

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

Thursday, June 17, 2021

The Senate was called to order at 10:31 a.m., the President in the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Will the Senate please come to order? Members and guests, please rise, and direct your attention to our Guest Chaplain Mr. Kehoe.

GUEST CHAPLAIN TIMOTHY KEHOE:

Please grant our hearts grace as we come together for our deliberations. As we face many needs and challenges, give us the ability to be judicious. Thank you, Madam.

THE CHAIR:

Amen. And Senator Lesser, would you like to come up and do the Pledge, and you could bring your assistant if you would like. And I would like to introduce Samuel Lesser to the Senate Chamber.

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much. Senator. And I see we, in addition to having Legislative aide number one Samuel Lesser, I do think we have another Legislative aide to Senator Flexer, Rose Flexer is

here as well, so welcome Rose. And good morning,  
Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Good morning, Madam President. This is the episode two of the babies of the Senate. And so pleased to introduce Samuel Lesser, and we have Rose back there as well for another episode as well. And thank you Rose for being here also. And so glad to have all the little ones here sharing the little day with us. Madam President, does Clerk have any business on his desk?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Good morning. The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda Item No. 1 dated Thursday, June 17th 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, we move all items on Senate Agenda No. 1, dated Thursday, June 17, 2021, to be acted upon as indicated, and that the Agenda be incorporated by reference into the Senate Journal and the Senate Transcript.

THE CHAIR:

Hearing no objections, so ordered, Senator Duff.

**Senate Agenda  
No. 1  
JUNE SPECIAL SESSION  
Thursday, June 17, 2021**

**BUSINESS FROM THE HOUSE**

**SENATE BILLS**

**DISAGREEING ACTIONS**

**SB NO. 1201 AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBLE AND  
EQUITABLE REGULATION OF ADULT-USE CANNABIS. (As  
amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 10984))**

**SB NO. 1202 AN ACT CONCERNING PROVISIONS RELATED TO  
REVENUE AND OTHER ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE  
BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023. (As  
amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 10933)  
and House Amendment Schedules "A" (LCO 11000), "G"  
(LCO 11007), "H" (LCO 11013))**

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Yeah. I don't think Samuel objected. Madam President, with the both items on Senate Agenda No. 1, would the Clerk call for both as go, Senate Bill No. 1201 and Senate Bill No. 1202 in that order, please.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1201, AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBLE AND EQUITABLE REGULATION OF ADULT-USE CANNABIS. (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO 10984)).

THE CHAIR:

And good morning, Senator Winfield. Here, we are again.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, Madam President, here we are again. Good morning. Madam President. I move acceptance of Emergency Certified Senate Bill No. 1201 and passage in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. This is the Bill that was before this Chamber two days ago. It's not hard to remember, not very long ago, two days ago. The exception is that when it went down to the House, there was an Amendment added. And the Amendment stripped off the language about those persons who were arrested or convicted of a cannabis charge, and their application to the social equity definition. Through you, Madam President, I urge passage.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Winfield. Will you remark further on the Legislation that is before the Chamber? And here we are again. Good morning, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Good morning, Madam President, on this lovely summer morning, here in June, great to see you. Through you, Madam President, a question, what is the net impact as to the House's actions in removing, what I believe was sort of the accumulated effects of two Amendments, that we passed on Tuesday. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Madam President. So, the definition of social equity applicants, as I previously explained, included the people within certain affected census tracts, who were under certain economic gap, and it also included people who in the past had run a file of the Criminal Justice System that we had.

The Amendment that was added that later was stripped. It's hard to sometimes keep up with this, added in people, who were -- who run a file of the Criminal Justice System, where cannabis was the source of that interaction. Taking the Bill as it currently sits, as amended by the House means that those individuals who additionally added are now removed, meaning that there are less people who fall under the definition of social equity. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And through you, Madam President, so, it would seem to me in trying to sort of follow the track here, that with the two Amendments now taken back out we would have the Bill that was originally before us in its pure form on Tuesday. And to my understanding, the way that was crafted was that the delineation of who would be eligible to apply, would be geographical in that it would deal with communities disproportionately impacted by, again what some people call the war on drugs or the enforcement of our drug laws.

And so through you, Madam President, with this have the alternative effect of making someone, who as an individual was highly impacted by "war on drugs," but came from a community and I will just select one out of the blue union up on the, let's say Senator Champagne's district, smallest municipality in Connecticut by population to my understanding. Nothing against the good people of Union, but clearly not an urban area as the smallest by population, if not, I don't believe so land mass wise, but you know, just to say that I am that individual, doesn't matter if I am African-American, Latino, Caucasian, Pacific Islander, Asian-American, whatever, we are not going by race. Would that individual be foreclosed because Union has not -- does not meet the criteria of an impact to community. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I guess, in order to make an attempt to accurately answer that, maybe I should ask some questions, but what I will do is make an attempt first. So, I think that the answer to a question depends on what one believes to be highly impacted. I think part of the discussion about the Amendment that had been added, that now is stripped, was that this Amendment touched anyone who would ever been arrested or convicted. I am not sure that people would call that highly impacted.

The war on drugs that began actually 50 years ago today, June 17th, 1971, with the pronouncement by the President, Richard Nixon, worked to target certain communities. What we were looking to do in his Bill was to target those communities. The Amendment that was added moved us beyond that.

But the reason it was looking to target those communities is because to have an arrest in those communities, is not to have an arrest just anywhere. To have an arrest in those communities, is to have an arrest in communities with a head, a presence of police that is different than other communities. To have an arrest in those communities is to have an arrest in communities with certain economic opportunities not existing.

And all of the stuffs that we have been talking about for the 50 years that have ensued since June 17th, 1971. So, I would say that the way that this Bill is crafted is to look at the situation it is set up by, not my words, but the President's words, the war on drugs. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Winfield. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much. And through you, Madam President. Am I correct in -- are you saying that this is exactly the 50th anniversary that something happened through -- I was a little kid in 1971, so I wasn't paying attention to what then President, Nixon was doing, but on June 17th, 1971, did he come out and make a speech or sign something or how that all come about? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. There was a speech, in which the President declared the war on drugs and talked about the drug abuse being the number one issue that we had in. There was a Commission that later was formed that the recommendations of the

Commission were ignored, but yes on June 17th of 1971, there was a pronouncement that we were in the war -- dealing with the war on drugs. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much. So, it's somewhat serendipitous that we are debating this, what could appear to be, at least the last legislative action on this Bill, third time a charm, or three strikes a year out, we are going to determine this, but through you, alright, so not being familiar, and again degree in history pride myself on studying history, but I don't know if that definition changed over 50 years or what that initial delineation was, regarding this "war on drugs", so was it targeted to specifically urban areas in our country.

I am guessing if it came down from the President. We are not just talking about Connecticut. We are talking about the nation as a whole. And I just don't know if it was like population driven or what were the characteristics such that it's now carried forward to a desire to extend equitable provisions within this legislation, proposed legislation, to remedy the deleterious consequences that may have been unintended by that policy initiative. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. And I would just say in response to the question that there were particular person to that we were looking to deal

with in the war on drugs. As I said in a, not the last debate, but the one before that, that it has come to be knowledge, because of those individuals who worked for President Nixon, that they had certain intentions.

And so, in declaring the war on drugs, it seems like a thing we might want to do, make sure that we can operate against drug abuse and proliferation of drugs, but what we have discovered in ensuring years was that the administration was working to end opposition to the war that existed at that time and deal with the issue of Black folks directly. This has been said on the record by people who were present at that time, about what their true intentions were.

