget, like previous budgets, appears to be more or less a cobbled-together collection of new and old revenue sources.

Of course, this time, it also includes a veritable mountain of federal money that is going to help fund

the revenue side of the budget. I'm pointing out for the first time and probably many times throughout my comments that that is also taxes that each of us have paid to the federal government. And of course, all of this is designed to plug holes left by decades of out-of-control spending and ever-increasing debt, much of which is not addressed in this document.

And also, to continue the progressive Agenda of growing government even further, creating more and more dependence on our state government and adding more and more burdens on the people that we represent who are working harder and harder to make ends meet. The choice Connecticut must face before long is whether we will continue to operate this way. Growing government and its monstrous appetite or growing our economy and the freedom and wealth that will result from doing so.

For me, Madam President, that is the question that really matters when deciding how to vote on a budget. The majority, and sadly some of my Republican colleagues who have voted or will vote for this budget, are going to repeat over and over, not just in the near future, but long into the future, that this is a no-tax budget.

And I just want to take a moment to illustrate that that is simply not true. Aside from the actual taxes that can be pointed out in the document itself, for example, there's the corporate surcharge. This is something that is supposed to sunset; this is a tax on corporations in our State, that is raising revenue at the expense of their ability to produce, provide jobs and grow our economy. And yet, it's being continued in this document. I consider removing a sunset and continuing a temporary tax to continue a new tax. So that counts as something that I would not ascribe to a no-tax budget.

They're also using something they call the capital base tax method, which I would describe as a disgusting tax that is based on already obtained

wealth. It punishes success and profitable businesses by taxing not just their income, but also their assets they've accrued over time.

There is the extension of the property tax credit sunset. Folks listening probably remember filling out their income taxes and being able to deduct \$500 from the amount that they paid for their property tax on their home and cars, which was then reduced to \$300. And then I think \$200 and then eliminated altogether, except for a few Connecticut residents.

And year after year and budget after budget, we're promised that it's going to be restored. And yet, here we are again, and that is continued, again, attacks that exists on Connecticut residents. There are also plenty of taxes that are being voted on outside of this budget. And purposely Madam President, because everyone knows that had those taxes been contained in this budget document itself, it would have put its passage in jeopardy. And we want to make sure that we get as many democratic and potentially republican votes as possible, I guess.

But make no mistake, this budget and the expansive government that continues to be built relies on the revenues from those taxes. We have new taxes on gaming. I'm pretty certain this budget relies on revenue from there. And while maybe not explicitly, and I can't seem to figure out how one thing equals another because I only have this spreadsheet and no policy language, there are going to be taxes on the new regulation of marijuana, presumably, if it passes. Yesterday, the highway or mileage tax, whatever you want to call it, passed separately last night in both Chambers.

There will be revenue generated from that also. And it will be used to grow our government and fund the items contained in this budget. And not only these things, but there are also lots of small things. There's a tax on using credit cards to pay government fees, which is possibly Madam President, one of the most obnoxious things you can do, in my

opinion, since the fees are already taxes. So we're going to charge our constituents the people we are charged with representing fees or taxes for their interactions with our State government. And when they pay by credit card, we're going to charge them another fee for doing so.

So I repeat, saying that this budget has 'no taxes' is simply not true. And it's obvious because the money that is being spent in this budget document can only come from one place, taxes. That's the only place that money comes from in a state budget. And that's because the government does not produce anything. It does not produce wealth, or profits. It can only spend wealth that is produced by people in the private sector. And when looking at any budget, Madam President, the most important information is contained in the bottom-line spending numbers. People can argue over what's a tax or a fee or whether it's included or not, but if you really want to know whether taxes are going up, you should be looking at what the spending number is because it's all taxes.

And when the spending number goes up, the amount of taxes you're being charged is going up also. And this budget, Madam President, spends way more than ever before in our states. Fiscal year 2022, the amount appropriated is \$22.74 billion. That is a 2.6% increase over fiscal year 2021. And in fiscal year 2023, it is \$23.62 billion. And that's a 3.9% over fiscal year 2022. But it's worth noting that that is also a 6.5% increase over fiscal year 2021, which is this year. So by the end of this next two-year cycle, our taxes and spending will have increased 6.5%, more than they are today. That is massive.

The idea that this is a good budget, that is so balanced, and so responsible because it has no taxes is a dishonest argument. 6.5% in two years is a massive increase, especially when you consider we have had some of the largest spending and tax

increases in the history of our state in the last decade, I believe this is the largest one.

And I remember when I got here in 2011, the state budget was \$17 billion. And that included nearly \$4 billion in federal Medicaid funds that we don't even count towards this number in the budget anymore.

Spending, spending, spending, that's what's important. Spending is a reflection of the size and scope of our government, and its influence on our lives as individuals. I heard the House had a standing ovation for passing the most 'complicated' budget ever passed in Connecticut. I don't want to minimize any individuals or the work that they put into this document. But that is not something we should be proud of, passing the most complicated budget ever. That's not what my constituents want to hear.

And after all, how complicated is it to spend like crazy and using federal grants of \$1.7 billion plus potentially another stimulus, \$200 million, so \$2 billion worth of federal grant money, that's going to be added to the revenue side of this budget. That doesn't sound very complicated to me. It sounds suspect, and way too easy to get away with increasing the size and scope of our government and the spending that goes along with it.

And then, incidentally, there are no plans for future revenue sources for replacing that, because everyone knows today looking at this document, that there are deficits in the out years. In fiscal year 2024, the deficit is projected to be \$1.12 billion, and in fiscal year 2025, \$1.16 billion. And yet we're going to vote for a budget knowing that three years from now, we're going to be back in this place having another budget deficit.

For me, that's just simply wrong. You don't support a budget knowing it's going to lead to future problems, because it gets you by just the next two years. And I'll point out that I think that those

projections about a little over a billion dollar in deficits in those two years is a complete ridiculous understatement of reality. Those projections are not even close to accurate. But even assuming they are, that means that we are headed towards a giant fiscal cliff. And the people that vote for this budget today are going to be supporting a budget that they know results in the fiscal crisis, or at very least a reason or excuse to have more tax hikes placed upon the people they represent.

I point out that had we not received this \$2 billion in federal help, again, all taxes that we paid to the federal government, this budget would have been the largest tax hike in the history of our state. As it is, it's the most spending and creates the largest state government that this state will have ever had. I chose to be a republican because I believe in less government and less burdens on taxpayers, and this is the opposite.

And let us ask ourselves, Madam President, do the people of Connecticut actually benefit from this budget? Will businesses in our state see this budget as a change in direction that makes Connecticut more attractive? I don't think so. How about millennials? The first reaction I have when I look at this is the mountains of debt that are going to be piled on young people who stay in our state. Why would they want to stay here and end up inheriting all of this debt and the taxes that will inevitably come with it? Then I think, what about jobs? I don't think there's going to be more business opportunities as a result of this massive increase in spending, and the continuation of the corporate surcharge, and so forth.

I recognize that we have an influx of folks moving to Connecticut, but they are fleeing other states that have high taxes and irresponsible budgeting. But what about everyone else? Particularly seniors, and the many, many other people that I talked to who are still considering leaving Connecticut?

Clearly, this is a problem. And we cannot sustain the monstrous appetite of this government, without people here who are going to work and pay taxes? Will the policies contained in this budget be enough to cause anyone to reconsider moving away from Connecticut? I don't think so, Madam President.

The question really is, what is wrong with Connecticut? What is wrong with the state? What is our problem? Why do we have a deficit? Why are residents contemplating and actually moving to other states, mostly southern states, red states with lower tax burdens? While we are simultaneously gaining illegal immigrations, illegal immigrants, and also jobs that go to low-wage workers?

Why is Connecticut still known, despite the fact that I've been here for ten years, hearing how we are going to fix this problem? We are still known to be notoriously hostile to businesses. There are loads of reasons. And we could talk quite a while about all of the individual policy decisions and votes that got us here. And we can revisit many of the debates that took place in this circle just in the last several weeks, to identify many of those reasons.

This budget is just more of the same, bringing us down the same tired path and likely to result in more and more huge deficits, to be addressed with more taxes. But it's not that hard to figure out the answers. Mr. President, if I had to pick one phrase to boil it down, I would simply say, we are not competitive. If you ask your constituents, "What's wrong?" They'll tell you it's not a secret. Everybody knows. It's too expensive to live here. There's too many taxes. Energy costs too much.

And many of our friends and neighbors are asking themselves over and over, year after year, is it going to get any better? How much longer can they afford to stay in Connecticut?

Businesses say it's too expensive. We hear it every day. That's not a secret either. So why does this budget make it even harder to do business in Connecticut? I know business owners that were looking forward to the sunset of the corporate tax surcharge. Mr. President, I have even had business owners in the state walk up to me and tell me, they fear us. They fear the people in this building and the people downstairs in the House. And who can blame them when they have to be concerned about the next thing we are going to do to them.

College graduates, why would they stay here? They have the same problems. They know it's too expensive to stay here. No matter who you are, and how much you love this state, and I do love this state which is why I'm standing here before you, Mr. President, I make the same commitment, "Every two years, I am going to stay and fight." That's why I keep running for office. That's why I keep standing up and saying these things over and over again. But you cannot help but recognize that we are not competitive. We are losing our edge. And we will continue to until we change direction.

If the problem is that it's too expensive to be here, and there are just too many taxes and regulations, then the answer must be to work on those problems. How do we do that? Again, it's simple. You can just ask anyone. And they will tell you. We need to make it clear that we intend to make it so that you are not better off in Texas, so that you would not be better off in South Carolina or Florida, or even Massachusetts.

Whether you are single person, or a growing family, a retiree, or small business, or a huge corporation, we need to let every one of those folks know that we want to make Connecticut more competitive, and that staying in Connecticut will be a smart decision. But every two years, there's another budget that looks like this.

And it's sad, Mr. President, because every one of us in this circle understands exactly what I'm saying. And that that's exactly what the problems are. And they also know how to fix them. It only requires the will to do so. We need to address our long-term obligations. And yes, that means reining in public sector employee unions, and the pension debt that is threatening the financial future of Connecticut.

This is not the direction that my constituents are asking for. More than anything, people will tell you we just need to cut spending and taxes. But as I have pointed out, Mr. President, that is not what this budget does. It does the exact opposite. This budget taxes and spends more than \$1 billion more the first year, and more than \$2 billion more in the second year. The moment I heard that, I was an automatic no vote.

Just for comparison's sake, compare with the 2019 budget, which was also awful, and filled with a mountain of new spending and taxes. That budget raised spending nearly a billion dollars, more each year. A huge increase, to be sure, but not even half of what this budget proposes to do. I hope my Republican colleagues are listening because I want to say it's awful odd that it was enough for Republicans to vote no in 2019. And yet we're doubling the increase in spending this time. And many of my Republican colleagues in the House thought this budget was worth voting for. I hope that is not the case in the Senate today.

My opinion, Mr. President, is that the state spent in tax too much on the day I was first elected back in 2010. Coincidentally, the same day, Governor Malloy was elected. And I have watched and voted no on every budget since then. With one exception, that was the Republican budget that passed in 2017. That we worked very hard on that legitimately raised no taxes, and cut no funding for education. And no, it wasn't a perfect document either. But compared to the one that ultimately passed, after Governor

Malloy vetoed it, it was a tremendous start down the right path.

And I often reflect and ask myself how much better off we would be if we were living under that budget, or one like it today. But sadly, every budget passed into law since 2011, since I got here, has raised spending and taxes substantially. They were all also all out of balance on the day that they were passed, and they all had projected deficits in the third year.

I've heard some of my colleagues today say that there are, 'policy reasons' for these huge new spending figures. What's the reason, we need even more government? To me, it's just proof of mismanagement. The only way forward for our state's economic future is growth. It's the only way to create jobs and opportunities, encourage businesses and people to choose Connecticut. It's also the only way we are going to pay off our long-term debts and obligations.

And that growth is only going to come with public policy that makes our state more attractive as a place to live, work, and retire. That means reducing spending and cutting taxes, reducing regulations, lowering the cost of living, the exact opposite of what has been done and the exact opposite of what is contained in this document.

For me, Madam President, I don't believe that there is more than one way to fix these problems. There's only one way. It's the ways I've just described, making Connecticut more attractive by reducing the burden on the citizens and businesses that are here. And every day that we choose not to do those things, the situation will continue to worsen.

I mentioned 2017. What ultimately happened after that Republican budget was vetoed by the Governor was that we passed something called the compromised budget. I didn't vote for that budget and I don't

really want to get down on my friends who did. I couldn't vote for it, but I understand why they did.

Time seemed desperate. The Governor was threatening massive cuts to education and town aid. And it was an opportunity to actually pass some Republican items by giving them the majority, some votes.

Things that would not have been included without our support, but like all budgets, it did good things and bad things. The good things were really good. A spending cap, a bonding cap, a requirement to vote on contracts. Those good things, particularly, the spending cap are sadly and cleverly being circumvented in the budget before us.

I was going to talk at length about it, but I'll just say a few words about the notion of shifting. Shifting to me is a way to describe what's happening when you make a promise that you're only going to spend a certain amount of money in your state budget. And then when you went to spend more than that, you take certain items and you say, well, this is not included in the budget. We're going to spend that money, of course, but it's not in the budget. It's an off-budget expenditure.

And we saw it all through the Malloy years when he took Medicaid, right out of the budget for the purpose of keeping our spending number, so it could be described as being beneath the spending cap. But in this budget, there are more things. Putting off payments that are supposed to get us on government or a GAP accounting.

I forgot what the GAP stands for, government, something accounting principles. And anyway, those payments are going to be put off because if they were included, even one year's payment would put us over the spending cap at \$85 million. That's how close we are.

That's not the only example either. Madam President, there are a number of ways this budget circumvents, the spending cap by moving things off budget.

And the bad things that weren't contained in that compromised budget in 2017, continue to haunt us, not just the significant increases in spending, despite a struggling economy, a familiar situation that we desperately need to reverse, but we're still paying the \$500 million bailout of the city of Hartford.

We still have that elimination of the property tax credit on our income tax. We had talked about offering an Amendment on it. And hopefully we'll be able to draft something before this debate is over, because I believe that's something that we should draw attention to and remind our constituents that some of us are working for them. And we want to keep the promise that that temporary reduction in that tax credit was indeed temporary. And it should be restored today.

I'm getting to the end of my remarks, Madam President, but I want to tell people that I do have it in me to compromise. A lot of what we say on this floor only comes when you have the desire and passion to get up and speak on something. But I work on a lot of Bills and Legislation behind the scenes, very well with my colleagues in both parties to make good things happen for the state and not everything we do here is bad though. It is mostly when I think things are going the wrong way, that I'm inclined to get up and talk about it.

All of our constituents want us to work together, but I also don't think that means that they want me to simply vote for bad policies. I'm always willing to listen and find common ground, but what I won't bend on are the principles that I believe in or my responsibility or my oath to the people that I represent.

And I appreciate the desire to find common ground. But I think my colleagues that are finding common ground in this document are going too far. There's no viable compromise in this document that's before us.

Compromising in this way, for me means moving away from the only correct solution. I wish I had taken the time over the years to write down some of the comments that were made in favor of the previous budgets passed over the last decade. Which one of these budgets was the one that was going to solve all our problems? Is it going to be this one? No, it's not.

This budget will not be the one that solves our problems. We will be back here in no time addressing the same issues and more deficits and passing more Band-Aids, trying to keep businesses in our state, offering corporate welfare.

We did one earlier this year for data centers. What we need to fix this mess and move our state forward, is much harder than this. Sadly, our ability to actually pass any kind of responsible budget was dramatically reduced, when the labor deal passed in 2017, that locked us into expenses that are very hard to meet.

This budget is in direct contradiction to the message we need to send as a signal to businesses and citizens that Connecticut has a bright future. I have said here several times, that every Bill needs to be measured against whether it makes us more attractive and competitive as a state. And if not, the answer should be a No vote. Funding our state on future tax hikes, federal grants.

We could not do this without new syntaxes, is not worthy of a vote for me. It's also in direct contradiction to my beliefs as a Republican and as American, this budget just feeds the monster that has become our state government and I cannot vote for it. Thank you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm just wonder if we
could stand at ease just for one moment please?

CHAIR:

Yes, we could stand at ease, sir. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate the
courtesy.

CHAIR:

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

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President. When I look through this
budget, one of the things I like to do is understand
it. And there's a lot of things that in this budget
that I don't understand, and I'm going to kind of
make my way through it. Sorry about the allergies. I
forgot my allergy medicine this morning.

When I go through it, I'm just going to ask some
questions because one of the things that I find in
here is something that bothers me when I look at my
own budgets and its other expenses. And I hope that
somebody has a more detailed report that can just
explain to me what the other expenses are?

Because I'm sure people have questions on these. The
same as I do. I will try to go through and use line

items, as I do this or page numbers as well. So just to kind of get an idea and it actually starts on page two. So through you Madam President for the proponent of this Bill.

CHAIR:

You may proceed.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. And its line T6, on page two, where, under personal services and it says other expenses and it's \$15 million this year, and \$16 million the second year. If I can get just an idea of what other expenses are?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. This is the line item where we include expenses relative to running that particular organization for purposes of buying paper or having an electric bill or you are also First Selectman mayor in a city that has those rather than detail out. This is how much we pay for paper. This is how much we pay for pencils. This is how much we pay for the minor things necessary to support a larger organization relative to the small incidentals that take to run a large agency. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. All right. And I understand that. I think it would be a lot more paper if we started printing that up. But we

actually have in the budgets that I've reviewed and know pretty well, this is for paper, this is for envelopes. And I understand because of the size of this budget that we can do that. So I'm pretty much going to go through these and I'm going to skip that because I was going to ask that on every single one of these. So I will accept that as an answer.

Saved yourself a lot of space here. Sorry, ma'am. All right. If we can, through you again, Madam President, I'm looking at page 27 and it's the tourism fund, but it actually is going to go on the next page.

CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President on T918, it says various grants. Do we have any idea of what those grants are? That's \$393,856 each year.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. What line item was that, sir?

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

It is T918.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. This is relative to DECD and some of these grants are very small, but these are even smaller grants relative to local arts organizations that are not detailed out. This includes the Amistad and some other much smaller than the \$20,000 or \$30,000 that are here for other organizations through you. Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. All right. I'm going to probably touch back on this page a couple of times, because I noticed that some of these programs are in other locations throughout this budget, which basically completely expands the amount of monies that we're talking about. But I do understand that answer and thank you. On line, I'm sorry. On page 37 Through you again, Madam.

CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Sorry. Page 37, line 311 to 313. It says up to \$40 million to the department of social services for Medicaid for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2022 for nursing home settlement. What settlement is this?

CHAIR:

And Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This is relative to the settlement with the nursing home staff that were going to strike if we didn't increase their pay. And this is a \$40 million carry forward for the temporary rate increases of 10%. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President has this already been paid out? Through you president? Has this already been paid out or is this going to start being paid out on the beginning of the fiscal year?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, nothing in this budget has already been paid out. Through you.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne,

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. And on line 314 through -- through you Madam President. On line 314 through 316, it says \$2,500,000 for the deposit into the Passport to Parks account established pursuant to and so on. Is this a pass through of the monies collected from the registrations, or is this an infusion of money into this account?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President and what this is, is Senator Miner talked about this a little bit in his comments and questions and what this is, is recovery. It's dollars that are used in the Passport to Parks program. Seasonal employees have assessed that it's not on there.

It's not assessed to them directly, but it's assessed in the accounts of how the comptroller assesses the unfunded liability in the past that 70 years of us not paying it is assessed for, is assigned to each one of the employees in the entire state doesn't reflect on their paychecks is an accounting thing from the comptroller's office relative to the unfunded liability.

And they're charging seasonal employees, this assignment. And this is an attempt to make sure that the Passport to Parks program is not assigned unfunded liability costs relative to that 70 years of past debt. And it deals with that particular issue in over the summer.

Should we finish the budget today and finish the other documents that we have to? There will be some work done to the unfunded liability to change how the assignment of the debt is accomplished in the budget.

So you don't see this in the design of the Passport to Parks program was to put the dollars into the programs and the parks themselves to do upgrades in those parks. And that is the goal of this. And this is dealing with that particular issue this year, while we know we have to deal with it in the future, through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, I'm going to take that this was an injection of the funds. Thank you. Actually I went ahead of myself a little bit so section 29, this is where these are all included, and this is all -- this is, I'm sorry, this is on page 36. This is all unexpended balances of funds. So this is, and if I can, correct, this is over \$400 million out of all these funds that we're talking about, and what we've done is we've taken these savings and basically spent them.

And to me, when I see unexpended funds, I would think about paying off some of our debt to make it a better long-term solution. And I guess that's why I had some of these questions as well.

Just making sure that instead of paying off debt to the tune of over \$400 million, that we're not spending it where we shouldn't be. So I'm going to ask a couple of questions on page 38. Through you Madam President.

CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

And these are payments. This is line 31 all the way to actually, all the way, basically to the end of the page. Where we're making payments to the colleges, 321 to 323, we're giving \$22,165,000 to the Connecticut state colleges and universities and the community tech college system.

Why are we giving them actually, I'm sorry, it's 21,332,962 for the first fiscal year? And the second is 22,165,000 for the second fiscal year. Why are we giving them that money? And what is it for?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much Madam President. Again this is relative to the unfunded liability that we just talked about with the Passport to Parks. The unfunded liabilities, instead of being paid directly out of the comptrollers, are assigned to each state employee. So when someone says a state employee is worth, for example \$100,000, and that person earns a salary of about \$35,000.

The Delta of that change is because they are assigned the cost of employees that left sometimes as far back as 70 years ago.

So we did not pay our liabilities under Governor Weicker or Governor Rowland or any other Governor, no matter their party affiliation. We were not paying our liabilities. It was on a pay as you go system. And when it became apparent that we were not accurately accounting under Governor Malloy, it started to be accurately accounted on what we owed on our pension systems.

Actually if you go to president Bush in the Patriot act, part of that said, you need to start accounting for your pension systems correctly. And Governor Malloy was one that took it very serious, and he started accounting for what we actually owed on our pensions.

And the comptroller pays that off by saying, you Senator Champagne, are an employee and you're paid \$28,000 or whatever we're paid a year, but you're assigned a cost of double that amount, which is your portion of that 70-year-old debt.

And this is covering that debt so that the money that they have in, within their block grants are used for the services that the block grants were designed for, teaching young people in colleges. So

that's relative to that. Through you Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So these are basically the pensions that we're catching up on through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. It's a little bit more than that. It's the obligations of our pension have been assigned to different agencies, and this is covering that cost of our unfunded liabilities relative to things, it's slightly more complicated than the way you said it slightly more complicated than the way I am saying it.

I'd be happy to show it to you on a spreadsheet someday, if you're interested in that kind of thing. But I would just like to say that this is relative to all of these line items. They're all the exact same thing through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President, does this also pay for the medical liabilities that we face as well through your Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Our medical -- we don't have a 70-year-old debt relative to our health care costs. Our healthcare costs have continued on the state employee side, go down every year. We're actually paid about a hundred million dollars less this year.

And I've seen a relative savings based on the policies that were passed in the SEBAK agreements over the last two or three SEBAK agreements, where we have changed the way we were paying for healthcare. In addition to that employees now are putting money aside for healthcare costs. So this is something that we've been working on. This is not relative to any medical costs. Through you Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I've seen something like this and the accounting rules have changed over the past couple of years, and that requires us to put extra monies aside for both pensions and for other liabilities associated with retirement, depending on what they are. So that would basically cover that whole page. Well, actually, I'm not quite sure about that. Can we look at lines 342, 344?

