

PA10-083

HB5033

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calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Mr. President, calendar page 2, and that is
Calendar 144, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 253.

I move to place this item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Mr. President, moving now to calendar page 20.

Mr. President, calendar page 20, Calendar 532,

Substitute for House Bill Number 5033. Mr. President,

I would move to place this item on the consent
calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, moving to calendar page 25, the
item at the bottom of calendar page 25, Calendar 561,
Substitute for House Bill Number 5419. Mr. President,
move to place that item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Bill 121; calendar page 7, Calendar 377, Substitute for House Bill 5291; Calendar page 8, Calendar 398, Substitute for Senate Bill 231; calendar page 9, Calendar 442, Substitute for House Bill 5141; calendar page 10, Calendar 449, House Bill 5495; calendar page 11, Calendar 451, Substitute for House Bill 5535; Calendar 465, Substitute for House Bill 44 -- 5448; calendar page 12, Calendar 466, Substitute for House Bill 5289; Calendar 473, Substitute for House Bill 5059; Calendar 476, Substitute for House Bill 5117; calendar page 13. Calendar 478, House Bill 5290; Calendar 481, Substitute for House Bill 5119; Calendar 482, Substitute for House Bill 5120; calendar page 15, Calendar 492, Substitute for House Bill 5446; Calendar 494, House Bill 5315; Calendar 504, Substitute for House Bill 5306; calendar page 20, Calendar 532, Substitute for House Bill 5033; calendar page 21, Calendar 534, Substitute for House Bill 5543; Calendar 539, Substitute for House Bill 5350; calendar page 25, Calendar 561, Substitute for House Bill 5419; calendar page 36, Calendar 374, Substitute for House Bill 5225; calendar page 37, Calendar 415, House Bill 5131; calendar page 38, Calendar 454, Substitute for House Bill 5526.

Mr. President, that completes the items placed on Consent Calendar Number 2.

THE CHAIR:

Please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Senate is voting by roll on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, please check your vote. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is adoption of Consent Calendar Number 2.

Total number voting

35

Necessary for Adoption 18

Those voting Yea 35

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 1

THE CHAIR:

Consent calendar Number 2 passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would move that any items on the consent calendar requires additional action by the House of Representatives be immediately transmitted to that chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And also any other items acted upon today, not on the consent calendar requiring action by the House of Representatives. Also would move that those items be immediately transmitted.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, sir, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would yield to any members seeking recognition for announcements or points of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

At this time, I will entertain any points of

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Those voting Yea	145
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	6

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Bill passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 143?

THE CLERK:

On page 32, Calendar 143, Substitute for House Bill Number 5033, AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF SEAT SAFETY BELTS ON SCHOOL BUSES, favorable report by the Committee on Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Guerrero of the 29th, you have the floor.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Question before the chamber is acceptance and passage. Please proceed.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has a strike all amendment

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LCO 4704 and I would ask that the Clerk please call the amendment and that I be allowed to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Would the Clerk please call LCO 4704 which shall be designated as House Amendment Schedule "A."

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 4704, House "A" offered by Representatives Guerrero, Scribner and Senator DeFronzo.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Guerrero has asked leave of chambers to summarize. Seeing no objection, please proceed, sir.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of the General Assembly here.

About five months ago we had a terrible accident on I-84. Where a young individual from my town, Rocky Hill, was involved in a school bus accident and lost his life. He was one of the brightest of the brightest and it took many families by surprise at what happened here, ladies and gentlemen. And, through our Committee, through the Transportation Committee as many as know, this bill has been before

us many times.

But, one thing that stood out during the public hearing was when we had people that testified from hospitals, the chief medical examiners, the question was asked - if seat belts were in those buses or in that bus, would that child be here today? And, the answer was yes. And, knowing the difficulties when it comes to our finances that we're all trying to struggle with, I worked with my colleagues to try to draft something that we all can live with. And, ladies and gentlemen this bill makes it an option - an option to have municipalities implement seat belts.

I would have liked it if we could have mandated this, but I know the fiscal note on that was very, very high. So, I said to myself, I'd rather take a piece of the pie, than the whole pie right now. But, to those families, ladies and gentlemen, to those families right now who are looking to us to make sure something like this never happens again, I ask for your support on this bill. Because, ladies and gentlemen we all have children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, it could have been any one of us that puts their child on a school bus and then gets that terrible call, that terrible call that says your

child's not coming home.

And, what this bill does, Mr. Speaker, is allows municipalities and school districts and bus companies to implement seat belts. It's an option and I want to make that very clear tonight. It's an option, it's not a mandate. But, if you do, do that, we've created a fund, a revenue neutral fund that will give them an incentive to do that.

So, for instance, Mr. Speaker, if your local district purchases a bus for \$100,000 with seat belts on it, that school board district submits that payment to the DMV, who will be administrating this, and we would give back 50 percent of the sales tax that they paid on this. So, we would still receive, again, we would still receive the monies to the general fund for that sales tax, but what we'd do through that fund, we'd give them a refund back for half of that which would be about \$3,000.

It's something, it's a start, ladies and gentlemen and Mr. Speaker. I want to first say, I want to thank the members of the Transportation Committee, the members on the other side, my ranking member, Representative David Scribner, who worked long and tirelessly with myself and Senator DeFronzo to try

to craft something here that we can all live with. And, I want to leave this with the members, again, this is an option, it's not a mandate, it's an option. If your school districts want to do it, they can do it. If they don't want to do it, they do not have to do it. And, Mr. Speaker, I move for adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Further on House "A?"

Representative Scribner of the 107th, you have the floor.

REP. SCRIBNER (107th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon. I rise in strong support of the amendment that is before us. As many of you know and as the Chairman of the Transportation Committee has pointed out, this discussion has been a very focused discussion and is largely in response to a very tragic and unfortunate fatality that involved a school bus with exceptionally bright, talented students traveling to a competition on a Saturday in early January of this year here in Connecticut.

To his credit, Representative Guerrera responded quickly to the horror that was felt by the lost student by the other student who were on that bus.

Other students and their families that were part of that individual's life and I can recall calling Representative Guerrero at home on that weekend in early January to offer whatever help I could to support him in his efforts to best represent his constituency. And, we've had many, many discussions, meetings, a lot of research, went through a very extensive public hearing in transportation to learn more about safety on school buses, tried to learn from history what works, what doesn't work.

We had experts in before us who gave us in-depth testimony in a very broad sense and I would tell you quite honestly the language that was before the Transportation Committee and the bill that did successfully pass out of the Committee did so without my ultimate support, not in opposition to the effort or the concept that was brought forward, but in large part it was a statewide unfunded mandate which I felt that most of our school districts could not absorb at this particular point in time.

So, I made the commitment to Representative Guerrero that I would do all and everything that I could to work with him and our fellow colleagues, both in the House and in the Senate, to come up with a

reasonable solution that would help to promote the concept of increased safety on our school buses. None of it was done lightly. There was many, many hours of discussion and additional research. I believe that the strike-all amendment that's before us today satisfies most, if not all of the concerns that have been raised by the discussions that we've had.

It is clearly not a mandate in any way and for me it wasn't only about the mandate having to do with the funding. It was about allowing our local school districts, their elected officials and appointed officials, work through the process and make the decision that they felt is most appropriate for the system that they are charged under state statute to run. That's what this amendment allows to continue.

We have simply brought forward a measure that creates a program that has a time certain date to it. It's a three year period allowing every public school district to apply for sales tax exemption in part on the purchase of new buses that are properly outfitted with three point shoulder harness seat belts which are known by the experts to be the best and safest and most secure way to go. Part of what we learned in this process is that there are only five school

districts in the State of Connecticut that have elected previously to install seat belts on their buses. Regrettably, those seat belts are lap belts which have been known by medical experts to cause perhaps more serious injuries.

And, we worked through with the industry, with the medical experts and determined that the three point shoulder harness belts are the safest, most secure and the soundest way to go. And, so this allows for the school districts when they order new buses beyond the date specified, to take advantage of an opportunity for a sales tax exemption which is 50 percent of the cost, it winds up being three percent of the purchase price and with that there is an offset built in to increase a restoration fee for suspended driver's licenses. Those figures have been worked out through RFA and are based on substantiated information and a track record in history.

So I, again, urge support of our colleagues. As we continue the discussion, know that this was not something that was done lightly but something that we felt very strongly about to enable the towns to take advantage of an opportunity while still making the decisions within the municipality, not here, whether

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or not that is the way for them to go. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Thank you, Representative Scribner.

Representative Cafero of the 142nd, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of this bill. Ladies and gentlemen, there's an old saying of course, that all politics are local. And, many times in this chamber in the course of our service, we see that various incidents and tragedies so particularly and intensely affect a particular community. Yes, we who might not live in that community will have our sympathies, our concerns, our thoughts and our prayers, but for those people in that individual town, it's much more than that. It's intense, it's real, it shakes them to their core.

