

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "The House will be in order. Members, please be in your chairs. We shall be led in prayer today by Wayne Padget, the Assistant Doorkeeper. Members and guests are asked to refrain from starting their laptops, turn off all cell phones, and rise for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Assistant Doorkeeper Padget."

Assistant Doorkeeper Padget: "Let us pray. Dear heavenly Father, you are the pillar of strength and shield. You are our shepherd who eternally guides us. Father, as we start Session today, be with us and guide our thoughts and actions. With your help, good things and new beginnings will happen to this great state. Father, we have faced many challenges in our state, some with impossible odds and others that are simply unbelievable. But still, throughout both of them, you come through for us. And, Lord, finally, we stand before you today because we hope for a better future. We pray that our investments, plans, and relationships will come to fruition. Walking in your light has taught us, by your power, we will persevere and win. Thank you for this Session, and you deserve nothing less than eternal glory. These things we pray. Amen."

Speaker Hoffman: "We shall be led in the Pledge of Allegiance today by Leader Burke."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "Roll Call for Attendance. Leader Gabel is recognized to report any excused absences on the Democratic side of the aisle. Leader Gabel."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Gabel: "Speaker, let the record show that Representatives Andrade, Chung, Jones, and Tarver are excused today."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Keicher is recognized to report any excused absences on the Republican side of the aisle."

Keicher: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please let the record reflect that Representative Jacobs is excused for today."

Speaker Hoffman: "Have all voted who wish? Have all recorded themselves who wish? Have all recorded themselves who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. There being 112 Members answering the roll call, a quorum is present. Mr. Clerk, Rules Report. Representative Miller seeks recognition."

Miller: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Miller: "I just want to take a couple of moments this morning to reflect on a few things that we've accomplished here in the lame duck Session. It's always important to take a moment of reflection. But we arrived on Saturday, and now we're in the fourth day of the lame duck Session. In the House, we were in Session for approximately 20 minutes on Saturday, maybe 30 minutes on Sunday, less than 2 hours yesterday, and so far, today, we're an hour and 40 minutes behind schedule. In the three days so far the Legislature has been in town, here's what we've accomplished: We voted on a whopping four Bills. We've held a handful of committees. We've read a few points of personal privilege. And we waited for hours for the Majority Party to get out of caucus. The bottom line is, three... we spent three days basically doing not much. Here's a little note of transparency. Every time we're in Session, the Member of this... of this Body get paid a per diem of, you

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

know, 170 bucks a day, give or take. And let's break down these costs. Every time the House is in Session, it costs the taxpayers over \$20 thousand per day in per diem alone, and if you add the Senate, that's approximately 30 thousand a day. So, Ladies and Gentlemen, just in per diem alone in the lame duck Session, as far as the costs to the taxpayers, it's a little over \$120 thousand, give or take. For us so far, we've done pretty much nothing. Imagine when you add in the cost of mileage, of staffing, of utilities, of security, of materials, et cetera. It's safe to say that the taxpayers are going to be on the hook for several hundred thousand dollars by the time we are done with very little to show for it. This is irresponsible government at its finest. We literally have done most of this... and by the way, we forgot to add the fun fact that we've done this in the middle of a... of a snowstorm. This actually wasn't an oops moment. The snowstorm had been predicted forever, and we had been out on the highway that the Illinois Department of Transportation has said, 'Please don't be on the highway.' This Body has done nothing to improve the quality-of-life issue for people that... that the things that they care about the most. We could've been working on the cost of living that's been fueled by inflation, which has all been caused by bad public policy. We could have talked about illegal immigration, which has been caused by bad public policy. We could've been talking about our failing education system, which has been fueled by bad public policy. We could've been talking about lowering the price of energy, which is all fueled by bad public policy. But yet, it's been crickets on all the kitchen-table issues that the citizens of

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Illinois care about. Instead, we're here doing nothing except spending tax dollars, which probably needs a greaser in the mechanism that fuels those dollars into the public sector. But for... but I would like to congratulate Speaker Welch. We drove through the snowstorm. We're here. We're spending tax dollars at thousands of dollars per hour. And it's no wonder that the citizens of Illinois call this Capitol Building the bad idea factory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "The Clerk is in receipt of a Motion in Writing to waive the posting requirements for a Resolution. Leader Lisa Hernandez on the Motion."

Hernandez, L.: "Speaker, I move that the posting requirements be waived so the following Resolution can be heard in committee: House Resolution 942 in Higher Education Committee."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "We request a record vote on this posting waiver."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Hernandez has moved to waive the posting requirements. All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. There being 72 voting 'yes', and 39 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And this Motion, having received a Constitutional Majority, the posting requirements are hereby waived. Leader Meier."

Meier: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Meier: "I'd like it a little quiet in here if I can, Jay. On the evening of December 23, Illinois State Trooper Clay M. Carns observed debris in the lane on southbound I-55 near Channahon.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

He put on his emergency lights, pulled over to the shoulder, and was going to remove the debris when he was struck by a vehicle. The vehicle violated Scott's Law, which was... the Body passed to prevent incidents like this from happening. Scott's Law requires vehicles to move over when approaching an emergency vehicle or any vehicle with its emergency hazard lights on. Trooper Carns was taken to St. Joseph Hospital in Joliet, where he passed away due to his injuries. Trooper Carns entered the Illinois State Police Academy on November 10, 2013 as part of the Cadet Class 123 and graduated on May 2, 2014. In 2022, Trooper Carns received the Violent Crime Expressway Ribbon for his work in helping combat gun violence and interstate shootings. He was assigned to Troop 3. Trooper Carns was a passionate public servant who will be remembered for his unparalleled dedication to his city, community, and state. Trooper Carns was only 35 years old and leaves behind his wife, Meghan; young children, Gray and Ally; parents, Patti and Danny Carns; and siblings, Chad Carns, Erica Raciak, Elyssa Carns. Trooper Carns was born and raised between Pinckneyville and Nashville, Illinois and has served the Illinois State Police for 11 years. His job as a trooper took one of Southern Illinois' finest up north to Orland Park with his wife and children. On January 3, 2025, Trooper Carns was laid to rest in Orland Park. Let us honor Trooper Clay M. Carns with a moment of silence. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Before a moment of silence, Representative Davis."

Davis, W.: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to Representative Meier for his words. On the 3rd, as I was

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

traveling to Springfield today, traveling west on I-80, I observed that traffic had been stopped for those cars heading east on I-80... on I-80, and they were stopped to allow the law enforcement procession to proceed unimpeded by other traffic on the expressway. I'm almost positive I saw no less than 200 law enforcement cars as part of that procession leaving Orland, heading to, I believe, Alsip for part of that ceremony. And that was the most impressive show of support that I had ever seen for a fallen officer. Not that we don't do it, we see the silent police cars traveling up and down the Dan Ryan sometime, but I had an opportunity to witness and see that show of support for that officer and his family personally. And it was overwhelming to see that many law enforcement cars from various jurisdictions participating. So, thank you very much, Representative Meier, for bringing this forward and allowing me to have an opportunity to share my experiences relative to what happened on January 3. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "The Body shall observe a moment of silence. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Leader Mah."

Mah: "Thank you. Thank... thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Democrats would request a caucus immediately in Room 114."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Keicher on behalf of the Republicans."

Keicher: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Republicans would request a caucus in Room 118, please."

Speaker Hoffman: "The Democrats will immediately caucus in Room 114, the Republicans in Room 118. The House shall stand at... committee announcements."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Clerk Hollman: "The following committees will be meeting this afternoon: Meeting at 1 p.m., Judiciary - Criminal's meeting in Room 122; Energy & Environment will meet in Room 114; Gaming will meet in Room 118. Meeting at 1:30 p.m. is Human Services in D-1, Labor and Commerce in Room 114, the Executive Committee in Room 118, and Higher Education in C-1."

Speaker Hoffman: "Members, we will go to caucus, and then we will proceed to committees, and then we will come back to the floor. The House stands in recess to the call of the Chair. Mr. Clerk, Committee Reports."

Clerk Bolin: "Committee Report... Reports. Representative Slaughter, Chairperson from the Committee on Judiciary - Criminal reports the following committee action taken on January 7, 2025: recommends be adopted, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 2 for House Bill 4144, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 4410, and Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 2 for House Bill 4828. Representative Ann Williams, Chairperson from the Committee on Energy & Environment reports the following committee action taken on January 20... action taken on January 7, 2025: recommends be adopted, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 2 to House... Senate Amendment(s) 1, 2, and 3 to House Bill 587. Representative Moeller, Chairperson from the Committee on Human Services reports the following committee action taken on January 7, 2025: recommends be adopted, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 2 for House Bill 4907. Representative Evans, Chairperson from the Committee on Labor & Commerce reports the following committee action taken on January 7, 2025: recommends be

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

adopted, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 297 and Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 2840. Representative Rita, Chairperson from the Committee on Executive reports the following committee action taken on January 7, 2025: recommends be adopted, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1, 2, and 3 for House Bill 817. Representative Stuart, Chairperson from the Committee on Higher Education reports the following committee action taken on January 7, 2025: recommends be adopted, House Resolution 942."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Benton, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Benton: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Benton: "First of all, I want to say merry Christmas to all of my friends and family that are celebrating Orthodox Christmas today. My family actually built a Serbian Orthodox church and chartered it in Joliet. And I also want to recognize and read a death Resolution honoring the father, Father Ned Lunich, that passed, that we're celebrating his life. We do this for one year after a death, and that's January 12. Father Ned Lunich was, first and foremost, a good man. He was somebody that had a little bit of a drier personality, was a real scholar, but would always be there if you needed him, whether it was a sermon, whether it was a ceremony, whether it was just having a conversation with him. He was a great man and very accomplished man. He ended up at St. George's Church in Joliet in 1974, where he stayed until his retirement in 2014. But even though he retired, he didn't just go away. He ended

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

up being part of the bishop's cabinet and received almost every single accolade that you could in the Orthodox faith. He had a lot of accomplishments within that faith, whether it was a member of the diocesan council or co-editor of *Path to Orthodoxy*. He served on many diocesan and central church committees during his long 50 years of service in the Serbian Orthodox Church. He was metropolitan deputy and the bishop's dean of Chicago, Chicago Deanery. He served the board of directors on the Serb National Foundation, which happens to be a foundation that was founded in 1901, and it celebrated Serbian-American folks from around the country and then also had deep ties back to Serbia. He was a member of the auditing board and the secretary of the Serb National Foundation Lodge 97 from 1974. And this is how impressive this man was. If you ask around the country and not only the State of Illinois, everybody kind of knew Father Ned Lunich because he offered that... that compassion and that... that charisma to have people get excited about being Serbian and the Serbian faith, and he received, exactly 50 years apart, the Man of the Year award through the Serbian National Foundation in 1973 and 2023, right before he passed a year later. So, I just want to take this moment to honor him, coming up on the one year, and very celebratory on Christmas for all the folks that celebrate within the Orthodox faith. So, just want to make mention of that and have a moment of silence."

Speaker Hoffman: "The Body shall observe a moment of silence.

Thank you. Representative Schmidt seeks recognition."

Schmidt: "Personal point of privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Yes, please state your point."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Schmidt: "Yes, I just wanted to recognize my chief of staff, Monica Gard. To my right here, her son, Bryce. They came up tonight to... to watch. Thank you for everything you do, Monica."

Speaker Hoffman: "Welcome to Springfield. Representative La Ha."

La Ha: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

La Ha: "Today, I would like to introduce both of my Pages for the day. This is my son, Cristiano, who's 10 years old. He loves baseball. And he's really interested in mayoral and village boundaries, so we may have another Legislator on our hands right here. This is my daughter, Ashlynn Grace. She's seven years old, and she loves American Girl dolls. And she has a brand-new boyfriend named A.J. They're here..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Meier."

Meier: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Meier: "I can't compete with that. So... but, you know, the last few days while we've been here and we've been watching all the winter weather outside, and you've been seeing the road reports and hearing this closures, I want you to remember one thing: No farm in the State of Illinois closed down for the weather. Those farm families are out there working. And as I talked to different ones in my district that didn't have electric in their houses because those generators were on the farm keeping water and heat for their livestock, to keep their family's farm going, they let the house get cold and freeze, but they protected their livestock. So, when you're drinking that glass of milk or you're eating that scrambled egg or

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

enjoying those wonderful pieces of bacon, think about those families out there in the cold so we can sit in a warm place and eat. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Kelly seeks recognition. Representative Kelly."

Kelly: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Kelly: "I rise today to bring attention to what I feel is an injustice being done to some of Chicago's hardest-working union men and women, the men and women of the Chicago Fire Department, my brothers and sisters. More than three and a half years ago, their contract expired. That's 1,286 days since we have had a contract. These men and women are the ones who protect the City of Chicago. They protect you. They protect your families. They're happy to do that, and they're proud to do that. What we are asking for is good faith negotiations, a fair contract, and investment in equipment we use to do our... to serve our constituents. In those 1286 days, the men and women in Chicago Fire Department have been at work every single day, 24 hours a day. For 1,286 days, the men and women of Chicago Fire Department have stood their posts, no break in coverage, no break in work action. Just last year, outside this Capitol, four new bricks were placed at the Firefighter's Memorial. Those names are my brothers. They paid the ultimate sacrifice protecting our constituents. In all this time, the men and women of Chicago Fire Department have not had one cent increase in wages. Every other worker in the City of Chicago has. We here on the floor have received salary increases in that time. To all my colleagues,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

specifically my colleagues who represent the City of Chicago, the structural disinvestment and a lack of urgency to address the glaring needs of Chicago Fire Department is a ticking time bomb. It's not the job of a Legislator... Legislature to negotiate union contracts, and I understand that, but we have an obligation to protect our constituents when the City of Chicago fails to. We need to take a hard look at mirroring nationally... nationally accepted language that limits the years of service apparatuses can be used on the streets. I am not exaggerating when I say that some of the apparatus we use day in and day out is older than some of the Members elected here on this floor. I don't think anybody here would use a 25- to 30-year-old vehicle to get around in a snowstorm or just to use for everyday use, but that's what we're using with the City of Chicago Fire Department. As many of you probably saw, the wheels are literally falling off the fire trucks under this mayor's administration. I urge this Body to make... to take some action. Call the alderman you know, call the mayor if you have his ear, but we've got a lot of problems with the... with the Local 2 contract of 1,286 days not being fulfilled and with the equipment that we are using. Since October 1, the City of Chicago has found the time to sit with our union three days. The last couple weeks, they've sat with the teachers' union every day of the week. Now, I don't believe that the Chicago Teachers Union should've been without a contract since the start of the school year, but I also think it's glaringly wrong that the men and women of Chicago Fire Department have done so for three and a half years. I ask you to urge Mayor Johnson to get this contract

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

done and show the men and women of Chicago Fire Department the respect they rightfully deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."  
Speaker Hoffman: "Thank you, Representative. Leader Keicher seeks recognition."

Keicher: "Mr. Speaker, if you could please excuse Representative Ugaste for the remainder of the day."

Speaker Hoffman: "The record shall reflect. Representative Weber."

Weber: "Point of personal privilege, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Weber: "Ladies and Gentlemen of the chamber, I would like to introduce you to my legislative aide here in Springfield, Illinois, Mr. John Gibbons. John also, besides working for me, also works with Representative Miller, Representative La Ha, and Representative Hauter. So, as we all know, it's hard when a member of our team chooses to leave here from our staff and go on a different path. But today, I think we can all be in agreement that Mr. Gibbons here has made a good decision. On Sunday, January 12, John will report to Marine Corps Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Virginia. John... John has shown dedication and professionalism to all he has served here. As John has served us here while in Springfield, I'm sure he will serve the American people just as well as a member of our armed forces. Thank you, John, for your service here at the Capitol for the people of the State of Illinois, and good luck on your journey and Semper Fi."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Hauter."

Hauter: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to echo those comments from Representative Weber and thank John for his

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

service to my district, my constituents, my office, the State of Illinois, and your service to the... the country and the Marine Corps. Thank you for that. And what people will do to get away from being in the office of Representative Weber is amazing. But congratulations and thank you again. Appreciate it."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Nichols on a Resolution."

Nichols: "Thank you. I have a real fun Resolution. It's not... you know, you don't have to stand. You don't have to start praying. It's just a really fun Resolution. Now, I'm not a Northwestern Wildcat, but this is really fun. House Resolution #972.

WHEREAS, A crude soccer-rugby combination game was played in Chicago as early as July 18, 1869; Northwestern University, using the rules created by Harvard and Yale in 1875, played the Chicago Football Club on February 22, 1876 on the Evanston campus to commemorate President George Washington's birthday in the first verifiable American football game and the first college football game played in Illinois, the Midwest, or anywhere west of the eastern states;

WHEREAS, The... the Massasoit Convention, held in Springfield, Massachusetts on November 23, 1876 between Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia Universities, had not yet occurred; and

WHEREAS, The game was played somewhere between what is now Lunt Hall and the Jacobs Building, the buildings that did not yet exist in 1876;

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

WHEREAS, No sign, no marker, no plaque, no monument currently exists on the Northwestern University's campus that indicates or commemorates where the game was played;

WHEREAS, It was agreed that the Chicago Football Club would play with 15 men and the Northwestern team would have 20 men, but by the end of the game, the Northwestern team had as many as 30 men on the side;

WHEREAS, The Chicago Football Club developed an early version of a football uniform, which was blue with a C on the shirts, but some on the Northwestern team came to play in the game with their baseball uniforms while others just wore street clothes;

WHEREAS, The ground was frozen, and the goal posts could not be put into the ground but instead had to be held up by volunteers;

WHEREAS, Despite the cold conditions, numerous celebrities attended the game, including Lunt, one of the founders of Northwestern University, who Lunt Hall and the Hotel named for him, also Francis Willard, the first Dean of the Women's Northwestern University, who became the important supporter of Northwestern University sports and became president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union; The Northwestern University team captain, Frank Cassidy... I know we got a Cassidy in here... a native of Evanston who became a physician, also played on the Northwestern University baseball team, along with Edwards, another member of Northwestern University's baseball team; and Northwestern players included Walter Lee Brown, Mr. Monroe, and Asher;

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

WHEREAS, The Chicago Football Club team captain, Gus Hornsby, organized the football Chicago since 1875, was listed on the roster;

WHEREAS, No known photographs to document the game were taken, but sketches were made by newspaper sketch artists; Various newspapers, including The Tripod, The Northwestern University student newspaper, The Daily Northwestern, The Chicago Tribune, The Chicago Times, reported on the game;

WHEREAS, The game was using a different scoring method what fans know now, ended with a score of 3 for Chicago Football Club, 0 for the Northwestern University, and three touchdowns by the Chicago Football Club;

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that was recognize the Northwestern University vs. Chicago Football Club game played on February 22, 1876 as the first American football game, the first college American football game played in Illinois; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge the citizens of Illinois to learn more about this historic event. I'd like to thank everybody for listening. My wife is a Northwestern alum and an Air Force veteran, so I thought on my last Resolution in the House of Representatives as the Mr. Athletic Guy, city (unintelligible) of Chicago, I chose this to be my last Resolution. Thank everybody for listening."

Speaker Hoffman: "Going to page 3 on the Calendar, on the Order of Concurrences appears House Bill 2547, Representative Olickal."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Olickal: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. House Bill 2547, the Warehouse Worker Protection Act, the... I move to concur on Senate Amendment 1."

Speaker Hoffman: "Would you like to explain what's in it?"

Olickal: "Senate Amendment 1 addresses the number of employees in eligible warehouses, increases the days of notice, and includes the definition of adverse employment action."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this Motion appears Representative Reick."

Reick: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Reick: "Representative, in committee we talked about adverse employment action and the definition of that. And you said that adverse employment action as it is defined in the... it's defined as is defined in the Illinois Whistleblower Act. However, that's not the case. The Whistleblower Act defines adverse employment action as an action that is... that is... a reasonable employee would find materially... Mr. Speaker, could..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Members, Members, keep the... keep the volume down, please."

Reick: "Thank you. In committee you testified that adverse employment action, as it's dealt with in this Bill, is defined as it is in the Illinois Whistleblower Act. However, this is not the case. The Whistleblower Act defines adverse employment action as 'an action that a reasonable employee would find materially adverse. An action is materially adverse when it could dissuade a reasonable worker.' This... this line is excluded from the Bill. Why did you leave out this portion of the definition?"

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Olickal: "The definition is materially the same. It's still... it says in the... in the language, 'average employment action means an action that a reasonable employee would find materially adverse.'"

Reick: "I think a little bit stronger language of 'reasonably dissuade' would be a lot more appropriate for this thing, given the fact that the employer is basically flying blind on this thing. The Bill provides the... the Department of Labor full discretion to assess damages and civil penalties. It... legislation typically provides for monetary caps and guidelines. Why haven't you done so here?"

Olickal: "Well, the department is going to have to go through the rulemaking process through JCAR to... to come to an agreement on what that... what those damages look like."

Reick: "Shouldn't that have been provided for in the statute instead of resorting to administrative rulemaking? Because we're going to be looking six months down the road on rules, and we're going to have people going into court right now saying, 'I've been treated badly and had a material adverse reaction... effect.'"

Olickal: "Well, the Bill does not take effect until January 1 of 2026."