Clearly, overtime, if you followed the issues of the war on drugs that morphed into more specifically about communities of color than ending the war, because the war ended. So, the 45 or 46 years of the war on drugs has been about what the impact is on certain communities, and those communities tend to be communities of color, there has been a disproportionate impact. And so in looking to deal with what has come from the war on drugs that is why we target those communities. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. So again through you, Madam President, would it be correct to say that under the construct before us this morning with that and those two Amendments now stripped out by the House and now sent back up to us, that certain individuals would be foreclosed from availing themselves of certain provisions in this

Bill simply because of the town that they live in.  
Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Through you, Madam President, I think I would answer that in this way. No one is -- none of the individuals that we were talking about in the Amendment are precluded from participating in the system where they would not have a role as a social equity applicant, and that implies all of the things that a social equity applicant would mean. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield -- I mean, I do apologize. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

We're so easily confused, Madam President, because we are constantly debating this Bill, this third time. I am going to stop there, because the Bill is before us for the third time because of the changes that the House made, but just a couple of things. First of all, I don't know if I have the ability to do this procedurally, but I would like to incorporate the remarks I made on the first debate, and on the second debate on this Bill, into this debate for purposes of legislative history ff there is indeed a court case or somebody needs to do research around this Bill, I think that sum total of all my remarks on all three days should be looked at in their totality, that's A.

B, I noticed that we have at least one small child in the Chamber today, that's really good, as far as the health status of our Chamber, and again my

concerns regarding our young people and the message that the underlying Bill sends to young people is of great importance.

Also, I acknowledge that part of the intent of this Bill, and also lot of work was put into this by Senator Winfield, regarding this effort to extend equitable provisions to communities that were, and I won't even say allegedly but in some respects disproportionately impacted by enforcement of criminal laws. Although, I think there are communities that are not large in population, that may be very much socioeconomically deprived, and again, I don't want to disparage any particular municipality, but I do know that there are communities in the eastern part of the state that are struggling financially very much so.

If you want an idea, look at the Judicial Branch, and where they've recently in the last year or two closed certain courthouses. And I have noticed that in some of those communities, they don't -- those courthouses don't fall in predominantly what we would classify as large urban areas, but they are highly socioeconomically struggling.

And so, again, I wasn't going to ask any more questions, but through you, Madam President, would a community that is poor, but not necessarily populous, would that be a community that would be beyond the list where an individual could reside, assuming they meet the other criteria, I think, there is like three years of residents and things like that, but again if the driving factor is poverty essentially as opposed to population center, would that be something that would carry him over the finish line? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. And through you, first, let me just address for anyone in the Chamber or anyone listening, so I will take you back to two days ago. We incorporated into the discussion on Senate Bill, 1201 Emergency Certified Senate Bill 1201, the debate of a week prior, so that was incorporated in the 1201. That Bill went down to the House and came back. So, the Senator Kissel is absolutely sure we are on the same Bill, so all of that is currently incorporated. We don't need to do any additional incorporating.

On issue of economics and how they have a role here, the requirements that give us a census tract that make up the maps if you will, are about certain number, certain percentage of arrest in a community and a certain level of poverty. So, if poverty is a part of it -- is a part of making up the census tract, so it is possible. It's not just about New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport. That's not what this Bill is about. They are obviously incorporated, but it goes beyond that. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And I appreciate that answer, and I appreciate the clarification regarding the procedural status and our debates on this Bill, as it's gone through its course to get before us this morning. Again, all the concerns that I expressed hereto for, I still stand strongly behind. I know that there are constituents that I have that feel that they'd like to see the legalization of marijuana, they feel that -- and some of them feel that it is even less dangerous than alcohol or other things that are permitted, as Senator Looney has stated on Tuesday.

We have -- we legalize tobacco products, and there is very little if any positive benefit to tobacco. There are stimulants in tobacco, maybe it has -- I mean, if one looks at that this keeps you awake or something like, I guess, that could be a positive thing, but at the same time it's increasing your chances of asthma and lung cancer and emphysema and heart disease. That's a huge downside to any possible plus sides, so I would agree that one would struggle mightily to find any positive health benefits to tobacco, but it is legal here in the State of Connecticut and across our great country.

Again, just in sum, I would like Connecticut to be the shining city on the hill. I don't think that because surrounding states are going down this path that we should. I think if we just take a step back, we can look other states, particularly Colorado, and indeed California, where they are running into roadblocks and problems regarding public safety, public health, law and order, the financial ramifications, state bailouts, an industry that feels that they have to keep up with the Joneses, so to say, the Joneses being organized crime and the black market.

We have a problem with lacing marihuana with other drugs. There are indeed indications that certain states are contemplating that, if not authorizing that, to keep up with the competition, and that has very bad health consequences that may not even be perceived at this point in time. It's in some respects the Wild, Wild West. It may seem like it's pretty recent, but in the great scheme of things, it's only been a decade or two.

The potency is just enormous and again why can't Connecticut be that shining city on the hill, the oasis, the place where a family. And I don't care if it's a mom and dad, grandparents, same sex couple, however you want to characterize it, but where families and their children, and their loved ones can go and not worry about if they're in the state

park or a local park or on the beach that someone's getting high and what kind of impact that has, as far as the image that it creates for the children that are being raised, and the implications for other adults that might not otherwise be tempted that might then all of a sudden say well. They look like they're having fun, maybe I should give a try too, maybe I missed something when I was growing up.

And I think that's a can of worms, I think it's a Pandora's box. I think that we may be down the road 10 years from now and knock on wood, I really hope I am wrong, but we may regret these decisions. So, I don't see any -- I don't see the revenue increase as being any kind of panacea or anything worthwhile to go down in this direction. I actually think that we would draw more attention and more people and enhance our revenue prospects by not legalizing "recreational marijuana," because then all of a sudden, we create a very special state here in New England, and a destination where someone can say, hey, we can go there and not worry about this issue. And that's a big deal.

There're so many other things that are bombarding families, moms and dads and grandparents and caretakers in our society. Technology changes at breakneck speed? And do we need to go in this direction I think not. So, I appreciate the fact that the House made its Amendments. I feel discouraged that because they adjourned sine die. It seems like our hands are tied as far as making any Amendments ourselves. I don't understand that at all.

For whatever reason when we adjourned on Tuesday, we didn't adjourn sine die basically tying the hands of the House. I don't get that at all, but that's a pay grade way beyond me, but again on the underlying merits of this proposal while I think it's interesting, and as I said serendipitous that this is the 50th anniversary of when Richard Nixon made that pronouncement back on June 17th, 1971.

I am not so sure it necessarily should bring us to this crossroads, and for that reason, Madam President, I stand by my opinions and votes over the last two times the Bill was before us. And I would urge my colleagues to vote no, and I will be voting no this morning as well. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just in response to the good Senator, from Winfield, just wanted to make a notation that the comments from Tuesday, right, are what we brought into the Journal from the previous Tuesday or Monday, whenever we did the first one, so everything is in the Journal reflected of those comments from the first debate. So, if anybody has any concerns about whether or not their comments will be into the record, their comments are so noted in the record. And I would just like to note that by the time we get to this vote, we will probably cumulatively have the same amount of votes as the House did last night, because we have been voting -- this is the third time we're voting on this. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator Duff. Will you remark further? Good morning, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I'm going to start with just a question for the proponent of this Bill. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed. Senator Winfield, prepare yourself.  
Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Was the two-year ban on Legislators getting any of  
these licenses removed from this Bill?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Through you, Madam President. No, it was not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I just want to make sure  
before I moved on with what I have to say. And I  
understand my comments were moved forward, but, you  
know, this is an important topic here, and I want  
people to understand, this goes beyond legalization  
of marijuana or not legalization of marijuana. This  
is the Bill itself, and what happens to not only the  
monies collected from marijuana, but what other  
protections are in this Bill.