We saw it happen in Middletown in early February and of course we saw it happen in Rocky Hill, Connecticut in January, when that town suffered a tragedy. And, it's at those times that a town galvanizes together and they demand action because they don't want what happened to their community to

happen to others. It is rarer yet that someone finds himself, not only representing that community, but also in the position of a chairmanship of a committee of cognizance over the very issue that it's the heart of the tragedy.

Such was the circumstance of Representative Guerrero. Representative Guerrero had shared with all of us his heartbreak of dealing with the families that suffered the loss. He talked about the emotion he felt, his neighbors felt and that his town felt. And, he also took his responsibility as Chairman of Transportation very seriously. And, as he indicated, his gut, his heart, his emotions said, this shall never happen again and we should mandate that seat belts be held on every bus.

But, in true leadership fashion, he realized that maybe what is good for one town might not be good for others, especially in this economic climate and worked with Representative Scribner and the rest of the members of the Transportation Committee and most importantly with all of us, talking to all of us, about how can we do something that doesn't mandate buses with seatbelts but incense their use that will not just promote the use but incent their use and the

end product is before you today.

It is a difficult compromise I'm sure especially for Representative Guerrero, but it is one that should be applauded and one that should be supported. So, my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, to ranking member Scribner, to all the members of the Transportation Committee and community that put their efforts into this bill. I would urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment and the final bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Thank you, Representative Cafero..

Representative Gibbons 150th, you have the floor, madam.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, if I may please a couple of questions to the proponent of the amendment.

First of all, I wanted --

(Deputy Speaker Orange in the chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

You may proceed, ma'am.

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REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you. We have a new speaker.

I want to thank the cochairs of the Transportation Committee and the ranking member for having worked out this bill. I was at the initial public hearing where we heard from the family whose son was so tragically killed and I heard from all kinds of people from boards of Ed, from the police, from transportation groups throughout the state - some very much in favor of putting seat belts in buses and some very much against it. Not because they were against the concept, but against it because of one of the cost, secondly it was going to be a mandate and thirdly, were the seat belts really going to be used or were they going to be used more as toys by the kids and not just sit there on the seats or used just to hit people with which would be absolutely detrimental to what they were trying to do.

I think the cochairs and the ranking member really worked out a very good compromise on this but even so, I've got a couple of questions, if I may please, through you. First of all, how many seat belts would be put on a bus, how many children generally sit on a bus? Through you, Madam Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Guerrero.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

You'd be allowed to have a three point seat belt system which would still allow three seat belts per seat.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you. Through you.

How many seats are on a bus? Certainly the buses that my children were on they were bench type seats and two sometimes three children would sit on the bus. So, how many would you end up putting on a normal bus, please. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Guerrero:

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

It ranges between 60 to 72 seats.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

What is the approximate cost of -- that is added on to a new bus, because these are new buses that we're talking about, to install all the seat belts on that bus. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Guerrero.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And, I'd like to thank Representative Gibbons for that question. The cost of that seat belt would range between \$7,500 and \$8,500 and this is only for new buses.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

I'm sorry, \$7,500, \$8,500 per bus or per seat belt?

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Per bus.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Per bus.

REP. GUERRERA (29th)

Madam Speaker, sorry.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Through you again, Madam Speaker.

And, the cost is really just that is going to be donated back or forgiven by the state is really half the sales tax cost, is that correct, please? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Guerrero.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

Yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you again.

And, one final question. I understand that we've got five districts in the state out of about 164 who have seat belts but not one of them has the three point seat belts. Do you know of any districts in the country where these three point seat belts have been installed, please? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Guerrero.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

I believe California, Texas and Louisiana.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Gibbons.

REPRESENTATIVE GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you. And again, through you, Madam Speaker.

Are these seat belts actually used? I think that was the other concern that was expressed over and over again at the public hearing. That we go to the expense of putting these in -- unless you have a bus monitor, which no district can afford to do, we've got problems with children being left on buses because we don't have bus monitors and the driver of the bus certainly can't check to see that the seat belts are being used. Will these -- have these seat belts actually been in use in the districts where they've been installed? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Guerrero.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

I don't have the answer whether they're using the seat belts in California, Louisiana and Texas. But, I will say that this will allow children to have the option of using it.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And, I thank the good Representative for his answers. I will vote in favor of this even though I did not vote to bring the bill out of Committee because I thought at that time there were many problems. This is not a mandate. But, I do hope that those districts that decide to go along this way find out the answers to some of these questions exactly what is it going to cost which is easy enough to discover but, are they really going to be used and how are they going to make sure that the children do use them. Certainly anything that is going to help save a child's life in any type of an accident is worth looking into. So, I thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the Representative for his responses.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Ma'am.

Will you care to remark further on the amendment before us?

Representative Steven Mikutel of Griswold, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MIKUTEL (45th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to support the amendment and I want to congratulate the Chairman of the Transportation Committee because this bill has come a long ways and he has made some difficult compromises on the bill. For people who are unfamiliar with this issue, it's not as clear cut as one might think and it's an issue that pulls at our heart strings, but there are a lot of other issues that are involved in this -- that would have been involved if this had been a mandate to put seat belts on new school buses. But, it is not a mandate; it is enabling legislation; it gives the local people the option to put the seat belts on. It's their choice.

So, the bill does no harm but it offers the opportunity to save children from serious harm and even death. So, I will certainly be supporting this bill. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir.

Will you care to remark further on the bill -- excuse me, the amendment? Representative Tim Larson of the 11th, you have the floor, sir.

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REP. LARSON (11th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise in support of this bill. I'm actually very encouraged by this. I think this is very dynamic and I'm going to speak to both of my communities boards of education and encourage them to adopt this. As we learned last night with regards to shared services amongst boards of educations in towns through efforts on the MORE Committee, I think this would be a great opportunity to show just in fact how that might work.

As we're all very well aware when we talk about school board and liabilities with funding, etc., school bus transportation is a large number for those particular communities. This would be a tremendous effort to encourage communities to come together around this. The fact that it's certainly optional let's towns grow into this effort and I believe it's certainly a step in the right direction and I commend the Transportation Committee and those involved for coming to this compromise and I'm going to actively ask all of my members to support that. Thank you very much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir.

Will you care to remark further on the amendment?

Representative Camillo, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just want to rise and salute our Chair of Transportation or cochair, Representative Guerrera for a great job. It was a terrible tragedy to happen in his district and he took action and brought it before us, worked very hard and got the job done. I also want to salute our ranking member, Representative Scribner who voted against the bill in committee then took another look at it, worked to make it even better, brought people around and together they worked on this bill. It's a tremendous committee and a great bill and I salute both of them. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir.

Will you care to remark further on the amendment before us?

Representative Sharkey of the 88th, you have the floor, sir.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, rise in support of the amendment and the underlying bill and also wish to extend my congratulations to Representative Guerrero for his leadership on this issue.

I rise, in particular, because, as I think many of the chamber know, I feel very strongly about the potential for creating efficiencies through regionalism. I think the new version of this bill that Representative Guerrero champions now as a compromise, really also can be facilitated through a regional multi-town approach to school transportation. I think it lends itself to exactly those kinds of efficiencies that can make this particular concept affordable to our communities. So, for that reason, in particular, I rise in support of this bill and I hope that my colleagues will do the same. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Representative Sharkey.

Will you care to remark further on the amendment before us? Will you care to remark further on the amendment before us?

If not, let me try your minds.

All those in favor please signify by saying aye.

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REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

All those opposed nay.

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Representative Guerrero.

REP. GUERRERA (29th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just want to thank this -- my colleagues in the General Assembly. And, let me just say that on behalf of the Parikh family and I mean this from the bottom of my heart, they thank every member of this General Assembly for what I hope we'll see in about two minutes. So, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Good job.

Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended?

If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine

will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is taking a roll call vote. Members to the chamber please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted?
If all the members have voted please check the board to determine if your vote has been properly cast. If so, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Would the Clerk please announce the tally?

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5033 as amended by House "A."

Total number voting 143

Necessary for adoption 72

Those voting Yea 125

Those voting Nay 18

Those absent and not voting 8

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The bill as amended passes.

Will the Chamber please stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Madam Majority Leader.

Now I'd like to call on the House Minority Leader, House Republican Leader, Representative Larry Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, distinguished guests, family and friends and most importantly, members of the Chamber.

There's an insurance company that recently put out a television ad wherein the narrator begins by asking this question: Years from now, how will we look back on today? As the great recession or as the recession that made us great?

Ladies and gentlemen, I would submit to you that the answer to that question lies with each and every one of us who work in this Chamber, who work in this building and work in state government.

The people we represent are feeling a little scared and uncertain right now. Uncertain about their jobs, their homes, their savings, uncertain about their future.