These are and I'll say actually 339 through 344, because it's talking about operating expenses for the University of Connecticut and the University of Connecticut health center. Is this something different because, I mean, if this is an operating expense, isn't this something that would happen year after year? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President Yukon health in fiscal year 2022, in fiscal year 2021, and actually fiscal year 2020 saw a revenue loss relative, and this is covering some of that revenue loss, through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So and would that be true for the lines 345 through 348 as well? Through you.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, this program was designed a number of years ago and was being forwarded to online only, and many of the veterans in the state requested that this continue to go in person. And this covers that program going in person through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I wish these had more detail. I wouldn't have to ask so many questions. I'm sorry. In lines 349 through 352. What is the

purpose for the two and a half million dollars, for the operating expenses under this line item? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This program is a circuit program, which currently operates through the University of Connecticut in Fairfield county, in new Haven, relative to climate change. And this is forwarding that program up farther up the coast and inland to make recommendations to municipalities on climate change. And that's what this is relative to. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And that's interesting, that it's passing this on to municipalities. Is this something that we also have access to? And do they provide those numbers to the legislature as they present them to the municipalities?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I just want to make sure we're understanding each other Madam President, but this is not fostered onto municipalities. There are municipalities that are dealing with climate change issues relative to their communities, to how they are going to further design things like sewer systems, or do you have a bridge that is flooding all the time because of the rise of

water? Or are there other ways that you can deal with some of the situations relative to flooding in your particular community?

And this program gives them services that they don't have to pay for. This is not a cost to municipalities. This is a program relevant to some of the municipalities right now. It's being taken advantage of by mostly Fairfield county.

There is federal grants that they apply for also. So this is to bring that program and provide resources to other communities that are not necessarily in Fairfield county going up to New Haven.

So that as you well know, some of our inland communities are seeing required changes to upgrade drainage or how we handle outflows into our rivers and our Brooks and how we handle those kinds of things. This program is designed to provide resources to municipalities that they don't have to pay for. Through you Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And again, I find that very interesting and basically, what I was asking is, as they're doing that, can they just give us an update, here at the legislature is what they're doing?

So if they're redesigning bridges because the water level's getting high, I would find that interesting. And I think it would be great information for us to know, because we may have to, at some point in time provide monies to raise bridges or to redesign the sewer systems or something like that.

So if they would keep us in kind of in the loop, we get little pamphlets from a lot of different

organizations. And I think it would just be interesting and it would keep us up to date on what's going on with our climate seeing as how we're giving them a lot of money. Through you, Madam President.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much --

CHAIR:

Senator Osten, we're all getting tired.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. We often ask people who receive grant dollars to provide us with resources and many of these have inside the documents please report back to us on how the dollars were spent.

This particular one, I talked with Senator Cohen about this and said, we would need to know this is one of those that is funded for two years. But unless we know how that program is going, it would not be funded after this two-year timeframe. So this is one of those programs that we're looking at it as a report coming back to us, is this successful? Is this meeting needs?

Does this have -- is there a way for us that we should deal with this or not deal with this as the case may be, but we are asking for a report back on this particular organization through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I hope that's made available to us, even if it's online. Like I said, I would love to read that. Lines 359 through 361. It says up to 1.7 million to the department of correction for community support services for each of the fiscal years June 30th and June -- I'm sorry, 2022 and 2023. Do we have any idea what those community support services are? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This is relative to community services that have long been a part of the budget. And the administration asked us to call them out and move them over and pay them through upper funds. It's relative to re-entry programs that someone returning to the community may take part in. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President again, I hope we get some sort of information back from that as well. I think that's it for that page. On page number 40 lines, 385 to 388, it says up to \$5 million to the Department of Energy and Environment Protection for solid waste management for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2022, to establish and administer, a program to support solid waste reduction strategies, including a redemption center grant program.

And then on page 42 lines, 453 to 456, and it's item 33 listed there. It says up to \$5 million to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for solid waste management for the fiscal year

ending June 30th, 2022, and made available to establish and administer a program to support solid waste reduction strategies. That's \$10 million that, we're going to study solid waste management. It may be two different directions, but it's in here twice.

That's a lot of money for a study. I would even say \$5 million is a lot of money for a study for anybody, but we're basically doing two different studies, studying kind of the same thing, except one goes one direction. But for the most part, it's studying the same thing. Is there a reason that we're doing this twice through you? Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President appreciate it. The first program is, neither one of them are studies to be clear. One is directly called out in the Bill referred to as the Bottle Bill, and that is to provide a grant to build up redemption centers, primarily in those areas where redemption centers are not currently available.

And the other one is a grant program for municipalities to deal with some of the other items that were in the bottle Bill relative to changes on solid waste through you. Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and you are correct. My notes were wrong on that and I apologize, but again, that's \$10 million and hopefully they can get those get both of those done for a little cheaper, and maybe we'll be putting some more of that money back

into the budget and other programs later on. Right on number -- I'm sorry, page 40 lines, 398 to 402.

There's two sums of money there. And it's to the Department of Economic Community Development for other expenses to be made available in said fiscal years for grants to flagship producing theaters. Is this basically going more money to the theaters and are any of the theaters anywhere else in this budget going to be included or is these different theaters.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, there's several items here relative to theaters. These are all different kinds of theaters. And the goal is to provide them with a two year grant with no grant coming in the third and fourth years.

These are those programs that have been directly impacted by COVID they're closing down, don't have the ability to, in many cases, the administration has said you need to do fundraising, but some theaters have no ability to, they don't have clients that come in, relative to the wealth that some places do.

So, while not respective of this particular line item in some of the other theaters, there's a small theater in Norwich that does not have the deep pocket people who go to the theaters and those theaters have also been closed. So this is a way to deal with a section of our economy that we certainly don't want to lose our theaters at a great rate. And this is attempting to deal with that issue, but it is just that two years and will not be seen in the third or fourth year or the out years of our spending packages through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. All right. Basically, the question that I was asking, basically is, these grants, before any grants are given out, are they going to look to make sure that, if they had been received other grants within this budget, are we going to compare to make sure that we're not doubling up on the funds, if there's other theaters who have not received anything and need that help through you? Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, we always check all grants. Anyways, the department that handles that, is the Department of Economic and Community Development and these will help stabilize the different types of theaters. And there is a bucket on lines 412 to 415, that deals with some of those smaller theaters of about \$3 million to deal with some that may not have gotten grants. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Okay. Like I said, I just want to make sure that when this money is distributed, it's distributed even, and we're not leaving anybody out. So that would probably answer my say that would be the same question I would've asked for well, most of these. On line 4 -- I'm

sorry, page 41, line 428 through 431, it's item number 26 on this list.

It says up to \$1 million to the Department of Emergency Services on public protection for other expenses for each of the fiscal years ending in 2022/2023 for the Western Connecticut School Safety program. Is this a school that Western Connecticut's school safety program, or is this a program that goes into the schools? I'm not sure what this is. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This is West conn, the state university. There is a program there that teaches municipalities how to do school safety programs, relative to looking at their particular schools to see if they're addressing any school safety issues relative to programs on teaching teachers, how to teach children on school safety issues. It's a program overall brought to the attention through Senator Kushner. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So is this available to all communities to send somebody there for this training? Or do they send people out to the school districts to train them? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you. This is a program that goes out to the different schools relative to that. And this is mostly a pilot program because it would not fit through the whole state of Connecticut. And if it works out, there may be other mechanisms to deal with that, but we first need to see if this is actually going to work and benefit those particular communities. And it would be on the Western end of the state. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President. On page 42, line 444 through 446. It's number 30 on this list. It says, up to \$150,000 to the secretary of the state for other expenses, for each of the fiscal years ending 2022/2023 for the cost of an election monitor for the city of Bridgeport. Is this one person making \$150,000 a year, or is this multiple people or is it a combination of benefits and one position. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Champagne. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

This cost of the election monitor for the city of Bridgeport, was given to us by the secretary of the state to continue a program on election monitoring in Bridgeport. And it would be relative to any needs that they may have to go to the different polling sites and check out the absentee ballots are done. So it would be run through the secretary of state's office. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Okay. So it's just the total cost of taking care of the program. Right. On lines 457 to 459, same page up to \$100,000 to the department of children and families for other expenses. And it's for the fiscal year ending 2022 and made available for the Care line up upgrades. Is this the when you call in to make a report about a possible child endangered? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. And yes, indeed. This is technological upgrades. It's a, one-year only expense on the technological upgrades to the system, through your Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm hoping that this technology will actually make it, so you don't have to wait for long periods on the phone when you, when you call the Care line. But thank you for that.

On lines 462 to 465. It says up to \$5 million to the secretary of the office of policy and management, for other expenses for the fiscal year ending 2022, for costs associated with legalization of cannabis.

The secretary shall transfer funds to the affected agencies. Under this, I see, it's a one-time

expense. Will we, in the future or any more expenses going to be brought before this body for the taxpayer to pay in relation to marijuana?

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. And originally, when we got our state budget, the Governor had all of the expenses or potential expenses for the development of a cannabis program and those dollar amounts were around \$20 million. And on looking at that, the appropriations committee at large felt that that was an overreach on expenses. It's why we want to design the system.

This would be one of those ways to carry cannabis revenue and expenses. The revenue would offset the expenses before any revenue went, any place else to anything else, so that you would see that net difference between expenses and on revenue coming in. And why have this here first? Because revenue doesn't come in first. So this is those startup costs.

In other times we have said for other programs that the startup costs would be repaid, but because all the money is coming in and out of the general fund then we don't need to in quotes, repay it back, but this would be a way to make sure that we're detailing out those expenses. And would people know about those expenses? Yes. All expenses and revenue will run through the normal mechanism and we would net out those expenses for this particular revenue source. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and out of that \$5 million, is there any money, out of that \$5 million going to train police officers to detect marijuana? Operate -- I'm sorry, drivers under the influence of marijuana, drug recognition experts? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I actually have put in a Bill for the last four years on DRES or drug recognition enforcement officers, or experts to expand this program, which already exists in the state of Connecticut and part of any training relative to that, would be in this particular \$5 million. Although some of that won't go to -- we'll need to actually get some revenue in to expand the program to the level that I think, we'll feel comfortable with. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well, I'm hoping somebody does and I've talked about this in the past because I put in to send two officers to training, just to get a cost estimate of what it would cost. And the cost was over \$13,000 for two officers to get through the entire program quite expensive. And the truth is, we're going to need more out there.

And hopefully, before anything takes place. And the other reason that I had that question is because I noticed that the funds in the Bill that we passed were earmarked somewhere else. 25% went for rehabilitation and 75% went to another fund, which I

had asked if it went into the general fund was told yes, but it wasn't available.

It wouldn't be counted towards our expenditures. So that's why I had asked this, I didn't want the taxpayers to be on the hook to spend their money on this. And I was hoping that if this program does go up and running, that it would basically pay for itself in some way or fashion.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I'm sorry, I didn't hear the question. Through you.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne. Could you repeat that please?

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Sorry, everything I just said, but basically, the question was out of the 75 is going since going one way. 25 percent is going the other way. Out of that monies, which percentage is going back to pay for the program and everything associated with it.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

The appropriations committee designed the system that all expenses relative to cannabis, no matter what those expenses are, whether it's rehabilitation programs or department of consumer protection programs, or any of the other programs relative to training that that would net those expenses with the revenues.

So that all expenses relative to cannabis will be paid out of the cannabis revenue coming in through you. Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Just for clarification on page 43, 490 through 493, that \$21 million is deposited at the state employees' retirement fund. This is paying off some of the debt. Is that correct?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President. No. This was a request by the Governor, to put dollars aside for possible payoffs of those inactive employees, vested employees, but not at the level of getting a payment.

So this is to take somebody who might be vested tenure, left state service has their pension sitting inside the pension account, but to take them off the books completely. And this is a program that the Governor is working on to take them off the books by offering them a payout. So to speak through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, That's an excellent idea. We just started doing that in the town where I live and it's being, it's quite successful. We definitely should do that. All right. I have some questions on what starts on page 43 and it's 494 into the following two pages and yeah.

And it's the department of economic and community development for other expenses to be made available for the following grants and said fiscal years. There's a lot of programs here. And how, how do you choose which of these programs get funded? Do they have to put in for the grant? Do Legislators ask to pay these? If I could just get some information on that. Through you, Madam President.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President and excellent question. So for example, there's a program on here right now, often confused with other programs. So it's T942 EMERGE. EMERGE Is a program that we have long funded for decades. It's a program for re-entry of inmates and often gets confused with a democratic state led democratic women's political campaign, not the same thing at all.

They just happened to have the same name. So I just wanted to make sure that that's clarified. But all of these programs are relative to what they've been seen as an agency or a nonprofit that has done good work in communities. They come from all over the state and what they are is like Upper Albany is in Hartford. They do a lot of work with the community to turn problematic situations around.

It's that kind of thing. So I'll use AHM, Andover Marlborough Hebron is a mental health and family stabilizing, great program. Work with three communities, actually they work with for now.

They work with the schools. So these are all programs that have been throughout time, they show up over and over again. I actually feel like I know

most of them now because of my work on appropriations.

They have been historically provided some grants sometimes. Some years they get nothing, some years they get a small dollar amount this year. There is more of them that I've seen dollars that have been increased. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President, I asked this question two years ago and I'm going to ask it again today because I've looked at some of these groups and I see some interesting things and I realized the amount of money that's going to be to sent to these groups. And in some cases, the amount of money is more money than they've ever had in a certain year.

So and in other situations they're an all-volunteer group and they're doing work and I'm not understanding exactly where they're spending the money. So for any of these groups that we've sent out money to them, do we get responses back from them?

Essentially, how is it going if they deal with clients, how many clients have you seen? Is it working? Is it worth the taxpayer's money to invest in that group again? And looking at them, most of them are, but I just want to know, do we do that? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. Madam President. Yes. We do get reports back from the organizations on the work that they're doing through you.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

And, is this some information available that I can look up as somebody who has to vote on a budget, that I can look up, and see the results of that. And I don't know, I'll just pick, I can just pick well, I can pick any of these, but I guess, 'the House of Bread' that would be some sort of food distribution or am I wrong on that. You know, how many clients do they see? And what kind of results?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I thank you very much. Madam President, if Senate could stand at ease?

CHAIR:

The Senate could stand at ease while you get that answer.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, I had to double check to make sure I was giving the right answer. I knew it was a program in Hartford, but it is a social service agency that handles food distribution and other things within the community. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I don't need to know the exact number, but do we get how many clients they've seen? How many people come on a weekly basis? How much food was distributed? Just showing a metric of how successful they've been? Through you, Madam President.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. And with any of these, many of these organizations are receiving other dollars through the department of social services. And yes, we get reports from many of these organizations.

The detail of which I may not have, but the fact that they're giving out a thousand pounds of food each week would be something that would like this particular organization that you're talking about is something that would be available. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator and Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. That is something that, like I said, two years ago, I asked for something like this, because I like metrics. I like to look at something and I like to make sure that if we're going to spend taxpayer money year after year, that it is getting the results. And again, like I said, I read through these, I look through a lot of them.

Some of them, like I said, are getting more money than they've ever had when you look at their 990's and I think it would be good for the taxpayers, if they ever wanted to view that information too. I'd like to ask a question about T-949 Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards.

CHAIR:

Pose your question, sir.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and through you. It's \$500,000. Is that for all the communities to put in for a grant to get money, to run their Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This is for all you service bureaus, we just increased in this budget. The number of Youth Service Bureaus by one adding in summers, but all the current Youth Service Bureaus and that one would receive additional dollars in a per cap basis through this grant. Thank you very much, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you Madam President. And one more question on this sheet or on page 44, and that is the parent trust fund. That was a Bill passed in 2001. And it talked about getting RFPs to provide those services. And I'm just wondering, do we continue to get

current RFPs every year for this trust fund. Through your Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. Could the good gentlemen, please repeat that question?

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. It is a parent trust fund and it was a Bill passed in 200, setting up this fund and at the time it talked about getting a RFP to provide services for this. And I just wanted to make sure that we are current on our RFPs. And do we do it every year?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

The answer for that would be yes. Through you Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just didn't see anything newer at the time. All right. On page 45, I noticed that there was a big amount on line number T 964 for the Lebanon library, a million dollars.

That's kind of one of the biggest numbers that I saw under this list here. Can you just explain what the million dollars will be doing?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Yes, I'm very familiar with that particular line item. That is a grant for the library. They had had a grant in 2015 bond. They had to contact the 33 landowners of the Lebanon Green. There were complications revolving around that they then had to work with the OT and the Attorney General's office relative to where the parking would be.

Ultimately the parking had to be moved across the street in the current parking lot. Then they had to move the septic systems that were between the library and the church that's on the same property. They went over the timeframe and the grant.

They just had just gotten the contractor to build it. And the grant expired on June 1st. This is just referencing that grant so they can put out the construction program. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

So essentially the million dollars is what was left on the grant and we're just allowing them to use it through this? Is that what it is?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

The grant had never been put out. A million dollars was the original grant, and this is making sure that they can use those grant dollars, because the grant lapsed in the other account. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And that makes sense. Thank you so much for that answer. Actually I have nothing else on that page.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

So Madam President I'm just wondering if the Senate could stand at ease for one minute.

CHAIR:

The Senate may stand at ease.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Madam President. I apologize. And thank you for your indulgence. Thank you, Senator Champagne.

CHAIR:

No, no worries.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Madam President, and absolutely no worries. You've been answering a lot of questions

for a long time now. So I want to go to page 46, section 31. The amounts appropriate section one of this act to the judicial department for youth services prevention.

Where did these several pages of items, where did this originate from? Who put in for this? Was this a grant? Did they apply for it or were there Legislators that put these forward?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, this is grant dollars assigned by the black and Puerto Rican caucus relative to those specific Legislators. Through you Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And how much does each one of the Legislators in that caucus get to spend?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. \$150,000. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President. Is that an increase? I thought it was a \$100,000 the last time I stood here.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President, to my knowledge, that is not an increase. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The paperwork that goes along with each one of these. Is this an application that has to be filled out with an explanation as to what the money is going to be spent on?

Do these parties reach out to their Legislators to ask for this money? Exactly. How does this unfold? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. These are actually somewhat of our more stringent grants that get rolled out. Each organization has to fill out an application through the judicial department. It's all monitored through the judicial department.

They all have reports that have to be submitted. It's actually a very controlled environment, so it's

not like the Legislators would get a check and they deliver it to them. This is an application process through the judicial department. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So the Legislators, do they reach out to the organizations and say, Hey, you should fill this out and, and tell them how much to apply for?

Because, or do they give the money up like that? Because they get \$150,000 each. Through you, Madam President.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. As they, and you and I know what our communities need. We often know which grant programs which programs need a little bit of an additional assistance. And so these are originally identified by the Legislators, but then there's an application process that happens after that to make sure they're worthy of the grant.

And on top of that, make sure that they comply with the reporting mechanisms surrounding them. So the Legislators initially identify them within that \$150,000. They then turn that recommendation over to the judicial department in a spreadsheet, much akin to this, and then the organizations have to file a prescriptive paperwork to get this. And then there's a reporting after the program. Through you, Madam President,

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And where are those applications listed? If a Legislator wants to view them. So that we can judge, if we should pass this budget or not. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

This is handled through the judicial department through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So we contact them and they would provide us this information. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Yes.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. So I noticed that throughout this list I found a couple that appear to be repeats. And when I looked at page 47 line T999, I noticed that it had been listed on page 44. The

name was a little different, but it's the same location.

And that is T940, under T940, it's \$200,000 over two years. And under T 999, it adds an additional \$10,000 in. And I think this is kind of what I was talking about with the doubling up on different efforts. And because of this is these two applications handled by two different agencies. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. The 940 is the one-time grant handled through, I believe this one's handled through DECD and the other one is handled through the judicial department and both will be applicable. The ones handled through DECD are one-time expansion of the other grant program.

The one handled through the judicial department often has the same organization year after year. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator champion.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, I guess my concern is, when the application is made, did they list that there is a possibility they were going to get \$10,000 from one, and when they made that application for the \$10,000, did they say that they got the 200,000 coming in or a hundred thousand dollars a year under the other? But either way, like I said, I want to make sure that we hit as many organizations as we can, but we're hitting multiple organizations in different parts of this budget.

All right. No, I have a lot of questions and I was going to ask a lot of questions about each one of these line items. Are you aware of the makeups of these businesses? I know I've looked up quite a few of them including 990's, or should I just leave it up to going through the judicial department. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President I've looked up many of these organizations, but the vetting process is not done that way. So if the good gentleman wants to ask me specific questions, he can and that's entirely up to him or he can work with the judicial department, which may be able to provide more in detail representation through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'll just ask a couple questions. On page 48 line T1065. All it says is steam train. What steam train.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President of Senate could stand at ease.

CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, the steam train. This is a steam train in Essex. I think that's the only one in the state of Connecticut. I just had to make sure I was speaking correctly through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President on page 49, T1074. It says steam train. Is that the exact same steam train?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Well, thank you very much. Yes, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. So it's repeated twice and each time it got \$15,000. If this is the same grant and it's being handed out twice for the same amount, is these two different lawmakers that covers the Essex steam train or is this one lawmaker?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. It could be two different lawmakers. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And then on page 49, T107, I'm sorry, 1075 and T 1076. Northern Middlesex, YMCA both lines for \$2,000, I guess that's going to be the same question. Could it be two different lawmakers?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, the answer would be the same, yes.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Okay. In line T1077. Is that Central Connecticut State University? And if so do they have a special program that that's going to deal with Youth Services Prevention under the department? I'm sorry, under the judicial department?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. There was a program at CCSU relative to judicial work called the IMRP. They've been doing a lot of work relative to different violence programs across the state.

They're actually eventually moving from CCSU over to Yukon Hartford. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I guess, I'm still not quite sure how CCSU fits into under this grant program. Okay. All right. I had M the T I'm sorry, page 50. The T1115 the MLK scholarship for \$15,000.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

And then --

CHAIR:

I'm sorry.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

I'm sorry. That's okay. And then on page 49, T1098, the Dr. Martin Luther king Jr. Scholarship trust fund are those the same?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Well, thank you very much. If I could hear the second number again? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Madam President. One is T 1098, and the other just lost my specs, hold on. It's T1115

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. I believe those are two different organizations. And if I could go back for the IMRP, just to give the gentlemen some additional information. It's the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policies, and they have developed policies working with different groups.

They also do the work. I think you might've seen the report that I referenced all the time on the sentencing commission, that did the report on how many inmates are chronically mentally ill. They work on policy statements and do the research relative to that.

And it's called the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy. IMRP. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. But isn't these grants for Judicial Department for Youth Services Prevention. How does that fit in with that? Through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten, would you care to response?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Well, thank you. And I really liked that you gave me an opportunity to choose whether to respond or not, but the policies that they design and the policies that they work on do help out with youth violence initiatives. They've done a lot of work relative to the JJPOC. So they do develop policies to mitigate youth violence in a variety of ways. Through you, Madam -- Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for that answer. That answers it right there. Okay, under I'm moving to section 32 now, page 51 and I noticed another one that's repeated and it's T1157 Hoops for Life for \$5,000 under section 32. And it's also located under T1133, in the previous section.

Well, let me start with my first one. How do you -- under section 32, how are these grants awarded?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam -- Mr. President. I'm completely blocking on that. I'm sorry. These grants are awarded the same way through Legislators, and Hoops for Life is a program which provides boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18 in the Naugatuck valley in Waterbury area and surrounding suburban and rural communities to develop a foundation and teaching skills and concepts. Through you Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President which Legislators under section 32 are able to give this money out? Through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. So this is a continuation of the youth violence initiatives through the black and Puerto Rican caucus through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. So under this T1174, Bridgeport city hall for \$375,000, that's above the \$150,000 mark. How did this one get into section 32 then?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. It might've been a combination of people down in the Bridgeport delegation. There are I think, five or six different Legislators. Through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President and Hartford nights. T1178
for \$375,000. The same thing? Through you, Mr.
President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

That would be exactly the same thing through you.
Mr. President, just a different delegation.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. And what is the Hartford
nights. Through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

If the Senate could stand at ease, please.

CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease. Senate will come back
to order. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. It's a youth organization in
the city of Hartford through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. President. Do you know what they do?
Through you Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President. It mentors young people who are at risk to commit violence to sort of, this is one of the programs that would intervene. If, for example, if there's violence against a family, this would intervene with that family to make sure that they did not retaliate in.