And let's start with the money side of this.  
Understand that this money is at least 65% of it  
coming in is going to be distributed by people other  
than this Legislature. And it is going to be done in  
a partisan manner. It is called the Social Equity  
Council and there are 15 members on it, 13 of those  
members are appointed by Democrats, 2 by  
Republicans.

The original Bill actually had a license earmarked for somebody, and I fear that, that earmark is probably still going to take place. I also fear where the money is going to end up. We're talking millions of dollars here, and it's controlled by people other than this Legislature. I have concerns about that. I also have concerns by the fact that in many places throughout this Bill, the police are basically handcuffed in enforcing driving and smoking marihuana. Their evidence is limited on what they can use.

If somebody drives, understanding Section 112, 113, if somebody drives by a policeman and they're smoking marihuana and the officer can smell it and see it, the officer cannot pull him over unless they have another violation. If somebody drives by drinking a beer, the police can stop him and immediately arrest him, not with marijuana.

And understand, alcohol takes a longer period of time to get into your system and affect you. Marihuana is pretty instant, goes into your lungs and right into impairing your driving. I have said this before, this Bill is a drug dealer's dream. It allows you to carry marihuana and cash, as long as you do it in such a way that you don't exceed the limits, you can just keep going and replenishing.

In Colorado, the black market is starting to be taken over by organized crime, because it's very profitable. They can undercut the taxes that are going to be put on this, and it won't go away. I keep hearing about communities that were affected by the war on drugs, and you know, there are communities. We are talking about people arrested for dealing drugs and mainly the cities. The cities have a larger population. The cities have a larger police department.

And when somebody is arrested anywhere along the chain of dealing drugs or even a possession of drugs, in the police role, they are given an

opportunity for those charges to be erased, if they turn over somebody, that's bigger or has done a bigger crime. And they do that, and they work -- the police will work their way to the biggest drug dealers they can find, and sadly a lot of them end up in the city.

But again, these are people dealing drugs. These are people making money and sometimes large amounts of money, and originally, we were talking about giving them preferential on these licenses. Doing a biogeographical area is better, but I just want to make sure when we do that, we don't basically take the amount of people arrested and said that's the area. It should be percentage wise.

Going back to Senator Kissel's example, let's take the smallest town in Connecticut. If they had five arrests per year, which I am sure they didn't, percentage wise, where would that put them. I really think we need to look at this as a whole and come up with a more equitable way of doing this.

In talking to several police officers in the last couple of days, one of the things I did learn is that marijuana is the most profitable drug being sold on the streets right now. The cost of heroin has dropped. More people use marihuana. And I keep hearing, we're going to make it safer. We're going to make it safer by commercializing it. And then I look what's going on right now in Colorado.

In commercialization, and this is just one example, because there is more than one. They wanted to use marijuana in vape, but in order to do that they have a problem. The THC oil in its natural form is too thick to be atomized or vaporized. So, in commercializing they came up with adding some additives to it. Polyethylene glycol, vitamin E acetate, medium chain triglycerides. Different chemicals that would thin out the THC oil. And what that ended up doing is causing lung damage.

I was going to add an Amendment making sure that at least those three chemicals weren't added on there, but I know Section 38 would give the authority to the State of Connecticut to ban those three and I hope they ban right off the bat.

One of the other things are doing in Colorado is actually putting the ingredients, that were added to marijuana. I think that's a great safety measure. If this is going to be safe, we as lawmakers need to make sure that it is very safe. I don't think marijuana personally is safe, especially when I think about the driving aspect and the damage that it does to the developing brains.

As I stated the other day, there is 3.6-million people in the State of Connecticut, and we need to make sure that these licenses, I understand 50% are going to go to these areas, but these licenses need to be distributed very equally. Nobody should be left out. But as we went through the criminal portion or the background check on this, we realize we don't have a list of crimes that would keep you from working or getting a license.

I think the words will develop that as we go along. The licenses are going to be issued this next year, and I have concerns about that. Throughout our entire process in this session, we have basically made it, so the crime pays, and this is just another example of that.

I am against the legalization of marijuana using this Bill. And I think anybody else that looks at this Bill and actually understands this Bill will realize that this is a bad Bill. And the last thing I am gonna say is on the revenue from the taxes on this, it should be used to lower taxes in the State of Connecticut with the highest taxed state in the nation, and instead it's being sent to a partisan group for them to spend it. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne. Will you remark further? Good morning, Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH):

Good morning, Madam President. Good to see you again. It does indeed feel like déjà vu all over again. I wanna compliment the House and Senate Chairs of the Judiciary and the advocates for this Bill. They have been truly passionate and relentless in that effort. I will be casting a no vote again today.

And my vote was further reinforced by watching our House colleagues yesterday. Over eight hours of deliberation and exchanges of thoughts and ideas leading to opposition and amendments, I was truly impressed by their thoughtfulness, by their engagement, and the exchange between colleagues of how a legislative process should be. And I learned so much, but I was also disappointed by the fact that despite powerful arguments against the legalization, and what I deem is effective arguments against legalization, the vote was a foregone conclusion, what it seemed to me.

It was passed, and unfortunately all of the arguments in the effective opposition to this went for not. It's really important as I kind of talk about that for us to fully understand the institution in which we are sitting in right now. We are an institution that began in 1639. We are according to history the oldest continuous operating legislature in the world. That is not lost on me, as I have had the incredible honor and privilege to sit in this circle to be able to know that this institution is bigger than anyone of us, and that as we deliberate, make laws and impact people, we have the incredible honor and privilege to sit in this circle, to be representing the communities that

elected us, to be their voice when we cast our votes.

So I am somewhat disappointed beyond the Chairs and the passionate advocates that I wished in those eight-hour debates and in our debates in this circle, that we had more of a voice for those that support this legislation. For them to come out and share why they are voting for it, educate me on their rationale, beyond the tireless effort of the good Chair of Judiciary, I wish I heard more of the exchange of ideas to persuade me why this could be a yes vote, but I didn't.

Nearly eight plus hours in the House, two debates in this circle, I have not been persuaded beyond the issue of money, beyond the issue of logistics. I find that troubling. I find that in my mind a disservice to the incredible privilege that we have to represent our constituents when we cast our vote to justify our rationale.

I want to be on the record and I know said déjà vu all over again, but I wanted to be clear. I wanted to be on the record to cite my opposition to these kind of -- to this vote today for the third time. That one, this process had no legislative public hearing input from the Public Health Committee in which I am the Co-Ranking Member on. I was eager to hear from experts on development, brain development, public health considerations.

We understand some of the important issues of why yes, but we didn't have a public hearing on the public health and societal cost of this. So, I want to be on the record to say that was a flawed process. Number two, I want to reiterate the ironing of this Legislative body that as we pat ourselves in the back and the irony that we are fighting against tobacco and flavored vaping. And that we are proposing plans to fight the scourge of opiate and substance addiction. We are now going to pass a federally prohibited class 1 narcotic.