They really don't care what party is in power or

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who's in the majority or who's in the minority. They expect us to work together, to respect each other, to listen to those we represent, and most importantly, to do our job.

So on this first day of session, on behalf of this side of the aisle, I wish all of us good health, good luck, great wisdom and courage, a spirit of respect and understanding and good, old-fashioned common sense.

So how will we answer the question: As we look back on today, will these times be known as the great recession or the recession that made us great? Ladies and gentlemen, the answer is in our hands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you so much Representative. It's great -- two great speeches to start us off on a wonderful year.

I'd like to take the opportunity to make some introductions myself. First, I'd like to welcome back to this Chamber speakers who stood in this place and served this House for many years of wonderful service, and I will introduce them as -- they're sitting up here.

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Certainly, many of us served with Representative Speaker James Amann. Thanks, Jim. Great to see you.

Again, a good friend of ours, Madam Speaker, Moira Lyons. Moira, great to see you.

A close neighbor just drove in, came to say hello, Speaker Thomas Ritter.

Again, we're honored to have with us a speaker known to many of us, Speaker Richard Balducci.

And again, a Speaker who served our Chamber well, Speaker Frank Collins. Frank.

Just a little bit of history I'll pass on to our Speakers; over the summer they were changing the light bulbs here in the auditorium. And if you notice, the one in the back, they were -- as they were changing the lightbulb, it fell and actually took out the brass rail in the back.

And as they looked at them, they found out that that lightbulb -- which -- a light structure, which is like similar to the ones there -- was held on by a screw about this big.

And so they went around just to let all the Chamber -- the members of the Chamber know they adjusted all of them, and they strengthened them. Kind of like Toyota, they came in and fixed them.

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And just to let the Speakers know, there's one right over our heads. Right. So they took care of that. So again, for caution, it is very important and they took care of that.

But I'd like to, again, thank the speakers all for coming here today. It shows, really, the continuity and the love they have for this Chamber. Let's give them another hand.

Thank you, guys.

Look at this. Look at that. Isn't that nice? Isn't that nice? That was very nice.

I'd also like to introduce members from my fair city who have come to join us. First, I have City Councilor Dante Bartolomeo, and her son, Riley.

And City Counselor Hilda Santiago. Hilda.

And in spite of everything, my family decided to show up, too, which was very nice of them. They have busy lives, but they took time out to come here to join us here today.

I'm thrilled to have with us my brother, Pat Donovan. Pat. My daughter, Sarah, who's off to college next year. And my wonderful life -- wife, my wonderful wife, who we will be celebrating our 33rd this Friday, Nikki Elaine Gallen Donovan. Nikki. It

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seems like only yesterday when we got married.

All right. Well, here we are. First of all, I want to thank, again, Representative Merrill and Cafero, for wonderful openings.

Denise, you're a great leader, a great Majority Leader, a true friend. You represent your caucus very well. She's a friendly face, but also a strong person who cares deeply about the needs of our community.

I want to thank you so much for all you've done for our Chamber and wish you all the best, and we look forward to a good year together. Thank you, Denise.

And Representative Cafero, as people know, Larry and I are good friends. Larry is a ferocious defender of his caucus, to make sure that their voice is heard in the proceedings here in the General Assembly. He fights hard, but he has respect for each and every one of us. And it's a pleasure to work with him. He's an honorable man, my good friend, Representative Larry Cafero.

All right. Now, to -- again, welcome to all the members and family and friends. And I'd like to say again that it is my heartfelt pleasure and honor to serve the House with members who give their best for the people of Connecticut.

The past year was particularly tough. It was tough. Yet your spirit and determination never faltered during the worst economic downturn in more than half a century. Sure, it was hard. Decisions were not easy. Sometimes many of us were frustrated. But during such rough times, we knew it couldn't be easy. We knew we owed our constituents our best.

Sometimes our process didn't look pretty or tidy, but the challenges we faced were not pretty or tidy. Our neighbors lost jobs, homes, health care, opportunities. Businesses were strained and some failed. Yet, working with our colleagues in Washington, we strove to hold off further setbacks as we build shelters in that storm.

Now, a year later, there's a turn for the better. Economic indicators are showing encouraging signs. Now, as President Obama stated, the worst of the storm has passed, but the devastation remains.

Now, to my colleagues in the House I say, the best of Connecticut will make our state strong again. The best of Connecticut will make our state strong again.

The best -- the best is our children, our businesses, our schools, our working families, our

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parents, our institutions, and the best is our government. Our nation founders stated in the Declaration of the Independence that we are all endowed with certain inalienable rights, and that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed.

That's worth repeating -- secure these rights -- governments are instituted deriving their powers from the consent of the governed.

We owe it to the people who voted for us into office to work to secure these rights. The people in our state depend on us to fight for them, to do what we can to grow, retain jobs and rebuild our economy. The people speak. We must listen. We must act. Together we can do so much.

Last week I stood in Union Station with Senator Dodd, Governor Rell and Congressman Murphy. We celebrated the beginning of an exciting new transit opportunity, the state and federal government putting down a down payment on a New Haven/Springfield commuter and high-speed rail, providing jobs, economic development, cleaner environments, energy savings. We're getting it done by working together. Let's use

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that example in the year ahead.

Government can be more efficient; seamless between local, state and federal government. Let's give our citizens a leaner, stronger Connecticut. A government that helps, not hinders; that is an efficient partner in our desire for strong people, a strong Connecticut.

In a short while, Governor Rell will deliver her last State -- of the State Message to the General Assembly and the people of Connecticut. Let us end now, and take a moment to recognize and thank her for her service to Connecticut and her steady hand during difficult times.

All right. Thank you, everybody. Now it's down to business.

Mr. Clerk, is there business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, communications from the Speaker of the House of Representatives, executive and legislative nominations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Refer to Executive Nominations.

THE CLERK:

Communications from the House Chairman on -- of

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the Transportation Committee, executive and legislative nominations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Refer to Executive Nominations.

THE CLERK:

Communications from the Senate Minority Leader, executive and legislative nominations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Refer to the Committee on Executive Nominations.

THE CLERK:

Communication from the Governor, a list of interim appointments.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Ordered printed in the journal.

THE CLERK:

Communication from the Governor, executive and legislative nominations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please refer to Executive Nominations.

THE CLERK:

Communications from the Governor, judicial nominations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Refer to the Committee on Judiciary.

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THE CLERK:

Communications and reports.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move we waive the reading of the list and refer all communications and reports to the committees indicated.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Without objection, so ordered.

THE CLERK:

And an introduction of bills, List Number 1.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I move we waive reading of the list of bills; refer to the committees indicated.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Without objection, so ordered.

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Mr. Speaker, I move for suspension of the rules for immediate consideration of House Resolution

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Number 1.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before the Chamber is on suspension of the rules for the immediate consideration of House Resolution Number 1. Is there objection? Is there objection? Hearing none, the rules are suspended for that purpose.

Will the Clerk please call House Resolution Number 1.

THE CLERK:

House Resolution Number 1, RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PRINTING OF THE HOUSE JOURNAL, introduced by Representative Merrill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I move adoption of the resolution.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before the Chamber is on adoption of the resolution. Will you remark?

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the resolution is self-explanatory.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you very much, Representative.

Would you care to remark further? Care to remark further? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of the resolution, please indicate by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

All those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The resolution is adopted.

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for the suspension of the rules for immediate consideration of House Resolution --

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I move for suspension of the rules for the immediate consideration of House Joint Resolution Number 1 -- Senate Joint Resolution Number 3.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Make it clear that moving for suspension of the rules for the immediate consideration of Senate Joint Resolution Number 3. Is there objection? Is there objection? Hearing none, the rules are suspended for that purpose.

Will the Clerk please call Senate Joint Resolution Number 3.

THE CLERK:

Senate Joint Resolution Number 3, RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PUBLICATION OF LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN, PRINTING OF BILLS AND EXPENSES, introduced by Senator Looney and Representative Merrill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for adoption of the resolution.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before the Chamber is on adoption of the resolution. Will you remark?

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. It's self-explanatory. This is the publication of our legislative bulletin and printing of the bills and expenses.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you very much. Would you care to remark further? Care to remark further? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor, please signify by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

All those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The resolution is adopted.

Will the Clerk please call Emergency Certified House Bill Number 5015.

THE CLERK:

Emergency Certified House Bill 5015, AN ACT
CONCERNING STATE CONTINUATION OF GROUP HEALTH
INSURANCE COVERAGE, APPOINTMENTS TO LEGISLATIVE
COMMISSIONS, PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS AND THE EFFECTIVE
DATES OF BONDS FOR ROAD RESURFACING, introduced by
Representative Donovan and Senator Williams.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

I'd like to call on a good friend, Representative
Cam Staples.