It's a method methodology that's been working very successfully in some of the urban areas to try to stop that retaliatory behavior that happens between situations that happen in communities, through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Do we know if this organization works with the other organizations that deal with the violence? I know there's an organization that we just expanded under one of the other -- it's already in New Haven and we expanded, I believe to Waterbury and I forgot the name of it.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Project longevity, sir.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Yes. Do we know if they work together? Through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I apologize for interfering there, but I figured I'd answer the question before you asked it. And all of these organizations have a loose network in order to expand the programming relative to these particular situations. So while they may not be in constant contact, but certain situations allow for that intervening. Certain situations require more in depth work.

So project longevity is an excellent program that is then working in a variety of communities to -- it has at their heart people who are involved with the criminal justice system in order to stop that from moving forward to try to get young people to recognize paths that they were traveling down in and intervene before it got too far through you. Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten, and no need to apologize. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for that information. I was hoping that's what you would say. Give me one second for my next one. Actually, under section 34 page 52, municipal stabilization grants. I always like whenever we see something like that, we would get the previous year's amount. And I wish our budget, when it's presented to us would always do that.

But it doesn't even, even for all the grants we just talked about, it'd be great if it was somebody who is receiving a second grant, if there was a column that would say that you know, the 2021 budget and what was awarded under that, but under section 34,

did these amounts go up or down or did they stay the same? Through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Mr. President these stable stabilization grants in some cases go up in some cases go down. Are relative to a formula that is addressing areas that would not be covered by pilot.

These communities generally are not receiving the dollars that are in the pilot program at the level that they are, but in some cases deal with those particular situations and is just stabilizing the, the different communities, through you.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for that. I'm going to ask the same question for actually, yeah. Section 35 as well. Did those numbers go up or down or did they stay the same?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President. These numbers relative to the different communities are the car tax grants, and they may go up or down relative to those communities that have mill rates. I think it's over 45 mills. So that the car taxes are not higher than 45 mill rate.

And so it depends on how far above your mill rate, the differential between what you would be charging. So this is part of the original MRSA grant from 2015 through you, Mr. President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for that. You already told me about the next one. On section 41, These are the funds that were distributed from the federal funds to the state under the American rescue plan and are all under the American rescue plan. So, are all of these funds new to this budget.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And I'll try not to call you Mr. President, but no promises. And I believe your question, sir, was, are these due grants to these particular organizations. Through you, Madam.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne?

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Yes.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you. And the administration asked us to move some off of the general government budget into ARPA. They qualify for ARPA funds. So for example, the senior food vouchers, I talked about earlier, this is an increase for the senior food vouchers. So this is relative to current expenditures and would not be repeated in the next biennium through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President, I noticed that we have a line item or an amount under fiscal year, 2024. In a couple of these, is there a reason that we have something under 2024? Or is it because this is the length of the grant? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. This is because the ARPA funds go to 2024, and this is relative to that timeframe. Through you.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And thank you for that. Under respite care page 63 T1577. Is this new, I've heard of respite care in the state before, but is it new under the department of social or developmental services?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President and through you. This is increased costs for respite care through this in this biennium. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Okay. None of the cost contained here is offsetting the budget is under section 41, is it?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. If the good gentlemen could repeat his question?

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Anything under section 41. Is any of the monies here offsetting what would normally be in the budget?

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. No Senator Champagne. Thank you. Madam President.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

And how were these allocated? Was this a request from Legislators? Was this an application to the Governor's office? Or did the individual place his request, these grants? Through you Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, this is a compilation of a different, a variety of ways. Some come through Bills that had associated expenses that were not going to be ongoing beyond the biennium, some were directly relative to the COVID such as T 1627 legal representation for tenant eviction too. That's also a Bill and some are relative to the Governor's programs.

So you'll notice that the summer camp scholarships for families, that \$3 million is a program that the Governor put forward. He's been announcing it on TV. You know, that's relative to that. Some of the grant to RAM for manufacturing is a piece of equipment for a drill for the ram manufacturing program, which would be a one-time expense to get equipment that's needed for that program.

Some are relative to expanding the workforce programs like the women in manufacturing at the Platte tech regional vocational technical schools for two years to increase the ability for those programs to get workers out some are for like the community health workers on T 1631 it will be a grant applied for by the community action agencies of \$30,000.

Each relative to supporting training and additional supports for community health workers who work in those particular groups to increase their training community health workers are used to access communities. So for example, TVCCA in the Norwich area does a lot of work in cities of Norwich in New London and go into the minority communities where very large populations of both Asian Americans and Haitians are just to bring data to them.

When we were looking to expand, for example vaccine information to communities that may or may not have English as a first language. So English language learners. So this is just a variety of different programs who have variety of mechanisms. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I want to start with Batterson Park for \$10 million. Is that the park owned by the city of Hartford, but is in, I believe new Britain in Farmington? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Yes.

CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

So I guess my question is where we're spending \$10 million to fix the park up in Hartford, just basically left it because they didn't have the resources to take care of it. Are we fixing this park up and then Hartford is going to walk away from it again?

Or do we have guarantees from Hartford that they're going to basically, maintain this park? Or do we have other plans? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. As you know, our secretary of the office of policy management was formerly in Hartford and she knows full well the situation in Hartford, I would point out that there are so many reasons why Hartford ended up having some of the problems that did, but primarily for the reason that we are correcting in this budget.

When we look at the pilot payments you know, Hartford is a more than 50% tax exempt and we had not really ever covered our costs relative to that. We have certainly have assurances through Hartford that this work would be done. And this is much akin to the WPA program that was back in the Roosevelt era, that we started building up a variety of parks, roads, bridges, schools.

And I look forward to the Biden administration, providing us with significant infrastructure grants, my personal opinion. I would love to be able to fix or expand water and sewer lines around the areas. Matter of fact, I worked on a large listing of such things and sent a letter to Congress, woman DeLauro and asked for some \$360 million for Eastern Connecticut relative to fixing some of those. So I'm hoping that we can do that, but this is just like a WPA program through you.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I hope that's true because once that park is put back, the beautiful park that at once was, I definitely don't want the residents to see it fall apart again. So as I went down this list, I did notice something that was in the budget last time that had been moved over to these one-time funds. And I thought we were not allowed to do that under the grant program from the federal government. And that's the department of transportation, the Groton water taxi.

I remember my question exactly. And my question was, we're spending a hundred thousand dollars on the water taxi. How many people ride the taxi a year? That's why when I looked down and I saw that, it reminded me that that was in the budget before. You don't need to answer any questions on that. I'm just pointing that out that, we do want to be careful that we're not moving budget items over to this grant. Madam President. I am done asking questions. I am going to close at this point. This is a long budget. There's a lot of money going a lot of different directions.

And when I looked through this and I see this going in different directions, I do have concerns of the expenditures. You know, we have \$400 million leftover and we immediately turned around and found ways to spend it. My idea would be to take care of long-term debt to try and change things around, to try and slow down our spending. You know, I understand we support a lot of community activities through, through this budget process.

But again, you know, we need to make sure that all of these community groups work together in a fashion that can turn around and save us money. As state

taxpayers, we're taxed in this state is one of the highest tax groups in, in the country. I am concerned about diverting monies from taxes into separate funds and not through the budget process.

In this budget right here, it should have contained something with the marijuana expected revenue and we should have as a legislature voted that, and it should have been as part of our spending cap. As I believe right now. And what I'm told we are above the spending cap.

If you take into account the other things that were put in other areas, and trying to find a unique way around the spending cap, isn't going to save this state. We needed to find a unique way to lower our spending. And I wish this budget did that. I wish it did it a little more, and I want everything to be transparent.

As I went through this budget, I explained the transparency. We need people to understand where their money's going. They're paying taxes, they're working hard, and many people are paying a lot. And I, for one, when I look at a budget, I want to be able to understand that budget. I could have asked probably another two hours of questions on each one of those items probably longer, because I don't understand them in the ones that I did look up.

I have some concerns about, I have concerns about a couple of those items where I see that lawmakers are part of those organizations. And there may be some that are actually receiving pay from those organizations. That's a problem, but again, I think this budget is better than the budgets that originally came out, but we're missing transparency. And I believe we're above the spending cap, no matter how we try to package us. Thank you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator, will you remark further on the Bill before us? Good afternoon, Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Good Afternoon. Madam President. Hope you're having a fruitful and good afternoon.

CHAIR:

Delightful.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Excellent. Madam President, I rise to make a few comments on HB 6689. Madam President. I first wanted to thank Senator Osten and Senator Fonfara for their work. As we look at the depth and the detail of this document, it's very clear that a lot of hard work has gone into making sure each and every aspect is looked at and is covered.

So this is something that is an important document. It's, as I stated before, is the most important document that we look at over two-year duration and I appreciate your work. So thank you through you, Madam President for both of the chairs.

I also wanted to recognize and thank Senator Miner for his comments, that he's made about the budget because in these conversations, it takes a lot of effort and some of the parts that he actually talked about that he appreciated in the budget were something that resonated with me as well.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

I think one of the senators earlier had made a comment and I wasn't planning to speak, but actually those comments made me want to come and speak. Madam President. This was when one of the senators earlier had said that, when he heard that the word of the budget was started with these are the values. He

said, that's the first time that he has heard about values in a budget and Madam President, the budget is about values.

One of our responsibility over here is that we are responsible for the communities we represent, but also as a state. And we have a responsibility of allocating resources accordingly. And this is what this budget does is allocation of resources based on our values.

And for somebody to be surprised at the word value is going to be used in this budget process is and that person was surprised is a surprise to me as well. Madam President, in the details of the conversation that we had for the past two hours, we lost track of some very basic things. And I want to bring us back to normalcy if you will. And then look at the bigger and important aspects that I think are worthy to be talked about.

One, this budget is resulting in the highest rainy day fund in the history of the state of Connecticut. And I will repeat this because people in the community who are going to listen to mixed messages, they need to hear this reality. This budget is has the highest rainy day fund in the history of the state of Connecticut, and one of the highest in the country. And also in the earlier year, we have paid our earlier debt about a bulk payment of \$63 million.

And we are going to be able to pay \$1 billion, \$1 billion of our debt. Madam President, something like that may have happened some 75 or so years ago. So this is a part and something to be celebrated. And I cannot imagine rather than having a celebration, some of the people are saying what values?

These are the values as well because, of the fact that we are going to have a fiscal responsibility and actually pay our debt and also have our savings account, have some money is what this is about. Then we are still within our spending cap and then that's

critical as well. So we are also within that responsibility and we are giving resources, money to our municipalities who are in need.

Many of the municipalities have been hurting with what's going on in the last 14 months. So Madam President through this budget, we are in the process of trying to address those needs as well. I think that's something that we need to be aware of and madam president, I want to talk about the values again. With this budget, we are investing in our seniors with this budget.

We are investing in the most vulnerable in our state. And with this budget, we are also investing in our children. The ZERO TO THREE program that Senator Osten has talked about as well, is a program that is going to take care of our children with developmental challenges in the state of Connecticut each and every one of them would be helped.

And then ask a parent who has been impacted, ask a parent who has a child with a developmental delay, and then ask them if the state was going to help you? This is life-changing for those individuals. And we actually have put our value into it, and we are actually going to put our investment into this, and then education, Madam. Well, before that, let me also talk about some of the other aspects of the children. We are investing in preventing suicide in our state with children. And that's a value. We are putting resources in suicide prevention strategies.

We are helping our children who are DCF children, our state children, to have communication systems for their protection. We are also working on education and making sure that we are supporting that and then enhancing that, and then helping the municipalities make that into easy for them to be able to achieve those goals. And then the higher education, this debt-free college is critical, healthcare, Medicaid.

One of the critical part that we have seen in the last year has been that we needed more resources in Medicaid, and we have been able to put more resources into this Madam President. And this is something that's a part of the value. And all the individuals who have been working in the healthcare field, the ones who have been some of the lowest paid people in our state, we are putting resources back into to be able to have them have reasonable pay so that they can actually have a, a life and be able to not have to work two or three jobs to survive.

That is a value as well. And we are putting value into that and investing in the people. Workforce development again, is a critical piece and this budget does that. So Madam President, I'm going to share my final comments. And the final comments are that we have two budgets. This is one budget, Bill number 6689. I want people to see that this is the document that we have. First one, this is the budget that we have, that we are talking about.

And the second budget is this one. This is the second budget. And I'll just show you the pages of the second budget. There is no second budget. There is no second budget. And right now just being saying no, and no, and no. That's not a strategy. Let's join in and do what needs to be done. And then do something about this. I am really concerned about the fact that we are here spending so much of the time, about \$2,000, \$12, \$15.

When we have a budget of \$46 billion, and we have Bills that we have to address. And then we obtain saying that, the first time they're ever hearing about values in a budget. That the first and the last step about a budget is about values. And this is what we are seeing as the opposing values. Madam President, I urge my colleagues to support this budget. Thank you.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar, will you remark further on the legislation before us? Good afternoon, soon to be evening Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you. Madam President, Madam President. When I spoke earlier about the budget itself I talked about the many items in the budget that I felt were good for the state of Connecticut and some that may not be in this budget. At least at the level of funding that I had hoped they would be in based on the appropriations budget that we had passed out of the appropriations committee. Madam President, early on, I spoke about the level of unemployment.

I spoke about the number of businesses that had closed those that continue to struggle as we move forward out of the COVID pandemic. And one of the residual problems of being shut down for almost a year is that through no fault of their own employees and employers, are put in a bit of a situation where many of my constituents have benefited from unemployment, they benefited from what I call a plus up unemployment from the federal government and the employers.

No matter what we pass here in legislation, in terms of reconstructing, a repayment schedule on that are going to be left, holding the bag. They are moving forward out of this pandemic. Many of them having borrowed money, many of them having made commitments just to try and stay open and no matter how you slice it or dice it they're facing about a \$1.2 billion debt for the unemployment compensation fund.

And so, as I said, in my earlier comments, the appropriations budget made a rather significant contribution to the unemployment compensation fund. This document that we're being asked to vote on today makes about a 50 percent of that contribution. And therefore Madam President the clerk has an Amendment and it's LCO 10718. I ask that he call it and I be allowed to summarize the Amendment, please?

CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO number 10718 Senate Schedule "A".

CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, what this Amendment seeks to do. It leaves all the line items that are in the document on pages one through five, actually one through six in place.

With the exception of the number T85 unemployment trust fund. Madam President, what that number is changed to is \$415,520,000. The revenue for that line item is what I understand to be a significant portion of the balance yet to be appropriated from the ARPA funds and I move it to option.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. And the question is on adoption. Will you remark on the Amendment before the Chamber?

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And I forgot to ask if I might please, when the vote is taken on this Amendment, I will ask that it be done by roll.

CHAIR:

And it will be taken by roll, sir. So will you remark on the Amendment, Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President and I have a great respect for my colleague Senator Miner and at this time respectfully, I would request that my colleagues oppose the Amendment, but I look forward to continuing to work on this issue. Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten, will you remark further on the Amendment before the Chamber? Good afternoon, Senator Somers.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Good afternoon -- Good evening. Madam President.

CHAIR:

Good evening.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Nice to see you. I rise in support of this Amendment. I have overwhelmingly heard from the businesses in my district who have suffered through this COVID pandemic and are now just beginning to crawl their way out of what has been an unprecedented time for help and relief there. And this Bill would help share up that unemployment fund to provide that help that our small businesses in particular need.

If not, I remember this as a business owner, I think it wasn't July of 2008, when all of a sudden the mail, we got this big assessment from the state of Connecticut, something that was unexpected, that wasn't anticipated. And for something that we had to be able to come up with the money for many of our small businesses are literally just surviving week to week.

They're just getting their feet back on the ground and to have a situation where the unemployment fund is not shared up and as robust as it possibly could be really puts them in a very, very vulnerable situation.

I think this is a great use of these funds and I would hope that people in the circle, especially those who have worked with small businesses, have small businesses in their districts or our business owner themselves will also agree that this is a very good use of these funds for our economic development and prosperity here in the state of Connecticut. Thank you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Osten, will you remark further on the Amendment? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and through you, a question to the proponent of the Amendment.

CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you very, very much through you. To the good Senator from the 30th district, we are looking at using the American Rescue acts, what we call ARPA money to be able increase that amount that had been held in reserve in order to pay down the unemployment account, is that reflected in line or T85 in which the dollar increases have been increased to nearly 260 million? Through you, Madam President, the proponent.

CHAIR:

Senator Minor.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you. Madam President, Madam President line T85, the unemployment trust fund is increased to \$415.52 million

CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Just for clarification that as we look through the Amendment and people may be confused that all of the other very important categories that have been allocated funds and justifiably does not get affected.

The only issue, the only category that has been impacted using funds that have been set aside on reserve so that this does not take funds from any other valued and important entities that this is from the reserve fund of the ARPA. Would that be correct? Through you, Madam President.

CHAIR:

Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President, stealing a word from my former colleague and friend Eileen Daily. Yes.

CHAIR:

Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Through you, Madam President. I think many a people could claim to that, but that's the way you say much more effectively, I dare say. With that being said I

appreciate, and I earned support of this Amendment and I appreciate the good proponent of the Amendment for clarification. This is reserved money that could be put to use to help our small businesses.

I know we've passed some initiatives in this session addressing it, but I know there were some concerns about potential shortfalls. This would be a step forward and using the reserve fund to a better cause. So I urge support this Amendment. I want to thank the proponent for raising it. Thank you.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang, will you remark further on the Amendment Senator Formica?

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President, I rise in support of the Amendment. These federal funds that have come our way have been most helpful in many aspects in areas of the budget and provided an opportunity to support ongoing expenses.

Anyone knows who has done budgets for many years, understands that, one time expenditures, and one time revenues are designed best for one time expenditures. And there'll be a bit of a cliff moving down the road, but you know, that is today and that is tomorrow, but this to me seems like a good use and one time use of these revenues to help shore up this fund.

Madam President, I think it's a simple way to use of these funds and I support the Amendment. Thank you.

CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark on the Amendment before the Chamber, will you remark further on the Amendment? There has been a request for the roll call vote, so I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, if you would please call the roll vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Amendment "A" of the House Bill 6689. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. This is House Bill 6689 Senate Amendment "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Amendment "A" of House Bill 6689. 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, please announce the tally on the Amendment.

CLERK:

Senate Amendment "A" of House Bill 6689

Total number voting	35
Total Y	12
Total voting Nay	23
Absent, not voting	1

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

The Amendment fails. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber?

Senator Formica, you're on that.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President.

I want to speak a little bit about the budget and my appreciation for the opportunity that we have here to have this kind of conversation.

You know, listening to some of the discussions around here you know my grandfather who emigrated from Sicily many, many years ago used to say if Watch the pennies, the dollars will follow. And, you know, he was very right. And so that's something that we have tried to do.

Madam President, this is an interesting budget cycle in the sense that we have so many things happen both to us and for us as a community, that have never happened before.

We just went through -- I don't have to remind everybody a very difficult and trying year, both for people and families and businesses throughout our state. You know, it was devastating for some difficult for others.

And as a result of that, Madam President, we have an opportunity through the federal government to receive Billions upon Billions of dollars. And you can argue whether you like or dislike that policy, you think it's a good policy or a bad policy, whether it's going to help or hurt.

But the fact of the matter is, Madam President without those dollars, this would have been a very difficult process to move forward. There are a lot of things in this budget that help a lot of people that have suffered greatly over the last year.

Now, as I talked before, during the last Amendment opportunity that failed, one time revenues present both benefits and detriments.

And the detriment to one time revenues is if you depend on it for the current budget or opportunity, then you need to defend it or find it for the next budget or opportunity. And otherwise, we're going to have a bit of a cliff.

But sometimes we just have to stay in the moment and do what we can do to move forward as a result of the place and the situations where we are.

This budget, I think, Madam President, you can find many things, if you were looking hard not to like, and I think you could find many things, if you were looking hard to like.

There are a number of things in the budget that have been supported by both parties. And a lot of work has gone into this budget under very difficult circumstances. We've found ourselves operating as a legislature in ways that have never happened before. And through all of that, we've been able to come to this day, five or six hours from the end of our constitutionally appointed end date.

You know, I've had the good opportunity over the years that I've been here to work on appropriations for six years, this is my first year that I've not been on appropriations.

And Madam President, I never thought I'd tell you this, but I miss it. And I miss the opportunity. And I had great relationship with the Senator Osten, who I would just like to commend personally, because I don't know anybody who works any harder is more detailed than Senator Osten.

This budget, Madam President, as we know, like all budgets are estimates, they're not perfect. We're not sure where they're gonna end up. But here we are.

As a First Selectman back in East Lyme, and prior to me being here, I was responsible for seven budgets. They were balanced, and, you know, they were within a percent or a percent and a half of the budget that followed it the year before.

This is a little bit above that. The spending is a little bit above that. But again, we have unique and different opportunities in this budget that we have

to make sure that we maintain and support because, Madam President, people are coming off very, very difficult times.

This budget does support cities and towns and education. And many of the things that each of us hold, dear.

So I just want to say that -- as well as let me mention the terrorism fund. I'm grateful that that that was made whole because that is a -- not so much an expense.

Madam President, as we've talked about this before, but an investment that has a return at a multiple of whatever the investment is. So there are some opportunities and in this budget.

But, Madam President, I'm not going to talk long. I'm not going to go through the budget. I think that I'm just gonna say thank you for the opportunity to be here.

And it's been a difficult session. And I appreciate all the hard work that has gone into this budget.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good evening, Madam President, and thank you for the opportunity to be able to address Senate tonight and our, you know, what is one of our most important votes of the session, which is our budget session.

And, Madam President, I want to thank everyone who has been so involved in our budget this year and working very diligently to get us to this point.

I want to thank Senator Osten for her tireless work. She works seven days a week and 24 hours a day if need be. And she is, really has budget inside out and just does wonderful work.

Senator Fonfara who his work over the years has allowed us to talk about so much money going into the budget reserve funds, so much money going down to pay down pension debt.

He continues to bring great ideas not only to our caucus, but to the legislature that has have proven to have great effects in the short term, the medium term and long term and his work should be celebrated as well.

Senator Looney for all his efforts and guiding the caucus to a place of support his vision and the pilot program, and getting that through which is not an easy task, and only through his determined leadership was that able to happen.

And Governor OPM secretary, the House Speaker, House Majority Leader and others who have worked and of course our able staff, who we could never ever do this without such great staff people. So I want to thank them, as well for their work.

Madam President is a year ago, maybe even more a little more than a year ago, when we were staring down the barrel of a colossal budget deficit brought on by a pandemic that nobody saw coming.

Back up even a year before that, we were finally on track with surpluses of full budget reserve fund, also known as a rainy day fund, and felt like the wind was at our back, for 10 years of very, very difficult decisions.

There were cuts, unfilled positions. There were deadlocked in rooms for months. And we had really made some very difficult decisions for what I believe was long term growth, and getting and paying

down debts that had accumulated for 70 or more years.

And that wasn't easy, it took discipline. And we were criticized, took a lot of heat. Campaigns were ran against us, because of long term decisions that were made, but people were trying to look at that in the short term.

And yet, so we finally got ourselves, what I thought stabilize a pandemic hits, looking like we're going to hit very difficult times.

Thankfully, we had the budget reserve fund. And yet, just a year later, thanks to the hard work of the Governor, the Legislature and others who have managed to be able to get us to this point where now we're looking at surpluses.

We have a large surplus, so much so that we're our budget reserve fund is full, and we're now paying down long term pension that as Senator Osten said, which has never ever happened, thanks to the volatility cap of Senator Fonfara, and what was put in that bipartisan budget at his lea -- with his leadership and his vision.

So Madam President, where we were to where we are now is night and day. And I'm so glad that we're able to now be able to write some of the wrongs that were made during very difficult times, very difficult decisions.

Where we're able to have a budget that makes the investments that we know we need to make in human services, our nonprofits, our nursing home workers, our group home workers, places where we had to make some difficult decisions over a long time.

And we're also still able to invest and keep some of the promises that we've made in the past, such as our debt free community college.