The irony should not be lost on people. For those very people that cast a vote and say tobacco is bad, vaping is bad, opiates are bad, but we are going to manage marijuana. The third point, I want to be on the record is for people to read the damaging editorial, that was submitted by Mr. Corey of Colorado, the major architect and proponent of legalization 10 years ago in the Colorado, and for him to share the experience that Connecticut should learn the lessons of what Colorado has now confronted.

I will add in that The Day's editorial and saying why the rush. I think the headlines said chill. Why are we rushing to implement something, because the moment's right, strike while the iron is hot, because maybe, maybe when there is further deliberation and when people really understand what we are voting on and passing has a sweeping public policy that in essence allows the State of Connecticut to get into the drug business.

Maybe if we delay and had other viewpoints and thoughts, we would draft something more protective of the goals of public health. I would encourage anybody to read Mr. Corey's editorial. And maybe if it is delayed we will allow our clergy, the very people that offer the pastoral as well as the recovery from broken lives of addiction, and the societal impact that they need to foot the Bill on to be heard more clearly. We have not heard them. I have not heard in nearly eight plus hours of debate and two debates in the circle. Our thoughts and consideration for the very people that are down in main street who have seen the ravages of lives broken beyond what it is possible for revenue for the State of Connecticut.

So, I want to be on the record to speak for our clergy, for those individuals that are healing souls, restoring lives broken, they had not been heard. And for talking about revenue, I want to be

on the record to cite a recent article in LA Times that said California, California, the great experiment in progressiveness and I think Senator Kelly brought up a point that resonated with me, if Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco, the state that profoundly impacted the progressive movement and drug use, I hate to label that with California, but they now have to implement nearly a hundred million dollars to resuscitate a failed program, because one of the main purposes of this, I've heard from is we want to control the black market, but maybe we should learn the lesson that in California we're losing to the black market.

When you legitimize the product and you're looking to make money off of it the industrious black market, which is always flourished, will continue to flourish. Learn the lessons from those before us. Do not be persuaded by the alluring riches of what could be. Learn from the lessons from those above us, we talk about New York, we talk about Massachusetts, enacting it. They are new. They have not seen the result and facts of this. Why we not listening to California and Colorado. Wait, those results aren't the ones we want, the selectivity is not lost on me.

I genuinely hope and pray that myself and those who vote against this are dead wrong, I really do. I really do, and I'd be happy to say boy that was bad on me, but if I am not wrong. But if we not listen to these voices, these rationale, that offer a different contrasting viewpoint, then we have abrogated our duty to represent the very people that sent us into this august institution. An institution that I began with great affinity and great pride that I value as one of those most important jobs I will have beyond parenthood, beyond being a husband, beyond being a son, it's an incredible privilege.

And I hope I am wrong, but I will end by saying this. I am going to use a baseball term. We have had two tries or strikes against this Bill, seems

extremely unusual, and I am really hopeful for reconsideration of people's votes, and maybe we can strike out this Bill and reject it. But you know -- but I hope for an alternative result, but using a baseball term I hope at the third strike on this vote that we strike out the legalization of marijuana, and I can continue to hope and pray. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. And I hate to prolong this conversation, but I know that the Senator didn't mean to do this, but the suggestion is that people are voting on this with no arguments to be made, and that people are voting on this purely for the economic portion of this. I think I have been on a record three times at least now, but that's not what I am here for.

And I will apologize, which is not something I normally do in this way to the good Senator, that my argument has not been heard, but clearly the argument that I am making here is that in 1971 when the war on drugs started there was a policy that is intended to negatively impact certain citizens. That's not the way law is supposed to be made. So, what we did was we put in place unjust laws. The reason why I think this is important is because we have operated for 50 years with unjust laws to target certain communities.

That's not that people aren't hearing the arguments being made, they're hearing all of the arguments being made, and when they weigh them, they come on a side of we should never have done that. I think it's important for us to know what happens with cannabis, but we cannot know that, because we can't research

cannabis because it's a schedule one drug, not because it should have been a schedule one drug but because of politics.

We have damaged the lives of human beings in the United States of America who are of a certain hue, because of politics. We have come to the space when we talk about the science, but we don't have any science, because of politics. And people talk about what Robert Corey had to say, yes Robert Corey was involved, and I am not going to talk about this recent past because that brings into question why he is doing what he is doing. But we have taken the lessons from the other states. That's a reason we have THC caps, that's the reason we have content labelling. It is the reason we are talking about the issue of equity, because in Colorado that was an issue, and the states that it started it that was an issue. It came underplay later.

It is the reason that our Bill looks the way that it looks. Why the rush. I have been talking about this around this circle and down in the House, when I was down in the House and I have been up here for seven years. And I don't know about you but, seven years is not a rush. And then to the point of the clergy, we hear the clergy, and just like people who disagree with the clergy on issue of clean slate doesn't mean they didn't listen. It means they came to their decisions because of all of the things that they know differently.

To disagree is not to say, I don't listen to you, I don't hear you. It is to say that I have weighed that and I come out with a different understanding. And just like, I don't say to those people you didn't listen. No one should say to people who vote the way they vote which is in opposition to the way. The previous speaker spoke, that simply because you don't do what they ask you to do you are not listening. That is not what this august chamber does.

And I think it's only fair. I really didn't want to speak, but I think it is only fair because my colleagues **aren't** speaking for themselves to say the people can come to different places hearing the same affirmation and do it legitimately. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR TONY HWANG (28TH):

Thank you, Madam President for the second time. And I want to rise to acknowledge the passionate oratory of the Chairman Judiciary. And it is important for me to note I appreciate and admire his passion. And I respect greatly his context and viewpoint. That is what I was citing. We can have different viewpoints. I can be passionate, you are obviously passionate.

But through you, Madam President, I want to be clear and be on the record, we are having a dialogue, a difference of viewpoints, but we respect and admire each other, I hope, and we are having this dialogue. I truly do profoundly respect his viewpoints. We have differences. This is what the circle and this institution provides. I just simply wish we had more of the, Senator. I just simply wish we had more of the viewpoints, because I was eager to learn and to be persuaded to have a different result.

I wanted to be clear on that, that this is a circle that I value. This is a relationship and colleagues that I greatly value. And I hope that we can strongly disagree, but know that we all have the same incredible privilege to represent the people. So I will say that as a reaction, but also reaffirmation, and acknowledge the passionate effort and the great work of the Senator from the Judiciary Committee. And even though I will be casting a no vote. I want him to hear that I have heard him loud

and clear as well, and I appreciate his passion.  
Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further? Good morning, Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21TH):

Good morning, Madam President. It was a beautiful morning when I got up. It's a beautiful sunshiny day, and actually not a bad ride on the way up as I missed 91 and the 95 Intersection in New Haven. Before I really get going, I do wanna thank in the discourse on this Bill, all our Ranking Senators, that helped advance the position of our caucus, first with Senator John Kissel and the Judiciary Committee who did wonderful work with regards to this Bill, as well as Senator Dan Champagne from Public Safety and Senators Heather Somers and Tony Hwang with regards to public health.