Reick: "The fact remains is that instead of relying upon the rulemaking process, what you're doing is giving an administrative agency, sort of, carte blanche to be able to provide rulemaking that may fit the needs of the employee, as opposed to giving the employer an opportunity to understand what it is, is going in. This... this undue reliance on administrative rulemaking shouldn't be... shouldn't be done."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

You should've provided for some sort of guidance within the statute. You should've provided guardrails for that, don't you think?"

Olickal: "I think the guardrails are going to be found within JCAR when they go to the... the rulemaking body to make that determination. So, I... I don't think it's necessary that we put... include it in the statute."

Reick: "Well, as a member of JCAR, I would respectfully disagree because it's the kind of thing that comes to us far too often without any kind of underlying understanding of what was in the statute to begin with. Have you engaged with any business groups on this Bill? Well, who... if you did, who were they and what were their concerns?"

Olickal: "So, we engaged with the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, IRMA, the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. That's where some of the changes in language came from, taking the notice from two days to five days, and some of the other changes in the language came from... they came from those conversations, and including increasing the number of employees in eligible warehouses."

Reick: "All right, let's go back to materially adverse. Can you give me an example of what would be a materially adverse action?"

Olickal: "There is a body of case law that paints a picture of what materially adverse is. So, I can't give you... I can't give you that specifically."

Reick: "Thank you. Okay, we're changing the standard of evidence from preponderance of evidence to a rebuttable presumption. Why are we doing that?"

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Olickal: "That language follows with what we've seen with the implementation of this law across the country. We're talking about a higher standard to protect against retaliation of workers who speak up about job conditions. And so, we believe that this is the standard that should be in place."

Reick: "When you currently establish a prima facie case for adverse employment action, the employee must articulate a nondiscriminatory reason or rationale by a preponderance of evidence standard that considers individual circumstances and pretext. This language automatically assumes employers' actions are adverse without a clear definition. How is that fair to the employer?"

Olickal: "I think it's fair to the employer in that, you know, they still have to still... they can... you know, they're allowed to fire an employee, but it just requires that they provide specific evidence. We have data... we're seeing incidents in Illinois where workers are being outright afraid of filing complaints. One out of three workers who have been fired or let go report that they were terminated for speaking up about problems on the job. We're talking about employees who are low wage who don't feel like they have a voice in... in their... in these warehouses. And so, we feel that the... the burden should be, you know, should not be so high on an employee seeking to advocate for their rights."

Reick: "Don't we... is this going to cover warehouses that are covered by collective bargaining agreements?"

Olickal: "Yes."

Reick: "So, if a collective bargaining agreement provides for a certain remedy and a certain way of... of dealing with these

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

things, this law has the potential of overriding that and creating that rebuttable presumption?"

Olickal: "A dispute over a collective bargaining agreement and a dispute over a part of this Act will be handled separately."

Reick: "In what way?"

Olickal: "This will go through the complaint process, and then any sort of grievance within a... with a union will go through that... their... through the union process."

Reick: "What are protected activities that employers should know, as long... that they should not engage in? Why is this not defined in the statute? And can you define protected activity?"

Olickal: "The understanding is that it's any right granted by the Act."

Reick: "Well, that's a circular argument. Can you answer that... my question, please?"

Speaker Hoffman: "The Chair will implement a three-minute time limit."

Olickal: "Again, the... the employee can't be retaliated against for any right... any act that is granted under this Act. That's... that's what that is."

Reick: "How far does the statute go with former employees who can request a record of adverse employment? Can... is this... is there a lookback provision in this Bill?"

Olickal: "The employee can request data up to 90 days."

Reick: "Ninety days what?"

Olickal: "After the end of their employment."

Reick: "There's not a clear definition of adverse employment action, but this Bill still allows for current and former

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

employees to bring a private right of action that may result in frivolous lawsuits for the court and costly litigation for employers. How do you protect against that?"

Olickal: "I think the idea that we're going to see frivolous lawsuits is unfounded. This law has been in place in Minnesota for over a year. They haven't seen incidents like that. We're talking about warehouse workers who are very low wage. They're not going to be... you know, they're not going to be filing lawsuits and hiring lawyers at a ridiculous rate once this Bill passes. This is about just enforcing warehouses that engage in this sort of quota system and efficiency algorithms to just be transparent about that to their employees to avoid injuries and avoid... to try to stop the... the high burnout and high rate of injuries that we're seeing in this warehouse industry."

Reick: "Well, knowing the propensity of trial lawyers to be able to troll for business by putting adds on TV saying if you think you were harmed by an adverse employer reaction, I think you're... you're being a little bit optimistic on the issue of not having frivolous lawsuits."

Olickal: "I mean..."

Reick: "How many other states require an employer to document adverse employee... employment actions?"

Olickal: "Sorry, could you repeat that?"

Reick: "How many other states require employers to document adverse employment actions?"

Olickal: "This Bill does not require..."

Reick: "I'm not saying that. How many other states do?"

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Olickal: "I... I mean... I don't have that answer, and I don't think this Bill has any... it doesn't address that at all."

Reick: "Why are we vesting sole authority within the Department of Labor to allow... to make rules surrounding the damage amount in civil penalties? Why are you not going through the legislative process as we do with other Bills?"

Olickal: "The... they're the agency with the most expertise on this subject matter. And, again, they're going to go through the rulemaking process through JCAR, and we believe that'll be sorted out there."

Reick: "To the Bill. This is just another attempt to further drive business out of the State of Illinois because what we're doing here is we're placing undue... undue liability... or undue burdens upon this... upon employers to prove a case that's already prima facie decided against them without the ability to understand or to have the normal way that lawsuits are done. Show that... me that you have suffered damages and then come to court. Don't issue... don't issue a rebuttable presumption. All this is going to do is make it harder for new businesses to come into this state and make it more likely for other businesses who are affected by this to move. We are in a... we're, again, giving something away in exchange for nothing to satisfy and appease a particular interest group. Vote 'no' on this Bill. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative, please close."

Olickal: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with the characterization of this Bill. What this Bill does is simply require that we stop the... that we require employers who are using quotas, invisible quotas, that force employees to work

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

at breakneck speeds that are... that are... that is exactly the cause of what we're seeing in these warehousing industry, where we're seeing injury rates in warehouses increase year over year. We're seeing injury rates in some of these warehouses like Amazon that are three times higher than any... than competing warehouses. We're at... that we are at such an unsustainable pace, that we may run out of warehouse workers in the... within this space. So, when we talk about what we're doing to affect businesses, I believe that what we need to do is protect employees, provide safe working conditions, and that's the way that we're going to drive business in Illinois. And so, I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2547?' This is final action. All in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there's 79 voting 'yes', 34 voting 'no', and the House does concur... having received a Constitutional Majority, the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2547. Moving to Supplemental Calendar #1, Leader Gabel on House Bill 4907."

Gabel: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to concur on Senate Amendments 1 and 2. I will describe them. It does... the Amendments have... there's three issues that these Amendments address. The first is the Amendment cleans up language from the Medicaid omnibus, a Bill that we passed in the spring of 2024 related to STRIVE nursing homes, per diem add-on payments for staffing. The Bill that we passed had a different formula

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

than CMS eventually came up with, so we just need to change it to match the CMS formula. A second piece is the Amendment increases the population threshold for contiguous counties to allow two hospitals to operate under a single license. This is for OSF in Urbana and Danville to be able to merge and become... work under as one hospital. And the third piece is a technical piece. The Behavioral Health Administrative Burden Task Force is planning its first meeting, and they need to change some of the language. They... it says that they can designate an entity or entities rather than a nongovernmental entity to provide administrative support. They were offered free support from a... a governmental agency, and they would prefer to use that. So, three simple administrative changes."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, the Chair recognizes Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Windhorst: "Thank you. Leader Gabel, with regard to the... the STRIVE funding, is this being done to align us with federal standards?"

Gabel: "Yes, it is."

Windhorst: "And what... what difference are... are we at right now and what will we be going to with this change?"

Gabel: "So, the way that we put it in... let me see here. You know, we made certain assumptions on the... on the expected numbers. Staffing level is based on the facility's census and patient acuity is the way that we did it, and the federal government just... let's see, the federal government wants it a different way. They calculated the average differently than HFS

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

assumed. CMS did a simple average of staffing, whereas HFS calculated the number based on a weighted average."

Windhorst: "And regarding the portion that is... that has been requested by OSF, that would allow their hospitals, as you mentioned, in Danville and Urbana to operate under one license. Is that accurate?"

Gabel: "Correct. Correct."

Windhorst: "And that will help the sustainability of those hospitals, they believe?"

Gabel: "Yes, particularly Urbana."

Windhorst: "And what is the change to the Workforce Direct Care Expansion Act? I believe there's a task force involved."

Gabel: "The third one, yes. It just... let me look. It just... let's see. Oh, it just allows the task force to use a nongovernment entity to do administration."

Windhorst: "And we show that there are proponents from the Illinois Health Care Association, Community Behavioral Health Association, and, of course, OSF, the Health and Hospital Association, Leading Age of Illinois, Illinois Health Care Association, and HCCI. Is that correct?"

Gabel: "Yes, they've all agreed to... to this language."

Windhorst: "Are you aware of any opponents to the Bill?"

Gabel: "I... I am not."

Windhorst: "And this passed the Senate 55 to 0. Is that correct?"

Gabel: "It did. And it just passed out of committee with everyone voting for it."

Windhorst: "Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Gabel to close."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Gabel: "I'd appreciate an 'aye' vote on these cleanup changes to allow us to operate effectively."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 4907?' This is final action. All those in favor vote 'aye'; opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 112 voting 'yes', 0 voting 'no', 1 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 4907. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Returning to Supplemental Calendar #1, on the Order of Concurrences appears House Bill 587, Leader Gabel."

Gabel: "Thank you, Speaker. I would also like to concur with the Amendment... Senate Amendments 1, 2, and 3. So, this Bill is the... what we're calling the skinny... a skinny energy Bill. We had bigger, grandiose plans. And we have even bigger grandiose plans for later this Session, but this is a small Bill that's just to correct a few... a few items so that we will be able to have enough power to meet the growing electric needs that we seem to have in this state. We have worked together with the Senate, the Governor's Office, with agencies such as the Illinois Power Agency, the Commerce Commission, with labor, AFL-CIO, with industry, with advocacy groups like Sierra Club, and the utilities, ComEd and... and Ameren. We've all worked together, and this is an agreed upon Bill. The Bill has about eight different pieces to it. I'll say... discuss them briefly. We can discuss them more. The first one is it creates an ICC workshop on energy storage procurement. We

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

were discussing a procurement for... for battery storage, and we realized there was a lot to discuss. We needed... so, we decided to just... for the ICC to do a workshop on this. The report that they will come up with requires and must include equity language on how to adopt CEJA's equity standards for renewals to any energy storage. Two is establishing a safety standards for electric transmission. This also will require contractors to develop a diversity plan. Third, it allows the Illinois Power Agency flexibility in procuring required amounts of wind and solar energy. Right now, it's... it's mandated they have 55 percent solar, 45 percent wind. This allows them some flexibility that they should do as best as they can to meet those goals, but not restrict them completely. This also extends high impact business designation to businesses establishing battery storage facilities in the state. They would then be eligible for tax incentives. Six, allows newer technologies called microinverters to qualify for the distributed generation rebate program. These are... microinverters are what... what solar panels and batteries use to produce electricity. And when the Bill was written originally, it only discussed one kind of microinverter. And today, there are different kinds, and we just want to make sure they're all included. It requires the Illinois Solar for All program to calculate incomes on an annual basis to align with federal programs. We'd been doing it an average of five years. In this we have to do it every year. And it clarifies the use of grant funds received by taxing bodies in Zion as part of an energy transition community grant. One of the bigger items in the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Bill is to correct a problem that we've had with large utilities being able to start their renewable projects. Banks have been worried about outlier extreme scenarios where energy prices go super low for a long time and renewable contract payments would have to increase above what IPA had projected and result in delays in payments to renewable projects. This change would, in the Bill, would essentially signal to the banks that the IPA would honor the contracts, that they will get paid, and IPA gets flexibility to slow down other procurements and manage costs year to year in order to make sure existing contracts get paid. So, the result is that renewable projects can get financed and built quicker. So, as I said, it's a pretty skinny Bill with some basic corrections, and I ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "On that question, Representative Severin."

Severin: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Severin: "Leader, I just wanted to take an opportunity to talk on this Bill. When I heard it was skinny, I wanted to get involved, but just had to throw it out there. Didn't think I'd ever get to talk about skinny on the floor. Couple questions I have for you. If the cap of 4.25 percent is removed, do you guarantee there will not be a rate increase for our consumers in the future?"

Gabel: "Yeah, we... we do not expect a rate increase. Even if rates go slightly above the cost cap in one year, that money is essentially being kind of borrowed from the next year. This Bill really gives the IPA flexibility to be able to not increase... not have to... what they will do is they will just

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

stop buying procurements until... until the rates are regularized."

Severin: "So, again, this Bill guarantees there won't be a rate increase for consumers?"

Gabel: "It absolutely gives IPA the flexibility to manage those outlier scenarios."

Severin: "All right. Next question, the battery storage workshop cost, will we bring this back to the GA to determine any rate increases or will the ICC determine those rate increases?"

Gabel: "It will be brought back to the General Assembly."

Severin: "I appreciate that. And then also, I just wanted to say a couple things. To the Bill, please."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Severin: "Ameren, since CEJA has been instituted, their rates have increased 50 percent. I want everyone to hear that. Since CEJA has been instituted, Ameren's rates in Southern Illinois have increased 50 percent. That's on business and homeowners. Also, I want to say this, that the Prairie State, they right now have a 90-day battery backup. You know what that is? It's a pile of coal in Southern Illinois. I just wanted to share that with you. Thank you very much."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Meier."

Meier: "You said in committee... well, will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Meier: "You said in committee that some roadblocks have come up, and that's why you need this... this Bill today, for the solar. Is that because wind and solar aren't fiscally viable yet?"

Gabel: "No, it's because the IPA was not being flexible."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Meier: "Were not being flexible. Okay. Do you believe that there will be no rate increase?"

Gabel: "I do believe that."

Meier: "We've heard those words before."

Gabel: "There's no procurement in here. It really... I..."

Meier: "You're putting a four and a half percent in here. You're bringing in more Illinois taxpayers' dollars to back up this program. Our electric rates in Southern Illinois were at 10 cents a kilowatt hour, basically average, before CEJA. Afterwards, we're at 15 cents. That's a 50 percent increase. Now, I know the people in the PJM... PJA... PGM did not feel that because ComEd got several hundred million dollars again in CEJA for nuclear energy. So, they actually had a rate decrease, while we in Southern Illinois had to pay the extra for it. When CEJA came in, you were putting \$250 million a year into clean energy of taxpayer dollars from Illinois. When it came in, your projections were to be at 14 percent. You were at seven percent for the State of Illinois, even though our co-ops and municipalities were at 14 percent clean energy already while using coal. So, you think that you can say there today that you're not going to raise our energy prices when we've seen what you've done already? Do you know today, as we sit in committee, did you see the lights flicker? I thought it was very appropriate as we're talking about energy to..."

Gabel: "Someone turned the lights off."

Meier: "...let lights flicker in the Capitol. Can you tell me the make up what our energy right now in this building is or where it's being produced?"

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Gabel: "Pardon?"

Meier: "Can you tell me the makeup of the energy in this building?  
Where's is it coming from?"

Gabel: "I think it's coming from the coal plant in Springfield."

Meier: "And across the State of Illinois, 40 percent is coming from coal, 35 percent is coming from natural gas, 12 percent is coming from nuclear. So, in all that money, now that we put the extra money in from CEJA, which is billions of dollars, we've only gone up five percent. And you're here today asking for more money, even though it's not fiscally viable yet to produce wind and solar. Our residents can't afford, specially our senior citizens and our businesses, can't afford another 50 percent jump in electric for us to keep paying for these wind turbines and solar panels. We're throwing our billfolds, our purses, and a checkbook into a fire to try to keep warm. I found it ironic that handwarmers were being handed out today by... by Illinois Environmental Council. We can't keep on supplementing this. Now, in my county, a small county in Southern Illinois, there's 33,000 acres of prime Illinois farmland proposed to be taken out of production and to go into wind and go into solar. That's putting the food on everybody's table in this room. And we're going to supplement taking that food production away. We're going to let that food production go down to South America. We're going to let them ship it back up here in ocean liners, and we're going to become a country that doesn't pay five or six percent for our food, but a country that's going to pay 20 percent of our annual income on food because we're not going to be producing it here. We're going to be trying to

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

produce clean energy while they bulldoze down the rainforest, which put more carbon back into the ground, more than double any forest in the United States because they're keeping their leaves on all year long. Now, number five.."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative... Representative, Representative Swanson gives you three minutes."

Meier: "Number five, you talked about the battery storage. I'm requesting, you said, but I'm requesting anything that has to do with battery storage does have to definitely come back to the Legislator. It's not something Illinois Commerce, it's not something Illinois Power Authority can do to make this happen. It's got to come back here."

Gabel: "It will."

Meier: "Okay. What safeguards are being put on these battery facilities?"

Gabel: "That is going to be worked out in the workshop. I will bring it all back to the GA, and we can discuss it."

Meier: "Where are these battery facilities going to be?"

Gabel: "That's going to be worked out in the workshop, and we can discuss it."

Meier: "Well, if you're going to put them by where we're producing it, am I going to be the next brownfield site in the State of Illinois because of what happens to these batteries in 10, 20, or 30 years? I have worries about that. My constituents have worries about it. We don't want to be a brownfield site. We want to clean up our brownfield sites. We don't want to make more. I believe these batteries pose a true threat to us. Now, why are enterprise zone tax relief incentives being

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

given to these battery sites when they're not in an enterprise zone?"

Gabel: "It will only be given to them if they're in an enterprise zone."

Meier: "It will not go to them if they're outside? There's not no special legislation carving out and saying you should have the say?"

Gabel: "No."

Meier: "Okay, I'm glad of that. There any requirements in here that's stating that this has to be made in America? We're sending billions of dollars of Illinois taxpayer dollars over to China for solar panels that are made over there. We're taking the product from South America, shipping it in an ocean liner over there, bringing it back, paying some of its sweatshop labor prices to China, and they're not being married there. Are there any things in there to make sure this is made in the United States?"

Gabel: "There's nothing produced in this Bill, so."

Meier: "Well, I think there should be. You know, just to... just to sum this up and give you something to think about. In... in ongoing battles on our energy Bill, in the battles of politics and physics, in the end of the day, physics always wins. You're creating a cliff here that we're going to fall off. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Davidsmeyer."

Davidsmeyer: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Davidsmeyer: "Thank you. So, on this Bill, we... we've kind of... a couple people have kind of glazed over this... this part just

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

a little bit. When... when this Bill was originally passed, they capped the amount that rates can increase to four and a quarter percent. Is that correct?"

Gabel: "Yes, I believe that... that is."

Davidsmeyer: "So, why... why was there a cap on that?"

Gabel: "To keep the cost low."

Davidsmeyer: "To keep the cost to ratepayers low, correct?"

Gabel: "Correct. Yes."

Davidsmeyer: "'Cause ratepayers are going to have to pay that four and a quarter percent."

Gabel: "Yes."

Davidsmeyer: "So, for those, anybody who's listening, the four and a quarter percent is profit insurance, right? Because they're bidding into this and they're bidding this at a... at a level of profit to ensure that they can cover the cost of their project, correct?"

Gabel: "Correct."

Davidsmeyer: "So, now we're coming back, less than a year later, and we're saying, yeah, we put a four and a quarter cap on this to protect ratepayers, but now we're going to allow them to charge more to ensure more profit for these companies on the back of ratepayers. And there's no cap on what the IPA can charge, correct? On currently running projects."

Gabel: "No. No. That's... that was put in there just in case, in one year, they may have to go above the cost cap, but it will not be... it will not cost the consumers anything. They are required to... to really manage their... their finances. It gives them the opportunity to manage it. As you know, sometimes the cost of... of energy goes up one year, down the next year, so

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

this will just allow them to... to manage it. They also can just stop doing procurements until this is reasonable. So, to do... the cost would occur if they did another procurement, but they are not going to be doing any more procurements. That is one of the way they would control..."

Davidsmeyer: "Who pays... you told me a minute ago that the ratepayers, the consumers pay that four and a quarter percent. So, now you're saying, no, they don't pay it? Who pays it?"

Gabel: "No, no. It would... it would be averaged out so there wouldn't have to be an increase."

Davidsmeyer: "Averaged out, paid by whom?"

Gabel: "By the IPA to... for the procurement."

Davidsmeyer: "So, it's paid by taxpayer dollars? The IPA is funded by taxpayers."

Gabel: "Yes, so by taxpayer dollars."

Davidsmeyer: "Is it funded by taxpayers or ratepayers?"

Gabel: "Yes, they... they already... they have quite a bit of... of funds."

Davidsmeyer: "That's not a yes or no. That's a... is it funded by taxpayers or ratepayers?"

Gabel: "I think it's taxpayers."

Davidsmeyer: "It's funded by taxpayers? So, now we're going... this is a... an income tax increase if... if the cost of power goes up?"

Gabel: "No, I'm going to repeat myself again. So, this is... this is giving the... the IPA some flexibility so that they will be able to pay for the procurements that they... they do and that banks will have more security to know that these contracts will be paid. It does not..."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Davidsmeyer: "So, the state is personally guaranteeing..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Davidsmeyer. Leader... Leader Davidsmeyer, would... Representative Niemerg gives you three minutes."