We're able to finally put more money, as Senator Formica said, into our tourism Fund, which we know, as somebody who sat on appropriations before I was in leadership.

When we spend \$1, you get about \$7, back and it -- and there's lots of jobs in that area. And that's an area for sure, that needs our help after the pandemic.

We're looking at cost free communications for our incarcerated persons, we're looking at Community Reinvestment, and we're looking at money for project longevity.

And the, really, I believe the best part of this budget, is how we're funding our communities all across the state.

This, I'm sure our legislature like many other legislators always has the best hopes and dreams that we possibly can have, for our state.

Sometimes delivering on that is we fall a little short. And we fallen short over the years, with our pilot, funding our payment lieu of taxes. And that has hurt our communities, our local communities.

We have cities like Hartford in New Haven, Waterbury, New Britain and others that have almost half of their property, that's not taxable.

How does the community succeed, when you have almost half of your property, that's not taxable?

And we know that that doesn't work. Communities, like our cities, that are small, relatively to cities all across this country, need the state's assistance.

They need help educating our children, they need help paving the roads, they need help with our social services, and they need help in a number of different ways. They can't be on their own.

But we have really, in the past, despite many great efforts and a desire to do it, we have fallen short on some of the promises that we've made.

Again, thanks to Senator Looney and his leadership, we have a budget that has pilot funding for our communities that will provide resources to them that they have never seen before.

We talk a lot about equity and justice. And I think that we have worked very hard this legislative session on those issues.

And this budget, when we talk about our values, as we said earlier, points to what our values are, when it comes to our funding, those who need the funding the most.

We're talking about funding our cities that have high property taxes, funding areas that need gun violence prevention, funding our community colleges, so everyone has access to higher education, because in this state, we have jobs that require people to have an advanced degree.

We wanna fund our tourism so that people can come in from out of state or in state and see all the wonderful things that are in Connecticut, we don't want to just be the great place between New York and Boston. Connecticut is a wonderful place to live and work and raise a family all on its own.

So Madam President, I'm glad, what I think will be a bipartisan vote on this budget tonight. Because it takes that step in keeping those promises that we have made for our state, and really helps to put us on that path after so many years of very disciplined and difficult decisions, to make some of those investments that we can make now for a future that will be bright and hopeful for our state.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Duff. Will you remark?
Good evening, Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Good evening, Madam President. Reasonable minds can always either disagree or agree. And I think when we look around this circle, we each have very unique and different districts.

And we represent those unique and different districts. And so when confronted with a budget, I think it's reasonable for each person that confronts this, to look at it from the perspective of their district.

And from that districts perspective, it may be reasonable to both agree and disagree, as to whether or not this budget is good for their constituents.

When I looked at this budget, I looked at it and thought from the outset, how did we get to this point? Because I think it's, it's important to put this budget in a in a framework.

It starts when the governor proposes what his vision of Connecticut should be, then it moves to the legislature for their version and vision. And then we end up with a negotiation and a final product.

This happened in the context when Connecticut has a \$500 million surplus in the current fiscal year. We have \$7 Billion of federal aid coming to our state, and a historic \$4.5 Billion Rainy Day Fund, which is the result of a 2007 bipartisan budget that imposed or infused many of the structural reforms, financial reforms, like the volatility cap, the spending cap and the bonding cap that have brought Connecticut to where it is today.

The rainy day fund in particular, has been instrumental in paying down debt, and thereby saving

money that has fallen to the budget in a positive way.

So with that in mind, the governor initially proposed a budget with \$630 million of taxes. Taxes on gas, mileage, health insurance. The Appropriation Committee proposed a budget with \$3.2 Billion of new taxes. And there were other Members of the majority who even proposed more taxes.

The Republicans pushed back on that. We believed all along that in the context of the current fiscal health of the state of Connecticut, the fact of the federal money and the surplus in the rainy day fund, that no new taxes were needed. That we could put together a budget without those taxes.

And so we took that message to the streets across the state of Connecticut. We went right to the people that we represent.

We held 10 rallies across the state got more than 12,000 individuals to sign a petition. Thousands more made phone calls to this capital.

And we use social media and grassroots organizations such as Peter Sasser, and the notollst.com, to get the message out to every day working class Connecticut families, that taxes were not necessary.

They made their voice known. That is why we are where we are today. This budget is good for Connecticut families, because there's no new taxes in this. Connecticut families didn't need more financial burden. What they needed was a financial break.

There are concerns in the budget, no doubt, and one of the Amendments that we ran, dealt with that issue. That small business, the economic engine that creates jobs in our state, a state that's dead last in the nation and job growth, needs help with regards to the looming debt that's been cost with regards to the unemployment Trust Fund.

We wanted to see more money put there because that money that's put in that trust fund is going to equate directly with jobs.

Jobs, like I said, in small business that is going to give our families across the state the opportunity to move ahead.

Better jobs and more jobs is going to increase personal income growth. Another place where Connecticut is dead last.

This is how we get our state moving forward. And I would have liked to have seen that Amendment pass, so that we could actually get that relief, that added relief for Connecticut families.

I also saw that there was a lapse, a sweep of a lapse from the Connecticut Home Care Program. Now that lapse has been there for a few years year over year, and that in essence, it's not a cut of the benefits and programs and services that the Connecticut homecare program provides.

But I would have liked to have seen that reprogrammed into opening up category one, which is the single point of entry to make aging in place initiatives, more of a reality for more families in Connecticut.

I was pleased, however, nonetheless, to see that there was a lot of money put back into long term care services, albeit in the nursing home venue.

But there were differences that I think we could have come to. But I wouldn't want to see the perfect become the enemy of the good.

This budget does impose or increase funding for pilots to many of our towns and cities across the state of Connecticut.

It increases funding in the ECS formula, another element of the bipartisan budget that Republicans insisted on that we look at educational funding from a formula based on need in each of our school districts across the state of Connecticut, and we increase those totals so that the kids get what they need so that they have a brighter future.

As I said before, I'm very satisfied to see the statutory rate increases for nursing homes, ICF and boarding homes.

The increase in funding to nursing homes and the separate line item for staff who worked through a pandemic, mindful of what its consequences could be still went every day to work to serve the people in nursing homes, who were very, very negatively affected by COVID. And obviously increases for home health and waiver services.

We increased funding for nonprofits that help seniors and the disabled. But I think one of the things that I'm -- I've railed on in each of the 11 sessions I've been here is the personal needs allowance.

I have talked about that every single year, for the past decade. And I'm very happy to say that this year, I don't have to rail on that because it is in the budget.

And that that is more as I said, every single one of those 10 sessions about dignity than anything. And so I'm very pleased to see that in our budget today.

On the whole once again, we all have to look at what works and what doesn't. What I'm happy to see this budget omits, what's not in this budget, are many of the ideas that were floated.

There's no consumption tax, there's no income tax, no gas tax, or digital advertising tax. No statewide tax on our homes or commercial property.

There's no mansion tax, there is no health insurance tax. And there's no tax for those of us who don't vote. That these were all ideas that rightfully didn't make its way into the budget.

So, on the whole, in looking at this budget, we all need to look at this budget, through the lens of what it is and then look at whether or not it works for each of our respective the districts.

And Madam President, I would ask my colleagues to do that, that as they look at this, reflect on whether or not this budget works for their district and the people that live there or it doesn't, and to discern whether or not this budget is best for their constituents, and vote accordingly. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark further on the budget before us? Good evening, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good evening, Madam President, rising to speak in support of this budget Bill, which I believe is an extraordinary achievement for the people of our state.

For many of the reasons stated earlier, I would begin by thanking Senator Osten for the Herculean effort that she has made, and not only in this budget cycle, but in each year that she has been Chair of the Appropriations Committee.

This year, in particular, because of all of the difficulties of, of harmonizing and dealing with the various funding sources, not only for the general fund, but with the infusion of the of the federal money, and deciding what were the priorities to be paid for out of each of the sources available to us.

Her counterpart, my dear friend of nearly 40 years from New Haven, Representative Walker, the two of them, once again, inspired great confidence in both Chambers by their labors and wanted to thank the Governor and you, Madam President, for your work and labor in this.

The Governor's Chief of Staff, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, Melissa Macaw. And of course, Speaker Ritter and Majority Leader Rojas and my dear friend and partner in this Chamber, our Majority Leader, Senator Duff.

There is of course, as I said much to celebrate here because what we are doing under this budget with the resources now combined, healthy general fund with an infusion of new revenues because of the -- primarily because of the performance of the stock market in recent years, and the infusion of federal money is the opportunity to address needs that have gone inadequately addressed for a number of years out of necessity in previous budgets.

One in particular is meeting the needs of many of the nonprofits in our state, the nonprofits who provide social services to a vast array of clients, many of whom are referred to those nonprofits, by state agencies, and provide services in effect as surrogates for state government.

And they have been underfunded and have been operating on a shoestring budget, without adequate resources for years, we are playing catch up in that area, and it's something that has been a need for a very long time.

Structurally, as has been pointed out, we have now a full Rainy Day Fund and the capacity to place more money into our pension funds a largest single payment in about 75 years since we first started with the with the state pension funds and the chronic underfunding that went on from that point on.

We reached the 15% threshold on the rainy day fund, allowing a bulk payment of about 63 million toward our unfunded liability.

So again, we're starting to meet commitments that are long overdue, because of the lengthy fiscal crisis that we have, that we have faced.

Another chronic problem has been mentioned earlier, of course, is the property tax in our state. When people complain about high taxes in our state, and you talk to them a little bit more, you find out most of the time, they are not complaining about any tax levied directly by the state because we have moderate rates of income taxes in the state.

But the tax that people complain primarily about is the local property tax, which is generally high, whether you measure that tax as a percentage of the value of the property in many communities or as a percentage of the income of the owner of that property.

In many cases, those taxes are high. By reconstructing and in effect, doubling the amount of payment in lieu of taxes funds available for his day property, and college and hospital property, we are also addressing that issue this year.

Because Madam President, while there are a relatively small number of communities, who have a very significant amount, pilot eligible tax exempt property, but although in some cases that amount is more than 50%, as in the case of Hartford and New Haven.

There are many other communities that have relatively low net groundless per capita, whether or not they have a great deal of pilot eligible property.

And this number devise pilot formula will address that for the first time by creating three tiers of reimbursement and thereby having the overall level

of pilot funding virtually doubled from about 158 million to over 300 million.

A substantial move in the direction of addressing the property tax and inequities in our state.

Madam President, there were a number of choices that go into the making of this budget.

The overall philosophy that behind it, of course, is that the state government has an obligation to help meet the needs of the people of the state.

We believe that state government should be a partner it should recognize need, it has an obligation, we are not going to let people just sink or swim.

And we try to redress inequities when we can, through our tax code, through our spending decisions.

And it is necessary I think, for the there's often kind of the fundamental divide in philosophy that you see in this Chamber, and in the House is, what level of engagement is the proper role of state government.

And I happen to believe in active state government and active, enlightened, committed state government, I believe, can do a great deal of good in the lives of people just as the same is true of the federal government.

And in fact, I'm so pleased to see that President Biden's early initiative is probably the third long one of the three great domestic policy initiatives that we have seen historically, in the last century.

The first being the New Deal, the second being President -- under President Roosevelt, the second being President Johnson's Great Society program, and now the major initiative of President Biden in the wake of the COVID crisis, which is now coming to the states and municipalities as well.

So that a year ago, when we were all wondering whether we would all be facing a cataclysmic crisis, we now find that we had a more complex budget than we anticipated.

And that complexity was caused by the significant increase in money coming from different sources, and decisions had to be made as to which pot of money, various things were to be paid out of so.

And of course, we have to look to the federal government in times of crisis, because it is the only level of government that does not have the mandated balanced budget requirement and is the only level of government that can spend to meet the need in a crisis to the degree necessary.

And thankfully, President Biden is there to lead us in that in that regard.

But Madam President, again, there are there are so many areas here that needed to be addressed.

We have the debt free community college initiative that we've been talking about for a couple of years

It is now being funded to the tune of 14 million in fiscal year 22 to 15 million in fiscal year 23.

The expansion of the open Choice Program and Danbury in Norwalk.

Greater support for students with the dyslexia, funding for the Roberta Willow scholarship fund that allows low income Connecticut residents to be able to get additional help for college so that they come out less burdened by student loan debt, which is the bane of the lives of so many young people in our state.

And again, that the theme of the direct support for nonprofits, an additional \$50 million in support from the fiscal 21 surplus to the nonprofit

providers of health and human service contracts in our state.

Again, the Bill that we passed last night expanding the Medicaid coverage to undocumented children under the age of eight, this is a critical thing to do in an expansion.

And what it early been talked about only in terms of perhaps prenatal care or care up to the age of one. It is important and humane, and ultimately cost effective to provide that coverage for those children.

And I hope that we will move beyond that age of eight and move toward 12 and ultimately two to 18 in future years.

There's funding for staff positions to implement the Jennifer's law program and for a grant to provide legal representation to applicants for restraining orders.

That is a significant thing as well, Madam President, we know that poor people are at a great disadvantage in using our legal system and the criminal justice system in particular.

That there are so many self-represented frightened women seeking protective orders very often in a very difficult situation trying to go into court to protect themselves in that way.

Similarly, we've established the fund to help pay for legal representation for low income tenants in eviction proceedings.

So these are all worthy social purposes of the increased spending that we are able to do in this budget to meet need a long standing problem was the cost of telephone communications with families by incarcerated persons.

As we all know, every criminal justice study that we have seen says that people who are able to make contact with their families while in prison have a much better record of avoiding recidivism when they come out, reconnecting with society.

For years, we have used the prison phone calls as a profit center to pay for other aspects of costs within the prison system. And now we're changing that this year, drastically reducing those costs.

Sometimes, unfortunately, it takes a long time to do that. That problem was first identified by former by Representative Ann McDonald 24 years ago when she was the House Chair of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee.

And finally, it is taking place this year in this budget.

And Madam President, we have, as Senator Kelly said, an increase in the personal needs allowance, which is important as well.

We have an expansion of the Connecticut homecare program to reduce the 9% copay to assist seniors and living at home with critical needs such as bathing, dressing and eating increase in the temporary Family Assistance Program.

So many programs that have been struggling with underfunding. Now, there's a catch up that will not say that they are abundantly funded, but at least closer to adequately funded.

Another element in the history of this process, Madam President, wanted to mention that the work of Senator Fonfara over the years, the architect of our volatility Cap, in the 2017 budget.

And again, Madam President, this evening, we are passing this budget with about five and a half hours to go until adjournment, as opposed to 2015 when we passed it about 20 minutes before adjournment in

2017, when it was four and a half months after adjournment of the regular session.

But what Senator Fonfara did in that time is carved out and structured away to recognize that one of the problems that we had seen in budgeting was that the capital gains dividends and interest portion of our state income tax, which of course is paid in estimates and finals people would pay quarterly, there was tremendous volatility in that from year to year, made it very hard to budget.

So we had a boom and bust roller coaster type cycle. And by structuring the volatility cap and saying that, in that category of income tax, only a certain percentage will be actually budgeted, and the rest based on rolling -- on an average over several years, and the rest will be held aside from being directly appropriated, has now put us in the position where we have the fully funded Rainy Day Fund and the surpluses that we have here.

Again, that points out the stark differences in the way the sources of income for people in our state.

An OFA study I once pointed out that for those who earn under \$100,000, in Connecticut, more than 90% of their income comes from regular wages and salary.

But for those who make \$2 million a year 80% of their income comes from capital gains, dividends and interest and only 20% or less from earned income.

So there are tremendous disparities not only in income, but in the sources of income, and how the aggregate of income for families is put together based upon overall wealth.

So Madam President, this is a budget I think to celebrate, it is one that puts us in a position to meet the needs of the state of Connecticut.

I think it reflects the fact that Connecticut has an obligation to help people who are in need, who are

struggling, Government needs to be a partner and friend.

There are those of us who don't believe in government at all, and believe that it should be virtually invisible and virtually no help to anyone.

There are others of us who believe as I do, that a vigorous, active, efficient government can be humane and beneficial to the people.

So Madam President, I want to once again, commend this budget to the Membership and hope that we will have a strong bipartisan vote here this evening, as the House did overnight, because this budget deserves that kind of vote, because it is one that indeed does meet the needs of the time. 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. And Mr. Clerk if you would 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 6689. House Bill 6689.

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Immediate roll call in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted?

Ladies and gentlemen, just admire this bipartisan board for a moment. Let us take it all in. Because I will lock the vote now and ask Mr. Clerk to please announce this very impressive tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6689.

Total number voting	35
Total number voting Yay	31
Total voting Nay	4
Absent, not voting	1

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

Congratulations. We have a budget that has passed. Mr. Clerk.

And the Senate will stand at ease a moment and then continue.

Chamber will come back to order. The Clerk kindly call the next item.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda. No. 1 House Bill No. 6690. AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND, 2030 BOARD AUTHORIZING STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND MAKING REVISIONS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT STATUES.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore. You have the floor and you have our concern.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

I'm gonna do my very best. I want to see this through to the end.

So Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the Bill concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on acceptance and passage, madam, will you remark?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Yes, Madam President. First, Madam President, I really want to thank my leadership.

I want to thank John Fonfara who's the chair of revenue finance and bonding. But I also want to call

to attention my new co-chaired representative Dorinda Borer and my Ranking Members, starting with Senator Martin and then Senator Hwang.

And I am so proud that we were able to work together on this initiative. Listening to all the concerns of all Members, all Members.

But not just the Members of, of the Committee, but different organizations, state agencies, and the community.

And I don't want to leave out a representative Piscopo. This is my first year working with him. And we work together as a team on this.

I just like to cover with you some of the Bond highlights. This Bond Bill authorizes critical projects for the state of Connecticut, our cities, our towns and nonprofits, the environment, clean water, housing, higher education and economic development.

It makes a historic investment to try to tackle the physical issues of inequity.

We will invest in our neighborhoods and our communities that have been ignored for too long.

This is another piece of the puzzle that we have been trying to solve for over the last 12 months to bring equality and opportunity to all of Connecticut.

It fully funds our school construction program. It expands our municipal aid that is crucial for the operation of our cities and our towns. And it is fiscally responsible.

This Bond package stays below the authorization cap. It authorizes only 83% of the debt limit, and both years of the biennium.

This is far below the 90% limit of the authorization Cap. I'm proud of our most Important in major investment in housing \$300 million.

I'm proud of our investment in baby bonds to support those born in difficult economic situations, to have a better future to look forward to the future.

I often talk about the children in urban centers, who are the victims of violence or have witnessed violence, and I say, what is their hope?

When I see a Bill like this with the baby bonds, I say, this is part of the package of bringing hope to our children, those not born here, currently, but for future generations.

And I'm very proud about our investment in gun violence prevention. There's \$12 million to help find a solution to the plague of gun violence on the streets.

And this has been my number one priority. And of many of my colleagues watching it pour out from Stanford, to Hartford to Waterbury, and to Litchfield County, no one can escape this, but we must deal with this problem as a community and as a state.

And I'm hoping to see that funding, be approved to and be able to do more work in communities. And this bond package is responsible, it will help build a better future for all of the residents and state of Connecticut.

I urge my colleagues to support it. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore. Will you remark? Will you remark further? Seeing - someone. Yes, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I got out-voted here. So I will lead the charge

THE CHAIR:

With watching that.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

I have reviewed this -- first of all, let me thank Senator Moore and Representative Dorinda. And Senator Hwang, and my good friend from my district Representative John Piscopo.

Thank you for the good job. I know it's a meticulous job. You're listening to a lot of requests and the scrutinizing that needs to be done.

Great questions on that sub-Committee level when we are zooming at the time. I thought some good dialogue. We had some presentations from various agencies who came and made their asks.

The decisions that were made by Senator Hwang and Senator Moore, along with Representative Borer and Representative Piscopo wasn't easy. It's never easy when you got to say yes to some and no to others.

I just want to make some comments, because I made some comments earlier last week, or maybe it was a week before.

In particular, and I forget what Bill that we were talking about. But it had to deal with some housing, and I shared the story or the -- what I experienced in Bristol when I bid on a project.

It was a housing project. It was an existing current nine unit for the homeless. And it was back out to bid four years ago, and first - let's go back 20 years.

I had bid on that same project, from scratch is breaking ground, it was of roll-in. And I bid on it. I remember it because I was a second low bidder, and you always sort of remember those, but it had gone out to rebid. And I think they had to come out here come up to the Capitol for some reassurance or I think they were waiting for the issuance, they had already got authorization by they were waiting for issuance.

So it just went on and on for six months awaiting for that funding. And I want to share this story again, because I want to look at some more of the details regarding some of these projects that we have.

And maybe we can start looking at ways of reducing some of the expenditures that we that we have in this these bonding packages so to speak.

This one I'm highlighting because it's nine units and they were converting they were converting it because the homeless. It was St. Vincent DePaul, who was the organization they couldn't fund it anymore, and they just couldn't support it.

So Now they were back to the - there was an agreement with the City of Bristol as a city councilman at that time. And they were looking to hand it over back to the city.

So the city worked something out, they got a nonprofit to come in. And the idea was to provide housing for the veterans.

All right, good idea. So fast forward, I was elected to state Senate, and to my second year, I see this project going back out to bid.

And it was for the veterans. It was constructed, the shell was existing. There was -- it had to be gutted on the inside, but there was the foundation was there, they were using the outside of the building,

there was nothing being change there, may be some facade. And there's some minor site work.

But what caught my eye on this was the cost of this. You're talking about nine units, and the project cost started out at over \$3 million. And I think at the time, the Governor Malloy's staff, or staff saw that and said, well, you got to do better than that.

And the number came down, like to \$2.7 million? Well, when we do projects, you start off with the back of an envelope. And it's pretty easy. When at 2.7 divided by nine units, that was \$300,000, a unit. I was floored.

I could build nine units at 700 square feet a unit for probably \$80, a square foot. And even at \$100 a square foot that's \$75,000.

If you go to \$200, a square foot, that's \$150,000. And I've only covered half the cost of what this project that was before us that got built for \$2.7 million.

We need to look at some of these -- costs of these projects. And we got to do better than what these numbers are being provided with.

Got to look at the specs. There's something that we're not doing right. So I'm just bringing that for us here in the circle in the hope that that we start, whoever's on the Committee's, or whoever's in finance, or whomever is involved with these projects will start maybe sharpening their pencils up and saying, we've got to do better than this.

I wanted to bring that up. There's only two other things that I want to share with you. And that is the 50 -- I think it's 48 million or \$50 million that the UConn wants for us to hire five or 10 million. They want five or 10 million - I thing five or ten new faculty Members.

They want to start and an entrepreneur ecosystem where we are hiring the best in the country to come here, and to entice them to come here and develop this entrepreneur ecosystem.

I'm all for different ideas. I thought that we were sort of doing that through the DECD through CI. And I know, I can't -- I don't know all the details on you know, I feel like a novice and for seven years here, but part of CI part of DECD is responsibilities is to develop economic development here. And I know there's some funding within CI or maybe it's advance something.

But part of their task is to develop this entrepreneurship within those programs and to connect with the higher education system.

So I see this entity over here. It's their responsibility and we're funding that, and yet here we have UConn who, who is -- who always asked for a lot of money. And I think the section of the document, the Bill, the section before that addresses the needs of, of UConn and all the capital improvements that they were looking for. And I know we expanded the amount of the original to one T or 2000, something, and we allocated them an X amount of money. And now we expand the aggregate amount. And that program has been going on for almost, I think, two decades now.

So there seems to be -- it appears and I don't know enough about the program. But it seems like it's a revolving type of a bonding that we're providing for them.

I get that we need to take care of our buildings. I'm in construction, and I am into real estate. So I understand, you just don't build a building, and then you're good forever.

No, you've got to be disciplined and making sure that you're at annually taking care of the maintenance of that building, you're checking your

HVAC system. You're checking your, you know, your roof, I get it.

And then sooner or later, you've got some renovation work to do. And sooner or later, you've got another idea that Gee, I like to do this and you have made need to do a major capital improvement and to do an addition or new building.