I think this is a substantial and significant Bill, and I think they put in hours of, you know, research and time into the Bill to make sure that we got the information with regards to it. As Senator Hwang had indicated before, you know, Connecticut is one of the blessed states, because, we're one of the oldest, and as he indicated that this Chamber and this Assembly was created in a different and new form -- a new form of government, which was a constitutional form of government, where the government of the people, by the people and for the people was created, we're the birthplace of that. That's our heritage, and among that is what we just saw was that people can have different views of the same issue can be passionate and reasonable, and they can disagree the thing that my momma has told me is it's not a problem to disagree as long as you are not disagreeable. And I think that's what we need to be here on this.

And I think as a Chamber, our Chamber has not been disagreeable on this. When we left here Tuesday night, our Chamber did not leave sine die, because we knew that the legislative process requires all views at the table, at least if we're going to create smart policies. And so we allowed the House to have full debate, full opportunity to discuss, even to change and amend what we did here on Tuesday. Unfortunately, our Chamber was not extended that same privilege.

I looked at the Journal of the House and I see that at 12:35, this morning, the House went sine die, which means that what we do here today if we were to change this, for all intents and purposes the Bill would have -- it would end this Bill, and we would have to have another special session to do this again. I don't think that's actually fair to those of us who may not support this and have bona fide, and I think well-grounded concerns, not with regards to the equitable issue that was brought forward by Senator Winfield, but looking more toward the health and safety of what this may or may not do.

The number that I just in all the conversations, and I haven't spoken about this yet, that sticks in my mind as a parent of a teenager is 491, -- 491, that's the percentage increase in hospital admissions for marijuana intoxication for individuals 18 years old or younger, have increased by 491% during the years of 2016 to 2019. That to me is not only unacceptable, but it's unbelievable.

We know the doctors, the Connecticut Medical Society said that they were not just opposed, but fiercely opposed. They said that marijuana is an addictive drug, they can have significant adverse public health impacts, if it were to be legalized for non-medicinal purposes. And the harmful impact is not just on our use, but it's also adult use. Some doctors have even said that if you were to legalize this, it shouldn't be at 21, it should be at 25 or

older to make sure that it stays out of the hands of our youth.

Our Department of Health said that this also poses significant risks for both adolescents and pregnant women because of its harmful and adverse consequence to the development of the brain. These are medical professionals telling us, let's study this issue, let's look at this issue, take the time to do this right. We hear a lot that Connecticut needs to do this because all the states around us are doing it.

And I know, I have always said that just speaking, like my mom taught me as a kid, just because your friends do something doesn't mean you should do something. So just because of the friend -- our friends in Massachusetts and Rhode Island or New York decide to do doesn't mean Connecticut should. And as a matter of fact may be -- just may be if Connecticut decided not to do this, that we would become an Oasis in New England, and, I am going to say a destination for families that don't want marijuana to be a factor in the fabric of their family, may be.

What is striking to me is when we look at this on a health and a public health issue is that here we are yet again for the third time - for the third time and I know Senator Hwang talked about a baseball analogy but you are only as good as your last at bat. I am hoping that I am better than my last at bat and in fact better than my last two at bats.

But when we look at this, this is the third time, this has come before us in less than two weeks, but think about what hasn't come before us. What didn't come before us is the single important most biggest issue, that when we go door to door and hear at every session and it gets pounded over our heads, that we need to deal with making healthcare in the State of Connecticut more affordable, reducing the high cost of healthcare and reducing the high cost of premiums.

Our caucus put forward a Bill that not only can reduce premium by 30%, but also gets its arms around the high cost, the medical cost, they drive the cost of insurance. We couldn't get that Bill out of Committee and it never came here for a vote. We have never got an opportunity to vote on reinsurance, even though, the Governor's administration agrees with us on it. That would have brought healthcare across Connecticut to every family that purchases insurance. And when you talk in 30%, the average cost of healthcare premiums in the State of Connecticut is almost 2,000 dollars a month, 30%, that's \$600, \$600, that's real money to real families in need, in one of the most unaffordable states in the entire nation, but did that ever see the light a day, nope, I didn't get an opportunity to go to the plate and hit that one, no that pitch never came, neither the benchmarking, another initiative that the Governor supports.

In fact, he signed an executive order in December of 2019 to begin the process, but we need the legislative grounding for that to give the state Government more power, more levers in order to get more savings. Did we get an opportunity on that, answer again no, didn't get go to the plate and hit that one. Then there's this one, House Bill 6626, it's an act regarding health insurance coverage for breast health, that's a good Bill, that's a good initiative. That can save lives, women's health issue, you think it would resonate, nope. Didn't get to swing at that one either, didn't get a chance to play, so I guess we strike out on health there too.

I think public health and the citizens of Connecticut's health is an important issue that we can't ignore. It's why I have stayed focused on that part of this issue with regards to this Bill. We hear and we see on TV nightly, the campaign of how negative tobacco and flavored tobacco smoking is bad for you, flavored tobacco and flavored vapes are bad for you, bad for our kids.

So, we need to take that out of the marketplace, but then we're going to legalize a product that is sold as gummy bears and brownies. Talk about inconsistent. Once again, I think we need to focus on what's important from a health perspective. So, Madam President, as I said a couple days ago, you know, the doctors of the State of Connecticut are following science. They are saying the science is telling us that this is not -not good for our youth.

I have a teenager, I am concerned about making this legal. It is obviously accessible in the State of Connecticut. I think legalization is going to make it that much more available. It's going to make it that much more accessible. It's going to be easier into the hands of our youth, and it's going to have a negative impact on their health and their development. And I think any person in the State of Connecticut, who has teenagers, is concerned about those types of things for their kids,

I am. And I want things that are not only best for my kids, but for all kids. And I understand there's is different views on this, but the doctors are telling us, the science is telling us, we ought not to be moving forward. We shouldn't move forward. Yes, may be more study and more science is necessary and maybe we have been robbed off that, because of the laws that were made, but there is nothing that's going to stop the State of Connecticut from being able to access that information, and may be doing it ourselves. We do have the best in the brightest here

We do have Yale University, we have UConn Health. We have that the ingenuity and capability within our boundaries to do a matchup with any, not only State but country. I am fully confident in the people of Connecticut and our capability to get things right. I think it would be prudent to be able to take that time to look at this Bill in that light. So for those reasons, Madam President, I will be casting a no vote. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark further?  
Good morning, Senator Looney. It's still morning,  
Sir.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Yes, it is. Good morning, Madam President, speaking in support of this Bill, yet again. Obviously, Madam President, we have moved into the realm and universe of the film Groundhog Day, with this particular Legislation. But we hope that like the conclusion of that movie, when Bill Murray's character finally gained some enlightenment and improved his life that we will come to the right approach on this, having gone through a number of twists and turns on this issue.

But, Madam President, I would first like to begin by thanking Senator Kelly for his cooperation on such short notice for helping to - helping us to convene and assemble on such short notice early today to get members here to vote on this once again on such short notice after the House action last night. And again to thank Senator Winfield for all of his heroic work on this issue for many, many years, I hope come to fruition today.

Madam President, cannabis has been available for so long, just as we have tobacco and alcohol, and from some of the debate we have seen, the three times we have addressed this issue, it would seem that we are going to be unleashing a new product that could be harmful in society. But the reality is it is already here. It is here in an amount and visibility and accessibility that probably won't be any different once it is legal for adults. And that is the reality. There's a reality that society didn't face with prohibition. People drank before prohibition. People drank during prohibition. What the problem was the profits went to organized crime rather than

a regulated taxed enterprise. Those proceeds were then used after prohibition ended to expand criminal enterprises into other field, so the whole enterprise was in contravention of human nature, because people continued to want to have access to alcohol regardless of what the law was. So, we have to recognize human nature here. We will have a regulated product to tax product in a system for use by adults, as we have for tobacco, as we have for alcohol. And we need now to learn the painful lesson of prohibition.