Davidsmeyer: "Thank you. So, somebody has to pay for it, right? So, if... if the cost goes over... so, we are... we are..."

Gabel: "Not if they manage their finances."

Davidsmeyer: "The state is backing these projects so that these projects can go to banks and get backing for their projects. So, we as a state are backing these projects, right, guaranteeing profit. But if the cost of the project goes over, then we're guaranteeing that taxpayers will pay more to cover the cost of the... the rates?"

Gabel: "It... it just gives them the flexibility to use... to, in essence, kind of borrow from next year. But it doesn't cost the taxpayers."

Davidsmeyer: "It costs somebody something. If it's... if it..."

Gabel: "Not when you borrow money that's... they already have all this... these funds in their accounts. They can use some of that, and the next year it... the cost could be lower. It... honestly, it... it is a... these are outlier situations, and it would... they said it would be at a time when... when prices were very, very low for a long time."

Davidsmeyer: "They were very, very low for a long time because we were an energy producer state. Now, we are an energy consumer state. Our cost of producing energy is super high right now because we are getting rid of the... of the forms of energy that we can count on. Somebody has to pay for this."

Gabel: "Yeah."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Davidsmeyer: "There's just not money sitting in some account somewhere waiting to be used. And what happens if that dries up?"

Gabel: "Yeah, I... I don't..."

Davidsmeyer: "Every year we provide a budget for the IPA..."

Gabel: "...I don't know if I agree with your assumptions here. I... we are still a producer state."

Davidsmeyer: "We... we are not a producer state. We import energy. So, to... to the Bill. I just want people to understand that somebody has to pay for the cost of this, right? And it is the consumer, it is our taxpayers, it is our ratepayers that pay for every bit of this Bill. So, if you think that you're not voting for an increase, a cost increase to taxpayers or to ratepayers, who is paying for this? Who do we think is paying for this? I... I am not opposed to new technology moving forward and, you know, new renewable energy, but it has to be able to produce itself. I'm all for that stuff. I've got a 12-year-old. I've got a 15-year-old. I want them to live in a clean environment. The reality is these new forms of technology have to be able to... to take care of themselves, otherwise all you're doing is putting additional burden on grandma, who's already got a hard time trying to pay her... her rate bill right now, right? I just got my Ameren bill, and it... it's at least \$75 more from the month of December this year than it was last year, and I guarantee the same will happen in January because look at the weather we're having right now. All we're doing is putting additional burden on taxpayers and ratepayers. Please vote 'no'. Let's try this a new way."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Halbrook."

Halbrook: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Halbrook: "Thank... thank you. Leader Gabel, there's a couple of headlines that I want to kind of make sure that you've seen and kind of dive into this Bill a little bit. This is... the *Tribune* had opined earlier this fall, the headline was 'Illinois passed an ambitious climate act 3 years ago. But it's struggling to meet clean energy goals.' Have you read that? Have you read that story?"

Gabel: "I've heard that."

Halbrook: "Yep. So, just a couple of excerpts from this one. 'Three years ago, after the state passed the Climate Energy Jobs Act, which aims for 40% renewable energy by 2030, the state isn't meeting its annual clean energy goals. Just 7% of the state's retail electricity came from wind and solar in 2023-2024, far less than a goal of 22% included in CEJA, according to data from the Illinois Power Agency.' It goes on to talk about how wind is lagging behind. 'In 2007, the state set a goal that 25% of its retail electricity would come from renewable energy by the year 2025.' That's interesting. Tonight, today, on the MISO app, which governs the regulation of electricity in a dozen-plus states from north to south, including most of Illinois but not Illinois, or not northeastern Illinois, we are getting less than one percent of their energy from solar, six percent from wind. We're importing right now a percent and a half. But the lion's share of our electricity comes from coal, oil, and natural... or natural gas and nuclear. The other headline that I want to

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

talk about is more recently in the *Tribune*, where the Governor of five states, including Illinois, calls for shift action on rising electrical bills. Have you seen that headline, Leader?"

Gabel: "I have not seen that one in particular, but I'm aware of it."

Halbrook: "Yeah, so, our own Governor is bemoaning the increase in PGM electrical rates here. 'The letter comes after a recent PGM auction for such electricity resulted in a bill of \$14.7 billion for consumers in the coming fiscal year, compared to 2.2 billion just the year before.' This is driving costs up. And the reason I bring this up... and with all due respect, Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting Bill. It's a complicated Bill. I wish the timer would be removed. More importantly, I wish that we weren't in the waning hours of lame duck Session to... to debate this really, really important policy that it appears that on the adoption and the... the attempt to implement FEJA and CEJA that it has tons and tons of failings. This is nothing more than a massive rewrite of appears... what appears to be all the shortcomings in those two prior pieces of legislation. Again, it's a massive 291-page Bill that we've had about 24 hours to look... look at, and thankfully, I guess, we've had that. But what we've seen with the implementation of these two prior Bills, and it's all predictable what has happened here, it's drove our energy costs up. It's shut... shutting down... has shut down and is shutting down our Illinois energy production. It's created job losses. And, again, we're importing less clean energy from out of state."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Miller gives you three minutes."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Halbrook: "Thank you. Leader, does this... does this Bill, and in what way, does it address the failures in FEJA and CEJA? And before you answer that question, does it have an acronym like FEJA and CEJA?"

Gabel: "So, the purpose of this Bill is to make it easier for renewable projects to get financed and to get built. There have been long queues in both PJM and MISO, which have made it difficult for these projects to get financed. And we are... we really want to make sure that these projects can get financed, built quicker. Wind and solar are cheaper than gas and coal, and we want to make sure that they can get on the grid. There has been a problem getting them on the grid, mainly because of these financing issues, the long queues. And this is... that's one of the things that this Bill is trying to address."

Halbrook: "Yeah, so to your point about these projects not being able to get financed, Leader. In the world that most of us live in, if a project doesn't get financed, it's because it's not feasible to be..."

Gabel: "No."

Halbrook: "...a working project. And so, to stand here on this House floor chamber, chamber floor, and to make a statement that solar and wind is cheaper, but then we have to have all this state and federal legislation to prop it up, that's just simply not true. I don't know how you can make that statement. Yeah, please explain how... how that is possible without this legislation to prop it up. If... if these projects were sustainable, they were cheaper, they would get financed."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Gabel: "The issue with the financing is that they have not been... been had any security, and this Bill is going to help with that. They're going to make sure that... that their... that they would get paid. So, finances don't like to invest in things that they're not sure they're going to get paid."

Halbrook: "So, if it was a viable project..."

Gabel: "So, with this change, the IPA... with the IPA, they will be assured that they will be paid."

Halbrook: "Right. So, all we're doing here to... to add security to these failing projects is to transfer or to put the burden on taxpayers, on ratepayers, one way or the other, to make sure that somebody, that the... that the creditors are going to get paid on this thing. I don't know how you can say that any differently. Well, let's move on. So, let me ask you, you mentioned earlier about the... the reason for this Bill. I guess, is it... is it just to... to add security into these people that are financing these projects? Is there anything in it that..."

Gabel: "That is one of the... that is one of the things. There are a number of smaller items, which I discussed earlier, around looking at energy storage. There's going to be a workshop set up for that. I discussed how the... the solar and wind are going to be getting a little more flexibility between 55 percent and 45 percent, requiring the Solar for All program to calculate incomes on an annual basis. They're... it's a very small Bill with no procurement and no cost to consumers."

Halbrook: "I find it remarkable that..."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Gabel: "I think you're... I think you're arguing with me about a Bill that was passed three and a half years ago, and that's not the Bill that's on the table right now."

Halbrook: "Well, I'm not trying to relitigate Bills of the past, but this is a Bill that fixes those failings..."

Gabel: "Well, it sounds like it."

Halbrook: "...of the past. And, again, all those Bills of the past have done nothing but make our grid less reliable, and it's... and it's cost us jobs, it's causing us to import our energy from out of state, and it's making the energy that we are buying from out of state less clean. And, again, this is driving costs up for consumers. Let's move on. So..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative, your time has expired. Leader Keicher. Leader Keicher."

Keicher: "Mr. Speaker, will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Keicher: "I've not had the opportunity to speak with you on this directly, but I'd be shocked if you hadn't heard some similar concerns, some of it already today. I want to ask about the procurement process from IMA, Ameren, and others. I know they share similar concerns. I think everyone just wants assurance that the procurement can't proceed without further legislative authorization after the ICC workshop and issuance of their report. So, to clear and confirm this, Representative, I have a couple of questions for the purposes of legislative intent and implementation, if that's okay."

Gabel: "Sure."

Keicher: "First, I'm looking at page 280, beginning on line 14. My question relates to the workshops and the report that is

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

ultimately to be provided. Is it your intention that the Illinois Commerce Commission and the Illinois Power Agency include broad and diverse stakeholder input? For example, including important economic groups, such as the Illinois Manufacturers' Association, retailers, Illinois Industrial Energy Consumers, and Consumer Utility Board?"

Gabel: "Yes, it is our intention to have a very broad representation at the workshop."

Keicher: "Thank you. And secondly, I'm looking at page 281 of the Bill, beginning at line 1, and my question is whether I am correct in my understanding that after May 2025, before any procurement under this legislation, there will be a need for clarity 'cause there was a lot of noise last time we were talking about this. There will be a need for further action to be taken by this Body, and that is the intent of the language in this Bill."

Gabel: "Yes."

Keicher: "So, in other words, no one can proceed with battery storage procurement absent further legislative action?"

Gabel: "Correct."

Keicher: "Thank you for the clarification of legislative intent."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Reick."

Reick: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Reick: "I want you folks to pay attention to the... the verbal sleight of hand that we've been listening to for the past 20 minutes or so. The Sponsor of this Bill is saying, 'We don't anticipate a rate increase.' When everybody says, 'I don't anticipate it, I don't anticipate a rate increase, I don't

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

anticipate having to go to the... to the voters for a tax increase, I don't anticipate running for president,' what we're looking at here is verbal sleight of hand that says we're not looking to run at rate increase. But I want you to also understand that rate increases come in many forms. The form that we're seeing here is the rate increase that is built into this Bill, which of course was built into CEJA, which is the whole reason for it's being, otherwise it would've been out of business years ago. But the tax increases that have to pay for the subsidies that go into making up the difference between what they want, and what they say we need, and what we're willing to give is also a rate increase. Yeah, the folks in Southern Illinois are seeing it directly on their power bills right now. There's no question about that, and it's tragic. The people in the north, up where I live, we're not seeing it yet on our electric bills. Although, of course, we will. We are going to see, however, increases in other taxes because they need the money in order to do the subsidies that will pay for this fiasco. So, when you hear them say, 'We don't really anticipate a rate increase,' when you're... when you hear in May that they're shooting for a tax increase, that is also going to pay for the subsidies on this legislation. Don't be fooled. Money is a fungible commodity, and here is the dirty, little secret: They're going to grab it from you from wherever they can get it. They're going to be out front about it because they've already done it in Southern Illinois. They're doing it to us in the north, and it's going to do nothing but get worse. I would like to yield

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the balance of my time to my good friend, Representative Halbrook."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Halbrook."

Halbrook: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Halbrook, I assume... Representative Caulkins, do you want to give three minutes to him or do you want to talk? Representative Caulkins also gives three minutes."

Halbrook: "Thank you. Leader, so, it creates a new... this Bill creates a new Electric Transmission Systems Construction Standards Act. Can you explain to the Body what that is and what that does?"

Gabel: "Yes. So, it creates some new standards for utilities and contractors. One, it requires the... pay employees wages consistent with the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act. Two, requires electric utilities and contractors to demonstrate the competence of their employees by proving participation in apprenticeship programs. And three, requires employees to have conducted OSHA-certified safety training and... and requires them to develop a diversity plan.

Halbrook: "So, thank you for that explanation, Leader. Aren't those things already included in CEJA and FEJA and state law and federal law? I mean, that seems like we're just kind of repeating what we already have. I... why are we redoing this and reinventing the wheel here?"

Gabel: "I think they... people just wanted some clarity and to make sure that it was understood.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Halbrook: "Okay. Can you explain this part about how it amends the Illinois Enterprise Zone Act and the... and the relationship to high impact businesses and how that factors into this?"

Gabel: "Yes. So, it just states that for the high impact business... let me look, one sec. That it extends... extends the high impact business designation to businesses establishing battery energy storage facilities in the state."

Halbrook: "Further..."

Gabel: "They will be able to qualify as well."

Halbrook: "Thank you. So, also, there's an Amendment to the Energy Community Reinvestment Act. And... and my analysis here is, just to paraphrase, requires that 75 percent of the Energy Transition Community Grant funds obtained by local government that are taxing authorities for a nuclear plant that was decommissioned before January 1, 2021 be used for property tax abatement. What... what nuclear plant is that, and why is this process being used here?"

Gabel: "So, it's Zion, and this was... this was in the original legislation. And it was not... it was... it was just stated that the money should be used for economic development. Except that in Zion, they had a handshake agreement that it would be used for property tax abatement since that nuclear power plant closed and they don't get any taxes from it anymore. And then some of the governmental bodies reneged on that handshake deal, so there was a request to please put it in the Bill."

Halbrook: "That seems interesting that we're doing handshake deals with taxpayer money."

Gabel: "Well, we're trying to give it back to them in property tax abatement."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Halbrook: "Okay. Seems strange, but that's okay. So, can you explain to me why there's no opposition on this Bill? It... it seems strange that there's, like, tons of proponents, but is it just because we've only had this language for 24 hours, and the... the opposition..."

Gabel: "No. No."

Halbrook: "...has not had time to review it and weigh in?"

Gabel: "Everybody... we've been working on this Bill for months. It's because we invited everyone to the table, and we took all... everyone's opinions, and we crafted a... a Bill that... that there is no opposition to."

Halbrook: "Thank you. I also heard in committee and I read here about ICC's role in the... the standards when it comes to..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Wilhour gives you three minutes."

Halbrook: "Thank you. Can you explain, is the role that ICC plays with the diversity requirements and... and all of those different things, and I can look at that further, but do they play this role in other things, or is this a brand-new role that they play when it comes to managing this?"

Gabel: "I know that they're in this Bill. My... my assumption is that they have played that role before. This is not a new role for them."

Halbrook: "Say that again, please."

Gabel: "My assumption is that this is not a new role... role for them, that they have done this before."

Halbrook: "Okay. So, how do they... how do they police that, and what's the teeth in this Bill that gives them the authority

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

to implement whatever things that need to be done? I... I heard a little bit about this..."

Gabel: "Sure."

Halbrook: "...in committee, but I was a little bit unclear about how ICC enforces the diversity plan."

Gabel: "Well, compliance with the safety standards and the diversity plan requirements of this Bill... as required for contractors, and they need it in order to receive a certificate of public convenience and necessity, and that certificate is required to perform construction."

Halbrook: "So..."

Gabel: "So, if the ICC doesn't give them the certificate, then they... then they are... then they can't perform their... their job."

Halbrook: "So, does the diversity plan have measurable benchmarks..."

Gabel: "Yes."

Halbrook: "...and accountability mechanisms?"

Gabel: "Yes, it does. It's in the... it's in..."

Halbrook: "Is that written into this legislation?"

Gabel: "Okay, it requires them to have a plan with measurable requirements and... and data to... to prove it."

Halbrook: "Yep."

Gabel: "And that's all."

Halbrook: "So, what's..."

Gabel: "And that's all."

Halbrook: "So, what is the protection from contractors to bringing in foreign labor?"

Gabel: "That's not... that's not addressed in this Bill."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Halbrook: "So, they could do that?"

Gabel: "Yeah, they would still have to pay the prevailing wage no matter where the workers came from."

Halbrook: "Okay, thank you. Mr. Speaker, to the Bill. We could go on and on, and again, I appreciate the opportunity to come back..."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Halbrook: "...and... and I think I appreciate Representative Leader Wilhour for yielding me his time. Ladies and Gentlemen, this is bad legislation. We'll be back. We've already heard it tonight. We'll be back sometime this spring with more legislation to fix this failed policy. This is things that we do over and over again in this place, is pump out bad policy. And as I heard my seatmate speak earlier today, this... this chamber has... or this facility has been named the bad idea factory, and this is yet another shining example of a bad idea. Ladies and Gentlemen, vote 'no'."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Gabel to close."

Gabel: "Thank you. Thank you all for listening for this length of time. I appreciate it. I... I would just like to say that CEJA was... was passed a few years ago because of our severe climate change, and I think that we all recognized that. We've seen the effects of climate change. We've seen the effects on... on storms, extreme storms, extreme heat, extreme cold. This is something that we must do. We must move from fossil fuel, which emits carbon into the atmosphere, into renewable energy. This Bill has a few small changes that will help us, will help us get renewable energy on the grid, and I urge an 'aye' vote."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in... in Senate Amendments #1, 2, and 3 to House Bill 587?' This is final action. Those in favor vote 'aye'; those opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 74 voting 'yes', 39 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendments #1, 2, and 3 to House Bill 587. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. I would like to recognize the Treasurer, the Treasurer of the State of Illinois, Mr. Michael Frerichs. Please give him a round of applause. On page 2 of the Calendar, on the Order of Second Reading appears House Bill 867, Representative Guzzardi. Mr. Clerk, please read the Bill. Senate Bill 867."

Clerk Bolin: "Senate Bill 867, a Bill for an Act concerning State government. The Bill was read for a second time previously. No Committee Amendments, but several notes have been requested and have not been filed."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Guzzardi on the notes."

Guzzardi: "My understanding is that the notes have been filed, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "I think your request is to withdraw the notes, Representative Guzzardi."

Guzzardi: "Any... any notes that have not been filed, I request to withdraw those..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Mr. Clerk."

Guzzardi: "...note requests."

Clerk Bolin: "No... no further Amendments. No Motions are filed."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "Third Reading. Please read the Bill, Mr. Clerk."

Clerk Bolin: "Senate Bill 867, a Bill for an Act concerning State government. Third Reading of this Senate Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Guzzardi."

Guzzardi: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief since we debated this Bill at some length in May before it was pulled from the record for parliamentary reasons. The Bill before us today provides that the state will convey Shabbona Lake and State Park to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, subject to a land management agreement. Just a quick reminder, this issue began 195 years ago with the second Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1829. The U.S. government set aside two sections of land for Chief Shab-eh-nay in what's now DeKalb County. Over the years, the United States changed almost every part of that treaty as it displaced Indian tribes west of the Mississippi River, but it purposely left intact the two parcels for Chief Shab-eh-nay in recognition of the work that he did for peace in the area. He lived there for many years with his family. Decades later, in the 1840s, the chief went to Kansas to visit his relatives down there, who had been displaced to reservation land. He came back a few years later, in 1850, and discovered that his home had been removed and the land had been sold in violation of U.S. treaty obligation. The Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation has been trying to reverse that illegal sale ever since. Starting in the 18... the 1960s, the state used federal conservation dollars to acquire land in around this area. The state built a dam. They created a lake and a state park in the area. The park today is roughly the size of the two parcels that were promised to the tribe in 1829. So,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the nation has agreed to relinquish its claim on the treaty land through an act of Congress in exchange for acquiring the park from the state. That's the synopsis. I want to make a few points before we start, and these are things that you're going to hear me say over and over again in this debate, but I want to start with them now so they're not news to anybody. First of all, in the Bill, the land transfer is contingent on a land management agreement between DNR and the nation that will keep the park a park, and it will keep the park open to the public. If there's no agreement, there's no transfer. So, the land does not get transferred with the passage of this Bill. It is pending a land management agreement to keep the park a park. There's been a lot of talk in this room and in this building about casinos. We'll get into this in tremendous depth, but I want to be very clear: The nation has no desire nor intent to build a casino. It would be against state and federal law for them to build a casino, and I have committed to working with Legislators in this Body on a trailer Bill in the spring, before the land transfer happens, to clarify that there will not be new gaming on this land. A couple of other points. Some amateur historians have suggested that Chief Shab-eh-nay once tried to sell this land. That claim is a little dubious, but even if it were true, there's a law called the Indian Nonintercourse Act that says that Indian land can't be sold without an act of Congress. So, whatever scrap of paper someone might have dug up from the 1840s does not supersede acts of Congress. And this brings me to my final point. The federal government has recognized the validity of the Potawatomi's claim to this land for decades under multiple

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

federal administrations, Republican and Democrat, including as recently as 2024 when a portion of this land was placed into reservation. This land is legally theirs. And the tribe, they could've gone to the courts to resolve this, but instead they came to us to work out an arrangement. It's a fair deal. It's supported by the local elected officials, the village president of the village board of the Village of Shabbona. The Dekalb County Economic Development Council is eager to see this done. The area's Republican State Senator spoke on the floor in favor of this Bill. This Bill passed the Senate 49 to 7. It passed the Senate 49 to 7, and I urge us to find that same spirit of bipartisanship here today. And I ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Fritts."

Fritts: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to House Rule 68, I would like to move that Senate Bill 867 be recommitted to the Executive Committee on the basis that during its initial... its initial trek through the Executive Committee, none of the property owners were allowed to come and testify. They have since hired a lobbyist, and I think when we talk about an issue that's this big, it would be in the best interest of the people of Illinois to have the lobbyist be able to testify. I move for recommit, and I would like a record vote on the motion."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Fritts, we will get back with you. Would you like to... would you like to proceed, or would... do you want us to stand at ease until we have the answer?"