It's a big machine. What I don't get, what I don't get is this \$50 million that they want us to fund. I see that as an operational expenditure. In n my opinion, you don't borrow money to operate. If you're doing that you're doing something wrong.

At the Committee level, I don't recall if it was the sub-Committee level. But I brought out the fact that it could have been maybe when we're passing the Bill or passing the Bill out of Finance Committee.

But I brought up the fact it wasn't my idea I had heard it in our caucus is why are they not using their endowment fund? If it's a good idea, I know. It's a good idea, why are they not investing in themselves.

And then maybe it's an idea that they want that they come up with within their student body or within the faculty member, hey, I have an idea. Let me go CCI for some help, or DECD for some funding or maybe here for additional funding for that idea.

When I have an idea, I go to a bank. It's more than a pad of paper or back of an envelope. But it's a plan. It's an idea.

And I tell them okay, this is what I'm doing. This is how much I'm gonna need. And they always ask me for how much do you put into the skin in the game? Madam President, you've heard me say that numerous times.

But how much of my skin do I put in the game? That is part of good financing. They want to see what are

you made up? What are you made of? Are you willing to put your money into this project?

I can't recall a project that I have that I've received 100% financing. For that idea. I've had put up some type of collateral. And for the most part, I've won more than I've lost and I have lost.

UConn is a big machine. And what they're asking for here is 450 million dollars for over a four or five or six-year period for us to go solicit human capital to come back here.

And this funding would be to operational expenditures, for their salaries. I don't get it. We should not be funding operational expenditures.

I had a discussion with the transitional President. And we talked a little bit about UConn health, and their unfunded legacy costs.

And we talked a little bit about that, because I had asked them if, you know if, if that was taken care of, and I think Senator Fonfara you know, wanted -- early in the session, you know, there was a discussion, I think of trying to get the unfunded liability away from them, and bring it back to the general fund.

I think that's probably a good idea. But if we're going to do it there, if we're going to do it for UConn health, we also need to do to do it with the special transportation fund, because we bought brought legacy costs to them.

So that the conversation went on to can you operate without those costs? It's sort of -- I think they would be close.

So eventually, we got to UConn. And then this \$50 million ask. And I told them how I felt. And I shared with them the same story that I just shared with you. And then I took it a little step further. And I felt that, you know, we've got this deficit.

We know that into the next biennium budget, not this one that we're addressing tonight. But the next one, we already know, we're already a Billion dollars two Billion over the next biennium for now.

But looking back, you know, before the pandemic, we were talking about a \$3.3 Billion deficit. But now it's taken regarding this budget.

And then past years, we've been addressing budget deficits since I was elected -- Senator Moore, you and I arrived at the same time.

And prior to that, they were dealing with budget deficit, so we're not doing something right. And we have to identify what it is that we're not doing right. And then have the courage to fix it, to say, these are the disciplines for us to, to put our state in the right path.

We need to develop and identify what needs to be fixed, the courage to fix it, and then be disciplined after that.

But I shared with them, you are the Flagship University of our state, and one of the top universities in the country.

We have this business aspect of the school. Why are you not involved with fixing our state? Why are you here asking for \$50 million but yet, I get the idea that we have to stimulate our economy, and there are going to be multiple different ideas on how to stimulate it.

But that's not part -- that is only part of how we turn the state around. But my comments to them, and he got it. At least he said to me, Senator Martin, I do get it. I do get it.

And I was asking him, I don't want you to ask for \$50 million. I want you to show us how to do it. If you have a good idea, then bring it to us develop

the program and show us -- show your students how to make money.

And I almost feel like they're showing the students how to borrow money, other people's money and not making -- and making money.

So I was told, Senator Martin, I got it. I get it. I'm a little surprised. I guess, he said politely I hear you. And then still did. What they asked was, for \$50 million.

The last item -- the last item is the Baby Fund. I just have a quick question, Madam President or I may have a couple actually.

Madam President, through you.

THE CHAIR:

You may proceed with the question, sir.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you. Is this a brand new program?

THE CHAIR:

To you, Senator Moore?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, Madam President.

Yes, it is. It's a program of the Treasurer for the state of Connecticut.

He originally asked for a different amount, but we came to an agreement to do the \$50 million a year. And it's my understanding, we'll evaluate the program as we go down the road.

But it is a new. It puts away money for every child who's born, who's on Medicaid and puts money aside for them for the next 10 years.

So when they turn 18, or of some age, they will have this money to either go to school, or continue to go to school, go to college or to buy property - home ownership.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore. You have the floor, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Thank you, Madam President. And Senator Moore, please don't stand when -- if you know, in answering the questions, you can stay seated.

So are we -- I think I read that it was \$1,000 to open up the account. If it's not, you can correct me.

But my question is, whatever the deposit amount is, are we doing that on an annual basis?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

To you, Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you. Yes. It's every year.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. You have the floor, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Okay, so we're going to be depositing \$1,000 from the birth of the child who qualifies in the Husky program - sorry, Medicaid.

So we're looking at a potential of \$18,000 a child?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

To you, Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, Madam President, I'm sorry, I want to correct it. It's \$3,000 initial investment, and then the money grows over the course of the year.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore. You have the floor, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

Through you, Madam President.

So it's a \$3,000 initial investment. And that is all. And then they earn interest on that money?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, Madam President. That's correct.

Thank you, Senator Moore. You have the floor, Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST):

So we're looking at -- I don't know, 10, 15, 20 years, but maybe it's on \$1,000 over to age 18. Maybe they're making 270 \$300. So maybe they're making 1000 for the \$3,000 initial investment.

So I'm not going to say a whole lot. I think we all want to help.

We all want to fix the racial disparity, the racial -- disparity within income levels. I think we all want to fix that.

I don't know -- just two things. I'd like to see us encourage our educators to do basic bookkeeping, basic banking, basic finances at the elementary level, starting with a savings, little piggy bank, and going on to middle school, and learning how to learning how to earn an allowance, moving on up to getting a job in high school, and learning how to balance a checkbook.

When Senator Kennedy was here, he introduced the Bill, which I was on banking at that time. And it was to allow the -- to include in the curriculum of our State Department of Education, financing.

And we left it up to the districts to decide whether or not they would have that part of their curriculum.

I don't know we if there's no follow up, but it's unfortunate that we have we have a generation or maybe even two generations of students, of people that have that are not fiscally disciplined.

So I would rather take that approach and encourage us to develop more education in financing. I'd rather not give it away. Which is what this Baby Bond does.

Like I said, I think all of us want to help. But we have to keep in mind, this is not our money. This is money that belongs to all of the people in the State of Connecticut, and in some way or form, they are paying for this.

And I don't feel that this is our job to make that decision for them when we start providing money for, for a particular program of this sort.

So thank you, Senator Moore. Thank you for doing what you've been or what you've done this session regarding the financing and putting the bonding package together.

I really do appreciate it. I want to help. And I think in time we are - we'll figure this out. And hope I hope sooner than later than later.

Senator Fonfara, thank you for everything that you're doing. I know you're dug in with being fiscally responsible here in the state, and I think I've told you and I want to help cure our deficit here and put us on a path where we all in few years to now can say, hey, look what we did?

Together, look what we did.

So, Madam President, thank you for the time.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Martin. Will you remark further?

Senator Fonfara, you have the floor sir.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Good evening, Madam President. It's great to see you.

THE CHAIR:

And good evening to you, sir.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Madam President, I rise in support of the Bill and would like to address one aspect of Senator Martin's comments, in particular the UConn initiative.

And it's my hope that the day will come when we will not look at the University of Connecticut as somehow a separate institution far off in the hills of Storrs, Connecticut, that is somehow an independent company that should be able to survive on its own and should be able to fend for itself.

Anywhere in the country, anywhere in the country that you see a thriving economy, particularly in the new economy, the knowledge economy, there is a first rate research university driving that economy.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a city down on its luck, after the steel industry collapsed, revitalized, revitalized, to the point where its residents are so high on their city, their home because of Carnegie Mellon University and University of Pittsburgh embracing their role as leading research universities.

Driven by faculty, driven by students in entrepreneurship and innovation and entrepreneurship, that has led to spin offs that now has totally transformed that city totally transformed it. Because of the beginnings of the work of those two universities.

Google is got a major presence in there. Several other corporations are there because of this effort to reach to turn a city that was -- essentially it was a steel town that was you know, left to rust essentially, as the steel industry collapsed.

Austin, Texas, Chattanooga, Tennessee, I don't have to mention Boston. I don't think I have to mention Silicon Valley in California. Those are the places that people that rolls off your tongue.

But there's so many places elsewhere that you see this revitalization of the knowledge economy, replacing older industries as technology advances.

As I said earlier on the budget, our country is on a pace to lose, anticipated to lose 70 million jobs before the end of this decade, because of technology because of robotics.

We have to advance. And that is going to come primarily because of the University of Connecticut, in my opinion, this effort is to advance that.

Put it on steroids to attract the best and brightest professors through the University of Connecticut that will attract the best and brightest students that will, through their innovations through the support of entrepreneurship, develop businesses here, startups here.

Connecticut has the oldest companies, chronologically, in the northeast, why is that relevant? Because there's a misnomer that most of us often repeat that small business is the engine, the job creator in our economy. In fact, it's young businesses, which happened to be small, initially.

But young businesses are -- and you think of the trajectory of businesses that you've been in Representative Martin. The rise of hiring initially in the company until it reaches a plateau and stays there, and hopefully it stays there, if not decline and ultimately, they decline because they want to become more efficient.

When you have the oldest companies chronologically in the northeast, as we do, that means they're not hiring. They've done what they're going to do in terms of hiring. They're satisfied with where they are, for the most part.

We have to change that as a state. We have to find our new path, and Connecticut has a long history. Senator Hartley knows this better than anyone.

A long history, in manufacturing of smart people, right here in Hartford, Cole, Pope, Pratt, Whitney. These are people who I think government helped in

one way or another, if nothing else to get out of the way.

But I suspect it helped in other ways. Many companies did very well, because there was a war of one type or another.

But nonetheless, somebody had an idea and they took that idea and made it something. And it led to -- we have Cole Park here in Hartford. We have Pope Park, here in Hartford. Why? Because those individuals, Albert Pope, Colonel Albert Pope, the Cole family, particularly, Mrs. Cole, said, "We need more workers." And these were factories, they hired thousands of people based on an idea. That's what we're trying to rebuild in our state, in the University of Connecticut.

I hope and I pray that we can get to the point where we see the university, not that it would no longer do liberal arts and other aspects of what the universities -- the great work that universities do in this country.

But in addition to that, that it is creating an environment where young people want to come from around the country and around the world because they know that there's an environment here where their idea, they can be with a professor who will help them hatch that idea will help them grow that idea to something.

And they don't have to go to Silicon Valley to get funding. They don't have to go to Boston to get funding. I had someone that worked for my company as an intern initially. Who -- he's already had two apps that he created. He went out to Silicon Valley and he said, "John, they throw money at you there. They throw money."

And he's a mama's boy, he'd love to stay here in Connecticut, but he's gonna go where the resources are. And we're not there yet.

But this investment here is -- well, I'll put it another way. Somebody had an idea that in sports, that University of Connecticut can be a lot more than what it was.

When I was there. You had a leaky roof in the Field House, literally, they put buckets out to catch the rain. And we were nothing and somebody had an idea and transformed that university in terms of sports program to where it's internationally known, and has drawn more students from around the world to sleepy Storrs, Connecticut, which is no longer sleepy, but it was when I was there.

That's what can happen in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship led by this research university, there is only two in Connecticut.

The other one, we can't tell what to do, Yale. And for the most part, they really don't want much to do with the state of Connecticut.

Capitalists, state of Connecticut unless it benefits them, but we can and we have a partner in UConn. And I hope that by advancing this proposal, we will see the kind of engagement that will put you UConn on the map for entrepreneur --and it is, it's rising nationally.

Senator Martin, it's rising nationally, in publications that measure how schools are performing in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship, we're moving up the ranks.

That was not true 10 years ago, not so much five years ago, I'm disappointed that President Katsouleas is leaving his vision on what UConn can be is something that I was very encouraged by.

I'm hoping the next President will bring a similar vision for what the university can be to build -- rebuild Connecticut's economy, to rebuild our economy.

That's the proper role of that university, along with so many other things that is rightfully their place in developing young people in this state and in this country.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

Senator Hwang, you have the floor, Sir.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President, in less than five hours to *sine die*. It's kind of exciting.

But good evening to you, Ma'am. I want to thank you, and I rise to acknowledge the efforts of the Finance and Revenue Bonding Committee, and the Sub-Committee leadership that crafted this bonding Bill tonight.

This was quite an unusual year for this legislative session that was impacted by the lingering precautions and procedures of COVID-19. And indeed, our Sub-Committee was no different.

We met by zoom meetings. But at the same time, we were a relatively new team. We were led by the experience and the guidance of Senator Moore, the most experienced Member with two years as the Chair.

We had Chair Representative Borer, who was appointed in mid-session, because then Representative, now Senator Miller's election and appointment to the Senate.

We have Representative John Piscopo, as Ranking, even though with over 30 years of experience, it was his first year as a Ranking Member.

And also for me, with the support of Senator Martin, I was in mid-stream brought on to be the Ranking Senator on the Sub-Committee.

I must say, I dug into the books, the OFA professionals that we have in this building are second to none in this country.

I learned so much in understanding the vast complexities and the impact of our bonding initiatives.

From issues that we're so accustomed, to infrastructure, housing, education, all aspects of what we do in the state of Connecticut.

And having been an Appropriations Committee Member, I was equally impressed by the coverage and the impact of the Bonding and Revenue Committee.

You don't hear about it enough, because we generate the revenue side. But the experience I learned this year was the coverage is equally expansive and impactful.

I want to also extend that, with the new team, and with the complexities and the challenges that we had. All of this was made to craft this product, because of the tremendous graciousness, the welcoming, but also the willingness to collaborate and work.

I must extend directly to Senator Moore, for us to have Saturday meetings, for us to be able to get the impact and get the perspective of our respective caucus colleagues.

Thank you, Senator Moore, for your graciousness.

We also recognized that we worked very closely to hearing the viewpoints and the perspectives and the contributions from the Governor's staff.

Every agency offered their perspective and answered every question that we had. Every entity was

cooperating and working with us and understanding.
It really was a truly team effort.

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the very good Chair, Senator Fonfara, and the Ranking Member of the Senator and the House Chair, Representative Scanlon, for you to allow us as a Sub-Committee to do the due diligence, and to allow us to be able to support your role, complementing the work of the Ranking Member, Senator Martin, and Representative Cheeseman. You gave us the opportunity to contribute to the blow that you had, so I thank you.

As we look at this Bill, I am really proud of the product that we put together. Did we cover everything? Are we going to leave some people out? Are people going to be sometimes unhappy? Absolutely.

But we did the best we could, and we put the best of our best into that effort. We have had tremendous successes in the Finance Committee.

One such example is what you saw in the collaboration and the innovation of the volatility Cap that we talked about so much.

But that was literally four years in the making. That has led to our new initiative of retaining money into the Rainy Day Fund, and to be able to pay down our looming and escalating pension liabilities.

That was a result of the support and the brainchild of Senator Fonfara, but it also had the bipartisan support of all the colleagues in the Committee to push that through.

We didn't always agree with some of his innovative thoughts. But if you don't try anything new, you're gonna be stuck in the same place over and over again.

But we had a challenging and vigorous debate with things that we may not agree with. But you know

what? We can be very proud in the Finance and Revenue Committee that the volatility Cap was born out of that same debate, that same type of interaction of thinking differently. So that's important.

I didn't think of it but I wanted to also extend Senator Fonfara's love of UConn.

I knew he liked it, I knew he was very proud of UConn, but sometimes when you work in a Committee and you hear that repeatedly, you understand he truly believes that UConn is not just a school in Connecticut. It is the very fabric of our state.

It is what other people in the country when they hear of Connecticut, think of. Not just for our great sports teams, maybe not for the ice cream either, But he wants UConn to be the standard bearer to the rest of the world, as we know UConn is.

So I thank you for that. I thank you and I want to acknowledge your support of UConn.

I could go on and go piece by piece on this Senator Moore. But no, I promise you I won't.

But I also want to acknowledge all the Legislators that reached out to us in the leadership role, to get their viewpoints, to speak for their advocates, their community leaders, their nonprofits, their infrastructure needs, to be able to present the idea in a context that we can evaluate, prioritize and be able to allocate.

So as I close and urging support for this, I spent most of my time acknowledging and thanking the people that crafted this package.

And that's just. Because for all the Legislators that have contributed to this package, for those that are consistently and will continue to offer ideas and viewpoints as an extension of representing

their community, That is the true essence of representative government.

True essence for our role as Representatives and Senators is we're representing their voice up here. We're fighting for them. We're trying to get a piece of the community to be better.

So I'm Want to thank Senator Moore again for our graciousness, and her patience. But I also wanted to thank the staff that supported all of us because, the information and the complexity is overwhelming.

I felt like I was a freshman crunching for final exams, when I had to read all the vast numbers and impact that we have.

So I want to thank the teacher and the mentor, Senator Moore, and the graciousness of classmates that helped us and helped me manage this process.

So I urge support and I want to thank all my colleagues.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hwang.

Will, you remarked further?

Senator Fonfara, you have the floor, Sir.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Very briefly Madam President, I want to rise and recognize Senator Moore who's not only challenged tonight in terms of her normal dexterity, but to recognize the work that she -- as an alumna of the of the club of the Bonding sub-Committee, former Chair of the Bonding Sub-Committee, I know the -- I know I don't like using this word, because it's maybe not taken in the way it's meant.

But it's a thankless job very often. But you have such opportunity to make a difference in this state with this responsibility.

And for all the Members, I will say I it's a challenge with this Governor in terms of his general reticence about Bonding. He's made representations that will change. I pray that's the case.

A lot of work goes on by the Chairs, by the Ranking Members, by the Members quietly out of the limelight.

But it's so important work. So important, and we need to do more, we need to invest more, and I just want to express my appreciation to you, Senator Moore for taking on this task, and for being here today when most of us would not be we'd be somewhere else right now. But thank you very much for all you've done.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara.

Will you remark further? Will remarked further?

If not, will the Clerk please announce pendency of roll call vote and the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6690.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6690.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, on House Bill 6690.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6690.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, House Bill 6690.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? Please check the roll call machine to see that your vote is properly recorded, if so the machine will be locked and the Clerk will announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6690.

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yay	34
Total voting Nay	2
Absent, not voting	0

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

The Bill is passed. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Senate stand at ease, please?

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President, and Good evening, good to see you.

Madam President, if the Clerk would call the next two items on our goal list. Calendar page 14, Calendar 387, House Bill 6378 mark go.

Followed by Calendar page 34--

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

Followed by Calendar page 34, Calendar 267. Senate Bill 658.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 14, Calendar 387, House Bill number 6378. AN ACT CODIFYING PREVAILING WAGE CONTRACT RATES. As Amended by House Amendments Schedule "A" LCO No. 7702.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Madam, you have the floor. Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Nice to see you up there.

THE CHAIR:

Likewise.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

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 motion is acceptance and passage in concurrence with the House. Will you remark, Madam?

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

I just want to start my remarks tonight, by saying how much I appreciate the hard work of the men and women in the trades, who construct buildings and bridges and roads all over our state.

And it's because of their work, particularly this last year, under difficult circumstances during the pandemic, that we can feel confident that we have a safe and well-constructed state.

These building trade jobs really offer opportunities for going into the middle class for living a good family life here in Connecticut.

And I want to also say this year, we have really looked to our trades to help us move forward in Connecticut, when we passed Senate Bill 999, for renewable energy projects.

We knew we were bringing into the future, jobs that would be there for the men and women in the trades, and that these would be good jobs with good benefits.

I also want to take this opportunity because I may not have another chance to say this, this session.

But I particularly want to thank our Senate leadership, Senate President, Senator Looney, and also our Majority Leader, Senator Duff, for all the good labor Bills that we have done this year.

It's really a tribute to how we stand by and stand with working families in Connecticut. And to all my colleagues who have voted for the Bills we've passed up here, I appreciate you, I thank you. And I look forward to doing great things next session with you.

In terms of this Bill, this Bill does two things. And it's quite simple. Connecticut has a prevailing wage law. And that law lays out the times in which we will ensure that workers in the trades are probate paid a fair and decent wage.

However, the process has been complicated at times. This Bill does two things.

One, it provides autonomy for our Connecticut Department of Labor to establish the rates for prevailing wage.

And two, it codifies the way in which they have made those determinations in the past.

And I think this is going to make for a smoother government process. But it also is gonna really speed up the amount of time it takes to get a prevailing wage rate from the Department of Labor.

So I'm very excited about this Bill. I'm happy that our colleagues in the House passed it I thank my Co-Chair, Chair Porter, for bringing that Bill out and getting it passed there.

And I do want to point out that there was bipartisan support for this strong passage in the House. And I look forward to my colleagues here in the Senate doing the same thing. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

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

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6378. House Bill 6378.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6378. House Bill 6378.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6378.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, on House Bill 6378.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate of House Bill 6378.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. House Bill 6378.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted?

The machine is locked. Mr. Clerk Please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6378

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yea	25
Total voting Nay	11
Absent, not voting	0

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

Legislation is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 34 Calendar No. 267. Substitute for Senate Bill No. 658. AN ACT REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO RECALL CERTAIN LAID OFF WORKERS IN ORDER OF SENIORITY.

As Amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" LCO Number 9247, and House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO 10402.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Good evening again, Madam President. Oh, you weren't there last time. Good evening for the first time today.

THE CHAIR:

It's good to have many Madam Presidents.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

It's wonderful.

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 KUSHNER (24TH): Thank you, Madam President. This is a Bill that will provide certain recall rights for certain workers that were laid off during COVID.

It is a Bill that we discussed at length here in this Chamber; it went to the House and was amended. And so we are back here with this Bill with a number of changes.

THE CHAIR:

Very good. Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber?

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

I would just summarize briefly to say probably one of the changes that is most notable is that the period of time for which an employee could qualify for recall is now changed to be instead of at the end of 2024, it will be in May of 2022.

It also, the Bill previously required certain information be provided if the worker with the most seniority is not recalled, and in this just as -- it will be limited in terms of the information that is provided. So, I think that it's a good Bill and that we should pass it.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Good evening, Madam President. I rise in opposition to Senate Bill 658, as amended by the House. Just to be clear, we are talking about the proper language before us.

Just like to confirm through you, Madam President that we are indeed discussing LCO number 10402, which is a strike all Amendment "A" adopted by the House which will now become Senate Bill 658, and that's how we have it before this Chamber. I just want to make sure we're talking about the right language through Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, that is the correct LCO number.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. As was just stated, this is a Bill that came to the Senate. I believe it passed on a party line vote. I spoke against the Bill at that time. And I believe I highlighted many of its shortcomings and significant concerns.

So it went to the House and I believe it met with some opposition there and has been modified and it is now back before us in its modified form.

I'll state from the outset that the Bill is significantly better than it was when it left this Chamber the last time and I am thankful for that.

However, Madam President, I would still say that this was a bad Bill the first time I saw this, and it's still a bad Bill. And I'm going to just go through it very quickly and talk about what it is.

The Bill is titled "AN ACT REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO RECALL CERTAIN LAID OFF WORKERS IN ORDER OF SENIORITY."

And that is more or less what it does, is it uses the government, and its ability to regulate free enterprise and private companies, through business regulation, to force them to recall certain laid off workers in order of seniority, is what the Bill is proposing to do.

I objected to this the first time on the basis that I don't believe that this body has the right to make that sort of determination for a private business. And that this Bill goes pretty far in undermining the system of at will employment that exists in our state.

And at the end of the day, I just want to remind my colleagues in this Chamber, that we do not own or manage the businesses that are affected by this Bill, and we should not be writing laws as if we did.