In terms of its use, we know that there are many people who have baby boomers who began to use marihuana in college, in the 60s and 70s, and have continued to use it recreationally all of the years since then without ever abusing it. They might use it recreationally on weekends without ever venturing on from that to cocaine or to opioids or to heroin or other things. So just as abuses can be cited the safe use of marihuana can be cited just as the safe use of alcohol in moderation. And as we said last time the same can't be said for cigarettes in any use, but the time is now, and for the discussion about the purpose behind this Bill. There was so much -- so much pain taken by Senator Winfield and others to try to make sure that there was a social policy behind this Bill, not just a new revenue stream as was done in a number of the states, that first enacted legalized marihuana, and we will be, I hope the 19th state to do so.

But the major debate, the major construction, the major analysis and the major research and the meetings and the compromises and the discussions back and forth, has all been about the equity piece, not the revenue piece, the equity piece. To address those communities that have been harmed historically over the last whether you measured from the 1937 Federal Act to the 1971, the Nixon Campaign for decades of abuse targeted at minority communities and the enforcement of anti-marihuana law.

So the concern has been about equity far beyond the issue of whatever revenue stream may be created for the State. So, Madam President, I urge support for this Bill today, once again for the third time. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? if not, the machine will be opened. Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the vote?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is a Senate Bill No. 1201, AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBLE AND EQUITABLE REGULATION OF ADULT-USE CANNABIS as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Bill No. 1201. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, Senate Bill No. 1201, AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBLE AND EQUITABLE REGULATION OF ADULT-USE CANNABIS as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A". Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. And now, have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? If so, the machine will be locked. And Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the tally?

CLERK:

Senate Bill 1201.

Total number voting	27
Total number of voting Yea	16
Total voting Nay	11
Absent and not voting	9

THE CHAIR:

The Legislation is passed. (gavel) Mr. Clerk -- Oh, I apologize Senator Fonfara. I do believe that you have a point of personal privilege that you would like to take.

SENATOR FONFARA (1TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the City of Hartford has lost a true institution. Clorinda Soldevila a force in Hartford politics for decades passed away early this morning. Clorinda, a very proud Puerto Rican woman, but a person who treated everyone equally, no matter who you were, what your background was. She told you how she felt without reservation, if she liked to, you knew it, if she didn't you knew that too. She worked here in this building as a messenger and befriended all Senators, Democrat and Republican.

Along with the Democratic Town Chairman Marc DiBella and her best friend Jean Holloway, Clorinda walked street after street, house to house, upstairs, backstairs, with dogs and sometimes other four-legged animals day and night, and I mean night. It would not be unusual for Clorinda to call Marc or Jean late at night about a person they needed to register the vote. This went on for years and since Hartford elections are our primaries, the work was often done through the heat, humidity of the summer.

Madam President, I doubt very seriously we will see another like Clorinda Soldevila again. To give tirelessly without asking for recognition in return, it was not done with millions spent on television or social media or special interest pressure. It was one on one personal relations build over a lifetime. I saw at first hand as we door-knock together. It was often a knock on the door followed by just one or two words, and the person on the other side knew who it was and that was enough. Because the relationship had been formed long before that day,

if you worth anything you don't forget what that meant. How that relationship, that trust was being transferred to you, I have never forgotten it and I never will.

I don't know why Clorinda embraced me in my campaign some 25 years ago and stayed with me through each of my campaigns until her health prevented her from doing so physically, but I am eternally grateful to you Clorinda that you did and more than anything that I was able to have you as my friend for all these years. Madam President, may I ask that the circle rise for a moment of silence in recognition of the passing of Clorinda Soldevila.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. And I will just say that I have the great honor of calling Clorinda my friend as well. And I know many around the circle did as well. So, if we could please have a moment of silence to reflect upon the life and legacy of Clorinda Soldevila of Hartford.

Thank you. And Senator Abrams, I do believe you have a legislative aide with you.

SENATOR ABRAMS (13TH):

I do, Madam President. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity. I would like to introduce to the Chamber, my granddaughter Rose Thomas [Applause].

THE CHAIR:

I will just say that she looks awfully comfortable both in my Chair and in that Senate Chair. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda No. 1, Senate Bill No. 1202 AN ACT CONCERNING PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE AND OTHER ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" (LCO No. 10933) and House Amendment Schedules "A" (LCO No. 11000), "G" (LCO No. 11007), and "H" (LCO No. 11013).

THE CHAIR:

And good morning, Senator Osten. Here, we are again.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And I think we're both going to be late for the FAC Meeting, but

THE CHAIR:

Which we are moving to next week, so I think you [inaudible] on that.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much. I am so glad to hear that. I was wondering how I was going to do two at the same time. So, Madam President, I move acceptance 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):

Thank you very much, Madam President. We have already voted on this once and my understanding is all comments and questions from the last meeting that we had relative to this have been incorporated into the Journal and there are some changes that happened down in the House. There are some minor technical Amendments that happened relative to an

appointment on Civic for the Governor relative to a date change, in the workforce, making the speed camera pilot program effective for two rather than one year and revise the camera operator requirements, and eliminated one of the underlying bills defenses to an alleged violation.

I did some changes relative to the fantasy gaming, required DSS to base FY22 and FY23, rates on FY21, rates adjusted for inflation. Removes in person instruction on Internet based software from the definition of remote learning for grades kindergarten through 12, made some clarifying changes to provisions on public assistance.

Removes provisions relating to the State Treasurer's Tax Exempt proceeds fund, allow certain retirees receiving a teacher's retirement pension to return to teaching without salary limits until 2024, and corrects a Bridge Naming Provision that passed in the 21 -- the 2021 regular session. Eliminated the provisions relative to the Data Privacy Bill, sometimes known as 893, expanded department heads, contracting authorities, and then extended the time period within which an insured persons must notify their health carrier of newborn's birth. Those were all eliminated provisions. Through you, Madam President, I stand ready for questions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further on the Legislation before the Chamber? Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I missed talking on this the other day because I had another meeting I had to attend, and I am not going to make this too long. I just want to make a couple of small comments. In this implementer, we actually outline the inmate phone calls to 90 minutes a day, and I decided to do some numbers on it, just to get a cost if all the

inmates were received 90 minutes a day and realized it was over 50 million dollars at just the minimum cost.

And then I continued further, and I wanted to know if this would create a problem with the inmates themselves. And so I figured out how many phones would you need per 100 inmates if they were to speak, from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., and were given their 90 minutes, and it's 6 telephones per 100 inmates. And then I just decided to take the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution, which holds 2,049 inmates to see how many phones that would take. And it would take 184 phones used constantly from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

And I hope when we came up with this 90 minutes a day, that we spoke to the Corrections Department to make sure that this wasn't going to create any violence amongst the inmates trying to guarantee that they get their 90 minutes. Now I went to 11:00 p.m. I don't know what the turnoff times are, I have a feeling that they're probably a little earlier than 11:00 p.m., but I just hope we didn't do something that, that is going to create problems within our Correctional Institutions that 90 minutes a day seems like quite a bit.