Fritts: "I would like to stand at ease, please."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Fritts, we would ask for a Motion in Writing. In the meantime, we'll go to..."

Fritts: "The rules..."

Speaker Hoffman: "We'll get back to you. In the meantime, we'll go to Representative Vella."

Vella: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield for a question?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Vella: "All right. The experience of gaming in the State of Illinois has been a great revenue generator, and I know you have said that there will not be any gaming on this land."

Guzzardi: "Should we talk about it? Let's get into it."

Vella: "Let's get into it. Right."

Guzzardi: "Please."

Vella: "Good. Can you commit, on the floor here, that there will not be any gaming, including casinos, bingo parlor, poker room, any gaming on this land?"

Guzzardi: "I can. I've spoken to the tribe about this. I want to say something... if you don't mind, I'm going to take a moment to go beyond just a yes here."

Vella: "Please."

Guzzardi: "So, there's federal law that says that gaming is not permitted on tribal lands unless that tribal nation enters into a compact with the state in which that reservation will be located. Illinois has a law called the Native American Gaming Compact Act that says the Governor can't just do these compacts on his own. It requires an act of the General Assembly to ratify that kind of compact. So, right now, no matter what happens with this Bill, they can't do gaming on

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the land without an act of the General Assembly. This Bill does not enable them to do gaming on the land. They have committed to me, to you, and to the people in this room and in public, they don't want to do gaming on this land. They want this to be a park and for people to come and enjoy the natural beauty of this land. And I am committing to you here, in front of all of our colleagues, that I will work with you on a trailer Bill in the spring to reaffirm their commitment and my commitment that there will not be gaming on this land."

Vella: "And... and I want to thank you for setting up the meeting, and it was great to talk to them. And so, again, I just... just to clarify, you said you're... we're going to work on a trailer Bill next Session to... to make sure there is no gaming or no... no casino, no any... any gaming at all on that land."

Guzzardi: "We will work on that trailer Bill together, you and I, next Session."

Vella: "Yes, that'd be great. We'll go out to dinner. It'll be fun."

Guzzardi: "I look forward to it."

Vella: "I guess one more question."

Guzzardi: "Please."

Vella: "Let's... let's say they change their mind tomorrow after we pass this Bill. Are you... I mean, are we..."

Guzzardi: "Yeah, so, it's a good point. The Bill does not transfer the land. The Bill says the land is only transferred when a land management agreement is reached. And that's not going to happen before spring Session is done next year. So, we will have a chance to pass this trailer Bill before the land

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

transfer is enacted 'cause that land management agreement is going to take some time."

Vella: "I... thank you very much. I have no more questions."

Guzzardi: "Thank you, Representative."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Ammons, then we'll go to Leader Windhorst."

Ammons: "Thank you... thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Ammons: "First, I'd like to commend Leader Guzzardi for consistently working on this issue from last Session. I hear the debate and the discussion. Of course, I was stopped, along with others, about the question of a casino on this land. I'd like to just draw the Assembly's attention back to the point of ownership and sovereignty. In Illinois, of course, Illinois was not a free state as people try to purport. There was slavery in the State of Illinois until after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. But they were also a part of the Trail of Tears that was part of Southern Illinois that moved the Native American nations out of the region and took their land. And so, in doing so, this Bill is extraordinarily important. Not only restoring the land and the land rights because that is the only way for economic viability, but also to provide for those who are the real owners of that property and land the opportunity for sovereignty as nations. They have the right to sovereignty, and we should respect that right of sovereignty and not put before them colonial practices that prevent them from doing what they need to do on behalf of the people that represent those nations. So, I rise in support of Representative

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Guzzardi's work and thank him for taking up such an important and crucial issue in the moments that we experience here in the United States. Thank you, Representative Guzzardi, and I move for an 'aye' vote on this measure."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Point of Order. House Rule 55 provides, under House Rule 55(c), 'A motion to commit or recommit, until it is decided, precludes all amendments and debate on the main question.' I believe debate is not in order until we decide the Motion to Recommit."

Speaker Hoffman: "We're waiting on the parliamentarian. Leader Windhorst, under rule 54(a)(1), the presiding officer, which would be the Speaker at the time, can require that the motion can be in writing. We have not received that motion. Therefore, House... House Rule 55(c) does not apply. We'll return to Representative Fritts. Representative Reick. Representative Reick."

Reick: "Mr. Speaker, it appears that developments are occurring in the back part of the room here that I would like to defer my comments until you have a chance to further investigate what is going at in the back of the room, please."

Speaker Hoffman: "We've ruled. We've already ruled."

Reick: "I'm sorry, what?"

Speaker Hoffman: "We have ruled that there's no motion. The motion has not been filed in writing. Therefore, there's no motion before us, so we can proceed."

Reick: "All right. Well, I'll waste your time while we're doing this. One thing that we talked about... one thing we... to the Bill. One thing we talked about during our discussions in the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

spring is the simple fact there are like 38 landowners, homeowners, people who have bought property in good faith who reside within the boundaries of this particular proposed transfer. And their titles are at risk because the federal government, through all the machinations, the... the transfers back, the... the transfers from the federal government to the tribe, abandonment as ruled by the... by the federal government, the State of Illinois has never been a party to a contract with the federal government to take title to the land. That being the case... that being the case, there is a cloud on title to at least the 38 parcels of property that sit within this boundary that if it becomes... if the time comes when any of these people decide they want to sell their properties to anybody but the Potawatomi band of nation, which is going to drive down the real estate values, they're not going to be able to do it because of this cloud of title that exists within the federal government. The answer to the issue of whether or not this property can be transferred under this... under this scenario rests with the federal government because the federal government at this point still holds a colorable pretext of title on at least the property that is owned by the 38 landowners, or occupied by the 38 landowners, who are not part of this... of what's going to become the park but are nonetheless within it. So, I would say that no matter what we do here, the State of Illinois does not have the legal authority to transfer this property because it never entered into any kind of an agreement with the federal government to transfer this property back to the State of Illinois. If what we're doing is saying these folks deserve it because of years

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

of whatever happened to them and Chief Shab-eh-nay being a great guy and all that kind of stuff, let's do it the right way. Let's get our federal representatives involved in making this clear that the federal government's claim of title, as unlikely as it may be, is still a claim on title that could color the value of these properties because it limits the ability of these people to sell their properties when the time comes. Can I have three more minutes? Yeah, I need..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Haas gives you three minutes."

Reick: "Thank... thanks. Thank you, Representative Haas. If we're going to do this, and I have no dog in this fight, I've... I've gone... well, have you gone fishing at Shabbona? Sorry, you've never been there. Okay. The simple fact is, is that if we're going to do this... and, again, I don't have a dog in this fight, but the simple fact is, if we're going to do this, we have to do it according to the way the law provides. And the law, at this point, is one where the federal government has an interest in this property for its failure to properly transfer the property to the State of Illinois, which they're using as an excuse to give this property to the Potawatomi Nation of Indians. So, if we're going to do it, I don't have a problem with it. I'll help you work with it, Will. But this is not the way to do it. There's a federal lien on this property, and it ain't going nowhere with this Bill. Vote 'no'."

Speaker Hoffman: "The Chair is in receipt of a Motion to Recommit Senate Bill 867 to the Executive Committee pursuant to Rule 68. We're in receipt of it. We're handing it to the Clerk,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

and it shall be referred to Rules. Representative Fritts seeks recognition. Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parliamentary inquiry."

Speaker Hoffman: "State your parliamentary inquiry."

Windhorst: "When is Rules scheduled to meet?"

Speaker Hoffman: "To be determined."

Windhorst: "Mr. Speaker, point of order. The rules clearly envision a Motion to Commit or Recommit to be heard during debate and not to be referred to Rules during debate. The motion has been filed. Debate cannot proceed until that motion has been decided. It may be referred to Rules, but then this Bill needs to be pulled from the board until Rules meets and disposes of the motion."

Speaker Hoffman: "The Chair has ruled."

Windhorst: "I appeal the ruling of the Chair that the motion should be sent to the Rules Committee."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Windhorst has asked that the Chair be overruled. The question is, 'Shall the Chair be sustained?' All those in favor of sustaining the Chair vote 'yes'; all those opposed vote 'no'. The voting is open. On this motion... Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this motion, there are 69 voting 'yes', 38 voting 'no'. And the Chair... the Chair is sustained. Representative Fritts on the Bill."

Fritts: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Fritts: "Thank you. Representative Guzzardi, we meet again on this issue and look forward to having some lively debate. Let's start from the beginning again as we talk about this. Where is this park located?"

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Guzzardi: "It's in DeKalb County. I had the pleasure of visiting it just last month actually."

Fritts: "You were?"

Guzzardi: "Yeah, yeah."

Fritts: "You were at the park?"

Guzzardi: "I was, yeah. I went to the... I went to Shabbona Cafe in the Village of Shabbona. They actually have a lovely little postcard with your face on it in the front... the little... the bulletin board in the front of the cafe."

Fritts: "So, you would say that people in the Village of Shabbona like me?"

Guzzardi: "I would say they like this Bill."

Fritts: "Oh, okay, interesting. Very interesting. So, if you were in my district..."

Guzzardi: "I was."

Fritts: "...being a part of this, and you're looking to run a Bill that directly affects the constituents of my district, it's pretty unbelievable, I can look back at my phone records, but I don't believe I had a call or a text from you to meet out there or discuss this issue at all since the last time that we debated this on the floor."

Guzzardi: "Representative, as you know, the... the tribal nation has done extensive outreach with you over the course of years. I know that you visited their reservation in Mayetta, Kansas."

Fritts: "I did, absolutely."

Guzzardi: "They flew you down for the powwow. They worked closely with your predecessor on this issue, who was a big supporter of this Bill. I... I think that we have a fundamental difference

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

of opinion about the... the right course forward here. So, yeah..."

Fritts: "So, because you think we have a fundamental disagreement, you don't even want to have any conversations about it on our home turf? You don't want to let me take you out and introduce you to constituents who are directly affected by this?"

Guzzardi: "Representative, I... I appreciate that, and I would simply say that we've attempted to engage you in productive discussions about this issue, the nation has, over the course of years, and I think we've reached an impasse, which is why we're here today."

Fritts: "Interesting. It seems like that's your name up there sponsoring this Bill. The nation can do whatever they want, but you haven't..."

Guzzardi: "I know they wish... they wish it would've been yours."

Fritts: "...you haven't directly reached out to me."

Guzzardi: "Yeah, they wish it would've been your name on that Bill, Representative."

Fritts: "I wish it would too because it wouldn't be nearly as horrendous as it is right now. All right, so let's just back up to the beginning here. We had... in that agreement 195 years ago, there were two sections given that were a total of how many acres?"

Guzzardi: "Twelve hundred eighty acres."

Fritts: "Twelve hundred and eighty acres. Awesome. And you say that that land was stolen, correct?"

Guzzardi: "It was sold illegally, yes."

Fritts: "It was sold illegally."

Guzzardi: "Yes."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Fritts: "Who sold it illegally?"

Guzzardi: "The land agents of the U.S. government."

Fritts: "Land agents of the U.S. government. Very interesting, Representative, because I hold right here in my hand, right here in my hand a deed out of a library, one of our state libraries here in Chicago, of 640 acres, 1 of those 2 parcels that was sold by Shab-eh-nay to the Gates family of Lee County, and for 1200 acres for... or for \$1200 back in the 1800s. So, if..."

Guzzardi: "Representative..."

Fritts: "...if you say that the federal land agents illegally sold this Bill, this is directly opposing what you're saying. Because if anybody illegally sold, it looks like Shab-eh-nay himself illegally sold, correct?"

Guzzardi: "The... you're aware of the Indian Nonintercourse Act, Representative? Do you want to tell the Body about what the act does?"

Fritts: "You go ahead."

Guzzardi: "Oh, I'd be happy to."

Fritts: "You seem to be so familiar with it, go ahead."

Guzzardi: "I am quite familiar with it..."

Fritts: "Go for it."

Guzzardi: "...because it has direct bearing on the question that you just asked..."

Fritts: "Yeah."

Guzzardi: "...and I think it is important for you and the rest of the Body to be familiar with it as well."

Fritts: "Please."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Guzzardi: "It's actually one of the first laws that the United States ever passed. It was passed in Congress in 1790, just a year after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. And it says that, what's called Indian land in the law..."

Fritts: "Yep."

Guzzardi: "...can't be sold without an act of Congress. So..."

Fritts: "Absolutely."

Guzzardi: "...no sale... no sale of this land, no matter who might have their name on whatever piece of paper, no sale or transfer of this land is legal without an act of Congress."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative, Representative Weaver gives you three minutes."

Fritts: "But you are stating... you are stating that U.S. government agents illegally sold this land, when right here, in writing, there is stating that Shab-eh-nay himself tried to sell this land. So, what we're talking about here is the fact that, you know, you can say that that's in violation of the Interstate Act, but he sold it. Was it wrong of the federal government to uphold this sale? Absolutely, it is. But here we are, 195 years later with multiple sales of this land forever, and now you want to give an entire park back to 'em. It's absolutely outrageous. All right, let's just... let's just talk hypothetically with your Bill here for a minute. If given back, what is their intention with said land?"

Guzzardi: "Well, I can speak to their intention and also to what's in the statute before the... the Bill before us, which is that the land won't be transferred until the nation enters into a land management agreement with DNR that will keep the land a park operated by DNR and open to the public. And the nation

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

has committed publicly, repeatedly, and I will commit here on their behalf today, that they want to keep the park a park and they want to keep it open to the public."

Fritts: "Well, Representative Guzzardi, I think that's... that's unbelievable sentiment, but I think actions speak louder than words. You know, you talk about wanting to keep land open to the public and how they're going to be such good neighbors on this, but do you know what picture I'm holding up right now?"

Guzzardi: "It's... it's very difficult for me to see from this distance, Representative."

Fritts: "Okay. Well, I'll explain it, what it is. The tribe owns land right now, and on that land, there are two signs with a post pounded right in front. I took this picture myself. It says, 'No trespassing without written permission. Federal tribal land. Prairie Band Potawatomi Tribal Council.' So, I think it's very interesting..."

Guzzardi: "So, that land is not state park land, Representative. You're... you know that. That's not the state park, and that's not the land that this Bill is about."

Fritts: "Yeah, but once it becomes their land, they can do whatever the heck they want to do with it, Will. All right, what... let's... it was brought up earlier on the interest of gaming. You said it is not their intention to build a casino, correct?"

Guzzardi: "I said that not only is it not their intention, but it would be in violation of federal law for them to build a casino without a conforming state compact."

Fritts: "See, that's not my understanding. My understanding is that the only way that financial backers, banks, typically,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

when you open a casino facility like that, they require that you be in a compact. But if you come up with the resources on your own, it's your land. You don't have any jurisdiction over that."

Guzzardi: "That... that's incorrect, Representative. The Johnson Act is federal... you're familiar with the Johnson Act, Representative? I would encourage you to familiarize yourself with it before you bring this topic before the Body. The Johnson Act prohibits gaming on tribal reservations, and there's an exception to the Johnson Act in the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act that says that gaming may be enacted, pursuant to a compact with the state. And as I mentioned earlier, we have a law that says that compact can only be entered with agreement both of the Governor and of the General Assembly."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Moore gives you three minutes."

Fritts: "What's to... what's to stop them from creating that compact in the future?"

Guzzardi: "Well, there's state law that says that that compact can only be..."

Fritts: "Yeah, I'm familiar."

Guzzardi: "...agreed with an act of the Governor and agreed to by the General Assembly as well. So, this... even should this Bill pass today, and even if it turns out that the tribal nation was somehow lying, and it turns out that we were... they had some desire to build a casino, which they don't, and I just can't reiterate that enough, they have said so many times publicly over and over that their intent is not to build a casino on this land."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Fritts: "They can say that all they want, Will, but like, right here..."

Guzzardi: "And it's backed up by federal and state law that prohibits them from doing so, Representative."

Fritts: "But did you not just say to one of our colleagues earlier that you plan on running trailer legislation with regards to this?"

Guzzardi: "I'm happy to run additional legislation clarifying existing law that prohibits them from... from building a casino on this land without an Act of the General Assembly."

Fritts: "And that is great. Why don't we do it right now before we pass it out of this Body?"

Guzzardi: "Well, Representative, as you're aware, legislation needs to be read in separate chambers on three days. We don't have enough time to do that today. But as I mentioned, the land transfer won't take effect until a land management agreement has been entered into. And that agreement will not be entered into..."

Fritts: "What's our... what's our hurry? You have 78 Members. What is our hurry?"

Guzzardi: "Yes, Representative, and those Members will vote for this Bill and I wish your Members would too."

Fritts: "You want to run this... you want to run this down... you want to run this down over the tops of my constituents, my landowners, who are... who are worried about the future of this, so much so that you're even willing to go and run a trailer Bill on it, but you're not willing to take a step back, let the next General Assembly get sworn in, and take this issue

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

up in the future. It is absolutely unbelievable. Mr. Speaker, to the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Fritts: "Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, this is, above all, it is a federal issue. The federal government screwed up here. The federal government has an obligation to fix it. We here in the General Assembly should not give a \$15 million taxpayer asset away in order to... in order to right what they feel is a potential and... or a potential injustice that I don't even know is an injustice to begin with if you actually look at the paperwork. But it is not the Illinois taxpayers' responsibility. My 30 property owners, their titles are still wide open on this. And they can say all day long, you know, right now we're going to... we're going to go ahead and cede that property, and instead we'll take the state park. What's to say another 195 years from now, they don't come back to this exact legislation that we're talking about and try to grab that property again? My constituents aren't protected. It's absolutely unbelievable. The bottom line here is that Shab-eh-nay sold this land illegally. Any solutions need to come to the... before... need to come from the feds. This solution that is before us today, it cheats taxpayers, it does not clear the title of my homeowners, and it is absolutely so sad that we aren't going to let the people who this directly represent... affects, my constituents with whom I represent, have a seat at the table here. It is so unfortunate, and, Mr. Speaker, I ask for a verification."

Speaker Hoffman: "The verification request is recognized. Leader Hammond."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Hammond: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Hammond: "We have reached a whole new low in this chamber. I never would've thought that it was possible, but obviously it is possible. On the last day of lame duck, where we haven't done anything of any import to this point, we have a Bill that directly impacts the district of one of our very own colleagues. There has been zero conversation. There has been zero negotiation. There has been zero respect for the Representative that represents the area that is being debated right now. The taxpayers of this area have been loud and clear. They are adamantly opposed to this action. This is not for us as Illinois Representatives to be deciding. This is a federal government issue. I know we love to pretend that we are Congressmen and women, and we are not. And we need to butt out. Ladies and Gentlemen, vote 'no'."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Moylan."

Moylan: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Moylan: "Ever since I've been here, we've been told or instructed to vote your district. Mr. Guzzardi, is this in your district?"

Guzzardi: "No, it's not, Representative."

Moylan: "Well, and... and I... this affects businesses in my community and other Representatives' community. You talk about this compact like there's some law that says that they have to abide by this compact. Let me..."

Guzzardi: "There... there is such a law. There is..."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Moylan: "I'm very well aware of what the law is, okay? Let me just say... state what the law says. If the tribe and the state have not agreed on a compact, the compact... compact you said that they're going to agree to, but if they're not, they don't. So, say we're in negotiations, and they... we want them to pay some kind of taxes, which they don't pay any taxes, while we're paying hundreds of millions of dollars of taxes to the state, across all the board of all the casinos, they don't have to pay a dime. So, it says, if we... if they can't agree on a compact in negotiations with the Governor, the statehouse, and them, after 180 days of negotiations, the tribe may file a lawsuit in federal district court claiming that the state has failed to negotiate... negotiate in good faith. While there is good faith requirement placed on states that are negotiating a compact, the tribes are under no legal obligation to negotiate in good faith. They're a sovereign nation. They can do whatever they want. So, I'm asking you, while you state that they don't want to build anything, while out there they said that they're going to put a building on there and they want some games. They can play bingo. They can have slot machines that you press to play bingo, even though they say they're not, but every Indian organization I know wants gaming. So, you say that you're going to file a trailer Bill, but how are you, if they change their administration and they change their mind, how are you going to prevent that from happening?"

Guzzardi: "Representative, thank you for the question. The... the plain language of the Johnson Act and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which I have in front of me, I think what

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

you're reading is like a legal interpretation from an attorney who has a vested interest in this issue. The language..."

Moylan: "No, that's not true."

Guzzardi: "Oh, can you tell me where that... what..."

Moylan: "I already... I already sent it to you, and I gave it to you. You know that."

Guzzardi: "Yeah, I maybe misunderstood you. I thought you said you'd received that interpretation from an attorney. I apologize. I didn't mean to misrepresent that. I... I'm looking at the language of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act right now, and it's the plain language of the statute. And from our consultation with lawyers, there's never been a casino opened in the country without a compact with the state. There... the tribe does not want to build a casino on this land. And even if they did or even if leadership changed, the Governor and the General Assembly would have to approve it or else it would be in violation of federal law."

Moylan: "Okay. I want this on the record, and that's why I'm speaking, Representative."

Guzzardi: "Thank you, Representative."

Moylan: "That if there is no agreement on a compact, that they can go to federal law and do what they want. They're a sovereign nation. So, just wait... I want you to know, I know what you're stating. You're operating in good faith, and I'm operating in good faith. I just want to make sure that this... this General Assembly knows that they can do whatever they want 'cause they're a sovereign nation. They can go to court and they can... if we don't agree on a compact after 180 days, they can go to federal court and do what they want. That's

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

all I want on the record, and I want you to acknowledge it.  
That's all."