I think that it is very presumptuous. I also think it is in direct conflict with our duty and responsibility, which I will remind everyone is to work as representatives of our constituents. We are not their bosses, we are not their masters. And we are not the managers of their businesses. We are in fact, their representatives.

And I would also point out that far too often in this Chamber; most recently, we are passing

legislation that takes aside in almost every interaction between our constituents.

And in this one, it is an interaction between employers and employees. And in this particular case, we are drafting a law.

I say we, I mean the majority has put forth this law, our proposal for a law that would in fact, take the side of the employee over the employer, and I don't take sides, Madam President.

I want to write policy that is mutually beneficial to every citizen of this state, and for the purpose of creating the most prosperous Connecticut that we can have.

And I believe that the most prosperous Connecticut will come from freedom and the opportunities that people have to enter into business agreements, employment arrangements, and make their own choices about how they're going to do business in this state and therefore, create jobs opportunity, and a better way of life for all of us.

And this type of Bill is something that I will stand up against every time and point out why it is damaging to the concept that America is defined by, which is that all people are free, free to make their own choices, and to pursue their own happiness.

This gets in the way of that, Madam President, because it essentially sets up rules and requirements that stand in the way of that freedom to choose and to pursue as one might wish.

There is a few changes to this Bill, unlike was described from the outset, the gentle lady mentioned that the period that COVID-19 would be considered. It was changed from 2024, now only through May one of 2022.

But there are quite a few other changes in the Bill. The very first one I noticed, I believe, is on line 32, which is in subsection six of section one. And I would just curious to ask through you, Madam President, why is it we are defining enterprise to not include Cruise Line companies? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

I would have to check on that. That was in the underlying Bill. I don't believe that question came up at that time. But if you want to give me a minute, can we take a short pause? Stand at ease?

THE CHAIR:

Chamber will stand at ease. Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President, through you, that was the Bill -- that was the way the Bill was crafted in Committee after taking public testimony and hearing and it seemed appropriate to the Committee to not include cruise line, as a staff, as enterprises.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I have the Bill that passed the Senate and went to the House before me. And looking at the same section, subsection six of section one lines 29 through 32 of the LCO, which was, I think 9247 is the one that passed out of here. And that language was not there.

So this language, that enterprise does not include cruise line companies was added by the House. And that's why I was asking, since we're here, attempting to pass a Bill that has already passed one Chamber, been modified and has come back.

Those modifications are the critical component of our conversation tonight. So I think that's why I was trying to focus on that.

I guess I didn't frame that in the form of a question, but I'd still like an answer to why we are not including cruise line companies, and why the House saw fit to make that change? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner. Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President, through you, I can't tell you what was in the mind of the House and doing that it's a House Amendment that is before us, and they obviously deliberated over it and made that determination.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate the answer. I mean, you initially had indicated to me that that's what was in the mind of the Committee. But the Bill that we passed out of this Chamber initially did not contain that.

So it did, in fact come from the House. And I don't know either, but I'm afraid that you and I are going to have to cast a vote along with the rest of the Members of the State Senate without understanding

the reason why cruise line companies were not included.

In the same section, it says 15 or more employees. And I remember asking the last time why we chose that number? This affects only certain types of businesses, enterprises as they are defined as hotels, lodging House, food service contractor, building service enterprise, with only 15 or more employees.

And I think that's a very narrow definition, which I'm thankful for, Madam President, that this Bill is not going to affect many more individuals and businesses in our state.

But it strikes me that if we believe that there is good policy here before us, why would we be limiting it in scope to only businesses with 15 or more employees or only these particular businesses, and specifically, not including cruise companies.

It says to me that someone's not comfortable enough with this policy to actually put it into effect. And they shouldn't be, Madam President, because this is lousy policy.

Another significant change is in subsection 11. And this is something that we had a great deal of conversation with the last time, which was the notion that this original legislation extended beyond those that were laid off as a result of COVID-19 and the Executive Orders that were issued by the Governor as a result, and included other non-economic disciplinary reasons, and I remember asking about what those were, I'm thankful, Madam President, that that was removed in the House.

So now this Bill is limited only to individuals who are laid off due to a lack of business or a reduction or furlough of the employers workforce due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Executive Orders, and I will use this as an opportunity to remind the Members of this circle and anyone

watching that, generally speaking, it is only because of the Executive Orders.

Some businesses were classified as essential and allowed to continue working, and other businesses were considered non-essential.

And the governor is the one that made that determination, and the results, the layoffs that resulted here, If they are a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including Executive Orders, then I believe that it's the Governor of the state of Connecticut that is responsible for those layoffs and not necessarily the laid off employer. They were simply trying to survive as a business in our state.

There's also a question that I asked the first time, which I think is very, very important, because in this section, laid off employee means any employee who was employed by the employer for six months or more in the 12 months preceding March 10, which is - - I guess, what we're considering the beginning of COVID-19, and whose most recent separation from active service or whose failure to be scheduled, and so on, was due to the lack of business, etc.

And I had asked whether or not this apply to individuals who quit, or were fired. Through, Madam President, would the gentle lady know if this applies to the people who quit their jobs during this period as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or the Executive Orders or they were fired? Or is it simply folks that were actually issued a pink slip? Through you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Through you Madam President, this Bill talks about laid off employees and there's a general knowledge

of what laid off means it does not include people who quit or were fired.

Although I assumed that if it was being litigated, one might want to look at to make sure that it wasn't constructive discharge, that could have been, in fact, a layoff.

But clearly, the idea of a layoff is someone where the work is reduced, and the employer no longer needs as many employees.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I don't disagree with that, the lady's response other than to say that there are other options beyond laying someone off when there is a reduction in the workforce required because of a lack of business or because the Governor, you know, puts forward an executive order that closes an operation or part of it.

That might include a termination, which I'm not sure even after that response, would be included. But we had this conversation on the first Bill and I do have some concerns that this will extend beyond people that are specifically laid off and offered a pink slip.

In line 66 through 69, subsection 15, it defines COVID-19 as a respiratory disease by, designated by the World Health Organization. But then it goes on to say, "And any related mutation thereof recognized by said organization as a communicable respiratory disease."

What concerns me about that, Madam President is that I don't think the World Health Organization should be making law for the state of Connecticut.

And essentially, a section does exactly that. It puts them in charge of determining what particular respiratory diseases will fall into the category of requiring this new law, if this becomes a law passed by this Chamber and signed by the Governor.

I just, I don't -- I think we should be more careful going forward in determining that we, in fact, the elected representatives of the citizens of our state make those determinations and not some foreign entity.

I also noticed that there is another new section that was not mentioned in the list of changes. And that is something somewhat shocking to me. And that is line 70 to 72, which is subsection B, subsection one of section one which says, "Not later than 30 days after the layoff an employee before May 1 2022, an employer shall submit to the Labor Department an affidavit stating the reasons for the decision."

And I just find this shocking, Madam President, that in a state where we have at will employment, that we are now going to require employers to not only specify the reasons for a layoff, which they are not required to do under our laws currently, because it is an at will state. But not only do they have to have a reason, they have to actually submit that reason to the Labor Department, and they have to do it in the form of an affidavit.

I find it absurd actually, that we're even debating this Bill, on the final night of the legislative session.

There's a reason why this Bill has been jammed up and is taken, it's time to get back to us. And I think it's because everybody knows that it's somewhat problematic and goes far beyond what our current labor law and the state is.

This Bill goes on to say that, not later than five days after a job becomes available at an employer,

the employer is now required to notify all of its laid off employees.

And it goes on to talk about who is qualified for the position. Lines 80 through 82, specify that where more than one employee is qualified for an available position. The employee shall employer rather shall offer the position to the employee with the greatest length of service at the employment site.

Madam President through you, are any other items considered relevant, rather than just the greatest length of service, such as skill level, attendance, cooperation? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President through you, this Bill, and the Amendment contemplates using length of service as the determining factor in which worker would be recalled.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate that. And I brought it up specifically since this is a common theme that we've seen this legislative session.

And unfortunately, it's not been a consistent theme because we've had Bills come before this Chamber that go out of their way.

Like there was a recent Bill regarding a mandate on employers about providing a space for breastfeeding,

but also included some language, updating the gender pay gap.

And I was very pleased, Madam President to see that we added in that Bill language that said that employers have to take into consideration someone's skill level, attendance, disciplinary record and so on.

But yet in this Bill, it does not include that information at all. It says only the greatest length of service. So that means to me that if I run a business, and I'm forced to shut down by the Governor as a result of COVID, and I want to start bringing back my employees, now, I am going to have to bring back the person with the greatest length of service, even if I prefer to bring back a different employee, because they're more reliable, they're better skilled at the job I need them for.

But no, this body is gonna say, forget all that. We don't allow you to make your own decisions. We are new managers in your establishment, and you have to do it our way and we're going to tell you exactly how you're going to bring back your employees.

That doesn't sound like any America that I recognize. And as a result, Madam President, I have an Amendment. It is LCO 10732. I ask that it be called and I be given leave of the Chamber to summarize. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, would you please call the LCO.

CLERK:

LCO number 10732, Senate Schedule "B".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. This Amendment would actually add in the language, that says, where more than one employees entitled to preference for a position, the employer shall consider each entitled employees skill level, attendance and disciplinary record, along with the length of service with the employer offer -- before offering the position to any employee.

This is a common sense Amendment. I urge adoption, I move adoption. And I would like a roll call vote. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption and we will have a roll call vote when we vote on the Amendment. Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I oppose this Amendment, and urge my colleagues to vote no.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm gonna stand in support of this Amendment. I think it's important if you have an employee who has a lot more time on, but that employee calls in sick every Friday, calls in sick every Friday before a holiday, doesn't get as much work done as everybody else. That's important when you're calling somebody back, because that affects your bottom line.

It affects the morale because you have other employees seeing that this employee isn't doing the work and they have to make up for it.

I mean, it's common sense. We're telling a business owner you have to take somebody who really retired on the job, who isn't doing the job correct and doesn't want to be there.

Because they take as many days off as they can. That's wrong. We should not be stepping in and telling an employer how to run their business. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne. Will you remark further on the Amendment "B" before the Chamber? Will you remark further? If not, a roll call vote has been requested. So I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, would you please call the roll.

THE CHAIR:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is on Senate Amendment "E" of Senate Bill 658. This is on Senate Amendment "E" of Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, on Senate Bill 658, Senate Amendment "E". This is Senate Amendment "E" of Senate Bill 658. 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, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 658. This is Senate Amendment "E"

Total number voting	35
Total voting Yea	12
Total voting Nay	23
Absent not voting	1

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

Amendment fails. Will you remark further on the Legislation before the Chamber? Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I'm disappointed that Amendment failed since I thought it was a very common sense Amendment that we should leave it in the hands of employers when it comes to determining which laid off employees return to work that they might take into consideration that employees length of service along with skill level, attendance, and disciplinary record.

But I'm afraid that I'm in the minority in that position.

Just following through on the Bill, the next several lines, I also found to be somewhat absurd. It says, "A laid off employee is qualified for a position if the employee held the same or similar position at the enterprise at the time of the employee's most recent separation."

And then it says, Madam President, it says, "Or can be qualified for the position with the same training that would be provided to a new employee hired for such a position."

Madam President, Will you do me a favor and bang that gavel for me so that I can hear myself thinking here?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson, you do have a point, it is getting -- there are a lot of side conversations going. So we are going to ask people to give their attention to the debate so that we can finish this session. So therefore, Senator Sampson, please proceed.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate that very much. I just wanted to keep my train of thought and I was having a little difficulty.

So this section gives me great pause. Because I believe that an employer is the person that should be making the determination about who is actually qualified for the position, since it's the employer that creates that position, and also would want to fill that position.

And to suggest that this body has the power to determine who is qualified versus the employer themselves, is absurd on its face.

And to go so far as to say that this body wants to manage that business in a way that says that as long as that person can be trained, they're qualified.

I think it's a ridiculous definition of qualified Madam President. And one of the reasons why I voted against this legislation before and I think why it's before us on the final night of the legislative session.

Just going on subsection "C", it says, "An offer of employment to a laid off employee pursuant to this section, shall be at substantially the same employment site."

And I don't know what that means. I mean, if someone moves their business, what is substantially is if they move it across the street, they have to hire the same employees back or if they move it to the next town over or what if it is in the same country but not, you know, on the same block?

I don't know who's going to make that determination? And as I have pointed out many times in this Chamber, it is our job to determine what the parameters are when we write laws.

Our constituents deserve clear laws. They deserve to know. That's why we make the speeding limit some exact amount. Whether it's applied that way, or not as a different factor, of course, but we don't say around 55 miles an hour, we say 55 miles an hour.

And we don't say substantially at the same employment site for a reason. But yet it exists in this Bill and it should not.

Just moving on. There is a following section that says that the employer must give the employee not less than five days in which to accept or decline an offer.

So you have a restaurant, for example, that's about to open back up, because the Governor's Executive Orders are allowing them to, and they've taken a few weeks and months to get their business up and going and ready again, and they're about to bring people back on board.

And they've got to call people back. Now they have to wait five days to open their business to determine whether or not those employees are going to accept the offer.

That's not fair, Madam President. I know how much people in this room like to use the word fair all the time, but that's not fair.

It's not fair to the business owner, who is number one providing the employment for these folks to be put in a spot where he cannot proceed.

In fact, we're also putting all of the other employees' jobs at stake, because they need this business to be successful in order to have that job.

Another absurd section, Madam President, and I'm getting used to just talking about all the absurdities in this Bill, subsection "E" 113 to 117.

Each employer that declines to rehire a laid off employee on the grounds of lack of qualifications, because maybe the position is different now, and instead hires an individual other than that laid off employee, get this, shall, in other words, must, by force of government provide to that laid off employee a written notice not later than 30 days after the date.

This is an at will employment state. It has been that way forever; I don't understand why we are attempting to undo that with this legislation?

Moving on, it says under 121, "The requirements of this section shall apply under any of the following circumstances."

And what concerns me, I know that we can see a difference between the Bill that passed the Senate earlier this year, and what has come back to us from the House.

That there is a paragraph removed that says the ownership of the employer changed after the employee was laid off, etc.

I see that was removed. But through you, Madam President, is it the policy in the Bill before us that a business owner would have to apply these requirements of this Bill including all of the job offers and notification and affidavits to the Department of Labor, et cetera. If they were a brand new owner of a business that had an employee that fit these qualifications? Through you, Madam President,

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would you restate the question?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would be delighted to restate the question. I noticed that in the Bill that passed this Chamber earlier this year, there was a section that said that the terms and conditions of this Bill would apply in the case where the ownership of an employer changed after a laid off employee was laid off, but continues to conduct the same or similar operations.

But my question is, even though that was changed, I'm not certain that that policy still does not exist because of lines 125 through 127.

The question very simply stated, I'll try and make it a little more clear, Madam President, that is, would a business owner who acquires a business operation where an employee had been laid off under the circumstances laid out in Section -- subsection 46 that describe -- subsection 11, which describes the laid off employee wouldn't have to apply to them also if they acquired a business, and there was a person laid off. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President, through you, the lines in the Bill do very specifically identify when that would continue to apply even if there was a change

of ownership. And that I believe begins on line 123.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. That's what I thought. I just found it remarkable that the House took the time to remove the language that says the ownership of an employer changed after a laid off employee was laid off, but the enterprise continues to conduct the same or similar operations.

As if they were trying to get away from that as a policy point. But most possibly missed the idea that it's actually repeated using different words in lines 125 through 127, where it says, "This section shall apply, under all of the circumstances, including substantially all of the assets of the employer were acquired by another entity, that that conducts the same or similar operations using substantially the same assets."

Again, the word substantially and same or similar, all very, very vague, which I've already drawn attention to.

But this concerns me, because I'm reading this to say that if a business went out of business as a result of the Executive Orders, as a result of COVID, and it was a Mexican restaurant, for example. And that owner sold all of his equipment and his location to a new employer who wanted to open an Italian restaurant.

I would like to know through you, Madam President, whether or not the owner of the Italian restaurant, who's using this similar location and similar operation, another restaurant, albeit a different type of food, would have to hire back the same chef from the Mexican restaurant? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I believe this is clear that subs -- evolved as substantially all of the assets of the employer were acquired by another entity, then, in fact, they would have employees would have those rights.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm speechless, Madam President. I hope there are people watching this; I really hope that the citizens of Connecticut and the press of Connecticut is watching what we are doing here.

This law would tell someone that buyers, buys the assets of a failed business after COVID has to take employees from the previous business.

And not only that, they've got to hire the Mexican chef to be the chef for their Italian restaurant. I'm Mexican cuisine, Madam President, just to be clear. I'm not talking about the ethnic background of the person; I'm talking about the type of food that they cook. So I just I can't believe that we would make a law like this. It shocks me to my core.

Just moving on, subsection 1. An employer that terminates refuses to re employ or takes any other adverse action against any laid off employees shall provide to the employee at the time of the termination, a detailed written statements on the reason or reasons for the termination.

Our current law in this Connecticut, in this state does not require that. We are in an at will employment state. It says that if an employee wants to quit, they can quit, and if employer wants to end a business relationship with an employee, they can end it.

This is going to change that to set a precedent that says that from now on employees are required to receive a detailed written statement.

I don't know, Madam President if there's a fine for this, but I do see that the following section says that a laid off employee aggrieved by a violation of this section may bring a civil action in the Superior Court.

You're creating a situation where someone can sue them now because that person who laid them off did not provide an appropriate reason in writing, in a state that historically has been a free state when it comes to employment, where employers and employees worked out the details of their employment situation together.

I kind of went out of order on my Amendments, Madam President because I was waiting for them to be filed.

But I'm going to just jump back quickly before we finish the Bill, because we're almost to the end, to offer another Amendment that I think is critical.

And that is LCO No. 10734. I ask that the Clerk call this Amendment "A" and I be given leave of the Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO No. 10734. Senate schedule F.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This redefines the Section that we discussed earlier, sub-section 11, which defines what a laid off employee is subject to the Bill before us.

Which is the person who was -- whose most recent separation from active service or whose failure to be scheduled for customary seasonal work by that employer occurred after March 10.

And was due to a lack of business or reduction or furlough of the employer's workforce due to COVID-19, and the Executive Orders.

And forgive me for reading it, I just want to make sure that it is very clear what the Bill says.

This would add the language that says that also someone who did not already reject an offer after March 10. And before the effective date of this action, an offer of employment.

Because I believe, Madam President, there are a great number of folks that would fall into that category, because we are now several weeks into the reopening of the state of Connecticut, and many of these businesses are now opening again.

And I'm quite certain that these employers have gone back to many of these laid off employees, offering them jobs. But they are not considered in this Bill.

And if they have already been offered a job and rejected it, so I think for clarification sake, there is no reason why we should be creating such a burden on an employer, number one, about all of these notifications, affidavits or written statements and the potential for civil liability

when they've already done the job of offering someone a job.

I move adoption of the Amendment, Madam President, and I'd like a roll call vote.

It's a very straight up vote if you believe that an employer's already done their job if that person was offered employment and rejected it, and they should not be subject to the requirements of this Bill, you vote yes. If you believe the employer is still subject to these things, even if they've already done their part, you vote no.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the Amendment "B" before the Chamber?

Senator Kushner, and we will have a roll call on the Amendment.

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

I oppose the Amendment urge my colleagues to vote now.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the Amendment "B" before the Chamber?

Senator champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAIGN (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise in support of this.

I've been talking to many businesses and the businesses have been facing a major problem.

They have been trying to get the employees to come back to work. And the employees are outright saying I'm making more money at home. I'm not coming in.

I've been to quite a few restaurants in the past two months. And what I see are the owners waiting tables, the owners bussing tables, because they can't find workers.

I have never seen more "Help Wanted" signs than I can ever remember.

Because the employees are refusing to come back and what this Amendment does, it says if you refuse to come back, you said you didn't want the job.

Without this Amendment, what we're saying is, we know the person was making more money. We know they said no, multiple times, but you know what we're gonna make you take them back.

No matter how much you had to work as the owner of a business who you wanted to pay people to come in and do this. You have to take them back.

That is wrong. Usually, when you offer a person a job, and they say no. At that point in any other time in our history, that's it.

You're offered the job. And once you refuse it, you no longer work there. And if you tried to continue to collect unemployment, you wouldn't get it because they offered you the job and you said no.

And some of these employers have gone out several times to get their employees back. And those employees have refused.

This law at this time after we've kicked all of these businesses to the curb, with - and especially with other laws that have been passed is wrong.

This Amendment would fix that part of this I think it's important, and we should watch out for our businesses under this.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne.

Will you remark further on the Amendment? Will you remark further on the Amendment?

If not, a roll call vote has been requested. I've opened the vote. Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the roll call.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment F for Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment F for Senate Bill 658.

This is Senate Bill 658 Senate Amendment F.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Amendment F. Senate Bill 658.

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 Please announce the tally on the Amendment.

CLERK:

Senate Amendment F of Senate Bill 658.

Total number voting	35
Total voting Yay	12
Total voting Nay	23
Absent, not voting	1

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

The Amendment fails.

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Senator Sampson, thank you very much, Madam President.

Again, I'm sorry to see my second Amendment, again fail on a party line vote.

It was a very straightforward proposal which was we should leave out the employers that have made a good faith effort to go back to their employees that were laid off.

But I do understand that this Bill has been around the block more than once now and its future would be uncertain at this late hour if we were to modify it and have to send it back to the House and once again.

And it's unfortunate because I offered Mr. Amendments the first time around, and I implore my colleagues sometimes just to listen to the value in what I'm saying.

You might disagree on much of it. But I'm hopeful that there is common ground. Every time I get up with an Amendment, it is with the sincere hope that folks will see the value of the compromise that I am offering.

Just continuing with the Bill, the final sections of

the Bill have to do with the punishment, or the liability created for an employer who fails to follow what I believe are really over the top requirements that are contrary to our state's historical employment arrangement. Which is, as I've mentioned several times now is "at will" arrangement.

I noticed in the final paragraph, something that I find very interesting, which is that this does not apply in cases where there is a -- what is described as a bona fide collective bargaining agreement.

And I suppose this is a reference to something called supersedence, which is a policy that we have in the state of Connecticut that allows collective bargaining agreements, actually, to supersede Connecticut state statute.

So if we all agree that something should be a law, and the House does, too, and we pass it and the Governor signs it, it's still not a law, if a collective bargaining agreement says otherwise.

And that makes me wonder, Madam President, why such a contract would supersede state law but not an individual employment contract between an employer and an employee?

I mean, would not that an individual have the same rights? And in fact, I made the argument many times on this floor, Madam President, that collective bargaining agreements don't have rights.

And the employees as a group don't even have rights, but the individual employees do. Because there's no such thing as collective rights. Rights only apply to individual folks, and not to groups.

But my question remains the same. Why on earth, would we say it's okay, to allow a collective bargaining agreement to supersede what I presume the majority who's going to vote this Bill into law thinks is good policy?

If it's such good policy, why would we allow a supersedence to exist in a collective bargaining agreement?

That doesn't make any sense to me, Madam President, I think it's absurd on its face. We're either making laws that apply to every person equally, over doing something wrong.

And in direct contradiction to our American system of laws and justice, the idea that a collective bargaining agreement would have more value in protecting the rights of those group of employees than an individual employment agreement between an employer and an employee, to me, is facetious, it doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

If an employer or an employee, who are free people in our society come to an agreement about what the terms of that employment arrangement is, then what does the government have to say with it?

Why do we need any of us here telling them what to do? Isn't that between them? That's the whole focus of much of the Labor Committee debate this year, is whether or not people are actually free, and they can make their own choices in employment arrangements.

I believe that that's the way our country was founded, that I believe that is a core part of our value system.

That that employer employee arrangement works best when it is just between people who are doing it because they want to.

And I also believe that that is the reason why we live in the greatest country on Earth. Because when you allow freedom to continue, many, many great things happen, new ideas, new innovations occur because of that freedom.

But when we're telling people No, don't even bother getting involved in a business or don't buy that failed Mexican restaurant, because if you open your Italian restaurant, we're going to torture you with a bunch of bureaucracy coming from the state of Connecticut.