REP. STAPLES , (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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I move acceptance and passage of the emergency certified bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on passage of the bill.
Representative Staples, you have the floor.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us includes some significant provisions around the extension of federal COBRA, COBRA subsidies pursuant to federal law. It also allows the road resurfacing process to move much more expeditiously, moving up that date. It permits an extension of time for certain property tax exemption applications.

And, Mr. Speaker, I move its acceptance and passage.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on acceptance and passage. Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a question through you, to

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Representative Staples.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Representative Staples, my understanding is we developed the language for this bill. That there is nothing, no concepts, if you will, or programs that are new here. This is not regarding an expenditure of funds, but certainly an extension of various dates and times for purposes of COBRA, road resurfacing, et cetera. Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. That's correct. There is no net fiscal impact of the bill before us on the state budget. There are federal provisions we're taking advantage of.

And as you stated, the exemptions were previously approved, and they are just resulting in a potential reallocation of existing funds that have already been approved. So there is no increase expenditure in the bill before us.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Remark further? Representative Noujaim of the
74th District.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr.
Speaker, a question, if I may, to Representative
Staples?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you.

Representative Staples, I believe a version of
this bill came before us last year in reference to
COBRA. And from my understanding is that the employer
initially would pay part of the cost, which is called
"administrative expenses," and then the employer will
then be reimbursed for those costs afterwards. Am I
correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

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Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's my understanding. And what the bill before us does is it extends the federal subsidy for eligible individuals under the federal law.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker. At the time when this bill was presented last year, I was also under the understanding that the employer would be receiving credit on their taxes, providing that the employer is profitable and they do show a profit at the end of the fiscal year.

But if the employer does not show a profit or profitability, then the employer may not be receiving credits. Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That would require a deeper understanding of the implications of this bill than I have. So I will just defer that to another Legislator who happens to have

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more understanding of the way COBRA operates with employers.

The bill before us does not make any changes to those provisions, however. So if your understanding of how it operated last year was such, then I would say this before us only extends the federal subsidy. It does not make any further changes to the way COBRA operates.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, I would like to receive further explanation. Because at the time when this was discussed last year, there were some objections to the fact that employers may have to pay up front, but they do not receive any benefits.

If, let's say, in a year like last year, when there was downturn in our economy and employers were not able to make profits, companies were not able to make profit. If I may request further explanation, through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples, you want to relinquish

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the floor and Representative Fontana may have some answers to that.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

I would be happy to defer to Representative Fontana. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim, if you could ask your -- refer your question to Representative Fontana. He may be able to answer your question.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the risk of being redundant, I will not go back and restate my question. I'm sure Representative Fontana would understand that. If not, I will go ahead and ask it again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fontana.

REP. FONTANA (87th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, the answer to the gentleman's questions are twofold: First, under the provision of the Federal Stimulus Act of last April, and then the law passed this past December, individuals will pay 35 percent of the cost of their COBRA benefits. And the

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federal government will pick up 65 percent of it.

So in other words, 35 percent of the 102 percent will be covered by the individual, and 65 percent of the 102 percent will be covered by the federal government for an additional six months under the provisions of this federal legislation from December.

To answer the gentleman's second question, according to the IRS.gov website, an employer may recover the subsidy provided to assistance-eligible individuals by taking the subsidy amount as a credit on its quarterly employment tax return.

So as I understand, Mr. Speaker, employers will do so once their employees, and only after their employees or former employees, have provided them the 35 percent premium payment, and then, again, off of their quarterly payroll tax returns.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very appreciative to Representative Fontana's answer. It seems to me that he was very well prepared this time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Would you care to remark further? Representative
Shawn Johnston of the 47th District.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a few questions on the bill; the
first time I've seen it.

We don't have the luxury of being able to go back
and look at the public hearing on an emergency
certified bill to get a little bit more background.

I have a question, through you, Mr. Speaker, on
Section 19.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. We're changing the
date that we're allowing the bond authorization.
We're moving it up from May to January. And I'm just
curious why we're picking the date January, 2010, when
today, when we're passing this bill, we're already in
February.

Have these -- have we already borrowed this
money, and we're sort of retroactively okaying that,

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or is that date there for a different reason? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker I'm not aware that we've already borrowed if the authorization today would permit that. I think what we're trying to do is just to permit, obviously, the road resurfacing funds to already be accessed and have that available as soon as there's an opportunity to begin road resurfacing.

I think the initial date of May was probably an oversight when we adopted this, because there's an opportunity for this to start, you know, once the spring thaw comes.

This is the authorization. It's just moved up so we can take advantage of the spring.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

I thank the gentleman for his answer.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, a question on the Sections 8 through 14, and Section 15 through 18. The

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fiscal note that we have indicates that there will be a significant revenue increase in these two grants to various municipalities across our state.

And as I remember the budget that we passed, we quite frankly didn't fully fund these grants in the budget we passed. Therefore, as a result of this, all the other municipalities of the State of Connecticut are going to have some sort of a pro rata reduction in these two grants.

They use this, the term "significant revenue increase" when describing the money that will go to the towns that will receive it, but they don't reference significant decrease when they talk about the other towns of the state.

Do we have a sense, through you, Mr. Speaker, of that pro rata reduction to the various other municipalities across the state of Connecticut as a result of this language?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think there is a better determination available right now than what we have here. And in

part, that's due to what applications are actually submitted.

Many of these -- in fact, all of these exemptions were approved in the budget that we adopted several months ago. But some of the municipalities didn't come forward and take advantage -- or rather some of the affected entities didn't come forward and take advantage of the exemptions; so they're being extended.

The pro rata distribution and reduction will depend on how many come forward, how much they actually obtain from the funds and then, you know, then a calculation is done thereafter about a pro rata reduction.

So there -- I don't think there is an exact dollar amount that we can determine right now. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

I thank the gentleman for his answer.

I'm guessing that we've got some sense of what it is, because our Office of Fiscal Analysis did put the term "significant" in there. I would think, if they

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might have used the term "unknown" at this point, or "potential revenue increase."

Lastly, when would these grant payments go out to these towns based upon the language that we passed today? And is our action today, in the course of an emergency certified bill, to try to meet a deadline for getting that money out there?

In other words, could we not have waited and have a public hearing on this proposal, and then vote in two or three weeks, after we've had a chance to look at it further? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some of these funds have already been let out. And I think that -- I don't think that today's action is specifically tied to another allocation date. But the question will be, once the applications come in, I think it's still unclear whether they'll be tapping into the funds that are available in this fiscal year or next fiscal year, and it would just depend on the timing of the allocation request.

But some of the funds have been let out. I do

not believe that all of them have been let out yet this year. And, you know, the calculations will depend, frankly, on the balance in the fund and on the timing of the application.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

I thank the gentleman for his answer. I'm just trying to get a sense -- and from the answer, I really don't have a sense why this is. I understand some of the other provisions in this bill, why it's before us today as an Emergency Certified bill. But based upon the last answer, I'm not certain I can determine why we need to be acting so quickly today in the manner of an emergency certified bill without a date certain, where the money has got to be out the door.

If the gentleman has any further explanation of that, that might help me.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Mr. Speaker, only that these issues have all been considered during the last legislative session. These

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are not new items we're adopting today. These were considered by the Finance Committee. These were put into the budget that was passed by this General Assembly.

So there's nothing new that we would need to have a hearing on. These have all been looked at, reviewed, and already previously approved by this Legislature.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

I thank the gentleman for his answer.

Quite frankly, if that was the case, each session we could come back here and we certainly wouldn't need to have public hearings on about 98 percent of what we do.

Very rarely are there new issues and new concerns. And quite frankly, each session, based upon different circumstances, especially when it comes to fiscal matters, we review everything and the game starts anew. And we start from scratch and discuss each and every issue.

So the fact that they might have been in a budget that didn't become law because of a veto or another

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reason, certainly, I don't think gives us pause today that we ought to just have an emergency certified bill and bypass a process whereby all other appropriations go through.

So I just have some reservations about what we're doing today here, Mr. Speaker, and I wanted to express those. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, a question to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think I share some of the same concerns that my colleagues shares, but Section 8-18 refers to the property tax exemption deadline, and I want to make sure that I understand this fully.

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Does this include the full universe of companies that we had previously addressed, or are we looking at a select group of

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businesses to provide this extension of the tax exemption? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at a select group that were scrutinized and were brought forward during the last legislative session.

For those of you who are not aware of how this process works, there is an opportunity for any eligible company to take exemptions under certain programs during a particular window of time. What happens in this Chamber and this Legislature, every single year, many of those companies fail to file their applications in a timely way.

So we have several companies that come forward and ask to be retroactively included in the program. This list is a subset of those companies that have come forward -- or entities, not all companies -- that have come forward and made a case that their application ought to have another opportunity to be submitted.