Guzzardi: "I acknowledge it. Thank you very much for your  
comments, Representative."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative DeLuca gives you three minutes."

Moylan: "Thank you. I'm good."

Speaker Hoffman: "Are you finished? Representative Rosenthal."

Rosenthal: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Rosenthal: "So, Representative, do you not agree that this is  
more a federal issue than a state issue?"

Guzzardi: "I would say that... that both factors are at play. And  
I would acknowledge what folks have said earlier and what I  
led my remarks with, that the only way for the nation to  
relinquish its ownership of this land is through an act of  
Congress. So that's... that's, I think, indisputed fact. Now,  
what the nation has agreed to and the reason they're here  
with us today and not litigating this issue is because they've  
agreed to enter into negotiation with us, where they've said  
we will work with our Member... our U.S. Senator from Kansas,  
who's a big advocate of this issue. We'll work with  
Legislators at the federal level to remove our federal title  
if we get this park transferred to us and it's in lieu of  
that federal claim. So, what that will do, in doing that,  
will lift the clouded title that my esteemed colleague from  
McHenry County mentioned earlier. It will make those  
homeowners secure in the ownership of their homes. This is  
good for those homeowners. There's a reason why the mayor of  
the... why the village president supports this Bill, why the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

village board supports this Bill, why the local community supports this Bill. Because it's good for the community."

Rosenthal: "Have you contacted Senator Durbin on this issue?"

Guzzardi: "I've not spoken with him direct. I don't have his number like that, but I know that he has been spoken to."

Rosenthal: "How about... how about Senator Duckworth or Representative Lauren Underwood?"

Guzzardi: "I know that the... the tribal nation has worked closely with their federal representatives here and in Kansas. And I know that the federal delegation here in Illinois is very supportive of the tribe's efforts."

Rosenthal: "So, would you not agree though that this is a federal responsibility and not a State of Illinois responsibility?"

Guzzardi: "Well, so, as I just laid out, Representative, I think that we're going to have a two-pronged solution to this. One is going to be to transfer the park land to the nation, and in so doing that will enable the nation to go to Congress and say we relinquish our claim on the remainder of the land."

Rosenthal: "And so, you think that the... the taxpayers and the people of Illinois ought to bail out the federal government."

Guzzardi: "No, Sir. First of all..."

Rosenthal: "Well, that's exactly what's happening."

Guzzardi: "Well, it's important to note..."

Rosenthal: "That is what is happening if you're transferring that park."

Guzzardi: "May... may I answer your question? 'Cause I think it's an important one. The... the land that we're talking about was actually purchased with federal dollars. You may know this from your days over at the... at the agency. The land was

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

purchased with federal conservation funds. So, this isn't... there's not a dime of Illinois taxpayer money caught up here. This is federal dollars that the state used to buy the land and create the park."

Rosenthal: "If... if that's the case, then the feds ought to give it back to them, not the State of Illinois."

Guzzardi: "The... the federal government doesn't have jurisdiction to do so. We do, and that's why we're engaging in this Bill today, Representative."

Rosenthal: "It's... it's federal dollars. You just said that yourself."

Guzzardi: "They were given to the state to purchase the land to create a state park. So, as often happens, the federal... federal government gives money to the State of Illinois to do various activities as a state government."

Rosenthal: "This... this is an issue that was caused by the federal government, and it ought to be resolved by the federal government."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Keicher."

Keicher: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Keicher: "Representative, I... I appreciate your passion on this. I appreciate the work that Representative Walker, now Senator Walker, done on this prior. I think we can all agree, as we've heard the debate on this up to this point in time, that there are many and varied issues that deal with the federal government and their relation. As I understand it, the federal government and the grant that we were awarded, in part, to purchase this parcel to make it a park and restrictions that

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

may exist as a result of us then retransferring the park. We have shaded titles. We have concerns with the contract holders who have operations and a long-term contract for facilities within the park. We have the intergovernmental agreements that we have that we have to worry about police, fire, ambulance, security, water, all these sorts of services. And now, we have a question that, as I understand it, has existed for decades on this clouded land transfer, the method, manner, and actual participants in what land was transferred, when, by whom. What I would really ask of you today... and... and I think the... the icing on the top is to what the Leader pointed out earlier. This is something that's outside of your district. And there's... there's kind of an unwritten code about that. What I would ask is this. It's... it's the end of Session. This has been going on for 150 years. What if we were to put together a task force, have these issues sat down in an open venue, and sort it through? So that, one, we can add a certainty to the tribe of what they want to pursue. But, two, we can give certainty to those members of the DeKalb County community who are worried about what that future looks like. There is no urgency to doing this today. So, I ask you, can we move this to a task force? I'd happily be a cosponsor with you..."

Guzzardi: "Thanks, Representative."

Keicher: "...so that these issues could be publicly vetted and everyone has a chance to be at the table."

Guzzardi: "I thank you... thank you so much for the question. I think I disagree with you respectfully about a couple of points. First of all, I really appreciate your questions, and

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

I appreciate the integrity that you bring to this debate. I disagree with a couple of premises. One is that there hasn't been any engagement with the local community. I want to... to recognize Chairman Zeke Rupnick, who's the elected leader of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. He's here in the gallery. Chairman, do you mind standing up here for just a moment? We'll give you your flowers at the end of this debate. But the chairman lives in Mayetta, Kansas, where his people were displaced to on a reservation there. He told me the other night at dinner, he said... I asked him, how many village board meetings of the Village of Shabbona, 900-person village adjacent to the park, how many board meetings would you say you've been to? He said, oh, probably at least 25. That's 25 times the chairman..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Keicher, Leader Davidsmeyer gives you three minutes."

Guzzardi: "...twenty-five times the chairman drove seven hours from Mayetta, Kansas to Shabbona, Illinois, sat with the local community, answered their questions, and drove seven hours back. This isn't new. This isn't... it's not as if this issue has not been vetted by the local community."

Keicher: "But, Representative, I would challenge that these issues would then have more resolution than they do before us today..."

Guzzardi: "Well..."

Keicher: "...and especially with the clouded transfer..."

Guzzardi: "I'm not sure what you mean by..."

Keicher: "...contract for transfer on the deed where it was sold..."

Guzzardi: "So that, I think..."

Keicher: "I think we owe it to the people..."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Guzzardi: "I want to... I want to remind you, Representative, that it's... has been illegal from the founding of this nation to sell Indian land without an act of Congress. That's one of the oldest laws in America. Indian land is the language that's used in federal legislation. Let me just also say, you said, 'Can't we wait. Why don't we wait just a little bit longer to do this?' This land was..."

Keicher: "I said let's push it so that we can do it in a manner that is respectful to everyone impacted."

Guzzardi: "Yes. I don't believe it's respectful of us to wait a single day longer for justice for these people who had their land illegally sold from them 175 years ago. One more day is wrong. One more day is unjust. It's time to right this wrong, Representative. That's why I'm here at this hour on this day."

Keicher: "Okay. Appreciate your passion. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Keicher: "Ladies and Gentlemen, we are breaking with precedent right here, and I want you to be very attentive to this. We are breaking with precedent of this institution by violating an honor that we have amongst ourselves to allow the Representative with which their district is being impacted by a very significant Bill that we are considering. All we are asking for is a deferral to the next General Assembly so that we can have a full vetting in a public view and weigh in on all these issues in a manner that's more respectful of all parties, the tribe included, the federal government included, the DeKalb County government included, the local governments, the township governments. They're being left out of the discussion of our transferring of property today, which is

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

also unprecedented. I ask for a 'no' vote today, my peers. Not that the issue isn't appropriate to pursue later, but that the manner in which we're pursuing it today is improper. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Guzzardi to briefly close."

Guzzardi: "Thank you, Leader Hoffman. And thank you to the Members for the debate today. I will take just a minute, with the indulgence of the Speaker and the Body. First of all, I really want the entire Body to recognize Chairman Rupnick, who I mentioned earlier, the chairman of the Prairie Band Potawatomi, and several members of their elected council who've been down here this week. They've been incredible partners. I told you how many times the chairman's come up to Shabbona. The library in the Village of Shabbona, their roof fell in, and the nation donated money to help fix it. The lake flooded. They sent workers and equipment up to the community seven hours away to help address that flooding. They've been incredible partners to this community, and I would just like us to give them a round of applause and recognize them quickly. Thank you. Thank you, Members. And... and listen, the history of our country is amazing. Our democracy, our Constitution, our great leaders, the innovations and wonders that have come out of this nation, it's something to marvel at. And it's also complicated, and there are parts of our history that are downright ugly. And our treatment of the people who lived here before this was America is one of those ugly parts. It is a story of murder and disease and displacement and broken treaties and erased cultures, and it's... it's a bad story. So, what do you do if

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

you're like us and you're born into a country with this kind of history? I don't think that the answer is, you know, self-flagellation, oh, America is terrible, we should be ashamed to be Americans. No. I firmly believe that for all of our problems, America is the greatest country on earth, and I'm proud to be American. But I also don't think that the answer is to turn a blind eye to the violence and the ugliness of our past, to rewrite the history books, to gloss over the unpleasant parts. I think the answer is to look our past square in the eye, the good stuff and the bad stuff, and when we recognize that we've done wrong as a nation, to see it, to own it, and to find some way where we can make it right. And today, right here and now, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have this rare and unique opportunity to right one small wrong in the history of America. Not to erase any of the harm we've done, but to add one small indelible mark on the side of the ledger of goodness and decency and justice. This is a vote that you're going to want to go home and tell your kids about. I know I'm going to. As soon as my kiddo is old enough to ask me what I do for work, I'm going to tell him about today. I'm going to tell him that 175 years ago, our ancestors took this beautiful part of our beautiful state from the people who it belonged to, and I helped give it back to them. And I'm going to drive my kid out to this reservation and show him that land. And in that moment, I'm going to be proud of the work we did and I'll be proud to be an American. So, I just urge you to think about how you want to remember today, what you want to tell your families about the role you played in the American story. And I ask you for an 'aye' vote."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "Members, Representative Fritts has requested a verification. All Members will be in their chairs and vote their own switches. The question is, 'Shall Senate Bill 867 pass?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 63 voting 'yes', 41 voting 'no', 2 voting 'present'. Mr. Clerk, please read the names of the individuals voting in the affirmative."

Clerk Hollman: "A poll of those voting in the affirmative: Representative Ammons; Representative Avelar; Representative Blair-Sherlock; Representative Buckner; Representative Burke; Representative Canty; Representative Cassidy; Representative Chung; Representative Costa Howard; Representative Crespo; Representative Croke; Representative Will Davis; Representative Delgado; Representative Didech; Representative du Buclet; Representative Evans; Representative Faver Dias; Representative Ford; Representative Gabel; Representative Gong-Gershowitz; Representative Gonzalez; Representative Gordon-Booth; Representative Grasse; Representative Guerrero-Cuellar; Representative Guzzardi; Representative Hanson; Representative Barbara Hernandez; Representative Norma Hernandez; Representative Hirschauer; Representative Hoffman; Representative Huynh; Representative Jiménez; Representative Johnson; Representative Katz Muhl; Representative Kifowit; Representative Ladisch Douglass; Representative LaPointe..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Mr. Clerk. Representative Fritts."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Fritts: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Members, for your indulgence and consideration. I withdraw verification."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Fritts has withdrawn the verification. On this question, there are 63 voting 'yes', 41 voting 'no', 2 voting 'present'. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Representative Sheehan, for what reason do you arise?"

Sheehan: "Mr. Clerk, can you please change my vote to 'no' on Senate Bill 867?"

Speaker Hoffman: "The record shall reflect. Moving back to Supplemental Calendar #1, on the Order of Concurrences appears House Bill 4144, Representative Hirschauer. Representative Hirschauer is recognized."

Hirschauer: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to concur with Senate Amendments 1 and 2 on House Bill 4144. Senate Amendment 1 shelled the Bill. Senate Amendment 2 is a gut and replace that becomes the Bill known as Karina's Law. All right. I am honored to rise today to present Karina's Bill, a critical piece of legislation that strengthens gun violence... oh, sorry. Sorry. Oh, am I good to go, Mr. Speaker? Sorry."

Speaker Hoffman: "You were doing great."

Hirschauer: "I thought so, too."

Speaker Hoffman: "Continue."

Hirschauer: "Okay, I will continue. Forgive my nerves. This is probably and will be the most monumental piece of legislation I will present on the floor, so I will start again. I am honored to be here to present Karina's Bill, a critical piece of legislation that strengthens gun violence prevention

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

protections for survivors of domestic violence. You might remember this Bill from back in the spring of 2023, where our chamber passed House Bill 676, a firearm omnibus package. Arguably, the most important policy piece in that package addressed the intersection of domestic violence and gun violence, and it has now become known as Karina's Bill. Twenty-one months have passed since we voted on this Bill. Twenty-one months that were filled with robust conversations with state's attorneys, law enforcement, advocates, and families across the state. I am proud to put before you today an improved Bill, one that is survivor-centered and also centers the needs of law enforcement, one that passed the Senate with bipartisan support and has moved law enforcement and state's attorneys to neutral. The robust process of extended negotiations was critical. Input from law enforcement and state's attorneys provided valuable context for the process of granting and serving search warrants. Careful consideration was given to the protection of the Second and Fourth Amendments. The Attorney General's Office was included in our conversations to ensure that this Bill comports with the Constitution. In Illinois, our FOID laws have long recognized that a person with a domestic violence order of protection should not be able to possess firearms. This Bill builds out a robust framework under our current domestic violence laws that clearly outlines the process of collecting firearms from abusers when survivors are specifically at risk of those firearms and clarifies the existing protections under these laws. House Bill 4144, Senate Amendment 2 accomplishes this pretty simply. Number

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

one, we clarify that these firearm remedies are available when survivors are most at risk, at the emergency stage of the order of protection. Number two, we create clear legal standards for the surrender or removal of firearms as well as clear timelines. Number three, we take steps to ensure abusers cannot get access to their firearms once these remedies are granted by creating a process centered to survivor safety for when firearms can be stored by a third party rather than law enforcement. And finally, this Bill clarifies and adds additional improvements so that firearms can be returned to their owners at the end of the order of protection. Folks, these protections are long overdue. Twenty-one months we have waited, plus countless other years when this Bill has been filed in the General Assembly. The time to act is now, and we must pass Karina's Bill today."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Windhorst: "Thank you. Thank you, Representative. I want to go through a few things that we hit in committee. We had voted on a similar Bill to this. Was that also called Karina's Bill, HB676, I believe?"

Hirschauer: "House Bill 676 was an omnibus package, and at the time of passage, Karina Gonzalez and her daughter, Daniela, were still alive."

Windhorst: "And I bring that up just to say there are changes from that Bill to this Bill. Is that correct?"

Hirschauer: "That's right."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Windhorst: "All right. Some things that were in the Bill were removed, but there are still some issues that, at least to some Members on our side, are concerning for constitutional grounds and other grounds. So, I... I want to hit those in the comments. First, we envision two types... or there are two types of orders of protection, civil and criminal. And those would play out a little differently when it comes to having a judge issue a search warrant. Could you describe how those processes would play out in both the civil and criminal order of protection context?"

Hirschauer: "On the criminal side, with the advisement from our state's attorneys, we have provided that law enforcement or the state's attorneys themselves would be the petitioners of the search warrant. The process would move through in that manner. On the civil side, through the framework of the Illinois Domestic Violence Act, we are allowing for petitioners to petition the court for the search warrant and the judge to grant."

Windhorst: "So, in... in that situation, in the... in the civil law context, the... if requested and the judge agreed and signed the order, the search warrant, the law enforcement involvement would come after the fact with the service of the order and the search warrant. Is that right?"

Hirschauer: "That is correct, once findings have been made. So, clear and imminent danger to the petitioner and their family that the judge has found credible presence of firearms at the... at the residence where the search warrant will be... will be done. And also again, just to the harm of the family,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

making sure we're keeping that in the forefront. Then law enforcement would come in."

Windhorst: "And that is a... a concern, as I expressed in committee, about the fact that before the search warrant is signed, law enforcement is not involved in the civil law context. It's only afterwards, which is different than, basically, every other search warrant that's obtained in other contexts. Most every other context, individuals go to law enforcement, law enforcement goes to either the state's attorney and/or the judge and obtains a search warrant. Why wasn't that process included also in the civil context as we're doing in the criminal context?"

Hirschauer: "In Illinois, I'm really proud of our survivor-centered Domestic Violence Act. By allowing petitioners to directly petition the court, we are centering them in this conversation. In this Bill, with... with guidance from our sheriffs and our law enforcement, we built out some time frames to allow law enforcement to get the information they need before they access the search warrant. So, there's a 48-hour provision on the civil side that will allow law enforcement to do their own investigation, make sure they have everything they need to be safe before they go serve the search warrant."

Windhorst: "Would the law enforcement officers, after the search warrant is entered, have any discretion to serve it or not to serve the search warrant?"

Hirschauer: "They have the ability to modify the warrant, as needed, to change information that they see fit to be changed. They have the ability to petition for an additional 96 hours

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

with... wherein they can take more time to serve the warrant. Thank you for your patience. I want to get this right. It's so important."

Windhorst: "You're fine."

Hirschauer: "So, we have built in those modifications that are accessible to law enforcement, but once a judge has... has made the order, there is no discretion before carrying it out."

Windhorst: "Is there any ability under the law in the civil context, if law enforcement obtains information that makes the information provided by the petitioner not credible, where they could ask that the search warrant be vacated by the judge?"

Hirschauer: "They can modify, they can make corrections, and they can negate."

Windhorst: "Negate. So, they could say, 'Judge, we believe this order should be vacated.' Is that a yes? I'm sorry."

Hirschauer: "Yes."

Windhorst: "Another concern, when it comes to the language regarding a search warrant, is 108-3 of the Code of Criminal Procedure says that a court may issue a search warrant for certain items upon the finding of probable cause. We use, in this Bill, the word 'shall', which appears to be mandatory and would remove judicial discretion. Is it your intent that judges would still have discretion to deny the signing of a search warrant or deny the search warrant if they acted in their discretion?"

Hirschauer: "The judicial discretion comes in the finding of the probable cause. In the... in the testimony of the petitioner, the judge has discretion to find probable cause, imminent and

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

present danger. But once the judge has made those findings, due to the emergency nature, the critical nature, then the order must be carried out."

Windhorst: "So, we're... you're interpreting that as a 'shall', not a 'may'."

Hirschauer: "Correct."

Windhorst: "I want to talk a little bit about the transfer of firearms. Our... our current law, when it comes to orders of protection, is that once the order's entered, an individual may be ordered to surrender firearms, but they can also transfer them to a third party. This Bill does not completely allow for that. How can an individual who's a respondent, who is ordered to surrender firearms, transfer them to a third party?"

Hirschauer: "So, taking law enforcement's advisement under consideration, we understand the importance of third-party transfer, and we have worked into the Bill a procedure for respondents. Most importantly, in this critical, timely nature of an emergency, we need law enforcement to take possession of those firearms. They are the most trusted and safest place for the firearms to be. Once law enforcement has taken possession, a respondent may petition the court with a valid FOID card holder to come in and make that third party transfer. It's... it's survivor centered. It makes sure we have a clear record of who has the guns and that they know, you know, the great responsibility that they're carrying on to. It also allows, you know, for... I know guns can be very expensive. They can be family heirlooms. You know, the whole

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

host of things how they're important to a person, and this allows those guns to be transferred."

Windhorst: "Is there any time frame a respondent must wait before they could go to court and request a transfer?"

Hirschauer: "There is no time frame. But it is a motion, and there has to be a hearing."

Windhorst: "And does the person, the transferee, the third party, do they have to appear in court to accept the firearm?"

Hirschauer: "Yes, the third party valid FOID card holder has to be present and sign an affidavit that they will not... that, number one, they do not reside in the same household as the respondent, and, number two, they will not give the firearms to the respondent for the order... for the duration of the order."

Windhorst: "And in this hearing on the motion, is the petitioner required to be present?"

Hirschauer: "We... we will find that answer for you."

Windhorst: "And... and adding to that, just... can the petitioner object to the transfer to the third party, or is it solely within the respondent's motion and the order of the court?"

Hirschauer: "Thank you for your patience again. The petitioner does not have to be present, but they will receive notice of the motion."

Windhorst: "Will the... can the hearing proceed without the petitioner's presence then?"

Hirschauer: "Yes."

Windhorst: "I wanted to talk about the constitutional concerns. We've had recent U.S. Supreme Court cases around the Second Amendment, most recently after Heller and McDonald. We had

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Bruen a couple years ago, and then last year we had Rahimi, kind of identifying with Bruen how legislatures, states, the federal government may be able to place restrictions on Second Amendment rights. When we... in this context, we're dealing with potential emergency orders, which are entered ex parte, meaning the respondent is not present, has no ability to object, provide evidence to negate the petition, at least initially within that first hearing. That, to me, expresses some due process concerns. And, in fact, in Rahimi, even though the court upheld that restriction in federal law, there was discussion about due process measures that must be in place to ensure that constitutional rights are protected. How does this legislation address those constitutional concerns that were raised by Bruen and Rahimi?"