It's bad policy. And so is this supersedence clause. Madam President.

I have one final Amendment, and that Amendment is LCO 10735.

I ask that the clerk very generously call it and permit me the leave of Chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Yes, sir. Mr. Clerk, would you call that LCO, please.

CLERK:

Absolutely. LCO No.10735. This is Senate Schedule G.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

This is a very simple Amendment that adds, at the very end of the Bill after sub-section K, a short paragraph, "notwithstanding any other provision of the general statutes, an employer that rehires a laid off employee pursuant to this section." So we're talking about someone who's following this law shall not be held civilly liable for violating any prohibition on discriminatory hiring or for violating any affirmative action policy in connection with such rehiring.

I move adoption. And I'd ask for a roll call vote and an opportunity to speak in favor of the Amendment "A" after the others.

So we will have a roll call vote on the Amendment "A" and the question is on adoption.

Senator Kushner, will you remark on the Amendment?

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

I oppose the Amendment "A" and urge that my colleagues vote no.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the Amendment "B" before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the Amendment "B" before the Chamber?

If not, I will open the voting machine. Mr. Clerk would you -- okay. We nobody's voted. Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President.

I was hoping there was going to be some dialogue on this Amendment. But I will just simply encourage my colleagues to support the Amendment.

It's something that applies only to people that have complied with the Bill before us.

We don't want to see someone end up in trouble and become civilly liable because they follow these requirements, because I can see that happening.

If someone has to follow this requirement and bring someone back based on seniority, they might very well find themselves in direct conflict with other

federal and state law require about discrimination, affirmative action, and so forth.

And this is designed to protect the employer in those cases.

Again, Madam President, I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

A vote yes is to actually support people that are willing to comply with this law.

A vote no, leaves them open to potential liability.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, the machine is open. Please announce the vote. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This will be Senate Amendment G on Senate Bill 658.

Senate Amendment G of Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 658. Senate Amendment G.

This is Senate Amendment G of Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Amendment G of Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment G. Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate

Amendment G. Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment G. Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Amendment G. Senate Bill 658.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted the machine is locked Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally on the Amendment.

CLERK:

Senate Amendment G of Senate Bill 658.

Total number voting 35
Total voting Yay 12
Total voting Nay 23
Absent, not voting 1

THE CHAIR:

Amendment fails. Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Once again, I'm disappointed that my third attempt to improve the language before us failed on a party line vote.

My efforts have been sincere, Madam President in trying to take what I think is a questionable piece of legislation and try and improve it in the most -- really insignificant of ways to prevent roadblocks

for the constituents I represent.

And since my requests have fallen on deaf ears twice now. And I've offered a several Amendments on this Bill the first time it was before this Chamber, which failed on a party line vote and I'm back again over three on my Amendments.

I want to direct my comments to the Governor of the state.

Governor Lamont I hope you hear me on this Bill. Your colleagues in the House and Senate did not see the danger of the Bill that is before us.

But I hope that you do I know that you're a thoughtful person. I know that when Bills cross your desk after leaving this body, you are going to take the time to make sure that they are good policy before signing them into law.

This is a candidate for a veto. Mr. Governor. I urge you to veto this Bill because it is setting up a horrible trap for people who are simply trying to get back to work in our state.

The damage done from COVID and as a result of the Executive Orders, forcing businesses to close has put many, many restauranteurs and other folks that would end up targeted by this legislation in a very, very bad predicament.

And I don't think we should be passing legislation that is going to create a trap for them, where they end up with civil liability or worse because we have set up rules of the game which are just completely unfair.

The employer and employee relationship is between them. We do not own these businesses. We do not manage these businesses. We should let those folks work it out.

We have laws in place already, Madam President to

prevent wrongful termination and discrimination and things like that those laws serve us well.

There is no reason to create a policy like this that imposes so much on an employer as if the employer doesn't know himself how to run his business.

I hope the Governor recognizes what I do that this is terrible policy absurdly written and very dangerous. We got to stop it before it continues.

I urge you to veto sir. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Sampson. Will you remark further on the legislation before the Chamber?

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

You know, I've seen some bad Bills. And when I look at this one, I'm going to reiterate exactly what I said.

You know, this was a tough time. COVID was a tough time.

When we shut these businesses down, many of them aren't going to open again. And those that are opening are opening up and they're struggling to get open. I've said it once already.

They have offered jobs. And people have said, no. And what this legislation is doing, is saying, I don't care if they said, no.

As soon as this legislation passes, and you knew another opening up in sub, you're going to have to give that job to the person who said no, whether they said no once, or said no 10 times.

I guess the owners out there probably may take note of this. And understand that. If they said no, you might want to move to termination, if you don't want to have to offer them this job when this Bill passes.

But to force a business to take somebody who has already put the business -- is already hurting that business more by refusing the job, because they're making more by staying home. And collecting the federal subsidy. You know, federal subsidy is going to end.

And if I was a business owner, and this person came to me after I asked him 5, 10 times to come back and said, Hey, I'll come back now, I would think twice about it. And I think twice about it, because during the roughest time, you didn't come back.

You know, we always want the good employees to come back. We want the hard working employees to come back.

What this legislation says is, you can't take the hardest workers or the most reliable workers. You have to take them all in the line with the most senior person, no matter how many times they said no. And no matter how many times they called out no matter their track record.

What the businesses is just went through in the last year. And we just want to keep kicking them.

You know, I asked a Democrat, or somebody from the other side and from our circle, I said, why would you vote for this type of stuff?

The person says you need to understand 50% of our vote comes from the unions, so we have to vote for the employees. And that's why it's important to have more unions.

You know, I think it's important that the state of

Connecticut has businesses, thriving businesses, not businesses that we keep stepping on over and over and over again.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne.

Will you remark further on the Bill before the Chamber?

Senator Kushner?

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

Hearing this debate is sometimes difficult for me. Because there are many things that are said that I strongly disagree with.

But I don't want to really delve into that. What I want to say is that this pandemic has been hard on everyone.

It's been hard on the doctors and nurses and firefighters and police and grocery store workers and hotel workers and restaurant workers.

It's been hard on employers, but it's been incredibly hard also on employees.

Employees who when they lost their jobs had nothing to fall back on. Yes, there's been unemployment. But people are looking to -- there's been unemployment compensation.

But there has - the people are looking forward to a future where they can get a reset, where they can go back to work. And that's what this Bill does.

It says, you were hit hard by something totally out

of your control. And now we're going to reset and put you back to work in the job that you had. And I think that's fair. And I think that's right. And I think it's good for Connecticut.

There's been some discussion about unions and supersedence clauses. You know, it's clear that unions in our country have been able to do far better in negotiating collectively, for wages and benefits.

There's nowhere in the law that it says you can't negotiate better than what we provide in law.

And it's terrific that so many unions have done that. And that as a result, our country and our state is better off.

People live a middle class life. They're not all working at minimum wage. They're not all working in part time jobs.

They've done that through collective bargaining, and many had recall rights through their union contracts.

Some of those contracts have expired. And this Bill will be good for those workers.

This Bill will help those workers. You know, honestly, I think everyone knows that I would have liked this Bill to be stronger.

I'm not convinced that we're going to be fully recovered by May 1 2022. I think in fact, it's highly unlikely that I look forward to the day when we do have full employment again, when those businesses do come back.

And when those workers get an opportunity to be recalled, and get a reset, I think what we're doing is good for the workers. I wish we could do more.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

If not, I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, please
announce the vote.

Madam President, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Oh, I so apologize.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

Speaking in support of the Bill, in concurrence with
the House. I certainly endorse the comments of
Senator Kushner, our distinguished Chair of the
Labor and Public Employees Committee who has worked
so hard and so effectively on this and so many other
Bills in the course of the session.

THE CHAIR:

Pardon me Senator Looney, I do apologize. I said we
would open the vote before I recognized you.

And we do have one vote that is on -- we have two
votes that are on the board.

So I don't know if that is problematic?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the
Senate. Senate Bill 658 as amended by Senate A and
House A.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the
Senate on Senate Bill 658. As amended by Senate A
and House A.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate

Bill 658. As amended by Senate A and House A.

Have all Senators voted? Have all Senators voted?

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

CLERK:

I'm ready. Senate Bill 658 as amended by Senate A
and House A.

Total number of voting	36
Total voting Yay	19
Total voting Nay	17
Absent not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The Item passes.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Mr. President.

For a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

You may proceed.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Mr. President, to state a comment on the Bill that's just been enacted.

I would like to commend Senator Kushner for all of her work on this Bill. And also so many of the other Bills that have proceeded from the Labor and Public Employees Committee this year.

I also want to express my disappointment with the fact that the House altered the Bill in a way that I think, changed it from a very effective Bill to a moderately effective Bill.

And certainly still worth doing. But with the early termination date of the spring of 2022. For the recall date, the full effects of the pandemic and the kind of rubbing up again toward full employment will not have been completed by that time.

One final comment is, Mr. President that we know that that long term unemployment is especially devastating for older workers and keeping people connected to the workforce is critically important because, as we know, retirement income is scarce. Penalties for collecting Social Security early are severe, and workers are actually not eligible for Medicare until age 65.

So recall, is so important to keep people insured if they run into that gap between employment or loss of employment at a time when they are not yet eligible for other social services.

So I wanted to commend the Committee, the work of Senator Kushner as always was stellar. And the Bill, although less of a solution to the problem than what we originally sent to the House is still worth doing.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. For those words, Senator Looney, and I do want to apologize. I did not see you when I opened the vote.

So I'm glad you have the opportunity to share your views on the Bill.

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

Will the Senate stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease.

Good evening, Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good evening, Madam President.

Madam President, before we begin our next markings, I would just like to if anybody has their TVs on if they're not in the Chamber, to please stay close to your computers or the Chamber because our votes will come fast. And I can't guarantee that we will hold votes open very long.

It is 10 o'clock on *sine die* and so we need to be mindful of the time.

Okay. Gotcha. Good. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Appreciate it.

Madam President for our goal lists and Agenda No. 1, to mark go, is Senate Bill 1070.

I'd like to mark that item go on Agenda 1. Senate Bill 716. I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered on both.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Calendar page 12.
Calendar 359. Senate Bill 514. I'd like to mark that
item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 20. Calendar 49. Six House Bill
6524, I'd like to mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Agenda No. 1 Senate Bill 1070 APR and MAP issue.
Home Health orders.

There is an amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABAMS (13TH):

Good evening, 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 ABAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This Bill originated in the Senate and was passed unanimously through the Senate.

The House did amend this Bill to remove some of the sections in agreement with some of the stakeholders.

It is still an incredibly good Bill and should be passed.

So I hope that my colleagues will again, pass it unanimously.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

Senator Somers, good evening.

SENATOR SOMERS (18TH):

Yes. Good evening, Madam President. I rise in support of this Bill.

As the good chair has indicated, this Bill passed unanimously out of the Senate, the House made one modification which really is to do with some specialty groups that would like very specific items for the PA to not be able to do although this can be handled under the agreement, they would like to have it in statute.

So I am hoping that the Senate will consider again, voting in favor of this particular Bill.

It's very important. It's been something that's been in the works for quite a few years.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further?

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

To the Proponent of the Bill through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:
Please proceed.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Could you just explain what the changes? They said? It's minor. I just want to know what the change was.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABAMS (13TH):
Hold on one second, and I'll get all that information for you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Abrams.

SENATOR ABAMS (13TH):

Thank you, Madam President. It removes sections of the original Bill.

The first one added provisions granting immunity from civil and criminal liability for withholding or causing the removal of life support systems under specific conditions that was removed.

Another section that was, documents the need for additional quantities of eye drops for insurance coverage of prescription renewal.

And lastly, it removed a section that added to the practitioners being allowed to give a statement of attendance, blindness, or disability for laws limiting eviction.

Those were the changes that were made, the sections that were removed, I don't think that they are in any way significant to the totality of this Bill, which allows PAs to follow through within their scope of practice with some other things that they're able to do.

And I will say that one of the reasons that we had removed this Bill and put it into this other Bill initially, was so that we could make it very clear which it does at the beginning of this Bill that physician assistants can only work under the supervision of a physician.

And we thought making that clear would make it clear in all of these sections.

However, there were some people that disagreed and as a result, they took those pieces out.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Abrams. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm good.

THE CHAIR

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further on the Bill?

If not, I will open the vote.

Mr. Clerk, would you please call vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill No. 1070 AN ACT ALLOWING ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS TO ISSUE HOME HEALTH ORDERS as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9002 and House Amendment "A" LCO No. 10261.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill number 1070. As amended by senate Schedule "A" and House Amendment Schedule a meeting roll call vote in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 1070. As amended by Senate "A" and House "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:

Senate Bill 1070 as amended.

Total number of voting	36
Total voting Yay	36
Total voting Nay	0
Absent, not voting	0

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

The legislation passes. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

It's good to see everybody here in the Chamber.

Madam President does the Clerk have Senate Agenda No. 2 on his desk?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda No. 2, dated Wednesday, June 9 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. I'll move all items on Senate Agenda No. 2 dated Wednesday, June 9 2021 be active as indicated that the Agenda be incorporated by reference in Senate Journal and Senate transcripts.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

**Senate Agenda
No. 2
REGULAR SESSION
Wednesday, June 09, 2021**

BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE:

**HOUSE RESOLUTION FAVORABLY REPORTED - to be tabled
for the calendar.**

EMERGENCY CERTIFICATION -

HJ NO. 378 RESOLUTION CONVENING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
IN SPECIAL SESSION.

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

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

SB NO. 1070 AN ACT ALLOWING ADVANCED PRACTICE
REGISTERED NURSES AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS TO ISSUE
HOME HEALTH ORDERS. (As amended by Senate Amendment
Schedule "A" (LCO 9002) and House Amendment "A" (LCO
10261)).

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT
COMMITTEE**

SB NO. 716 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FEDERAL STUDENT
LOAN BORROWERS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2019. (As
amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 9355)
and House Amendment "A" (LCO 10489))

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Madam President, would the Clerk call the
next -- Oh, Madam President just for notation on the
third marking, Calendar page 12, Calendar 359 it's
House Bill 65614, not 514.

THE CHAIR:

65614. So noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda No. Senate Bill No. 716. AN ACT CONCERNING THE FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2019, as amended by Senate amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9355. And House amendment "A" LCO No. 10489.

THE CHAIR:
Senator Slap. Good evening.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Good evening, Madam President.

I move adoption of the Joint Committee's favorable report passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President, this Bill comes back to us from the House with overwhelming approval really makes a very simple change.

The House made an amendment to align the definitions in this Bill now with Senate Bill 890, which is a Banking Bill, which deals with federal student loan providers in this Bill deals with private student loan providers.

And again, we already passed the underlying Bill here and I'd ask for my colleagues as support in passage again.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

Senator Witkos, I do apologize. There's so many of you now.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

You're lost in the crowd, I understand. Madam President.

I just want to say very briefly, I concur with every single thing that the good Chairman of the Higher Education Committee said, and urge passage of the Bill, thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 716. As amended. By Senate "A" and House "A".

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 716 as amended by Senator "A" and House "A".

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Bill 716 as amended by House "A" and Senate "A".

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 716 as amended by Senate "A" and House "A".

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yay	36
Total voting Nay	0
Absent, not voting	0

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

Measures is passed. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 12 Calendar 359. House Bill number 5614 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMISSION ON THE DISPARATE IMPACT OF COVID-19 as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 7501.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH):

Good evening, Madam.

Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the Bill in concurrence with the House, madam.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH):

Yes, thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President, this is a very straightforward proposal that was unanimously approved by the House.

And it is actually the work of the majority leader of the House.

It simply establishes a commission on disparate impact of the COVID-19 affects.

It is a 22 person commission that will look to analyze identify the causes of disparate impact of COVID-19 regarding federal and state responses on the areas of racial, ethnic, gender and socio economic groups.

I urge adoption, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Hartley. Will you remark further on the legislation? Will you remark further?

If not, I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally. --I mean the vote, sorry.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 5614. As amended by House "A"

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5614. As amended by House "A"

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. This is House Bill 5614. As amended by House "A"

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. House Bill 5614. As amended by House "A"

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

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

CLERK:

House Bill 5614 as amended by House "A"

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yay	35
Total vote Nay	1
Absent, not voting	0

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

The legislation is passed Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 20. Calendar No. 489. House Bill No. 6524. AN ACT CONCERNING THE SOLICITATION OF NEW FUEL CELL ELECTRICITY GENERATION PROJECTS as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 8206.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Good evening, Madam President. Very nice to see you with an hour and 40 minutes left.

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 NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Certainly, Bill comes to us from the Energy and Technology Committee where it received overwhelming support and pass the House of Representatives with only one dissenting vote.

Proposed legislation received backing from the Green Bank Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, CBIA, fuel cell energy and others.

I'm pleased to bring this Bill out today as it addresses energy efficiency while still being business friendly.

It has never been more critical than now to find ways to rebuild our economy following the devastating impacts of COVID.

The Bill before us will have a direct economic impact by attracting new job creating businesses in a booming sector of the energy market.

This Bill requires electric distribution companies to create a competitive selection process to obtain new fuel cell electricity generation projects manufactured right here in our state, and makes use of areas in need of remediation such as brownfields and landfills.

Proposals must begin on or after July 1 2021 and must be submitted to and approved by PURA.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Needleman. Will you remark further on the legislation before us? Good evening, Senator Formica, and let me just ask all of our members and guests to give your attention to the speakers because it's getting very difficult to hear.

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you Madam President. Good evening, I rise in support of the legislation. This is, of course a good jobs Bill for the state of Connecticut.

As you know, several of the fuel cell companies operate right here in our home state of Connecticut.

And these projects will be preferential projects,

Madam President, for cited to be on brownfields and landfills.

As you know, fuel cells are very good in reducing green House gas emissions, and they have high reliability and flexibility and installation. Good for micro grid.

So this is a good Bill from the Energy Committee, Madam President, and I urge support.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you, Madam President. If there's no objection, I'd like to call the roll.

THE CHAIR:

Will, you were you mark further. Will you remark further?

If not, I will open the vote. Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the vote.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6524. As amended by House "A" Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is House Bill 6524. As amended by House "A" Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. House Bill 6524 as amended by House "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 vote please.

CLERK:

This is House Bill 6524 as amended by House "A"

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

THE CHAIR:

Measures is adopted. (gavel) Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President.

Madam President, on Senate Agenda No. 2, will the Clerk please call House Joint Resolution Number 378.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

House Joint Resolution -- Senate Agenda No. 2 House Joint Resolution Number 378 RESOLUTION CONVENING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SPECIAL SESSION.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President, I move for acceptance of the Emergency Certified Joint Resolution, convening the General Assembly in Special Session.

THE CHAIR:

And will you remark further, sir?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. This is just a Joint resolution passed by the House and need to be passed by the Senate to convene the General Assembly in Special Session. That is it.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, would you I will open the voting machine.

Mr. Clerk would you announce the vote.

CLERK:

House joint resolution 378.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Joint Resolution 378.

Resolution convenient the General Assembly in Special Session.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Joint Resolution No. 378. This Resolution is convening the General Assembly in Special Session.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Joint Resolution 378.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate in the House Joint Resolution No. 378. Resolution convening the General Assembly in special session.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. On House Joint Resolution No. 378. Resolution convene in the General Assembly in special session.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Joint Resolution 378.

Total Number Voting	36
Total voting Yea	34
Total voting Nay	2
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The resolution is adopted. (Gavel) Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. Would the Senate stand at ease for a moment, I would ask that Senators please stay very close to the Chamber. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senators stay close to the Chamber, please.

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President.

Madam President, two more items for our goal list, please?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, on Calendar page 21, Calendar 502. House Bill 6600, mark go.

Calendar Page 26. Calendar 550. House Bill 6442. Mark, go.

Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 21. Calendar 502 Substitute for House Bill No. 6600 AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKE DETECTION AND WARNING EQUIPMENT, THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE SAFETY CODES, THE CODE TRAINING AND EDUCATION BOARD OF CONTROL, TEMPORARY FIRE MARSHAL CERTAIN FIRE REPORTS AND SMALL WATER HEATERS, as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO 9167.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. Madam President. 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 Bill is relative to smoke detectors and similar provisions.

The fire safety and prevention codes, inspections, code Training and Education Board of counsel and works into the discussion, fire marshal appointments.

It is a good Bill, and I'd be happy to answer any questions, but it's fairly technical in nature.

And I urge passage. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage. Will you remark? Senator Champagne?

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this Bill. And it's exactly what the -- what Senator Austin said. And I urge supportive as well.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

I would just echo the same thing. Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. 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.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. House Bill 6600 as amended by House "A"

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 6600 as amended by House "A"

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 6600 as amended by House "A"

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yay	34
Total vote Nay	2
Absent, not voting	0

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

Measure passes. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 26 Calendar No. 550 Substitute for House Bill No. 6442. AN ACT CONCERNING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO BROADBAND as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 9750.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

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 NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Sure. Thank you, Madam President. This Bill is about adoption of -- using some of the Federal opera money to increase access to broadband.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this Bill.

As we all know the last year has shown us how important broadband infrastructure is in access.

This Bill begins combination between the state and the Fed partners to make sure that broad band is expanded and extended for better access for our citizens throughout the state of Connecticut.

I urge support.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Senator Champagne, and then we'll go to Senator Needleman. Go ahead, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you Madam President, I just have one question to the Proponent of the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. Is this the infrastructure for broadband or the actual devices in the House?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Thank you, Madam President. This is for the infrastructure for broadband, not for devices in the House.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, madam.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Needleman.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD):

Madam President requests the roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

And indeed we will have a roll call vote. Will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further on the Bill?

If not, the machine is open 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 on House Bill 6442. As amended by House "A"

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 6442. As amended by House "A"

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. House Bill 6442.

Immediate roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

House Bill 6442 as amended by House "A"

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yay	36
Total vote Nay	0
Absent, not voting	

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

Legislation passes. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

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

THE CHAIR:

Stand at ease.

Senator Duff. Good evening.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good evening, Madam President as we come to our last hour of the session. Three more Bills to mark go.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 21. Calendar 504 Senate Bill -- I'm sorry. Yeah, Senate Bill 1112.

Followed by Calendar page 22. Calendar 505. Senate Bill 1114.

Followed by Calendar page 24. Calendar 525. Senate Bill 1109.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk

CLERK:

Page 21. Calendar 504. Senate Bill number 1112. AN ACT AMENDING THE CONVEYANCE OF PARCELS OF STATE LAND TO THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, 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 conveys apart or amends the conveyance of a parcel of state land and the City of New Haven. It's been worked out with the Department of Transportation and my urge my colleagues to support this measure. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, I will open the machine. Mr. Clerk, please announce -- please call the vote

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 1112.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 1112.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Bill 1112.

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:

Senate Bill 1112

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yay	35
Total voting Nay	1
Absent, not voting	0

(Gavel)

THE CHAIR:

Measure is passed. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 22. Calendar No. 505 Substitute for Senate Bill
number 1114 AN ACT RELINQUISHING THE STATE'S
INTEREST IN A PARCEL OF LAND CONVEYED TO THE TOWN OF
EAST WINDSOR.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Good evening, 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, Madam President, Madam President, the Bill
before us makes a change with regard to land in the
town of East Windsor.

I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the
legislation? Will you remark further?

If not, I will open the voting machine. Mr. Clerk.
Please announce the vote.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1114. Senate Bill 1114.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Bill 1114.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill 1114.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Bill 1114.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1114:

Total number voting	34
Total voting Yay	32
Total voting Nay	2
Absent, not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

Measure passes. (Gavel) Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 24 Calendar No. 525 Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1109. AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF A PARCEL OF STATE LAND IN THE TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR.

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:

Question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, this Bill before is conveys a parcel of state land and the town of South Windsor.

Madam President, the clerk is in possession of an amendment LCO No. 10731. I ask that the Clerk please call the amendment and I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk. 10731 -- LCO

CLERK:

LCO No. 10731. Senate Schedule "A"

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, the amendment before us makes a

change to the underlying legislation that was requested by the administration and the Department of Transportation.