You know, when I look at the fix for the Treasurer for the STIF account that's used across the state. And one of the things that was brought to my attention with the STIF account is that overnight we went from actually paying an interest to no interest at all and it went to zero. And the main reason is because of an influx of almost a billion dollars into the STIFF account. We made a provision in there that a percentage of that money had to be put aside, and because of that they actually had to stop paying the interest, so I am hoping that this fix actually takes care of that.

And one other point I wanted to make is in the Section 150, where we were still using COVID as a

reason to change our voting laws, and back on May 3rd I brought up just the statistics that were happening with COVID. And I did that by saying how many tests were administered, the positivity rate, and how many people were hospitalized. And at that time, there were 73,821 tests administered in the day with 1,312 positive, the 7.8% positivity rate, and 342 people in the hospital. And I pointed out that we were getting hundreds of thousands of people a week vaccinated.

Well, today, we have over 2 million people, especially adults, those that are in the high risk pools vaccinated. Currently, as of today, or yesterday, when the results came in, the last results there was only 10,187 tests administered. There were only 39 positive, which was a 0.38% positivity rate, which is a little deceptive given the vast number of people not being tested. We went from 73,000 to 10,000. We went from 1,312 positive to 39 positive, and we went from 342 in the hospital to 50 in the hospital, and that number hasn't changed in the last week. Yet, we want to use COVID as a reason to change our voting in November, and I find that odd, as I did back in May, because I said that the numbers were going to continue to drop and we would be where we are today.

Yet, it is still in here, we are still going to use that, and I think we should stick with what's in the Constitution and with those protections. Those are just a couple of examples that I went through this, there're many others, but given the time I am not going to go through every single one of them, and one of my fellow lawmakers stopped and told me I better wrap it up quick. So I am going to leave it with that. I am going to be a no vote for this Bill. It should all be -- this should all be part generally with a budget and nothing more, and there's a lot more in here than just a budget related items. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise to thank Senator Osten and Representative Walker for their hard work on this Bill. I have seen how much effort and care Senator Osten put into this Bill, but really into everything she does. She is a tireless advocate, not just for her constituents, but she really watches out for all of us and all of our constituents in the State of Connecticut, so I thank you for that.

I also want to express my extreme disappointment in the fact that the House of Representatives removed the data privacy provisions from the Budget Implementer Bill. While the Right to Privacy is not explicitly guaranteed in our Constitution, in either this Connecticut Constitution or the US Constitution, as it is guaranteed in the constitutions of 160 countries around the world. The Right to Privacy is implied through the Fourth Amendment. The Fourth Amendment starts the right to the people to be secured in their persons, houses, papers and facts against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated. Yet, it is every day. Every day, we allow corporate entities to surveil us and not only are they surveilling us, they are selling that data and profiting off of that data.

And while this Bill would not have prohibited that practice, it would have given our residents the right to opt out of that surveillance and over the sale of that data, just as three other states in the European Union have done. We had a Bill that established rights for our residents and responsibilities for corporations to respect those rights, yet in the end the corporate entities won out and for some reason it was decided that out of

state corporate profits were more important than Connecticut resident's rights.

Well, I cannot deny my disappointment. I am trying to adopt the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, who had stated that, that which impedes the action becomes the action, what has been paraphrased as the obstacle is the way. And I see this as a tremendous opportunity because I vow that in the end Connecticut residents will win. We will be back next year with a stronger Bill that puts their rights ahead of out of state corporate pocket books. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR LESSER (9TH):

Yes. Thank you, Madam President, and good to see you up there along with your legislative aides. I want to rise and support of this proposal, this provision, and again associate myself with remarks of Senator Maroney, who just spoke, and thanking Senator Osten and our leadership for their work on this provision and on the budget and on the legislative session.

Like Senator Maroney, there is a lot to like in this Bill and like Senator Maroney, I am also disappointed in some of the amendments adopted by the House of Representatives last night. I don't have any Marcus Aurelius' quotes available at the moment, but I do want to know one provision in particular, which is attempting to address a public policy problem, which is that in some cases parents of children born prenatally are stuck with sometimes massive surprise hospital bills. This Chamber by vote of 33 to nothing voted to end that practice.

And last night, the House of Representatives voted to remove that. I am disappointed. I am hopeful we can move that process forward, that provision forward, and there are a lot of -- there is nobody in this Chamber, who is worse off because this does not pass, but there may be a lot of parents in the State, who will be. And I am hopeful that will be able to remedy that in short order. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. I believe our legislative aides have a lot to say. Will you remark further? Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, and Rose.

THE CHAIR:

And the baby whisper.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

The baby whisper [Laughter]. Thank you. Thank you. It's good to see Rose and Sam here today in this circle as well along with everyone else. Madam President, I also rise and want to thank Senator Osten again for her hard work on this, Representative Walker, and the folks who put this implementer together, Senator Looney for his leadership and to our staff who worked so hard on it and continued to through last night as well.

I also wanted to take a moment and rise and express my disappointment in the fact that the data privacy language was stripped out of the implementer last night by the House of Representatives. Madam President, I first introduced Data Privacy Legislation a couple of years ago after California adopted their strong data privacy rules and their

law and feel very passionately that data privacy is what the consumers want.

We have a crisis of privacy in our country right now, Madam President, and that is because of the fact that any device whether it's this device, whether it's an iPad, any kind of a tablet, your laptop, or Echo, or any other type of things that we have at home, or TVs are literally listening to us. They are watching us. They know exactly what we are doing, when we are doing it. And it is right now, these companies are profiting off of every single keystroke that we make on our devices.

And there is -- the consumers at this point have no expectation that there is any type of privacy because we have not put any of the guardrails around this issue for businesses, is literally the Wild West out there. And companies are profiting like crazy. They are raking in billions of dollars, billions of dollars a year, unbeknownst to consumers. Because of the fact that they may type something in or they may go on a page or they may look at an app and literally that data then is transferred and sold multiple times.

And so consumers then wonder why they search for something or they say something on their phones and the next thing, you know, they are getting an ad for that, a very thing that just pops up automatically. It's no coincidence. It is no coincidence that, that happens. And in the year 2021, where we rely on our devices for pretty much everything. We can get any kind of information we want. We rely on that for school, rely on that for the economy, for our jobs. We rely on it for pretty much every aspect of our lives, and yet our governments have not -- especially our Federal Government has not set up any kind of guardrails for us, for consumers to have any expectation of privacy being able to opt in or opt out of anything.

And yet, we have companies all across this country, all across this country who are literally making billions of dollars a year on what we do. So, all we tried to do here is set up those guardrails. And I want to thank Senator Maroney for his tireless work, tireless work on these issues to the General Law Committee. We were on a Zoom late last year with representatives of many companies, and they do not want to have any kind of rules. They don't want to have rules because they know how much money they make off of peoples - off of not having any kind of privacy rules whatsoever.

And so, Madam President, it is -- it is so disappointing when the Federal Government can't make rules for our nation. When here in the Senate we pass legislation that is strong that protects consumers, that it gets stripped out of the House of Representatives in the budget vote. The reason why it was in the implementer is because we had positions in the Attorney General's office to be able to enforce the law that were going to pass. So it was a budget item, and that was why this language was in the implementer.

There were other Bills that were proposed, those though were literally written by the industry, and I had said I would rather have no Bill than have that Bill, because that Bill literally written by the industry is not one that protects consumers. So, we will continue to work to address this issue, and I know Senator Maroney will continue to fight for this issue like I will continue to fight for this issue, because it is the right thing to do.