So this is not every single possible entity that missed a deadline. These are certain ones that have

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been vetted by the committee process who've missed those deadlines, who will be given another opportunity to file those applications.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So am I to understand that everyone of those companies that missed the deadline, that still would like to pursue that exception, will be eligible under this provision? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Yes. That's true. Every company that is -- that meets the criteria of the bill before us will have an opportunity to resubmit their application for a certain defined period of time.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do thank the gentleman for his answers. I share a concern coming from an area with several rural

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communities that, although these dollars that we're looking at are modest -- minimal, I'm -- I, too, am chagrined that we can't identify what that impact is going to be. We do have municipal budgets which have been built around receiving a certain dollar figure. So I will have to weigh that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just a quick question, and Representative Staples may or may not be the proper person to answer this, but in reading through this emergency certified bill, I have a question as to why -- what's the emergency in Section 4 that would require it to be taken up in an emergency certified bill? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I guess emergencies, you know, are a term of art and subject to some interpretation.

These commissions are obviously currently operating. There was a necessity on the part of those commissions to fill their vacancies. And rather than wait for the several months that it might take through the normal course of a legislative session to have them properly function, it was determined that we should do that on the first day.

I think it's really just to permit those commissions to operate at their highest efficiency right from the beginning of the session.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you, Representative Staples.

And I thought I had a pretty good understanding of what the underlying emergency was with regard to the COBRA -- with regard to be COBRA benefits.

Some of the other things that are contained in this Emergency Certified bill can really not be described as emergencies. Filling unexpired or vacant appointments on boards and commissions in this state, I don't care who they are, can't be classified as emergencies, which would justify bypassing the legislative process and be lumped into an emergency

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certified bill.

It's just -- I find it a little disingenuous and I just had to -- want to put that on the record.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Chamber, welcome back. I think, with regard, if I may, on behalf of this side of the aisle, explain that we -- what we have before us is an emergency certified bill with several parts to it.

The first and most important part, for those of us on this side of the aisle, is the extension of COBRA benefits in this very trying time for so many people and their concern about health insurance.

Unfortunately, the bill that's before us is not only about COBRA. It also includes several other provisions. And as you've just heard, there is some uncertainty, in fact, quite some uncertainty with regard to how this will affect our various towns and municipalities.

There is a possibility that any number of our

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towns that we represent will receive less money in this very trying time. There's also concerns with regard to other sections of this emergency certified bill that have nothing to do with the COBRA provisions that are also contained within.

I say this to you for explanation, that as we start a very hopeful session of bipartisanship, understanding and cooperation, the votes on the board might not be reflective of that. But please understand why. That this is an emergency certified bill, one that you would think needs to be taken under consideration, as does the COBRA provisions, has far more to it than just that.

So many of us are put in a position to vote in favor of a COBRA, but potentially take money away from our towns and cities. It is for that reason that you might not see unanimity on the voting board when the vote is taken.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

With the Chamber's permission, Mr. Speaker, for a

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second time on this bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

Mr. Speaker, to frame a question to the proponent bringing out this bill, a follow-up question.

Representative Alberts asked if any other municipality in the state of Connecticut, based upon the language we're doing today, could put forth an application to get reimbursed under these two programs. And the answer, as I understood it, was that that was indeed the case, that any other municipality would be able to do that.

And as I further read the language of the bill and look at the fiscal note, in multiple places in the bill they reference each of these towns specifically, and in no place in those sections do I see any language that references a municipality or any municipality in the state of Connecticut "may put forth."

The only language I see references specific towns on line 478, the Town of Watertown, and line 488, the Town of Suffield.

In numerous other lines, we see the Town of

Hartford, West Hartford and New Haven.

And if I saw language that said any municipality or a municipality may submit application, I would assume that that would indeed be the case. But I'm -- but as I read the language, and I'm looking to be corrected if I'm wrong, it appears that only the municipalities listed.

And if the gentleman could clarify that, because it's not clear in my mind based upon his answer to the question.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe what I said was any entity in a town that is referenced in the bill before us. This is a discrete list of entities that are eligible based on a certain tax year and a certain town within which that entity's application will be submitted.

This is not every town. It is not every entity. It is -- they are individual entities that came forward from certain locations in the state and they missed the deadline. This is drafted in such a way to

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permit them to refile. That's all it does.

It's not available for all towns. It's not available for all entities. It is not towns that make this application. It is the entity that gets the property tax exemption in that town, and is eligible for a state grant pursuant to these programs to offset that exception.

So, I mean, I think it's important to state this is a discrete list. They've been fully vetted. It's been preapproved and was -- and became law. This is not a bill that did not become law. It's a bill that became law. But all the applicants didn't submit an application in the window of time that the previous passage of the law permitted; so this is giving them a second opportunity to do that.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

I thank the gentleman for his answer. It clarifies it.

So if a company in a town not listed here missed that deadline and now wanted to pursue that with the town, this language before us, at least today, would not permit that.

It seems to me that if your company is not located in one of these towns, that you would have to come back before this General Assembly in a bill, possibly later this session, to seek that exception. Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes. And I will tell you that in my experience in the Finance Committee, companies are not shy about doing so. Every year there are a lot of requests that come through from people who missed deadlines, and every year we approve most of those entities' applications for another shot at the exemption.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

I thank the gentleman for his answer.

And the last question based upon that answer.

It's been my recollection that not each and every year has this General Assembly actually approved an omnibus list. And there have been years when money was tight where this General Assembly did not act upon the

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request of the list of companies in certain towns to go forward.

And we've sort of known early in the session, gotten some type of an indication from leadership whether this was going to be a year where some of those applications were going to be allowed to go forward.

Do we have any indication, at this point in the game, if companies come forward between now and the end of session, if that's something that we plan on having an omnibus list ready again? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Staples.

REP. STAPLES (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I can only speak for myself, Representative Johnston, which is that in the Finance committee, where we receive a lot of these applications, we usually do have a bill. And, at some point, that gets reviewed by the leadership on both sides of the aisle to make determination about whether or not it is something that can be afforded that year, and those judgments get made. But I do believe, virtually every

year, we have approved some of these applications.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

Thank you very much for your answer. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time to further understand this.

There are important sections of this bill I think that are time sensitive that I think are appropriate, that do meet the criteria of being an emergency certified bill.

I, however, come down on the side that there are sections of this bill that are not -- do not meet that criteria, that they need to be acted upon today, and my vote will reflect that today. And then to know the reflected -- of some of the important language of this bill, I think that not a person in this Chamber disagrees with.

So it's somewhat of a procedural quandary for me that I will be voting no, because there are some significant sections of this bill that I can't at all come to the conclusion are an emergency of any sorts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Thank you, Representative Johnston.

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, to Representative Staples and others for clarifying what this bill is seeking to do.

And I just wanted to make sure people realize that this bill was fully vetted and anticipated by both sides of the aisle. There was discussion, and it was shared with everyone in advance.

And that there are two very important pieces to this bill which indeed are emergencies: The COBRA part, and the part about resurfacing the roads, which will put people to work in a very timely way.

So I just wanted to make sure people understood the context of the bill.

Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Would you care to remark further on the bill?

Care to remark further on the bill? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

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The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is taking a roll call vote. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the roll call board to make sure your vote has been properly cast. If all the members have voted the machine will be locked and the Clerk will please take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Emergency Certified Bill 5015.

Total Number voting	147
Necessary for adoption	74
Those voting Yea	137
Those voting Nay	9
Those absent and not voting	5

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill passes.

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Yes, Representative.

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REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes. Thank you. I move for the immediate transmittal of the previous item to the Senate.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The motion for immediate transmittal of emergency certified bill to the Senate. Is there objection? Is there objection? Hearing none, the bill is immediately transmitted to the Senate.

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I now move for the suspension of our rules for immediate consideration of House Resolution Number 2.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you.

It's getting -- I know that was exciting.

Representative Merrill, please.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Thank you. I'll repeat that. I move for the suspension of our rules for the immediate consideration of House Resolution Number 2.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before the Chamber is on suspension of the rules for the immediate consideration of House

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Resolution Number 2. Is there objection? Objection?
Hearing none, the rules are suspended for that
purpose.

Will the Clerk please call House Resolution
Number 2.

THE CLERK:

House Resolution Number 2, RESOLUTION RAISING A
COMMITTEE TO INFORM THE SENATE THAT THE HOUSE IS READY
TO MEET IN JOINT CONVENTION.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move adoption of
the resolution.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before the Chamber is on adoption of
the resolution. Will you remark?

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. This is the resolution that
raises a committee to inform the Senate that the House
is ready to meet in joint convention. It's
self-explanatory.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you very much.

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Will you remark further? Remark further? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of the resolution, please signify by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Anyone Nay?

The ayes have it. The resolution is adopted.

At this time, I will appoint Representative Candelaria, Representative Hamm and Representative Klarides to inform the Senate that we are ready to convene in joint session.

Are there any announcements or introductions? Any announcements or introductions? Representative Ritter of the 38th District.

REP. RITTER (38th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to be here with my colleagues today.