Hirschauer: "Thank you again for your... for your patience. We're talking about emergency orders of protection, so... so built into this process are findings of imminent and... imminent danger, exigent circumstances, and the critical need to protect the petitioner and their families. This is a temporary separation of a person from their firearms, which will be revisited at the plenary where there is notice and the ability for the respondent to respond."

Windhorst: "Thank you for that answer. I... I still believe there are constitutional concerns with Bruen and Rahimi, particularly in our state where we have a FOID card. And when a... an individual has an order of protection entered against him or her, they lose their FOID card. And if that order of protection is ever vacated or removed, they don't receive their firearms back immediately, even if it was shown that

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the petition was fraudulently obtained, meaning it was obtained under false pretenses or through the use of inaccurate or incorrect information. Because an individual has to reapply for their FOID card and get the FOID card back, which is a process which takes more than 14 days, which we... we list 14 days and they can receive the firearms back, but they won't have their FOID back in 14 days. So, I think you couple what we developed in this framework with our FOID card problems in Illinois, and we're going to have serious constitutional issues when this goes to court. I've made a statement. I'll give you the opportunity to address that if you'd like."

Hirschauer: "That was just a statement, not a question?"

Windhorst: "If you want to address... you have time to address it.  
To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Windhorst: "I think there are serious constitutional concerns here, Mr. Speaker. And for that reason, I'll be voting 'no'.  
Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Gonzalez."

Gonzalez: "Thank you, Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Gonzalez: "Colleagues, I want to take a moment to focus on the individuals, the families, and the communities that are impacted when we don't address domestic violence, and especially firearm-involved domestic violence. And that's what this Bill addresses, the urgency to disarm domestic abusers as part of an order of protection. This Bill is about women and their families, women like my former constituents,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Karina Gonzalez and Daniela Alvarez, in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago. Karina and Daniela, on the Fourth of July weekend, just five minutes away from my house, were killed by their husband and father after Karina, that what society judges other people for not doing, going to our courts and our systems for protection. This is a family who is deeply loved by the people who miss them every day. I want to acknowledge a few of those people here today. Her cousin Monica Alvarez, who's here in the gallery, and her surviving son, Manny Alvarez, who is standing right... who is sitting here right next to me as my Page for the day. I am proud of this young man, and I know his mom and sister would be proud of who he is today. His mom, Karina, was a hardworking mother who put her children first. She was consistently employed for temp agencies and would take whatever job was available. Even in the face of domestic disputes with her husband, she made sure there was food on the table for her kids. Daniela was 15 years old, a top of her class student with ambitions to work in astronomy, and who always had a smile on her face. She also loved her two cats. Now, some people might say that this Bill is an emotional response to Karina's case, but Representative Hirschauer was working on this Bill while Karina and Daniela were still alive. And when Representative Hirschauer told me that the Bill had passed the Senate, I told her it was about damn time because when it comes to saving lives, you want to start as soon as possible. Karina's case was not an antidote. There are dozens of victims a year who are gunned down by their abusers across Illinois. The opposition would like to point out the importance of transfer

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

and storage of firearms when discussing the Bill, but as I mentioned earlier today in committee, when the opposition is making the case for protecting pieces of metal over survivors, regardless of the legal arguments, they have lost the moral argument. We are thus moved through personal stories for years of advocacy, through our love for one another, to act in the name of Karina, Daniela, and countless others. Let today be a new chapter where, as Legislators, we actually honor the sanctity of life and do our part in saving lives and serving justice. It is a commonsense law for the communities that need it most. I'm proud to vote for this Bill, and Manny has a few words to say."

Manny Alvarez: "I urge for an 'aye' vote. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Caulkins on this question."

Caulkins: "Thank you. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Caulkins: "Thank you very much. Representative, you said you consulted with the Illinois Attorney General on the constitutionality of this Bill?"

Hirschauer: "Yes."

Caulkins: "How'd that work out on PICA? The Illinois Attorney General said that was constitutional, and it's now been ruled unconstitutional. What kind of assurances do... do you have this... this Bill, if it becomes law, is constitutional? He was wrong the last time. Why... why do you think he's right this time?"

Hirschauer: "If you have a question pertaining to the Bill on the board, I'd be happy to answer it."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Caulkins: "Well, it's about the constitutionality of this Bill. You have referenced the Illinois Attorney General as... as an expert who has told you that this Bill passes constitutional muster. He told us that the PICA Bill passed constitutional muster as well, and it did not."

Hirschauer: "I have confidence in the countless hours of negotiations we have put in with law enforcement, state's attorneys, and advocates and families across the state."

Caulkins: "Do you... I guess Gray versus Jennings. Are you familiar with that case?"

Hirschauer: "No."

Caulkins: "I... I suggest you look it up. It... it deals with this exact same event, taking a person's rights away without due process. You're... you're on the trail of doing that. I know you say, 'Well, they can come into court later and get their rights back.' But you're taking their rights away without due process. That's already a precedent that's been set. This is, I think, will cast a shadow on this legislation. And once again, you're going to pass a Bill, and you're going to force the people who are affected by this law to pay an attorney to get their rights back, knowing that this already creates a situation that we should never create. When you talk about the firearms can be returned, when an order of protection is entered, you lose your FOID card when you take someone's firearms the same time. And then this order of protection goes away 14 days later when they go back to court and... and the person who claims that they were abused now changes their mind, doesn't show up to court, whatever the case may be, or it's found not to be sustained. How does that person get their

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

firearms back? How do they get their Second Amendment rights back?"

Hirschauer: "The process is outlined in the Bill."

Caulkins: "No, it's... no, the process is that you've lost your FOID card, and now you have to go through an appeal process with the Illinois State Police to get your FOID card back, to get your... your guns back. This is..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Halbrook gives three minutes."

Caulkins: "Thank you. So, what you've done is... is created an unconstitutional situation, and I... and I don't care for it. You talk about 48 hours can be extended to 98... 96 hours to serve the search warrant and the order of protection. Is that... did I hear that correctly?"

Hirschauer: "That is correct, when we're working through the... the civil side through the Illinois Domestic Violence Act. There's also an additional 96 hours that law enforcement can petition for. So, 48 plus 96, plus 96."

Caulkins: "I... I want to make sure I heard you correctly because the next thing you talked about was an emergency or critical nature of... of this request, that the abused individual goes to court and gets this order of protection. And yet, we're allowing 48 hours, up to 96 hours, for this action to occur. What do you think is going to happen when the abuser finds out that... that their spouse has gone to court and is threatening to take their rights away, take their guns away? Why... why do we do that?"

Hirschauer: "The EOP is under seal until the order is served, one. Two, I want to address... you know, you addressed access to firearms and... and the importance of the firearms. What

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

we're trying to do here is thread a needle to save lives, not only the lives of the petitioners and their families, but the lives of the law enforcement who will put themselves on the line to go get those guns. So, we listened to their concerns..."

Caulkins: "I get... I get your point. I get your point. It's an emotional appeal. Once you start to take someone's constitutional rights away, you have gone down a road that I don't think any of us should go down. I don't care if it's the Second Amendment, the Fifth Amendment, the First Amendment. When you take someone's constitutional rights away, we say I would rather free one guilty person than convicted an innocent person. That's just the... the tenet of the rights that we have that are protected under this Constitution, the God given rights, not man's rights. And so, if this is such a problem, and it... and I admit that there are issues, why not just go to court and have the perpetrator arrested? File... file a complaint and say that this... I've been abused, physically, mentally, emotionally abused. Why can't... why can't the... the person just go to law enforcement and have that individual, the... the perpetrator arrested immediately, immediately to stop this domestic violence on the spot?"

Hirschauer: "Is there a question there? I'm not sure what... what to respond to..."

Caulkins: "No. I think that's the answer to the problem."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Caulkins, please bring your remarks to a close."

Caulkins: "Thank you. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Caulkins: "This Bill is another... here we go again, we're going to take the rights away of the individual. We're going to spend hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars fighting this out. We... if we really, truly want to protect, and we do, I'm sure, the rights of an abused person, we want to protect that person, make it easy for them to go to court and file a complaint. Go to law enforcement, file a complaint, and have the abuser arrested. Have them arrested immediately. Don't give them 48 hours or 96 hours to continue the abuse. That is not what's going to solve this problem. This is not a good Bill. I understand the emotional appeal of it, but I urge you to vote 'no', please."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Niemerg."

Niemerg: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Niemerg: "I rise in strong opposition to House Bill 4144. While hardworking crews are working on freezing conditions to restore power in the rural parts of our state, the Majority Party is pushing through a Bill that strips honest citizens of their due process rights. We have a Bill here, folks, that a petitioner can go to court, circumvent the state's attorney and law enforcement, file for that order of protection, the judge shall issue that order of protection, law enforcement issues that order of protection, serves that order of protection with... with the search warrant, kicks in somebody's door, seizes their firearms, and they have no due process rights at all. And you say, 'Well, they can petition the courts, get their FOID card back later.' That typically takes about 18 months. The radical left in this state is not only

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

out of touch with working people, they're out of touch with reality. Illinois has one of the most restrictive states... we're one of the most restrictive states in the country when it comes to gun laws. Every state around us, except Wisconsin and Michigan, have constitutional carry. Only Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, and New Jersey require additional identification to purchase firearms, with Illinois being the worst state in the union. But with all these restrictive gun laws, has that changed anything? Has that done... done anything? The City of Chicago still pretty much leads the nation in gun violence and gun homicides. This legislation, like the weapons ban, will be challenged in court, and in the end, it will be found unconstitutional. It's a waste of taxpayer dollars, and it is a violation of our constitutional rights. But the message all working class people in the state need to pay attention to is the fact the Democrat Party has abandoned you. The IBEW, IUEC, BAC, Teamsters, Pipefitters, Operating Engineers, Carpenters' Council, Sheet Metal, Machinery Movers and Riggers, Painters, Ironworkers, Steel Workers, Mechanics, Millwrights, HVAC, and all other working-class union members who spend their free time in duck blinds and deer stands need to pay attention to what's happening here. I invite every working-class person in Illinois to join us to defeat the radical left's bad policies. There's plenty of room in the Republican Party for commonsense, working-class people. While working people are, right now, risking their lives to clear roads, restore power, and keep local businesses open to provide basic necessities to people during a snow emergency, this Body is wasting taxpayer resources to meet in a

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

completely unnecessary legislative session to jam through another radical measure aimed at punishing working-class Illinois citizens. Vote 'no'."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative West."

West: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

West: "I rise today in strong support of the legislation before us, Karina's Bill, which is desperately needed to help protect survivors of domestic violence. I know this because I have seen the devastating impact of domestic violence in my district and across Illinois, especially when firearms are involved. We are coming up on the anniversary of a horrific firearm-related murder-suicide in my district that claimed the life of 25-year-old Jessica Young-Thomas. In fact, just last week on New Year's Day, there was another firearm-related murder-suicide just north of my district. Firearm-related domestic violence homicides have been rising in Illinois, especially since COVID. According to data from the network, there has been a 63 percent increase in firearm-related domestic violence deaths since pre-pandemic 2019. Domestic gun violence murder-suicides have doubled. As lawmakers, as community members, as neighbors, as people, we cannot simply stand by and watch as these disturbing trends accelerate. To throw up our hands and shrug our shoulders or dismiss these tragedies... tragedies as lesser than... than is because they are domestic in nature is absolutely unacceptable. We need more than just prayers. We must take action. And today, that's exactly what we're doing with Karina's Bill. My hope is that this Bill sends a clear signal to anyone experiencing gender-

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

based violence that the State of Illinois, our justice system, and our domestic violence services providers are here to support you. You have options, and we are here to help. I want to acknowledge and thank the Rockford Family Peace Center and the City of Rockford for their advocacy and the work to make this Bill a reality. Also want to thank Rep. Hirschauer for her tireless efforts to get this done, as well as the family of Karina Gonzalez who has fought for this legislation amid unimaginable grief. While our work is not done, this is a huge step in the right direction, and I look forward to continuing to find ways to strengthen protections for domestic violence survivors. For now, I urge... I strongly urge to you all to vote 'yes'."

Speaker Hoffman: "Members, I would like to recognize and acknowledge on the floor of the House, we have our Attorney General, Kwame Raoul. Representative Blair-Sherlock."

Blair-Sherlock: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Blair-Sherlock: "In May, I stood before this chamber and I pleaded to pass Karina's Bill. This was after a neighbor of mine, Julie, my apologies for mispronouncing this very long name, Elguezabal, was murdered by her husband and then he committed suicide. Julie did everything that you're telling people that they should do. She called the police. She went to criminal court. She got an order of protection. He had a FOID card. The state's attorney's office says, 'Do you have a gun?' He says, 'No, I don't have my gun anymore.' And there was nothing they could do to confirm whether that was true or not. So, what did he do? He returned home, he retrieved his gun, he

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

murdered him, he murdered himself, and he left their children parentless. This happened after Karina's Law started working on. I'm sorry, but I understand. I've been an attorney for over 30 years. I've practiced in this area of law. I understand what due process is, and I don't think a lot of people in this chamber understand what that is. The minor inconvenience of losing your firearm for a period of time is not irreparable the way someone's death is. I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Katz Muhl."

Katz Muhl: "Thank you, Leader. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Katz Muhl: "I rise today to acknowledge all of the people all across the state of Illinois who gave their time and their heart to moving this Bill, to the thousands of individual advocates and volunteers, including survivors of both domestic violence and gun violence, to thank the dozens of organizational allies, especially, but not limited to, those in the domestic violence and gun violence prevention space. Together, you drove in calls, emails, and visits to Legislators that brought us to this day. You have shared your personal stories, deeply painful stories, and you have shared compelling statistics about why this Bill is an absolute necessity. I want to thank all of the House and Senate Sponsors and the bipartisan cohort of Senators who moved this Bill yesterday to bring it here today. And last, but certainly not least, the Chief Sponsors, especially our own Representative Maura Hirschauer, who gave all of her heart and soul to making this come to fruition today. Thank you."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Cassidy."

Cassidy: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Cassidy: "First of all, I want to thank Karina and Daniela's family for turning your grief into action, for selflessly putting yourself out there to spare others this tragedy. Domestic violence, gender-based violence touches everybody in this room, every district we represent. It's an issue that we have to confront. You've heard me talk about too many cases of lives lost and families shattered over the years. You've heard me talk about the lifelong fear that survivors carry. Opponents, talking about restoring Second... Second Amendment rights, dents or rust on weapons, any number of ways some folks in this Body prove that they value guns more than the lives of the women in their lives. And it disgusts, but it doesn't surprise me, sadly. Frankly, we do a pretty terrible job protecting victims in this space. Starting from the first time they're not believed, when they have the nerve to finally speak up and try to get to safety. The times that they are blamed for their own abuse or failed in the most heinous way possible. Today, I am incredibly proud to stand in support of us getting it right for once. That is due to the diligence, resilience, and determination of an amazing crew. It started with the family, and that's absolutely true. Without your shoulders pushing this through, we wouldn't be here today. But our Sponsors are amazing, Rep. Hirschauer and Senator Villanueva, who would not take no for an answer, who knew that this had to happen. And I want to give a very special shoutout to my former chief of staff, Maralea Negron, from

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the network. I'm incredibly proud of you. I've watched you work tirelessly day and night, weekends. You weren't going to let this go. You are indeed my very favorite dog with a bone. And, Maura, there are more big Bills coming your way. I see this, and I know this, and I'm very proud to stand with you. Vote 'yes'."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Rashid."

Rashid: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Rashid: "Adrianna Lopez was one of my constituents, and she was brutally murdered by her ex-boyfriend. She was shot 10 times. This Bill, had we passed it before October 2023, would have prevented that death. We're taking a critical step here towards protecting survivors of domestic violence and making our communities safer. We owe it to Adrianna's memory to not only pass this today, but to continue the fight for stronger protections for survivors. I'd like to thank the Sponsor and all the advocates who put in tireless, you know, so many hours of work to bring us to this point. I urge an 'aye' vote on this very important Bill. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Ladisch Douglass."

Ladisch Douglass: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today because this issue has directly impacted my family. My biological father's second wife was shot at point blank range by her first husband 20 years ago. They had a history of domestic violence. She had filed a restraining order. She had gone to court multiple times. She had gone to the hospital and shown her injuries. She tried to leave with her eight-year-old child after filing, yet again, to have him removed from the home.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

And before that happened, he chased her down a road, drove her off the road, and shot her three times. Their eight-year-old had the capacity to call medevac, call for help. And in front of that child, he died by suicide with that same gun. That gun should have been removed. And this in-law has PTSD to this day. Every May, she relives the hell of being shot by someone who was supposed to love and protect her. Those guns should've been removed, kept away, and she and her child should've been protected just like every other domestic violence person... victim in this country and in this world. Like Blair-Sherlock, I'm a lawyer too, and I have had to stand before judges and defend alleged criminals. I know the process. I know the defense process. I know how long it takes to get things done. We are not trying to fight hunters and sport shooters. We are going after people who have committed crimes, who are hurting people they love, and who should not have access to this violent way to harm. To the Bill. I urge an 'aye' vote. We must move forward to protect people. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Norma Hernandez."

Hernandez, N.: "To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Hernandez, N.: "I also want to express my gratitude to our Sponsor, Maura Hirschauer, for passing... for having this legislation. And to the family of Karina, thank you so much for the fight and the trauma that you've had to experience over and over again, and even more hearing some of the debates here, when life should be the most important thing above all. And we're talking about abusers, people that abuse others,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

who have not even had the courage to fix their own problems and decide to take someone else's life. And I also want to bring light to a situation that happened close to me in October of 2024. My childhood friend, Maria Roque, who was killed in October in the Austin neighborhood by her abuser in front of her two children, where now they get to live that trauma for the rest of their lives. So, for those that think that it's just Karina or want to ignore the fact that this is a constant issue that happens to so many people, these are the legislation that are going to save lives, and that should be the most important thing that we should be worrying about. Thank you, Maura, for having this legislation, and I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Morgan."

Morgan: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Morgan: "Just want to take a moment to thank not just Sponsor, Representative Hirschauer, but the entire House Firearm Safety and Reform Working Group, which has been working on this particular Bill, on this particular issue for two years. It's something that is important to each of us for all the reasons you've heard, but it's important to note that this Bill wouldn't be here today and we wouldn't be passing this but for Maura Hirschauer. So, when you read the next story about a domestic violence situation where a gun was removed from the home because we passed this law, remember to thank Maura, thank the advocates, and remember we have to continue to do the right thing because there's no time to wait. There

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

is no time to wait when you're talking about domestic violence. Vote 'yes'."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Hirschauer to close."

Hirschauer: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I close, I request a moment of silence for Karina Gonzalez, Daniela, the other victims mentioned here today, and the countless constituents who have faced this issue across the state."

Speaker Hoffman: "The Body shall have a moment of silence. Thank you."

Hirschauer: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. I mentioned in my opening that it has been 21 months since we failed to take action on Karina's Bill. Our failure to act had life and death consequences for our constituents. People, mostly women and children, who look towards us and our laws for protection, who applied for and were granted orders of protection, lost their lives by firearms in the hands of their abusers. So, yes, these past 21 months have been filled with productive compromise, a lot of listening. We have a better Bill in front of us, but we have suffered unimaginable tragedy. When we took up this Bill 21 months ago, Karina Gonzalez, for whom this Bill is named, and her daughter, Daniela Alvarez, were still alive. Maria Roque, Maria Lazaro-Castillo, Adrianna Lopez, China Mitchell, and countless others were alive 21 months ago. This Bill honors the lives of Karina, Daniela, and the others, and it changes the systemic issues in our process to protect victims. It also honors the lives of the loved ones who were left behind, like Karina's son and Daniela's brother, Manny, who's with us today, and Karina's cousin, Monica Alvarez, who is with us in the gallery. Manny

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

and Monica have bravely picked up the pieces of their shattered lives and tirelessly advocated for this change. They and other victims have turned their pain into purpose, and millions of Illinoisans will be safer because of what you have done. This Bill is a reflection of countless hours of work from dedicated and fearless advocates in the domestic violence prevention space. Sam Tuttle, Maralea Negron, yeah, we are carrying this Bill over the finish line on the back of your incredible hard work. Thank you to all the advocates who stepped forward in the gun violence prevention space and who made this Bill a priority. And to the women standing behind me, the most hardworking and dedicated staff in the world, thank you for your support and diligence. Twenty-one months ago, we took action on this Bill. But today, we all have the immense honor and responsibility to take action and send it to the Governor's desk. I, once again, ask you to walk with me, to walk with Manny and Monica and families across the state and vote 'yes' on Karina's Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 4144?' This is final action. All in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 80 voting 'yes', 33 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And this Bill... and the House does concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 4144. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Leader Smith for a point of personal privilege."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Smith: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Point of personal privilege. I'd just like to acknowledge my wonderful chief of staff is here today, Miya Lewis, her mother and sister, and today is her birthday. Please give her a warm Springfield welcome."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative du Buclet."

du Buclet: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

du Buclet: "Hi. I am here to introduce my daughter, Alexandria, who's in white, and Cydney Walls. Alex actually lives in London, but she came here this week to witness my inauguration. So, let's please give her a warm Springfield welcome. Alexandria du Buclet."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader McCombie."

McCombie: "Thank you, Speaker. I would like to introduce to the Body one of the best things in my life, my mother-in-law, Janet Hockman."