And if I can just mention very briefly, Madam President, what the consumer rights that were there in the Bill. They had five consumer rights, the rights to access data that has been collected, the right to correct data that has been collected, the right to delete data that has been collected, the right to export data that has been collected, and the right to opt out of the sale of consumers data

or the use of the consumers data for targeted advertising.

That's all of us. That's all of us, and it wouldn't have gone into effect until January of 2023. And we would have set up a working group as well that was in the Bill to make the Bill even better. So, that to me is a major disappointment, and while I am convinced, we will come back into this next year with it and we will continue to gain support through the Legislature and will continue to build the coalition. I fear that we will run into the same roadblocks with the industry, because again they have no interest in making any kind of changes. They have no interest in protecting consumer's data. When you have companies that make two billion dollars a year and then you have their representatives in this building who spend millions of dollars, representatives in this building who are paid millions of dollars to defeat a Consumer Bill.

You know we're in for an uphill battle. But I know eventually that which right will win because that is what always wins in this building. So, we want the consumers to win on this in the future and while we are disappointed today, I will vote for this implementer Bill because there are lots of other very good things for my district and for the State of Connecticut, but I wanted to make sure that my disappointment on this was duly noted, and again, I wanted to thank Senator Maroney for his work, all those in the circle who supported this, because there was bipartisan, Senator Looney for his leadership as well, and we will continue to fight this another day. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Will you remark further?  
Senator Kelly, good afternoon.

SENATOR KELLY (21TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I spoke about the ride up. I am hopeful that the ride home will be equally as sunny and beautiful as it was on the way up. I am also very disappointed with this Bill that's before us, albeit for different reasons. As I mentioned when we had the opportunity to speak on the prior Bill with regards to the legalization of marijuana, I was extremely disappointed and disheartened this morning, when I woke up to find in the House Journal that they went sine die.

I think that takes away the ability of this Chamber, which we afforded the House, the ability of this Chamber to look at the legislation before us and actually have input. The only thing we have now is the choice whether to go thumbs up, thumbs down, and either vote for or against this, but our ability to may be make a Bill better has been taken away. And I think that's a disservice to this Chamber.

I am disappointed in the sense that there is an evolving issue that's very present in the State of Connecticut. It's an issue that has taken very many people by surprise, and it's an issue that is just when you hear it, the first thing that says how can that happen in our State of Connecticut, but it's the story that recently broke this week in the past couple of days about the convicted rapist who ended up a resident in a skilled nursing facility in the State of Connecticut, and purportedly assaulted, sexually assaulted an employee. That's the type of Bill that could be in this. Something that I would like to see in this, something I would like to maybe even offer an amendment on, but I am prohibited, because I know if I were to offer that today because the House went sine die, an amendment on this Bill would kill it.

But that's an issue, that's front and center and it's known. I was even, you know, what was even more disheartening was when you read the news articles and you find out that this is not an isolated incident that you have heard that from people that

were involved in this, that this is something in bad acts have happened before. And it's not only a threat to the individuals who do Yeoman's work. They do a fantastic job caring for our seniors and our elders, but also the residents. These are seniors that live in skilled nursing facilities who suffer most of them from diminished capacity. This was exactly what I have been talking about throughout the COVID pandemic, regarding not only social isolation but the removal of family members, because they become the eyes and ears for these individuals who are residents in nursing homes.

Thank God we took steps during this session to make sure that we not only were able to bring in electronic equipment, like cameras and modern technology, so that these individuals could stay connected with their families, but we also strengthened rules that would give them a zone of privacy and to have more robust family and resident councils. Those were good steps. Those were positive steps to help protect abuse, but the mere fact that we have this situation. There is a loophole in our laws that can be exploited and this is something that needs to take action and needs to be done sooner rather than later, so that we can close this loophole, not only for the protection of the residents but also anyone that is employed or visited -- visits these facilities.

So very, very unhappy that we have that -- we don't have that opportunity. We are here today, we are gathered, we are convened, and yet we don't have the opportunity to take the necessary steps to protect people, who are deserving of our protection. This is a lost opportunity, and it was taken away from us by the House, and I am very disappointed that, that occurred.

You know, as to the rest of it, there is still the issue is here that I find disheartening. I was happy to see that the authority granted to state agencies to contract with other states was taken out. There

was always a concern that, that could be a backdoor to a gas tax, and I don't think Connecticut residents need or deserve a further tax on their gas and their commute to work. So, I was happy to see that taken out. But for these reasons, Madam President, I will remain a no on the Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us? Good afternoon, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President, speaking in support of the Emergency Certified Bill in concurrence with the House of Representatives. Madam President, as we said on Tuesday there were many extraordinarily beneficial components of this Bill implementing the budget that we passed in such a strong bipartisan in vote before the end of the regular session, just to enumerate a few, there is an expansion of support for social services and non-profits, municipal infrastructure, funding for the debt free community college program that we think is, is an important beginning in getting control of college cost and reducing the amount of student debt, the incorporation of the elements of Senate Bill No. 5 regarding election reform. The Senator Flexer worked so hard on. The expansion of the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program, the funding for that and so many other things that are important and significant, and I think an achievement for this General Assembly.

At the same time, Madam President, as said by our Majority Leader Senator Duff and by Senator Maroney and Senator Lesser, the Bill that was sent back to us from the House is not quite as good as the one that we sent to the House, because of the sections that were -- that were deleted, namely the strong consumer protection of the data section that, that

reflected the interest of consumers in establishing a framework for controlling and processing personal data.

We know that that is a huge unregulated profits and are now often to the detriment of the general public. And this Bill, that proposal would have helped us to join those enlightened states that have already started to move in that direction, and I am certainly hopeful that we will be able to, to move again on that next year.

Again, the proposal on extending the time period under which an insured person must notify the health carrier of a newborn's birth was a protection for families with newborn children, to make sure that they don't have a lapse in their insurance coverage for those -- for those children.

So, Madam President, that is -- that's why we have annual sessions and we will be back on those points again next year and highlight them once again, but I urge to support for this implementer today, because it does in effect provide the super structure and enables us to go forward with the strong, I think, an effective and consensus budget that we adopted before the end of the regular session here in this Chamber by a vote of 31 to 4. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. This is Senate Bill No. 1202, AN ACT CONCERNING PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE AND OTHER

ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM  
ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 as amended.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the  
Senate, on Senate Bill No. 1202. Immediate roll call  
vote in the Senate on Senate Bill No. 1202.  
Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the  
Senate, Senate Bill No. 1202. Immediate roll call  
vote in the Senate, Senate Bill 1202. 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 1202:

Total number voting	26
Total voting Yea	20
Total voting Nay	6
Absent and not voting	10

THE CHAIR:

The Legislation is adopted. (gavel) Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move for both items to  
be immediately transmitted to the Governor, please.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objections, so ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I would like to yield to  
Senator Kelly.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly, do you accept the yield, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21TH):

Yes, Madam President. I rise for general notations.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR KELLY (21TH):

Thank you very much. First, Senator Sampson missed votes today because of in District business. Senator Witkos missed votes today due to employment commitments. And Senators Formica, Cicarella, and Martin missed votes today in the Chamber due to prior family commitments. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

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

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, also we had Members who are absent today due to, let's say, business outside the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. So, noted.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Madam President. So with that, I move that we adjourn the Sine Die.

THE CHAIR:

And we are adjourned Sine Die. Go forth, enjoy the summer and govern.

(On the motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 12:26 p.m. adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.)