I'd like to make an announcement that the Public Health Committee will hold a committee meeting this Friday, February 5th, at 10:00 o'clock in Room 1D of the Legislative Office Building.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Tallarita of the 58th District.

REP. TALLARITA (58th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

I ask that the Chamber quiet down a little bit. It's hard -- it's getting hard to hear the people who are speaking. Quiet down a little bit.

Representative Tallarita.

REP. TALLARITA (58th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's wonderful to see you up there today.

For purposes of an introduction.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please, members of the Chamber, it's still pretty noisy. I really couldn't hear what the Representative had to say. If people could quiet down. Some people in the back, if they could tone down their voice a little bit, we could hear the introductions people are making. Thank you.

Representative Tallarita, please proceed.

REP. TALLARITA (58th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For purposes of an introduction.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, Madam.

REP. TALLARITA (58th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, seated with me, I have a special guest, Jim O'Donnell, who happens to be one of my colleagues and boss at my other job when I'm not here.

So he came down here today to see what I do when I'm not there, which is -- seems to be a lot these days.

And so I'd like the Chamber to please welcome Jim O'Donnell. He's from Suffield, Connecticut, and I'd like to introduce him to his State Rep, Matt Conway, as well.

Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you. Welcome to the Chamber. Representative Tallarita works very hard when she's here.

Representative Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY (110th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. For purposes of an introduction.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. GODFREY (110th):

Joining me here today, from the great city of Danbury, are two very -- two of my very favorite people.

From Danbury high school, I want to introduce who's -- they're standing up in the back, Anders Johnson, who has been quite a volunteer and is getting quite interested in the political process back at home. And he's here with his mom, Nancy Johnson.

Would the Chamber please give them a warm welcome.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Barry.

REP. BARRY (12th):

I rise for the purpose of an introduction, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. BARRY (12th):

Yes. I'd just like to introduce to the Chamber my son, Henry, who is seven weeks old yesterday.

And then, also -- oh, wave. Wave. Wave.

And then, reintroduce to the Chamber my son,

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Ryan, who's six. He's in kindergarten. He wanted everybody to know he learned how to tie his shoes last weekend. Good job.

And then my daughter, Caroline, who's clapping. She's three years old. She's in nursery school.

And then my wife, Lisa, who I won't let you know how old she is, but she's very young. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Thanks for introducing your wonderful family. Lisa, nice to see you again. Congratulations, everybody.

Representative Lawlor.

REP. LAWLOR (99th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For a point of personal privilege.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. LAWLOR (99th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my distinct honor to announce to all of you, my colleagues, and to our colleagues in the Senate, that all of us were the recipients of a national award recently.

Representative Bye actually attended the dinner and accepted the award on our behalf. It was presented by the Human Rights Campaign, which I think many people are aware is a national advocacy group for the GLBT rights.

They honored the Connecticut General Assembly for our bipartisan support, our ten-year long process to achieve marriage equality in our state.

Representative Bye has the award. It names all of us, so I just want to congratulate all of you on receiving this award.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you. Thank you, Representative. Thank the organization for their support for this Chamber.

Thank you very much, Representative Bye.

Representative Taborsak.

REP. TABORSAK (109th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the purpose of an announcement.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. TABORSAK (109th):

The General Law Committee will be meeting tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, Thursday, February 4th, at

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10:30 a.m. in Room 1C of the LOB. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Kirkley-Bey.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY (5th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For purpose of announcement, I'd like to announce the two young people who are with me today. I have Alfonso and Denise, they're both members of the Hartford Job Corps. And they're here to visit, to see what we do.

And they are furthering their education, going through the Job Corps. And I'd like us to give them a rouse hand of applause and a welcome. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Olson.

REP. OLSON (46th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good morning, Madam.

REP. OLSON (46th):

I rise for the purposes of an introduction, please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Please proceed.

REP. OLSON (46th):

Great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm so very pleased to have with us in the Chamber today one of our newly elected alderman, Mr. Tucker Braddock and his lovely wife Elizabeth. And I'm pleased to see you here today, and join us in the process.

We're looking forward to a very exciting budget year and we'll be working together with the City of Norwich. So thank you very much, and welcome.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Welcome to our Chamber.

Representative Lesser.

REP. LESSER (100th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. For purposes of an introduction.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. LESSER (100th):

Mr. Speaker, I have with me today two AP government students from Coginchaug Regional High School, who won -- they each won lotteries to be here today.

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passed and he really will leave a good legacy for our community of Wethersfield of open space and just to preserve our community.

Finally, I just want to thank Sheryl for showing the courage of coming up today with her family. I know it's not easy, but it's really a pleasure. And we thank you for coming up, giving us the opportunity to thank you and the entire community of the capital.

And just in closing, I just want to say he, chief, is a wonderful person. He was humble, a great police officer, a father and a leader in our community and we are truly going to miss him.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Senator.

Representative Russ Morin.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I have a few words of personal interest that I'd like to share for my constituent and my friend, Chief Mike Fallon.

When I first met Mike on a Little League field, our boys played baseball together, and I had never known Mike, and I thought as co-coaches of a team, I

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said, boy, I'm in trouble.

This guy has got a perfect physique. He's got more energy than anyone, and he's so -- I saw an intensity in him and a passion. And I thought, boy, what a guy.

And then as I got to know him I realized just what a great guy he really was. His interest in those kids, not just his kid, but everybody that played on that team was amazing. And that was my first opportunity to get to know him and I knew right there he was the real deal and he was a great man.

He loved his town, as Senator Doyle mentioned. When he came forth to work on that issue of open space, it brought many people from many different arenas into an issue. He went forth full throttle with passion. His children grew from that. They fed in to that as they got involved. Again, what a testimony to a man that can relay that and bring it out of his family.

Chief Fallon loved the service that he provided. I admire him as -- for his 22 or 23 years in the Hartford PD. Frankly, I admire all police officers. But then when he came here, this was a different setting.

And firsthand, I can tell you there were a couple of things that happened in my short time in the Legislature where I had received something that was considered threatening. And in a short matter of time, I called the chief's office. And within an hour, the issue has been addressed and the threatening comments that had been made to my family had been personally addressed by Chief Mike Fallon.

And he didn't do it because it was Russ Morin from Wethersfield, little league coach. He did it because he loved his job and he would have afforded that to any member of the General Assembly because he loved what he did and he knew how important it was.

And I guess most of all, and I'll save this for the last, is the love of his family. You know, whenever we would talk about anything, and I'd say, how is Sheryl and how are the kids, he lit up. He was so proud of his family. And everybody that's talked that knew Mike knew how proud he was of his family and how much he loved them.

And I guess all I would say to Sheryl and Mike and Teaghan at this point is, everybody has talked about how wonderful Mike was, your dad, your husband. Well, you are the reason that he was that great,

because he had such a love for all of you that he wanted -- he grew from that himself.

So, thank you again for sharing him with us and thank you for letting me make a few comments.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Now I'd like to call on Senator Coleman.

Why don't you use the Majority Leader's microphone, if you please, Senator.

SENATOR COLEMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, for many years I worked as a criminal defense lawyer in the city of Hartford. And I want to let everyone here know that working as a criminal defense lawyer, it is impossible not to encounter or cross paths with, or even lock horns with someone named Fallon.

The Fallons were known for a very long, distinguished and proud history with the City of Hartford and the Hartford Police Department. They were well known for an impressive and admirable integrity. They were firm. They were fair.

And Michael was a contributor and participant in this legacy of the Fallons because of his dedication to public service and to public safety.

I thought that he was ideally suited for the position of chief of the capitol police force. And Chief Fallon would probably say, if you can succeed in Hartford, you can succeed anywhere. And I imagine that those representatives from the City of Hartford Police Department would agree with that sentiment.

But he brought to this job a certain patience and a warmth and respect for others. And in all of the encounters that we all had with him, I think we share the perception that he was very adept at handling people because of his keen insight and understanding of human nature.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to express condolences to the Fallon family. You must feel a tremendous sense of loss. But I certainly hope that you that are comforted by hearing and understanding in what high esteem Chief Fallon is held.

Like others, I thank you so much for sharing this great man with the rest of us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Senator.

Representative Ken Green.

REP. GREEN (1st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You've heard a number of stories here. I could relate some of my own stories, however I would just like to say on behalf of the citizens and the residents of the city of Hartford, particularly those who I represent, we feel a tremendous loss for the service that he's given to the City of Hartford.

It was a pleasure to see Chief Fallon come here to the capitol. As a resident of Hartford, getting involved with a number of police issues, sometimes people may have different opinions of police officers. But sometimes, in the community when you approach an officer, how they treat you is very important, and he's always treated me with respect.

I appreciate seeing the Hartford Police and Fire Department here today and know that I will continue to support them.

And as Senator Coleman said, you know, we're as a family and as citizens of Hartford trying to do well.