I encouraged my colleagues to support the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber? Will you remark further on the amendment before the Chamber?

If not, let me try your minds. So all in favor of the Amendment please signify by saying Aye.

MEMBERS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The Amendment is adopted. Will you remark further? Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

If I may, a few questions to the Proponent of the Bill as amended?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, to Senator Flexer, is the property in question one that the department set an average price -- median price for sale?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, I do not know how the price for this property was set. I will just say that the amendment that we just adopted was to clarify the exact parcel of land that was being considered here in case that's caused any confusion

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, I guess I'll just have to ask in the manner that I'm only familiar with.

The piece when we discussed it in caucus was that there was a certain parcel of land that the DOT estimated the price to be at 200 and something dollar's value and that it was only to be sold to an Abutter. The Abutter only offered somewhere in the \$70,000 range.

So the department said no to the sale. And so now the town is moving to have it conveyed to them for an economic development piece, and I'm just curious if (a) I'm talking about the right parcel, and (b) what would that economic development piece be if the good Proponent of the amended Bill knows.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH):

Through you, Madam President, as I said the amendment was to clarify exactly which parcel was being considered. And I believe the -- I know that the language before us was negotiated between the town of East Windsor and the Department of Transportation.

So this is something that has been worked out there's no continued objection with regard to the conveyance of this parcel from the Department of Transportation.

And it's been worked out with the town of East Windsor.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

Thank you, Madam President.

I'm gonna vote no on the on the underlying Bill, because although we just heard that the language had been worked out, my understanding was that the parcel would be conveyed for economic development.

And when I spoke to the member who represents that

community, what that economic development was, the thought was that it would become a park.

And I don't know really, if a town is trying to do economic development just to take a piece of land that the state owns at a value of over \$200,000, an Abutter wanted it for 70. The town's taking and making it a park.

I think that, in my opinion that circumvents what the process that we've had in place.

There is another mechanism that the people that are interested in buying the property or the town if they want to without going through the conveyance process, and I would hope that they should go through the whole process to have this fully vetted out.

So I'm going to be voting no on this conveyance Bill this evening.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

If not, I'll open the voting machine. Mr. Clerk Please announce the vote.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate Bill 1109. As amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 1109 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Bill 1109 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Bill 1109 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Bill 1109. As amended.

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1109.

Total number voting	36
Total voting Yay	25
Total voting Nay	11
Absent not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Legislation passes. (Gavel) Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President. Madam President I move for immediate transmittal of these last three Bills to the House of Representatives, please?

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you Madam President, will the Clerk now please call Calendar page 34 Calendar 403 Senate Bill 1100.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Page 34 Calendar No. 403. Senate Bill number 1100 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FAILURE TO FILE FOR CERTAIN GROUNDLESS EXEMPTIONS, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" LCO No. 10107, "B" LCO 10105. and House Amendment Schedule "A" LCO. 10175.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Good evening, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening.

Madam President, I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the Bill.

The Question is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

I move adoption, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

And will you remark?

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

In concurrence - I move the Bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you will remark further on the legislation before the Chamber.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

I urge passage Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Will your mark further?

If not, I will open the voting machine.

Mr. Clerk, please announce the vote.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 1100. As amended by Senate "A" "B" And House "A"

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill 1100. As amended by senate "A" "B" and House "A"

Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

The legislation -- Yeah.

Mr. Clerk, could you call the tally, please?

And I know you're busy. Take a deep breath.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1100.

Total number voting	36
Total number voting Yay	36
Total voting Yay	0
Absent, not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The legislation is adopted. Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

For the moment we all been waiting for, our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

On Calendar page 34. Calendar 126. Senate Bill 837
I'd like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 13. Counter 372. House Bill 6427. I'd
like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 16 counter 411, House Bill 6387.
I'd like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 17 Calendar 430. House Bill 6606. I'd
like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

I'm sorry. Calendar page 17 counter 430. House Bill 6602.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

On Calendar page 19 Calendar 454. House Bill 6606
I'd like to mark that for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 19 Calendar 455. House Bill 6580. I'd
like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, and that is page 19, 455. Calendar 580.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Correct. Thank you, Madam President.

Calendar page 19, Calendar 455. House Bill 6580.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. Calendar page 20, Calendar 475, House
Bill 6391. I'd like to mark that item for our
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 22, Calendar 508. Senate Bill 1117,
I'd like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 22, Calendar 509. House Bill 6436. I'd
like to mark that item for Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 23, Calendar 523, House Bill 6034. I'd
like to mark that for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 25, Calendar 538, House Bill 6574.
I'd like to mark item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 26, Calendar 552, House Bill 6624, I'd
like to mark item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

Calendar page 27, Calendar 559 House Bill 6457. I'd like that item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 28, Calendar 564 House Bill 667. I'd like that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 28, Calendar 567. House Bill 6589. I'd like to mark that on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered

Calendar page 29. Calendar 569. House Bill 6685. I'd like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 29, Calendar 571, House Bill 6412. I'd like to mark that item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

On Calendar page 29 Calendar 573 House Bill 6449.
I'd like to the mark that item on our Consent
Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 30, Calendar 576. House Bill 6385. I'd
like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Calendar page 19 Calendar 456 House Bill 6466, I'd
like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar page 26, Calendar 554. House Bill 6541,
I'd like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

On Calendar page 28, Calendar 566. House Bill 6684,
I'd like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

So ordered.

Calendar page 28, Calendar 565. House Bill 6680, I'd
like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

On Calendar page 22, Calendar 506. Senate Bill 1115.
I'd like to mark that item for our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President.
And will the clerk please call those items and
followed by a vote on exact count?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1, page 34. Calendar 126.
Senate Bill 837.

Page 13 Calendar 372, House Bill 6427. Page 16
Calendar 411. House Bill 6387. Page 17 Calendar 430
House Bill 6602. Page 19 Calendar 452. House Bill
6606. Page 19. Calendar 455 House Bill 6580. Page 20
Calendar 475 House Bill 6391. Page 22 Calendar 508.
Senate Bill 1117. Page 22 Calendar 509 House Bill
6436 Page 23 Calendar 523 House Bill 6034. Page 25
Calendar 538 House Bill 6574. Page 26 Calendar 552
House Bill 6624. Page 27 Calendar 559 House Bill
6457. Page 28 Calendar 564 House Bill 6678. Page 28
Calendar 567 House Bill 6589. Page 29 Calendar 569
House Bill 6685. Page 29 Calendar 571 House Bill
6412. Page 29 Calendar 573 House Bill 6449. Page 30
Calendar 576 House Bill 6385. Page 19 Calendar 456

House Bill 6466. Page 26 calendar 554 House Bill
6541. Page 28 Calendar 566 House Bill 6684. Page 28
Calendar 565 House Bill 6680. Page 22 Calendar 506
Senate Bill 1115.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the
Senate on Consent Calendar number 1. Immediate roll
call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent
Calendar No. 1. Immediate roll call vote in the
Senate, Consent Calendar Number 1. Immediate roll
call vote in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1

Total number voting	36
Total number voting	36
Total voting Nay	0
Absent not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar is consented to Mr. Clerk -- sorry,
Paul -- Senator Formica. (Gavel) It's been a long
evening. Good evening, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20th):

It's been a long a lot of things, Madam President,
has it not?

But first, let me start by thanking you for your
graciousness, and your kindness and consideration
and your steady hand over our great circle.

And I think a good way to start our way out of this
session is to give you a great big round of applause
by everybody.

(Applause)

Thank you, Madam President. This year, and this session has certainly brought a lot of changes and challenges to our state, to the world, to certainly this legislature, and to our Senate Republican caucus, me in particular, in my new role.

The pandemic has enabled me to see this building in my service here in an entirely new way. We started with a vacant building. Then we were operating session and committees, from home.

Crafting policies around our kitchen tables. People running around the house, screaming meetings, not meeting face to face.

This was a -- then there was a sporadic, separated return to the building, slow and steady. And tonight, we're closing the session with almost all of the work that we wanted to do get done.

And Madam President, as all of us know, and I'm certainly mindful, this is a people. This is a people's business.

And I know we all missed to a certain extent, all the people that are out in the hallway each and every day when we come here.

That's the juice. That's why we work so hard in here to serve them out here.

So it was very difficult to move forward without their presence. But hopefully as we move forward from now on, the building will get back to normal and the people's house will return to the people.

I have many people to thank including all the people the great 20th district. The great Senate Republican staff, they have worked so hard under so many great, so many difficult conditions. And I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Len Fazano, Kevin Witkos, just great leaders setting the stage for what happened here this year.

I'd like to thank my partner and great friend, Kevin Kelly, for choosing me to assist him in this role. I'd like to thank clerks, Mike Rico, what a great job you did, all session long, and all your stuff.

And finally, I started in 2015, January and February, my great aide Kimberly King, started with me. Well, today was her last day in session. She's moving on in another month or two. So we'll see her for a little bit. But I can't tell you how important she has been to the service to the 20th district in all the years that she has assisted me.

So if you will do me one favor, and stand up and perhaps give her a big round of applause. And think of your staff when you do that.

(Applause)

Thank you.

Madam President, we were afforded a spectacular reminder this year that our world can change in a moment.

And as we navigate these changes, whatever they may be, I call upon our state, and this legislature to do our very best to make sure that these changes are for the better for the people that we serve.

And I thank you all very much for this opportunity.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Formica.

Senator Duff. Good evening.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good evening. And it is so nice to see people in this Chamber, sitting in your seats, again, with your name plates, and us to be able to be literally in the circle together again.

It is -- we've come a long way since January on that. A very cold day in the parking lot where we all got sworn in. And here we are on *sine die*, back in the Chamber again, being able to see each other and talk to each other and renew our friendships and our relationships. And I think that's just a wonderful tone for today.

Madam President, I also want to just take a moment to thank everybody for where we are right now and the end of session. I know everybody has worked extremely hard, and we're all tired and look forward to reconnecting with our families.

But I want to just take a moment to thank a few folks who have led us and worked with us and worked for us and deserve some recognition.

First, I want to thank our Senate President, Senator Martin Looney for his work, his leadership, his dedication, everything that he does to lead our caucus in the Senate from January 6 to June 9 and everything in between. He is a stalwart, works hard, has more enthusiasm himself than I think all of us combined. For the legislative process. He is truly a creature of the legislature and we are fortunate to have him not only in a circle, but in this state as well.

I want to thank Senator Kevin Kelly and Senator Paul Formica for their leadership this year. We were getting as we're getting to know each other and in leadership styles, we always worked well together. When there were disagreements.

We took them in backroom we work things out, but we have developed a relationship of trust and confidence and I look forward to working together in

the future as well.

Madam President want to thank you for your work and being on the dais and helping us get through things as well as your staff and your office. And our new speaker. Speaker Ritter and Majority Leader Rojas also.

I want to thank our Senators and their families, especially the families, for everything they do to support us in our desire to serve the public.

We have gone through and still going through a pandemic that has put a lot of stresses on us personally has resulted in probably a lot of phone calls to our homes, more hours than people would even recognize.

And we do it because we love service. But we also want to want to thank our families for support and putting up with it and times where we wish we could spend with them but we are trying to assist people at sometimes at their worst moment.

I want to thank this screening committee that I chair. Senator McCrory, Senator Moore, Senator Winfield, Senator Haskell and Senator Cohen for their extra time because it does take a lot of time.

Our clerks, Tim Kehoe, Mike Jefferson, Ricci, Karcher, and everybody in the Clerk's office who works very, very hard, they do a great job and we thank you for that.

We have our staff, starting with our Chief of Staff, [Vinnie Morrow] our Deputy Chief of Staff, Courtney Coleman, who is also at my side here on the Senate floor as well and helps to keep things moving along in our policy and does policy and budgets, as well.

And so I want to thank them for their work. I know they're over there somewhere and say thank you to them. [Cesente] who's always behind me here, yelling at me, usually if I'm missing something, I

appreciate all his work here in my office

Shirley Thomas, as well and Dean Orion, who I'm glad to have welcomed back into the Chamber again.

For the first time we have our attorneys, you'll [Ruttercough] [Brad Kupferberg] Julie Anderson Teresa Govert.

Communicator Kevin kauflin, McNeely Carter, and all of our policy staff or outreach staff. They all do a great job.

Carlos Smith, who always kept us fed and things running. Rhonda Carroll who always has a smile on her face and is always trying to put more food on us, as well.

And all of our SDO staff in case I missed anybody, because they're all very valued.

I also just want to take a moment to a special shout out to Chief Casanova and the State Capitol Police. This has been a very trying year on a number of different levels, what's happening nationally and sometimes in our state.

And I think they deserve a special recognition for keeping us safe and always being very preventative. And I want to make sure I thank, and I'm sure we all thank our State Capitol Police for keeping us safe during these trying times.

Lastly, just want to again, thank our legislative management, I saw our director here in our office of legislative research. OFALCO.

Certainly the Governor, Governor Lamont, his staff. We saw Paul Mounds who's here as Chief of Staff. Thank you, Paul, for what you do.

And again, our families and our constituents, for giving us the honor to serve. Because if it weren't for them on Election Day, pulling the levers or

filling in the bubbles, we wouldn't be here.

So we want to obviously honor them for giving us this opportunity to serve them in this beautiful building.

So with that, Madam President, again, I thank everybody for what they do. And congratulations to all Senators on a very successful session.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Good evening, Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Good evening, Madam President. I also want to take a moment to recognize what was accomplished in the chamber this session.

Over the last year, our state, our nation and our world, faced unprecedented challenges.

The pandemic virtually changed the life as we knew it.

We were isolated from loved ones. We saw a historic level of unemployment. Main Street businesses were forced to shut down.

Many never reopening. People lost work. Our children attended virtual school. People were scared for their health, for their children for their parents and grandparents.

People waited in lines for food, and sadly, too many lost their lives.

But we all saw how people come together in this time of hardship. And today, we are moving forward. This session was like no other.

While we did not always agree on the best way to move forward. We still nonetheless did good work on behalf of the families of Connecticut.

And as Senator Duff pointed out just a couple moments ago. It looks so good to see so many people finally back in this Chamber in their seats. We haven't done this in well over a year.

I've had the honor to serve the people of Connecticut in this Chamber for the last 11 years. Every time I enter this circle, I think about how blessed I am and how I've had the opportunity to serve my constituents.

This year I entered this Chamber with a new perspective not only blessed to serve the people of 21st district, but also blessed to serve as the leader of the Senate Republican caucus.

Our caucus is dedicated to serving our constituents, and fighting to make our state a better place to live, a better place to work, and a better place to raise a family.

We are a group who is not easily deterred, who are steadfast, who wake up every day to advocate and fight for working and middle class families.

I appreciate the service and the work of our entire caucus, as well as the shared goals of all colleagues in this Chamber on both sides of the aisle who dedicate so much of themselves to serve the people of Connecticut.

Thank you, to my Republican colleagues. I also want to thank Senate President Martin Looney. Majority Leader, Bob Duff, and the Lieutenant Governor, for working professionally with us to make sure that we move business in this Chamber, and to work with us in a very, very open and honest manner. We sincerely appreciate that.

Thank you.

I also want to take this time to thank my deputy leader Paul Formica. Paul is hard working and dedicated, he is bold and kind.

He has been a true partner and a true friend. And I don't think we would have made it through this year without his cooperation and assistance. I am blessed to have him as my deputy.

I also want to thank our staff who dedicate so much of themselves to helping our state and its people move forward.

Our aides over the last year, they have been the vital resources to so many people during a very difficult time.

They worked every day to help people struggled to find and to secure unemployment benefits, looking for food assistance, seeking assistance to test and to get vaccinated.

They were critical. And they went above and beyond to not only answer questions, but to provide solutions and to support those people in need. So thank you Eileen Conard, Brittany Hedges, Jamie Iannotti, Kim King, Tara Frilling, Chris Farrell, Logan Carter, Kate McEvoy, Debbie Adams, Dan Davis, Nolan Davis, Caitlin Liesio, Tim Waldron and Catherine Ernsky.

To our incredible team of researchers, Sean Cleary, Avery Gaddis, Jared Pico, Chris Zavinian. Our lawyers Jason Welsh, Ryan Cafarelli, James Rocco. Our budget director Christian Spencer, our communications team of Adam Liezo, Sarah Clark, Matt Ferlino, Joe Lemieux, Jack Quito and Nicole Roll. Our outreach staff of Peggy Tibbles, Kristi Oreo, Erica Polcock, Steve Delvecchio. And of course, are all our other staffs and policy advisors Hugh McKenzie, Allopolito, Pat Crowler, Rob Poudre, Jack Shannon and Chris Fletcher.

And I couldn't leave out Yvette Flemming, who makes sure that we're fed and fed well every night, and that she cleans up the caucus room and airs it out. Thank you very much, Yvette.

I also would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that I miss Mike Goodwine who was so good for the past 10 years. And he was sorely missed this year.

To our Senate clerks who keep us on track and on task, as well as the bipartisan staff of OFL, OFA, OLR LCO and the newest Commissioner, Len Fasano, as well as the Capitol Police who greet us every day with a warm welcome and a temperature check.

I thank you all for putting in the long hours, especially during this session, taking time away from your families to be here supporting our Senators, making us look good. And moving all pieces of legislation so that we can advance good policy.

To our families, I thank you for allowing your loved ones to be with us here to dedicate so much of their time to this Chamber and this institution and to the state residents whom we serve.

Thank you for your loving support.

And finally, to the people we serve. Thank you for entrusting us to be your voice in this building.

We are a government of the people, by the people and for the people. We are blessed that every day is to serve you.

And it's an honor. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Kelly. Senator Looney.

SENAOTR LOONEY (11TH):

Good evening. Thank you, Madam President, and good

evening again.

Madam President, this, as we all know, has been an extraordinary session.

This is my 29th year in the state Senate and serve for 12 years before that, as a state Representative.

And my everlasting thanks to the members of the Democratic caucus for electing me President Pro Tem, again, my seventh year in that capacity after 12 years before that, as a senate majority leader.

I loved every single minute of all of the 41 years, and all of the time with committees and leadership meetings and all of that.

It is a blessing to be selected by the people of Connecticut, to represent a district in this general assembly, whether it be a House District for 12 years in a Senate District, for 30 years.

The people who send us here have certain expectations of us. They don't really know all it is that we that we do here, they hope we come up here with their best interest at heart.

And I believe all of us do, I think that any time someone becomes blaha rather than excited about having been selected by the people of a district in the state to represent them here at the state capitol, then it's time to leave.

I think that - and that can happen to people who've only been here a short time and not happened to people who have been here a long time, for whom it remains fresh, and exciting, and a sense of purpose and a blessing that goes with it all the time.

I think this, this session, as was said earlier, began in a not very propitious way with a bitter cold day, on January 6, where we had to be sworn in outside the building as holding papers that were blowing away, shoving our hands into our pockets.

Courtney Coleman as always with the presence of mind, to get little hand warmers to get people to put in there as they put in their gloves in their shoes. And to make it more bearable.

And that was the beginning. And from there, we went to public hearings that were on zoom committee meetings that were on zoom, all the time, not knowing whether we would be able to continue and have any semblance of a session, because as you recall, in January, the virus was particularly spiraling upward.

The number of -- the percentage of positive cases every day was high and growing, the number of people in the hospital was high and growing, the number of people dying, every day was high and growing.

We had no idea whether at some point we would be required to shut down because of people in who work here or serve here or elected to be here, that would become sick that we might have quarantine that we might have a shutdown, not be able to complete our work.

But that did not happen. And it did not happen in large measure because I think we did the right thing and tried to be careful and try to protect them everyone here.

And thank God it worked. And I would like to add to thanks to those who were thanked earlier, Jim of LLM and the people at SMG who clean this building every night and every day and helped us during those critical times.

And we had to do those cleanings. It's, again, we began with it. We have the new boards here. I want to thank their work and helping to coordinate that so people could choose to vote from their offices here as well as here in the Chamber. All this was done on the fly in a very short period of time, with great skill and, and great creativity.

So that we did in fact have not only a session that saw us be able to go all the way through to the end, all of our committees do their work through their JF deadline, getting bills on the calendar voting productively here in the Senate in the house, but to have a session of great achievement.

I think that the bills that we passed, the budget that we passed today will be stand is one of the best sessions that the General Assembly has had in its recent history.

Humane, progressive, enlightened legislation, responsible legislation, responsible budget, attention to health care, bills like Senate Bill 1 and Senate Bill 2, where we declared racism a public health crisis. We're concerned about mental health issues concerned about child care, concerned about all of the way that lives have been disrupted in this state since March of 2020.

Obviously, we're going to continue to experience that and learn about it and try to find ways to respond but I think in good faith, we will. I think that all of us collectively, whether it be Democrats or Republicans are operating in the spirit of goodwill, I think have to assume that spirit of goodwill in each other in order to be successful. And I think for the for the most part, we do that.

And Madam president like to, again, thank our great majority leader, Senator Bob Duff, who was, as I mentioned, the beginning of the session today, today's his 20th wedding anniversary. And because that this is the latest possible date of the session, he had to spend it here with us, instead of with his wonderful wife, Tracy, in Norwalk.

But Bob is someone who has served now in this Chamber a long time after a brief tenure in the House, and loves it every day is that as the rest of us do.

Madam President, we'd like to, again, thank you for your gracious service in the in the chair, we know that every day, you never take for granted the spirit of wonder that it is to have been chosen by the people with an office of trust.

And we know that that lives with you every single day in the way that you carry out your duties.

I thank the Governor for his gracious efforts in in so many ways. And Paul Mounds, I think, who has who has done such great service for him, as Chief of Staff, and our colleagues, the House Speaker, Matt Ritter, who is of course to third generation now of his family.

No, I did not serve with his grandfather. That'd be No, I don't. I only served with his father. And Tom Ritter and I came into the Chamber together. We were sworn in in April of 1981, along with Representative Mary Mushinsky who is of course still there.

And I remember the day that Tom in May of 1982, in the second year of our first term, Tom was proudly handing out cigars because of the birth of his son, Matt, that year, so that he is horse born to it and is a natural for the majority leader of the house.

Jason Rojas, as we know is a gifted public servant in own right, and want to thank Senator Kelly, Senator Formica for moving into their new roles here, with great grace and commitment, and a sense of duty and responsibility.

And in the House, of course, the new leadership, their, Representative candelabra, as well. So we have, I think, a group of people who are who may have diverse views, but I think begin with a primary commitment to making the state of Connecticut a better place.

Having ambitions for the future in the sense that we are proud of our accomplishments, but recognize there is always more that we can do.

Fundamentally, there are those of us primarily on the Democratic side, who believe firmly that an activist enlightened government is good for the people, and can meet the needs of people who need a voice on their behalf and are not necessarily able to do things for themselves and need an advocate.

There are those on the Republican side primarily, who believe that less than that the role of government should be less, and that that people are not entitled to that level of governmental institutional help.

So the lines are often drawn along those lines, but they are lines I think that people on each side of them have in good faith. And hence the debate is drawn and grows from there.

So again, no Madam President, I think that we have a great deal to celebrate a great deal to be thankful for. And much to thank God for the blessings we enjoy here this evening.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Looney, and if I may, a brief word of personal privilege.

We've been through such a difficult year and a very challenging session, I want to say thank you to our Governor who has been a great leader through all of this.

I want to thank all of our Commissioners who work 24 seven, to keep us all safe.

I want to thank our state workers, many of whom were on the front lines, keeping us safe, and helping us get through this.

It's been a pleasure working with all of our great

legislative family.

I want to say thank you to our legislative staff, and to our staff in the Governor's office and the Lieutenant Governor's Office.

They make us look great every day. And I think we have done so well together, because we all share the same goal to bring more equality and opportunity to everyone in our beautiful state.

So thank you all so much. It's just such an honor to be here with you today. Senator Duff.

Thank you Madam President, and at 11:58pm I move that we adjourn *sine die*

(Applause)

THE CHAIR:

And we are adjourned go forth, govern and sleep

(Applause)

(On motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 11:58 p.m. adjourned *Sine Die*)