Speaker Hoffman: "Returning to the Order of Second Reading, on page 2 of the Calendar appears Senate Bill 457, Representative Olickal. Mr. Clerk, please read the Bill."

Clerk Bolin: "Senate Bill 457, a Bill for an Act concerning education. The Bill was read for a second time previously. No Committee Amendments. No Floor Amendments. No Motions are filed."

Speaker Hoffman: "Third Reading. Please read the Bill, Mr. Clerk."

Clerk Bolin: "Senate Bill 457, a Bill for an Act concerning education. Third Reading of this Senate Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Olickal."

Olickal: "Thank you. Today, I present Senate Bill 457. This Bill will ensure that public schools as well as hospitals and

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

prisons owned or operated by the state, upon request, serve or provide religious dietary food options, included, but not limited to, halal and kosher food. This Bill did pass out of this chamber and the Senate last year, but was vetoed with concerns. And the Bill now has the support of both the Illinois State Board of Education, the Governor's Office, and without any stakeholder opposition. The Bill ensures young people... young children are able to receive nutritious meals that meet their dietary requirements. And to be clear, it's not a mandate on school districts to provide these options, but that ISBE will enter into a master contract to provide food options, including, but not limited to, halal and kosher food items. I'm happy to answer any questions."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "You're making me earn my money."

Windhorst: "I'm doing my best. What is the status of notes on Senate Bill 457?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Mr. Clerk."

Clerk Bolin: "The note requests were withdrawn."

Windhorst: "Mr. Speaker, we have rules that are outlined in our rulebook and the statutes for the provision of notes. And they have a purpose, fiscal notes have a purpose, that way people know, the people of our state know, as well as us as Representatives voting on legislation know what things cost. We have other notes that serve various purposes. But what we've seen, and the second Bill today where we've seen this, notes are requested by a Sponsor. So, no other Member can request the note. And then when the Bill comes up, for either

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

a vote or today, the votes... or the notes are withdrawn before the information we need from the note is obtained. So, I just want to point out, I think this is a practice that is detrimental to our rules, it's detrimental to this body, and it's detrimental to the people of Illinois. And I think we need to address that in the 104th General Assembly as we consider our rules. I have some questions of the Sponsor."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please proceed."

Windhorst: "Is there any, that you have, cost estimate to this Bill?"

Olickal: "Well, the Bill is subject to appropriation. And pending its passage, there'll be a comprehensive discussion with all stakeholders, including the State Board of Education, to accurately ascertain the cost of these meals that would meet the dietary restrictions of... of youth and ensure the healthy food options."

Windhorst: "So, at this point, we... we're not aware of what the cost will be, but in the future we will learn what the cost is."

Olickal: "Yes. The Bill is subject to appropriation. It will give us time."

Windhorst: "We are dealing with both the Halal Food Act and the Kosher Food Act as part of this Bill. Is that correct?"

Olickal: "Yes."

Windhorst: "And each of those acts contain penalties. In fact, this Bill has a penalty that's referenced as well as the Halal Food Act has a penalty. Do you know what those penalties are?"

Olickal: "A violation of the halal is a Class B and then the Kosher Food Act is a Class C misdemeanor."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Windhorst: "Why are the penalties inconsistent?"

Olickal: "That's how it was originally drafted."

Windhorst: "But we could correct that in this Bill if we wanted to make the penalties consistent."

Olickal: "Yes. I... that was how it was drafted. I believe there was a commitment to address that technical change in a following Bill."

Windhorst: "Well, I... I appreciate you bringing this forward. The concerns about cost as well as some of the other things I've highlighted are going to leave me to be a 'no' vote on this. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Crespo."

Crespo: "Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Crespo: "Representative, you were asked this question before. I'm going to ask it again. I understand that this is subject to appropriations, correct?"

Olickal: "Yes."

Crespo: "Can you at least try, give it a shot. How much do you think this is going to cost?"

Olickal: "So, it's... it's hard to say because there are a number of factors that are... that need to be considered. The... many of the students that would be eligible, it is more likely that there would be... the schools would just enter into contracts with the existing vendors that they already have and take care of it through their own... their own contracts. Then you also have... once this... once ISBE goes out to negotiate contracts with vendors, there's going to be a competitive bidding process to drive down the cost as well. So, that's

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

why this Bill gives adequate time to figure out what that cost estimate's going to be, and then they can present that, and then we can decide if we're going to make that appropriation."

Crespo: "Okay. I'm going to come back to that, but let me ask you a different question here. Can you turn to page 4, line #6, Senate Bill 457. And you said this is subject to appropriation, so it's permissive. In other words, if there's no funding, the program does not take place, correct? Correct, Representative?"

Olickal: "Could you repeat the lines? Page 4..."

Crespo: "Okay. Well... okay. Line... page 4, line #6, and it's... it's in reference to the University of Illinois Hospital. So, this would also apply to the University of Illinois' hospital?"

Olickal: "Yes."

Crespo: "So, it's not only... okay. So, it's not only school districts, but also the University of Illinois' hospital. Can you go to line #12, on the same page, and it states that... line 11, I apologize, the University of Illinois... Illinois Hospital shall, it's not permissive, shall make accommodations for the request as soon as the University of Illinois Hospital is able to provide for meals. Not financially able to provide for meals, but this is a 'shall'. So, that means that if you're saying that subject to appropriations for the schools, but for the University of Illinois, it is a 'shall'. So, they need to comply, correct?"

Olickal: "The difference is within the university system, they're not... these are food... this is food for purchase, correct? So,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

they just have to offer it for purchase. If... if they're selling food."

Crespo: "Well, it doesn't... it's not very clear on... on this Bill. It doesn't spell... it doesn't spell that out."

Olickal: "But the accommodation means that they just have to offer it."

Crespo: "Well, if it's not spelled out, we... you can't imply. Let's... let's move on. Let's go to page #7."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Crespo, Representative Kelly gives you three minutes."

Crespo: "Thank you. If you'll go to page #7, that's in reference now to the Department of Corrections. Page #7, line 17, we're talking about the Department of Corrections, and it also mentions here that the Department of Correction's facility shall make accommodations to provide this request. So, that means that the University of Illinois and the Department of Corrections, they shall. It's not... it's not subject to appropriations, correct?"

Olickal: "Yes. They're... they're..."

Crespo: "Okay. Sorry. Can you tell me then, for Department of Corrections or for University of Illinois, how much would that cost?"

Olickal: "Well, the... they already have an obligation to provide food, so they're doing it through their own budget for food. And also, both... both Department of Corrections and... and the university system, hospital system, none of them have expressed any concerns about any fiscal issue for them to be able to address this on their own. So, I... it has been brought to my attention."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Crespo: "Representative, they might not express any concerns because we're responsible to funding them and they don't care. They going to come before our appropriations committee and ask us for funding. You know, it's like the State Board of Education, I believe, is neutral or for the Bill. Because it's subject to appropriations, they really should say that they're against the Bill because it's going to cost money. Now, to the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Crespo: "Back... back in August of 2023, we passed another Bill for schools, which was called the Healthy Meals for All Programs and was subject to appropriations. So, we have all these kids at all these schools waiting for their free lunches or free meals, and as of today nothing has happened. Why? Because the State Board of Education has figured this is going to cost anywhere from 150 million to 200 million dollars just to fund this program. We're giving people a false sense of hope. You're setting expectations. Not only that, you're putting taxpayers on the hook. Once you pass these Bills, subject to appropriations, it goes in statute, there's a line item. Then all it takes is just a handful of people behind closed doors to decide whether they're going to fund this or not, and you're out of the equation. It comes before you in a BIMP Bill and then you support that at the expense of something else and you're not going to have a say so. But most problematic, though, is, again, you're putting our... our constituents at risk of losing more money. If this Bill passes, and it could come up in a... in a BIMP Bill, unfortunately, we can't even tell people how much we think

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

it's going to cost. I would ask my colleagues, as we start the 104th General Assembly moving forward, at a minimum, at a minimum please try to identify and quantify the cost. People might still support the Bill, but please at least try to.. to tell us how much it's going to cost. Otherwise, it seems like you just don't care or you just don't know. This has to stop. I'm going to close with a quote from a, I believe it was superintendent or someone from School District 15 in McHenry County. When the program, Healthy Meals for All Program, was passed, there was a lot of hopes that it was going to help the school, but the money was never appropriated. And this person stated, back then, it was quoted in a.. I believe it was the *South Beach Chicago*. All these Bills that pass out without ending funding.. without any funding, it's a wasteful, wasteful time.. and I'm going to look for the quote, I lost it here real quick. He was just basically saying it was just a waste of time to pass these Bills without any funding. So, I would ask moving forward, folks, that keep this in mind. Try to identify how much it's going to cost. We need to stop this.. this pattern of passing Bills subject to appropriations that keeps adding on and keeps adding on, and we're putting our constituents at risk. Thank you, Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Costa Howard."

Costa Howard: "Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Costa Howard: "Representative Olickal, you and I've had many conversations about this Bill. And so, I just want to make sure that you and I are making the record about some of the conversations and the questions that we have had in the past

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

on it. First of all, are... Representative, are you aware of any schools or school districts here in the State of Illinois who have not made accommodations for meals in our free, reduced lunch programs in our state?"

Olickal: "I can't give you a specific... I can't tell you about a specific school district, but there are schools, yes."

Costa Howard: "Okay, but I... Representative, I... I'm going to push you a little bit harder on that one, okay? Have you been contacted or are you aware of any school district in the State of Illinois that is not making religious accommodations for meals?"

Olickal: "Yes. The religious accommodations, yes. There are school districts that aren't able to make those accommodations, which is how we ended up with the model that we have now with this Bill."

Costa Howard: "Okay. So... so, when you say they haven't made accommodations, could you explain what you mean by that?"

Olickal: "So, making accommodations for... for students, providing them a meal that meets their religious dietary needs."

Costa Howard: "So, for example, Representative, does that mean that nothing is being provided? Let me... let me ask it to you another way. So, are they not... does a vegetarian meal suffice for most for... for a religious accommodation for a halal or kosher meal?"

Olickal: "In the context of this Bill, we're talking about students who have not been able to be accommodated with a meal that meets their religious dietary needs. So, if a... a Jewish student getting a kosher meal or a Muslim student receiving a halal meal."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Costa Howard: "Okay. Representative, I'm going... I'm going to keep going at this one, okay, for just a second because I think it's a really important delineation. This is a religious accommodation..."

Olickal: "Yes."

Costa Howard: "...that you are seeking, correct?"

Olickal: "An... yes."

Costa Howard: "Okay. So, it not a food allergen, correct?"

Olickal: "No."

Costa Howard: "And a child is not going to be physically harmed in some way if they have a vegetarian meal versus something that has been specifically designated halal correct?"

Olickal: "I... I don't believe so."

Costa Howard: "Okay. So... so, since we really don't have any schools who have not made this accommodation, are you aware of any school districts... let me back up, I'm sorry. Is there... do all schools have a policy that meets... that addresses the needs of dietary restrictions for students?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Costa Howard, do you need more time? Representative Croke gives you three minutes."

Olickal: "So, what this Bill specifically addresses is we are making... with this Bill, we're making a decision that, regardless of whether or not they have a vegetarian option, schools are providing those. We'll acknowledge that. We're saying we want to go beyond that and give a kid... a kid an option to have a meal that meets their religious accommodation beyond just the vegetarian option in the school district."

Costa Howard: "Got it. And I... and I applaud that policy perspective. However, I think there's a liability issue that

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

I think we need to discuss, and we need to make sure that we make the record. For example, what occurs in a free and reduced lunch line when the lunch worker is there and a student who typically would have either a kosher or halal meal chooses the non-kosher and halal meal? What liability does the school have for allowing that to happen?"

Olickal: "So, when we talk about a lunch lady or... or a person that is serving students meals, they are required to serve that student whatever they choose in this situation. They're not allowed... they're not supposed to be making a decision on behalf of the student. This policy, after speaking to ISBE, this... this policy is handled at the board level and is uniform regardless of the type of meal. So, when you have kids who just choose not to eat the meal that their parents are paying for or... that is all done at the school board level and they have a policy in place to address that issue, regardless of whether or not the kid's being denied... is not... is choosing not to eat a halal or kosher meal."

Costa Howard: "Thank you. So, I just want to make sure that the record is clear, is that our local school districts will have no liability if a child gets a... a non-religious meal."

Olickal: "If... if a... they're liable for egregious conduct, but this doesn't... that happens regardless of whether or not this Bill... and this... this Bill is passed or if the food is provided. That is... this doesn't create any sort of new liability that doesn't already exist."

Costa Howard: "Well, I... I recognize it doesn't create a new liability. I'm very concerned about any liability to our local school district, so I will... because if... that the child gets

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the wrong lunch, or I should say the child gets to pick the lunch that they want. I want to talk a little bit about... do you know how many vendors are actually out there that can provide halal meals?"

Olickal: "I... I can't say the specific number, but there are a number of... of vendors out there."

Costa Howard: "Do you know where they're located?"

Olickal: "There... they could be... I can't say exactly where they're located, but I'm assuming across the state."

Costa Howard: "Okay. Are you aware... do you know how many kosher vendors there are?"

Olickal: "I don't know the exact number."

Costa Howard: "Okay. The reason I raise..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Costa Howard, could you bring your remarks to a close, or would you like more time?"

Costa Howard: "I... I will wrap this up."

Speaker Hoffman: "Okay."

Costa Howard: "One... one last question. That... that's okay. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Costa Howard: "Representative Olickal and I, and many of you know, I have issues with this Bill, not the underlying policy because every child deserves to have lunch. Not just some kids, every child deserves to have their meal. But when we talk about the budgetary impact of a Bill like this, we're not talking about all kids. We're talking about some kids. As Representative Crespo raised, the budgetary implications of Healthy Meals for All that hasn't been funded. We also have transportation funding issues here in the State of Illinois

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

for our school districts that have not been raised in forever. There is... this is a wonderful policy. This is an outstanding policy to make sure that kids get their meals. But we have a lot of kids across the State of Illinois, and our priority should be every student, not just some."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Weaver."

Weaver: "Thank you. Does the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Weaver: "Representative Olickal, first of all, my deepest apologies for being directly behind you during this. But I just have a couple questions. So, first of all, this piece about Class C for the first misdemeanor and Class A for second, who exactly is the person that would be the offender that would be receiving the misdemeanor?"

Olickal: "The commercial producer of the food, so the vendor. So, the person is guilty if they represent food as kosher and halal and it does not meet that... the definition."

Weaver: "I see. So, it's not like it's the superintendent or the principal. It's saying that if you mislabel the food that's being received, they would be the recipient of the misdemeanor."

Olickal: "Correct."

Weaver: "Interesting. Okay. And then I have one other question. Can you explain, like, what's... what's the state today? If a student goes to school and it's pork chop day, I'm assuming the school just doesn't say sorry, you're hungry. I mean, I'm sure they have some accommodation today."

Olickal: "So, each school district had... does it individually, but... so they will provide some sort of alternative option. If

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

it's pork chop day, that's not the only thing that's available to them. But we do run into situations, and this is... we've had testimony from parents who came to... even in Springfield, where, you know, their... their child was not eating because wasn't a meal that accommodated them. And so, that's part of the reason why this Bill is here."

Weaver: "Got it. So, like, you know, maybe the accommodation is a peanut butter... peanut butter sandwich, and you don't want to have that five days a week. So, the point is to get kids quality food that's in line with what they can eat so that they're... it's not that they're not getting fed today, this would just perhaps address the quality of what they're being given."

Olickal: "Yeah. And... and in some situations, you know, if... if the vegetarian options are limited and there aren't enough meals there available to... you run into situations where the kid doesn't have an option. And the build... yeah. So, it almost ensures that the kid that needs a vegetarian option gets that vegetarian option or that religious accommodation."

Weaver: "Okay. And then this is my last question, sorry to belabor. Do we have a guess on like the percentage of students in the state that would... or, I guess it's not students, but the... the people receiving meals from the state that would be benefited from this change? Like, what's the... does this say three to four percent? Is that right?"

Olickal: "It's roughly two percent. There's some estimates that were given to us, yeah. Two percent."

Weaver: "Okay. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Swanson."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Swanson: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Swanson: "Thank you. I've just got a couple questions. Seems like when we had this in debate in committee, the Illinois State Board of Education said they don't do contracts like this. But yet, I see the language is still in the Bill. Is that still going to be an issue? Is the State Board of Education going to do the contracts for these meals as indicated within this Bill?"

Olickal: "Yeah. So, the Bill would require ISBE to enter into a master contract to provide these meals."

Swanson: "And... and ISBE can do that? They have the abilities and the authority to enter into those contracts?"

Olickal: "They do, and that's... I mean, they are in support of the Bill. So, that is the framework that we've decided on."

Swanson: "And that's troubling or surprising they're supporting the Bill when they were the ones who spoke up in opposition to it during the committee last spring when we... we had this Bill. And... and to follow along with the previous question, these meals... and you were asked a question, and I wasn't very excited about your response. We have schools out in Western Illinois that I don't know if there's any company or any type of food distributor that provides these types of meals in quantities that a school district may need. Are you aware of any, or does a... are these available through the whole State of Illinois?"

Olickal: "So, the... whoever ISBE enters into a contract with, when they vet the vendors, these vendors are also going to be able to get those meals shipped to these specific schools as well."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

I think that's part of the... the procurement process for... for ISBE. So, this is part of the reason why we're entering into this master contract, so that even in these remote areas where they don't have... they may not as have much access to halal or kosher food vendors, the state will be able to enter into contracts with vendors who will be able to provide those meals."

Swanson: "So, they could be coming from hundreds of miles away and still be as fresh as if they left a distributor 20 miles away locally."

Olickal: "That's... that's the hope."

Swanson: "Wow. Okay. That's kind of troubling to me because of the expiration on food and wanting to ensure that we have a quality product for these students who want and expect that meal at school. I guess that's all I got right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Halbbrook."

Halbrook: "Speaker, will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Halbrook: "Thank you. So, Representative, the great thing about going late in the queue here is a lot of my questions have been answered. I do have one question and then to the Bill. The question I have for you is, at the tail end of this legislation, it talks about an effective date of June 1, 2024. That date has come and gone. If this Bill was to pass and to be signed in law, how do you... how does that work?"

Olickal: "Well, the Bill is subject to appropriation, so until that appropriation is made, it's... it's not going into effect. But if... if needed, we can address that with trailer language."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

But because of the subject to appropriation, we don't think it's a... it's not an issue."

Halbrook: "So, just to be clear, if it was to pass tonight and get signed into law, and there's a supplemental appropriation come this spring, then this would be potentially retroactive? And, Mr. Chair... or, Mr. Speaker, I'm having trouble hearing in the chamber. If you could quiet it just a touch, I just want to make sure I understand this."

Olickal: "Again, because the Bill is subject to appropriation, it's... it essentially doesn't have an effective date until that... the appropriation is made. But we can't... I can't give you an answer right now with specifically how it affects the... the effective date that's in the Bill right now after it's appropriated."

Halbrook: "Okay. Thank you for that answer. Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure, this is probably an inquiry of the Chair or of the parliamentarian about the... the process here. I think the bigger point, to the Bill, is, Ladies and Gentlemen, we've heard a lot of points to the reasons to be in opposition to this Bill tonight, one of which is a 200... a potential \$200 million expense to the State of Illinois. We've seen the own Governor's Office of Management and Budget has announced that a potential \$3 billion budget hole in this coming fiscal year. So, I don't know, maybe another \$200 million doesn't really much matter, but I think it does matter, that this chamber's got to get spending under control. We've got to reign this in. This is no place to continue to keep spending money on. Ladies and Gentlemen, I would urge a 'no' vote. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Syed."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Syed: "To the Bill."

Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Syed: "I just want to take this opportunity to thank the Sponsor, Representative Olickal, and even Representative Rashid, for their work to make this a Bill that works, a Bill that understands the needs that different students have and makes it easier, makes it even easier upon schools in the original Bill to fulfill these lunch requests. I would also just like to point out that this is a well-negotiated, well-worked on Bill. It is a Bill that is supported by the Governor's Office, the State Board of Education, the Jewish United Fund, and the Muslim Civic Coalition because there are so many people in those communities, that even if it might not affect your kid at home, they understand the significant impact this legislation will have on their kids. As a Muslim woman growing up going through the public education system, I didn't have any halal food options. But guess what? I also didn't think it was a possibility for me to even ask for that. I didn't even think people knew what halal meant. So, even if this gives someone the opportunity to go to their school and ask for them to make accommodations, I've grown up seeing accommodations made for all different reasons, for all different faith groups, and I would love for there to be opportunity for Muslim families, for Jewish families to see accommodations be made for their children that are growing up here in America, here in the State of Illinois. So, thank you so much, Representative Olickal, for your incredible work on this Bill, and I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Olickal to briefly close."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Olickal: "To clarify a point about the effective date, if the effective date provided in the terms of the Bill is prior to the date the Bill becomes, then the date of the Bill becomes a... the date the Bill becomes a law shall be the effective date. And, again, the Bill is subject to appropriation. I want to thank Representative Syed for speaking up about her personal experience and the importance of this Bill. And... and I think, you know, it's wrong to pit Bills against each other. This Bill specifically is trying to make sure that kids with specific religious dietary needs have a chance at having a healthy meal, regardless of where they live in the state. And it gives ISBE the time they need to come up with the... the cost and make that ask of this Body. And we can make that decision when the time comes whether or not to fund this. And... but at least in the meantime, we can make... we can give ISBE the time they need to stand up this program so when we have the capacity that we can make sure that every kid, regardless of their faith, has a religious meal that meets their... that accommodates them. So, I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall Senate Bill 457 pass?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 64 voting 'yes', 38 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Members, we all know tomorrow is a... is a big day. Many people have people in town tonight, so we're going to move to Short Debate. There will be one person in support and one person in

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

opposition, and let's see if we can see our... see our friends tonight. On the Order of Concurrences in Supplemental Calendar #1 appears House Bill 817, Representative Vella."