For those colleagues of mine who won't be able to speak, I'm sure that they share also in working with Chief Fallon here at the capitol, that again, he always treated us with respect.

To the family, on behalf of the citizens of

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Hartford, we send our deepest sympathies and
condolences.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Kelvin Roldan.

REP. ROLDAN (4th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker and members of the Chamber, first
I'd like to start out on echoing Representative
Green's, Senator Fonfara's statements and express my
deepest condolences to the Fallon family.

Mr. Speaker, Mayor Perez, Chief Roberts, Chief
Teale, and members of the Hartford Police Department,
I met Chief Fallon in 2001 when I was asked to serve
in Mayor Perez's administration. Chief Fallon and I
worked on many issues together.

Many of you in this Chamber got to know the Chief
and I'm sure that in every single conversation you had
with him there was never a doubt for his devotion and
love for law enforcement and justice. He was just an
outstanding public servant. He will be remembered by
many in Hartford, by the Hartford Police Department,
capitol police department and uniformed bodies across
the state, as a true colleague and professional.

As mentioned by many, he had a very distinguished career with the Hartford Police Department. He grew up in Hartford, a son of Hartford, attending South Catholic in the south end, and ended his career in the police department as assistant chief and commander of the patrol division.

As assistant chief with -- along with Chief Roberts and Chief Patrick Harnett, Chief Fallon helped lead and champion community policing in Hartford, an effort that has resulted in the lowest crime rates in the city experienced in 20 years.

The people of Hartford and the people of the state of Connecticut are grateful for his service and commitment. I'm honored to have had him as a friend. And I thank his wife, Sheryl, children Teaghan and Michael, and family members for sharing Mike J. Fallon with us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Marie Kirkley-Bey.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY (5th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to Sheryl and the family, I offer my condolences. But my experiences

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with Michael were very different.

I was on the Hartford City Council about 22 years ago, and I said I want to go out with a patrolman, and I want this person to be from Hartford. And so, I get a knock on the door and there's this gentleman who's immaculately dressed, impeccable manners, absolutely handsome.

And he goes, I'm Officer Fallon and I've come here to take you out tonight to show you the Hartford nightlife.

I said, you're kidding.

So we get in the car. His car was immaculate. I mean, it was unbelievable. And that started the relationship between Marie Kirkley-Bey and Michael Fallon.

One day I parked illegally on Asylum. John Fonfara gets a call and says, who drives Legislative 5?

And he says, Marie Kirkley-Bey, Michael.

So he leaves me a warning ticket with, "Don't ever do this again." So no name, nothing. And I said, well, who is this? So he calls me up and he says, Marie, why did you have your car parked like that? You were blocking part of the driveway.

I said, Michael, I was just running in to get something for my father. I said, I wasn't gone ten minutes. You had to drive by then?

And he goes, yeah, because you were not doing what you were supposed to.

And I said, all right. All right. All right. All right.

And I had many conversations, like John says, with Michael, about things that I thought of, things about the Hartford Police Department. And I used to tease him. I would say, Michael, who gets to cut the turkey?

He said, well, I haven't gotten beyond my brother, Frank. So he says, not yet.

So then he got to be assistant chief. And I said, well, who does it now?

And he goes, I do.

So then I came here one day and I ran into him. I said, what are you doing here?

And he says, I'm the new chief of police.

And I said, you've got to be kidding me. So I gave him a hug and a kiss, and I said, congratulations, couldn't happen to anybody nicer. It's great to have you here. And he truly cared about

all of us that were here and he cared about the safety of this building.

He was always immaculate, if you looked at him. Michael was always immaculate, and he was trying to instill some of that into the other members of the state capitol police. And I know all the guys were very, very well dressed and whatnot but he just was a fanatic about it, and I loved him about that.

And he had such great respect for everybody. And he always treated you fairly. And he never showed favoritism.

I got to get a hug every time I saw him, but that was always when it was just the two of us. Other than that, I got a squeeze on the hand. But he was a sweetheart and I love him.

And as I said, from October 30, 1962, to December 4, 2009, May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind always be at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face. May the rain fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hands, Michael J. Fallon.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Betty Boukus.

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REP. BOUKUS (22nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while I never knew Chief Fallon from Hartford or anywhere else, I had the pleasure to be able to observe him in the capital. And I want the family to know how much this gentleman meant to the young children that come through this building.

He made an effort to stop and talk to them, and the "yes, ma'am" and the "no, sir" and the "yes, sir," they were just taken by him. And when I'd go back to a school afterwards and ask them, you know, what was your trip like? Oh, they just loved the chief. They just loved the chief.

So as much as we mourn and grieve and share in yours, we want you to know there are many children throughout the State of Connecticut that visited here every single day. They got -- were lucky enough to be able to get the opportunity to meet Chief Fallon.

Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

State Senator Joseph Crisco.

SENATOR CRISCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the circle, it seemed just like yesterday, on a very cold, rainy day, that services were held for Chief Fallon. And as I drove into the parking lot and saw his fellow officers standing in that cold rain, and then upon entering the church for the services, one felt the warmth and feeling of everybody in the church.

And when his wife and his children spoke, you couldn't help but feeling the stoic presence that existed. And it seemed like all of us, so unfair -- so unfair that a life of just a vibrant young father and police chief should be taken.

And I felt we should be doing something about this. And so that is why I want to commend each and every member of the General Assembly for their total support of our biomedical research fund and our stem cell fund, which has achieved significant gains in the fight against cancer. And hopefully, in the future, we will take action on the umbilical blood bank that will mean so much.

As a member of a family who lost a loved one shortly after Chief Fallon's passing, one experiences roller-coaster days. One day there is a smile on your face. The next day there is a tear in your eye. And

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that's because of the love and affection we have for those.

And in speaking of Chief Fallon, I would just like to quote Emerson, who stated, "To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded," and Chief Fallon has succeeded.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Toni Boucher.

REP. BOUCHER (143rd):

May 13, 2009:

Dear Chief Fallon,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the prompt, professional and attentive manner you and your staff exhibited over the past week addressing a threatening e-mail that was directed towards me.

The action of the state capitol police exemplified the highest qualities of law enforcement:

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honor, integrity, duty and respect.

The e-mail caused concern for the safety of my family and for the legislative process. The rapid response to investigate and apprehend the perpetrator was extraordinary and eased my distress. In addition to being highly trained, you and your officers kept me notified during the entire investigation and responded quickly to any questions or concerns that arose.

Yesterday, your department increased its security measures and supplied me with two officers who carried out their duty with diligence and professionalism.

Chief, your leadership, in response to this unfortunate event, was extraordinary and allowed me and my colleagues to conduct our legislative duties in a safe and secure environment. The state capitol police were outstanding during this unfortunate incident. A potential threat shook my sense of security, and the efforts of the state capitol police, under your leadership, restored it.

My family and I are grateful for all the work the state capitol police officers perform everyday, and particularly appreciative of your recent efforts to protect the democratic process.

Sincerely, Toni Boucher.

In the Legislature, you usually call the capitol police to ask for help with missing keys, a locked car, a missing computer, usually because we forgot something somewhere, and occasionally, even leaving them in the hood or on the hood of our cars.

If things get really intense, as they sometimes do in an overly congested or raucous hearing room, you call security. It's quite another thing, however, a shock, in fact, to receive a personal call from the chief himself while buried in a mountain of paperwork on your desk. That is exactly what occurred last May.

In a very serious tone, Chief Fallon informed me of his concern for my personal safety due to an intercepted message. As he never took any threat lightly, he carefully explained the actions he had already undertaken to protect my safety. Nevertheless, it's really shocking to listen to the dark tone and the explicit language contained in the message.

You can imagine, very well imagine, the thoughts going through my head. My concern of getting in my car in a deserted parking garage, or with the prospect of somebody lurking outside my home or near my family. But I need not have worried at all. Because only a

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few hours later, he called back on the phone. And as I looked out my window at the LOB, I could see that it was dusk when he called to tell me that they had located the suspect.

I couldn't believe that there was the sound of a motor in the background. When I asked the chief what was he doing, he apologized for being on his cell phone while riding his John Deere lawnmower. I guess that's a common story for the family, right? It was nearly nightfall, but there he was, mowing his lawn while taking care of me.

He had reassured me that he was getting to the bottom of it, and he did. And I'm not alone. You've heard other stories and I have another colleague in the Senate that was forced to endure a very similar experience, but with the very same positive result.

What I didn't realize, at the time, was that Chief Fallon was waging a battle of his own. I cannot tell you how moved to tears and how heartbroken I was when I learned that he had succumbed to his illness, an illness he has been battling undercover as he worked so quickly and professionally to secure my own safety.

I regret that I did not know of his suffering,

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that I could not tell him once again how much I appreciated his self sacrifice, his caring and warm way protecting me as he was quietly fighting for his own life. But I am grateful to be able to express my appreciation, and that of my family to his family here today.

Winston Churchill said, "Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality that guarantees all others."

You have heard from so many today that will remember Chief Fallon for his professionalism and commitment to duty and honor, but mostly for his strength of character and the courage he displayed every day right up to the very end.

We thank you for sharing this decent, courageous, honorable and valiant human being with us. You, as a family, should be so very proud of him, as we are.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR FONFARA:

I'd like to take a moment to recognize and thank the Mayor of Hartford, Eddie Perez, for joining us in this ceremony here today. Thank you.

And at this time, I would like to ask Acting

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Chief Walter Lee, who will present the state flag to Sheryl and the Fallon family, the flag that was flown over the capital this morning.

And from Mike and the family's very good friend, Capitol Police Lieutenant Stephen Hajdasz, who will present the City of Hartford's flag that flew over City Hall.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

As is our practice here in the House, I ask that the members please stand for a moment of silence in recognition of a fallen member of our family.

Thank you very much.

This concludes our memorial service. I want to thank the family, everyone who's joined in and saying thank you for a wonderful person who honored us with his presence and his work. Thank you all very much.

The House will stand at ease.

Chamber at ease.

LT. GOVERNOR MICHAEL FEDELE:

If I could have your attention please, I'd like to call this joint convention back to order. If you are having conversations that don't pertain to the

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joint convention, please take them outside. Thank
you.

At this point, I'd like to welcome and recognize
our legislative leaders before they go and get
Governor Rell.

To my right, Senator President Pro Tem Don
Williams. Senate Majority Leader Marty Looney.
Senate Minority Leader John McKinney.

One of the few times I can say this, to my right,
Speaker Chris Donovan.

House Majority Leader Denise Merrill. And my
very good friend, House Minority Leader Lawrence
Cafero.

Mr. Clerk, I believe we are ready to proceed. Is
there any business on your desk?

THE CLERK:

Mr. President, Clerk is in possession of Joint
Convention Resolution Number 1, LCO 205, RESOLUTION
RAISING A COMMITTEE TO INFORM THE GOVERNOR THAT THE
SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ARE MET IN JOINT
CONVENTION TO RECEIVE HER BUDGET MESSAGE. Introduced
by Senator Looney of the 11th District and
Representative Merrill of the 54th District.

LT. GOVERNOR MICHAEL FEDELE:

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Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I move adoption of the resolution.

LT. GOVERNOR MICHAEL FEDELE:

On adoption, will you remark?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Mr. President, this is our standard resolution convening a committee to invite the Governor to address the General Assembly in joint convention.

LT. GOVERNOR MICHAEL FEDELE:

Thank you, sir.

On adoption, would anyone else like to remark?
If not, I will try your minds. All those in favor, please signify by saying, aye.

CHAMBER:

Aye.

LT. GOVERNOR MICHAEL FEDELE:

Opposed, nays.

The ayes have it. The resolution is adopted.

Now that the resolution is before us, I'd like to call a committee of Senator Looney, Senator McKinney, Representative Merrill and Representative Cafero, to

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wonderful job. He was a terrific man and we will all miss him terribly.

I, also, before I begin, prepared remarks. I want to take this opportunity -- Mike did say I joined here 25 years ago. Can it really be that long? I had a beautiful seat right over there in the General Assembly. And when I just came in, the Speaker just said to me -- he said, welcome back to the House. I love the Senate as well, but there's some fond memories of the House and it's always my pleasure to be back in here with all of you.

I also will ask that you indulge me since this is my last State of the State. My husband has joined us today and God bless him. He's been here for most every one of these. And he is patient enough not to keep looking at his watch while I'm speaking. But if all of you will join me in saying, thank you, to my husband, Lou.

My son, Michael, is joining us. His wife is working. What else is new? And I do believe that my daughter and grandsons are watching us on streaming video in Colorado. So, you know, it's a family affair today.

But, to all of you, thank you for the wonderful

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memories that I have of being here, but we do have business to do.

So, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Williams, members of the court, members of the General Assembly and guests, good morning -- good afternoon now, to all of you.

We gather today to mark the opening of the 2010 Legislative Session. And we do so at a time of continued challenge and continued anxiety. None of us need to be reminded of the unparalleled struggles that we have endured over the last 22 months.

Our nation has been in the grip of an economic crisis unlike any witnessed in our generation. The stark reality of our struggles is all too real. Housing prices are down. Unemployment is up. The value of savings and retirement accounts are down. Mortgage foreclosures are up. The amount of debt, at all levels of government, is up.

Yes, the statistics are real and our emotions are raw. People are uncertain about the future. They are frustrated and they are angry about the present, and they have every right to be.

The people of Connecticut are looking to us to help them. They're looking to us to lead. They're

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looking to us to right our ship of state. They don't want to hear shallow lamentations of sympathy or understanding from their elected officials. They want action and they want assistance. And they want an end to the theatrical histrionics of political press conferences and partisan pinball. They want us to act like adults.

President Obama spoke eloquently about this last week in his State of the Union Address. He spoke of the nature and nastiness of politics in our nation's capitol. Frankly, he could have been speaking of our own state capitol, here in Hartford.

I will echo his sentiment, but I'll be a little bit more blunt. We need to stop the game playing and name calling and constant bickering that has come to consume too many at the capitol. There is no room for such pettiness on the playground. They're certainly shouldn't be in the Legislature, the Governor's office or the courts either. None of us are blameless in this regard.

All of us must accept our responsibilities to treat one another with respect and to listen, truly listen to the views or proposals or politics or policies of others. Our policies may differ, but we

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have to get along.

In the end, we may not agree with one another, but we should respect one another. We need not speak glowingly each other -- of each other, or each other's ideas, but we must speak civilly.

Let us replace acrimony with accommodation. Let us set aside the difficulties and the divisions of the last year and commit ourselves, truly commit ourselves, to working with one another, for we have much work to do and our work begins in earnest today.

Thousands of trees will be felled for the hundreds of bills that will be filed on dozens of topics. But our efforts, our energies this session should be focused on just two core issues: creating jobs and balancing our state budget.

Too many people have lost their jobs. And a lost job means a lost paycheck, lost security, lost dignity and lost hope for the future. Families across our state are hurting and suffering and struggling. We need to get to work to put the people of Connecticut back to work.

Today, I am announcing new proposals that will allow us to spur job creation now and chart a course of economic vitality and growth for years to come.

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The most critical problem facing businesses today, particularly the small and medium businesses that are our main engines of growth, is credit availability.

Employers need loans and financing to buy equipment and inventory, expand space or just to meet daily cash flow demands. As we all know, the credit crunch has crippled a great many employers. Financing that was readily available in years past is difficult, if not impossible to find.

This is a national problem, but we need to find a Connecticut solution to it. I am calling for the creation of a new Connecticut Credit Consortium, a \$500 million partnership between the State and Connecticut banks to substantially boost credit availability. I propose canceling \$100 million in old bond authorizations, and instead, use the funds for the consortium.

Our \$100 million will leverage at least \$400 million from banks all across our state. That's \$500 million that will immediately be put to work to help businesses save and create jobs.

And here's one key provision: \$25 million of the State's \$100 million will be targeted strictly for small businesses, for micro or small loans.

As I have said before, small businesses are the chief job creators. That is not in dispute, and neither is their need for credit. Their lifeline is credit and that lifeline has been cut off. Work with me to open up that lifeline to create jobs and to pass into law the Connecticut Credit Consortium.

I also ask you to help in passing other proposals that I am offering to reinvigorate our economy and create jobs. The first one modifies the relatively new but little used job creation tax credit. It was aimed at large corporations, but they are not availing themselves of it.

So I am proposing that we change it to benefit small businesses with 25 or fewer employees. Because most small businesses are limited liability corporations, LLCs and S Corps, we will, under my proposal, allow for the first time ever a credit against an employer's personal income tax liability.

The credit will be for \$2500 per year for three years for each new job created. \$10 million is already in the budget for this proposal and up to 4,000 new jobs could be created this year alone.

One area where we see a large number of new startups of small businesses is in green technology

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and clean renewable energy. Kermit the frog had it wrong all these years, I'm afraid; it is easy to be green. Solar, fuel cells, wind turbines and geothermal all hold the keys to economic and energy prosperity.

That is why I am proposing that we expand our sales tax exemption to include machines, equipment, tools, materials, supplies and fuels used in renewable energy and green technology. This is in addition to the work of my electric vehicle council that is preparing the way for green business opportunities for the arrival of the zero-emissions electric vehicles.

And there's one more component we still need to address and it is a critically important component, our workforce. We are recognized around the nation for the high quality and talent of our workforce. The best and the brightest are found right here in Connecticut, but we need to do more to keep them here.

We want our children to be educated here and start their work life here, and then raise their own families here. And our companies will only succeed if they have the qualified, trained employees that they need.

That is why I am proposing a new loan forgiveness