Vella: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to concur on Senate Amendment 1, 2, and 3 in House Bill 817. What these Amendments do is two things. It allows the Treasurer's Office to make repairs to the buildings that they own... to a building that they own. It also makes necessary changes to GATA, which aligns language with federal language and helps streamline the GATA process. This Amendment passed unanimously out of the Senate and unanimously out of committee. I urge for concurrence."

Speaker Hoffman: "Seeing no one seeking recognition, the question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendments #1, 2, and 3 to House Bill 817?' This is final action. All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 106 voting 'yes', 0 voting 'no', 2 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendments #1, 2, and 3 to House Bill 817. And this Bill, having received the Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. On the Order of Concurrence, Representative Guerrero-Cuellar on House Bill 2840. Please proceed."

Guerrero-Cuellar: "Thank you. Thank you, Speaker. Really short, really quick, and to the point. This Bill, the Amendment does two things. One, it allows 14- and 15-year-olds who are employed by the park district to go ahead and be supervised without someone who is over the age of 21. We're reducing the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

age to 18 and over. And when I say work, I mean, you are the umpire at the little league game, or the referee at a soccer game, or at a volleyball game. Also, this... we passed a Bill earlier in Session, Senate Bill 2737, which the majority of you all supported. It is to provide first responders with... with access to therapists as a non-compete clause. And what we... it's a technical change. We wanted to make sure that even though you are no longer first responder, you are still entitled under this act to receive those services."

Speaker Hoffman: "Seeing no one seeking opposition, the... seeking discussion or recognition or opposition, the question is, 'Shall... shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2840?' This is final action. All those in favor vote 'yes'; all opposed vote 'no'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 113 voting 'yes', 0 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2840. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. On the Order of Concurrence appears House Bill 297, Representative Will Davis. Please proceed."

Davis, W.: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm... I'm sorry. Can I go?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Please proceed."

Davis, W.: "Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move to concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 297. House Bill... even with Senate Amendment #1, it keeps the basic tenets of the Bill, which allows for the Chicago principal... Chicago

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Principals and Administrators Association to have the rights around arbitration relative to collective bargaining. It keeps those provisions and just makes sure that we put certain guardrails on their ability to have that arbitration. It sets limits on what can be arbitrated, as well as allowing for the Illinois Labor Relations Board to be a participant or be used in that arbitration and sets guidelines on when those arbitration opportunities need to take place. I'll be more than happy to answer his questions."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, in opposition, Representative Reick."

Reick: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Reick: "Representative, we talked about this Bill this morning. This is a trailer Bill on House... on previous Bill. What is this... what is this Bill trying to solve? What was wrong with the first Bill that we're trying to solve with this Bill?"

Davis, W.: "Well, the first Bill was pretty much just making sure that the ability to collective bargaining was made available to the Chicago principals. It was something that they had before that had been taken away, and initially we're given it back. This Bill is just setting some of the guidelines around the use of arbitration as a way to help mediate those disputes. Chicago principals are not allowed to strike, so this arbitration is their tool in which to be able to collectively bargain, if you will, to make sure that they are... that their rights are being held up appropriately and that they have the ability to conduct themselves appropriately as well. Part of the Amendment says that this

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

is now governed by the Illinois Education Labor Relations Board versus the Labor Relations Board. And, again, it sets forth certain provisions relative to how long arbitrations can take place and when they need to take place as well."

Reick: "Does this Bill provide a change in allowing principals to strike, or are they still prohibited under... as was in the original act?"

Davis, W.: "It's my understanding they are still prohibited from striking. As a matter of... when I say prohibited, they didn't want the right to strike. They want to continue to work, but they want to use arbitration as their mechanism to be able to, and again, I use the phrase collectively bargain, but doing arbitration in order to make that happen. "

Reick: "Thank you. In the committee, our... as I mentioned in committee, our analysis says that the Chicago public school system was in opposition to this Bill. We heard from the representative for CPS today that that has gone to neutral. What changed in this Bill that moved them from opposition to at least neutrality on this Bill?"

Davis, W.: "Well, it's my understanding they were never opposed to the Bill. I'm not sure where that came from, but the walk from the Amendment over in the Senate to the House to committee today suggested that Chicago was not opposed, CPS is not opposed, and the Chicago Teachers Union was a part of the negotiation on Senate Amendment #1 that we are concurring in right now."

Reick: "Does this apply only to the City of Chicago?"

Davis, W.: "I'm sorry?"

Reick: "Does this apply only to the City of Chicago?"

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Davis, W.: "Only to the City of Chicago."

Reick: "Or Chicago Public Schools?"

Davis, W.: "Or Chicago Public Schools."

Reick: "Okay, very good. I'll remind our... our Members over on this side just the fact that this Bill, when it was originally passed, went out on a partisan basis. There were no... there were no votes on our side. I'm going to not recommend passage or failure. I'm going to vote my own switch. You vote how you wish, but it was 71-40 on the original Bill, and this Bill, making changes to it, you can decide for yourself whether or not this Bill is appropriate to move you to a 'yes' vote. Thank you very much. Thank you... thank you, Representative."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Davis to close."

Davis, W.: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You heard those questions, the debate. I ask for a 'yes' vote. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 297?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there's 75 voting 'yes', 38 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 297. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Representative Niemerg, for what reason do you arise?"

Niemerg: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Very quick point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Niemerg: "With me I have my wife, Trina, here with me tonight. And then there's, Ben, my son, Ben. And where's Vivi? Where you at, Viv? There you go. Hi, guys. Welcome to Springfield. Thanks for coming."

Speaker Hoffman: "Welcome to Springfield. Representative Guzzardi, on the Order of Concurrence, House Bill 4410. Please proceed."

Guzzardi: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have another historic opportunity before us, Members of the General Assembly, to move an effective date from January 1 to July 1. I hope you'll join me in making history by this six-month effective date change. This is, as I say, a small change to a Bill that we passed several months ago pertaining to prostitution. It was a Bill that changed some names of offenses throughout the statute. It's a Bill that expunges, excuse me, seals some of former felony offenses, and it's a Bill that requires law enforcement to make agreements about how they investigate prostitution. This Bill is negotiated and agreed to by law enforcement, by the courts, by the advocates for... who oppose sexual trafficking. It's an agreed Bill with all stakeholders, and the Amendment before us simply moves the effective date."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Motion. To Members on our side, this is a minor change with the Amendment. Review your vote, and vote accordingly."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Guzzardi to close."

Guzzardi: "I have a lot more to say, but I'll urge an 'aye' vote."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 4410?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 73 voting 'yes', 38 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 4410. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Representative Olickal on House Bill 4828. Please proceed."

Olickal: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. House Bill 4828 and Senate Amendments 1 and 2 is a... 4828 is a simple transparency measure that would require the Illinois Department of Corrections to collect and publish data on the use of solitary confinement at its facilities. The Senate Amendments change the date of the first report and remove the cause of action provision. I'm happy to answer any questions."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Windhorst: "Thank you. Representative, initially, the DOC was opposed to this legislation. They are now neutral. What brought them to neutral?"

Olickal: "The change in the effective date and the removal of the cause of action provision."

Windhorst: "And there is still some cost associated with this Bill. Do you know what that cost is?"

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Olickal: "From the department, we've heard it may be \$250,000 to collect the data, and then, depending on the recommendations of that, there... there are other estimates."

Windhorst: "And it looks like the vote in the Senate was 44 to 12. Is that..."

Olickal: "Yes. There was bipartisan support."

Windhorst: "Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Ammons, we have had... we're on Short Debate. We had an individual speak in favor, and I guess one semi-opposed. Not sure, kind of opposed. Representative Olickal to close."

Olickal: "Again... again, this is simply a transparency Bill requiring our Department of Corrections to really look at how we use solitary confinement and... and as a matter of... of responsible and transparent government. I'm grateful to all the advocates that helped us get here. I want to shout out to Restore Justice. I want to also thank AFSCME, Department of Corrections for helping us get this Bill here. And ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 4828?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there's 75 voting 'yes', 38 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. The House does concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 4828. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Representative Olickal on House Bill 5164."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Olickal: "Thank you. House Bill 5164 was passed out of this chamber in... during the... the last year and really addresses... proposes a critical reform to modernize our name change laws, primarily by aiming to enhance safety for various vulnerable groups. And this Bill seeks to address this by removing the costly and outdated newspaper publication requirement, simplifying judicial proceedings and removing this obligation. It's really removing a barrier for name changes for vulnerable populations. The... want to make clear that the Amendment moves up the effective date and was worked on with the State's Attorneys Association to make... and bring law enforcement and state's attorneys into neutral. And, again, we've been in conversation with State Police. They do not oppose the Bill, so I ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Wilhour."

Wilhour: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just go straight to the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Wilhour: "I sit here and I watch this stuff and often times wonder what in the world are we doing here? And I just wonder what the citizens of Illinois think. I've determined that we might be the most tone-deaf Legislative Body in the history of civilization. Our own citizens are... are struggling. They're struggling with everything. We're the... we have some of the highest property taxes in the nation. We have the slowest growth on everything but government in this state. Unemployment rate lagging in the nation. We're trapping poor kids in failing and dangerous schools because too many people here are afraid to stand up to corruption like we see in the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

teachers' unions and the other special interests around here. We have billions of dollars of budget deficits facing us right now. We have hundreds of billions of dollars in pension debt that is strangling taxpayers in this state. And in spite of all of the platitudes that we always hear over there about how you care, how you care about poor people, how you care about minority people, how you care about working people, we are ranked dead last in the country in terms of racial economic equity. And our main concern here today and always is, in the name of racial equity, let's make it easier for illegal aliens to evade foreign agencies and suck up the very limited resources that we have that are intended for our own citizens, the citizens that are struggling. It's time to get real and face the facts. Our state is burning down around us, and the people better wake up and they better open their eyes to the people who they sent down there. Because when those eyes are open, when citizens are truly awake and they might just see that the people they have sent here for generations care more about the wants of the corporate lobby, special interest fat cats, and the destruction of American values and the culture than they do about the interest... the best interests of the communities that they are purportedly promoting and representing down here. Let's just take a look at the policies that they promoted. Look at the industries and the opportunities that have fled once proud working-class communities. You can't talk about caring, you can't talk about caring about struggling communities when you have controlled every level... level of power and policy for generations and things have gotten worse. They have gotten progressively

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

worse for the people that you... that you say you represent. The results of your policies are clear and they're terrible. And when you actually care... when around here are we actually going to care about our own people, our own citizens, who are clearly struggling under... under the weight of your poor leadership? Why are... why are poor people in places like Harvey, whose industrial base has been destroyed by policies that have been put forth through this Body, paying four times, four times the effective property tax rate of people in rich places like Winnetka? Who's standing up for these people? I don't see anybody fighting to lower property taxes and bring industry back to these places that's been destroyed by the policies that are pushed over there. Where's the outrage? Where's the... where's the righteous indignation for those folks who have been failed by their political leaders? I don't know, but I... I got a feeling it's coming. So, you better wake up. Wake up to the destructive nature of your own policies and priorities 'cause... 'cause our people are. The people in Illinois are. The citizens of your community have had enough of suffering the results of poor policies and misplaced policies like these. They've had enough of illegals being prioritized while their proud communities, families, and cultures are being systematically dismantled by the very people they sent here to look out for them. So, you know, our message to communities across this state that have been left behind and ignored by their elected officials is that there is hope, but it's not in the folks that you've been sending. You have allies on this side of the aisle that represent communities and working-class people that have suffered under

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

similar circumstances and lost opportunity because of the insane policies, like this one, that prioritizes everybody over the citizens of this state. You have allies on this side of the aisle that are unafraid to stand up for your interests over the interests of the woke left and their special interest allies. Because, the fact is, until this government, until this Body gets serious about the necessary reforms that will bring investment... 'cause, you know, you can't have opportunity without investment. Until they bring investment and opportunity back to all citizens in all areas of this state, regular folks are going to continue to suffer, and that cannot stand. I encourage a 'no' vote on this and every insane policy like this. We should be talking every day about how we are going to bring opportunity and change to this state, and this isn't it."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Olickal to close."

Olickal: "Really don't want to dignify the ridiculous accusations made about this legislation. This Bill is about privacy, something that conservatives love to talk about. It's about revoking and removing archaic laws that do not serve a purpose anymore. Twenty-four states do not have this requirement. We are forcing survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, people who are trans to out themselves for what? It doesn't serve a public safety purpose. It only seeks to serve predators and extremists who want to find victims, track them down, and people who simply want to live in peace. So, this Bill is about privacy and protecting people. And I want to thank Equality Illinois and the Transformative Justice Law Project for their advocacy and their work. I want to give a

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

special shoutout to my chief of staff, Beni Batiste; my outreach director, Tina Samuel, that's here that helped get this stuff... to get this work done. And I also want to give a shoutout to my Niles Township supervisor, Bonnie Ognisanti, who brought this Bill to me. And I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 5164?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there's 71 voting 'yes', 38 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 5164. This Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Leader Barbara Hernandez in the Chair."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Under the Order of Resolutions, we have House Resolution 942, offered by Representative Faver Dias. Representative Faver Dias is recognized."

Faver Dias: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to represent... I'm sorry, it's late. I am pleased to present House Resolution 942, a Resolution that offers a strong statement of support for the Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship, which has recently become the subject of a lawsuit questioning its constitutionality. This Resolution reaffirms the General Assembly's commitment to continuing this critical program and urges the state to not back down in the face of this harmful lawsuit that aims to breed fear about policy that incorporates race, even when we know it is the right thing for our students. I do want to provide a little background on the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

scholarship. The MTI Scholarship Program has been around for a little over 30 years, aiding aspiring teachers of color with scholarship support. Scholars who receive funding are required to go on to teach in racially or linguistically diverse schools, where many of our teacher vacancies exist. In an effort championed by the Black Caucus, the scholarship went through significant revisions in 2021 that made it stronger and more impactful. This scholarship is targeted to teacher candidates of color for the simple reason that diversity matters. It matters immensely to the students in our classrooms who rarely get to see themselves reflected in their teachers. That is clear to me as a former teacher, but also it is substantiated by decades of research showing that when students of color are taught by color... teachers of color, their outcomes improve. Those improved outcomes range from academic proficiency to increased enrollment in advanced courses, to reductions in exclusionary discipline, to increases in college aspiration and overall educational obtainment, all the things that matter and that are at stake, and that, we, are as a state, working hard to improve and improve equitably. Our efforts to prioritize diversity among teachers cannot and should not be stuffed out by outsiders who want to misconstrue any race-based policy as racist. In fact, not doing everything in our power to create a diverse workforce is what will cause further harm to children in our state. Given we know... given what we know about its impact on kids, teacher diversity is and should remain a priority for the state. I'd ask that you support this Resolution to demonstrate our commitment to MTI and make a clear statement

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

that we have to defend our ability to make policy decisions that are best for our state, especially when it comes to what's right for our kids. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ammons is recognized."

Ammons: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to ask a clarifying question to the Representative, if that's okay."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Would you like her to yield?"

Ammons: "Yes, please. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "She indicates she will."

Ammons: "Thank you. Thank you. Representative, is it true that the distribution of the scholarship has a merit base based on race because there's so few African Americans or Latino teachers in the classroom currently? Can you explain how that works?"

Faver Dias: "Yes, absolutely. So, currently, in our state, 56 percent of students are students of color, while only 18 percent... 18 to 20 percent of teachers are teachers of color. So, this MTI program was created to recruit and to be able to financially sustain teachers of color as they go through the teacher education program."

Ammons: "Thank... thank you for clarifying. I just want to thank all of the Members that have come before us that initiated this program 32 years ago. It is an effective program, probably one of the most effective that we have had, so that we can increase teacher diversity, teacher pipeline creation, as well as supporting legislation to bring more teachers into the pipeline. I urge an 'aye' vote for this Resolution, and I certainly thank the Representative for taking up the initiative."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Faver Dias moves for adoption of House Resolution 942. All in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, take the record. On this question, there are 76 voting 'yes', 18 voting 'nay', and 0 voting 'present'. And this Resolution, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby adopted. Leader Mah, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Mah: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Mah: "Thank you. Colleagues, I'd like to point out, in the gallery, we have Lake County Treasurer Holly Kim with us today. She... she is among a small but growing number of Asian American elected officials around the State of Illinois. Thank you for giving her a warm Springfield welcome."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Williams, Ann Williams, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Williams, A.: "Point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Williams, A.: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge a fabulous staff person who has served us as legal counsel for the Energy & Environment Committee for the past several years, Ojars Berzins, and he is leaving us, unfortunately. But our loss is the gain of the environmental community. He'll be doing some great work, so he will not be far away from us. But if you've worked with Ojars, especially in the E & E Committee, you have noticed his calm demeanor, his measured approach, sense of humor from

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

time to time, which we always appreciate, and his competence and knowledge of the issues. So grateful for all you've done. Wishing you the best of luck."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Hoffman is recognized."

Hoffman: "Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Ojars, trying to leave? Before you do leave, and I know... I think today is your last day, I just publicly want to say thank you for all your years of service here. Not only a very talented and great lawyer, but you also have the demeanor to help us through so many difficult times, and I really appreciate that. The most recent... Leader Evans and Leader Gabel were able to work with you and see what a great job you did on the recent energy Bill. It was your work, it was your dedication, it was your guidance that helped us actually get the Bill done and drafted. Thank you. Good luck. If you ever need anything, we're here, okay? Thank you, Ojars. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Gong-Gershowitz is recognized."

Gong-Gershowitz: "Point of personal privilege, Madam Speaker."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Gong-Gershowitz: "I just want to echo what my colleagues have said about this talented young man who I got to know staffing Judiciary - Civil, which is no easy task, highly technical committee, where I asked you to take a deep dive into emerging issues like AI. And I'm going to miss having you in committee, but I'm really excited for that next chapter and look forward to working with you in the clean energy space. All the best of luck to you in all your future endeavors. We'll miss you."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Caulkins, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Caulkins: "Point of personal privilege, please, Madam Speaker."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Caulkins: "Thank you. Before I proceed with some prepared remarks, I'd like to take a minute to acknowledge some of the people that have made this adventure possible. This is my last night here, and I'm leaving after six years, three terms, as I told everyone seven years ago when I first ran. First of all, obviously, I want to thank my wife, Jo. Some of you know her. She's been my accomplice, gatekeeper, governor at some times, trying to throttle me down, but I could not have done this without her. I want to always... also acknowledge the lady that's run my office for the last six years, Missy Wooters, probably the longest serving district office manager in the history. She served 20 years with my predecessor, 6 years with me, and fortunately she'll be going on with my successor, Regan Deering, who's here tonight. I also want to thank John Foreman. You met him some time ago. When I first announced I was running, John came up and said, 'What can I do to help you?' John and I served in the Illinois Army National Guard together, retired master sergeant, and has been with me through thick and thin, knocking on doors, getting petitions signed, putting out yard signs, going to breakfasts and lunches and meetings. John, I can't thank you enough. I also want to thank a group of Representatives that formed the nucleus of the conservative movement here in the General Assembly. Tom Morrison, Allen Skillicorn, Jeanne Ives, and Brad Halbrook were here before we arrived. Darren Bailey,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Chris Miller, Blaine Wilhour, and Andrew Chesney filled out our ranks in 2019. Our group became the nucleus of the Illinois Freedom Caucus. I want to thank you all for including me. I also want to thank the Illinois State Police liaison, John Thompson. For the last six years, John has been there for me, for all of the problems that people have had with FOID cards and concealed carry cards. He's never failed to produce. And, John, I don't know that you're still here, but thank you very much. There was another gentleman here today, Mark Cavers. Mark was the person who helped choose me when I was running in my primary in 2018. I made you a promise that I would represent my district well and stay true to our conservative values. I hope I've served... served well and made you proud. And I know there are many other people that... that have been involved, and I can't mention all of them, but I will... I'll thank you personally somewhere along the road. I did talk about Jo, the very first thing. You know, we came here six years ago. We all ran and got elected. We showed up for freshman orientation full of vim and vigor and remembering our campaign promises that we made, our stump speeches, our... our advertising. And we met, and I think with a lot of hope and a lot of ambition that we came here to serve the people of our districts, of this state. We came here to work together, and it was an interesting time. Then, you know, we went over to Sangamon Auditorium where we got sworn in, we got our license plates, and we bolted our license plates on, and we came back and we got our office assignments and our committee assignments, and then the reality hit. The reality hit because of the way this Body is run. We... we were

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

essentially forbidden, or not permitted, to work together on the issues that are very, very important to our constituents. You know, we came here to ease the burden of government on the people and businesses in our district. We came here to fix the roads and bridges that are vital to our economy. We came here to do better for those populations that depend on government, like the developmentally disabled and the homeless people who need a helping hand. And likely, many of us promised our constituents that we would come here and lower property taxes. It was one of our main concerns. In January, we took the oath of office, we... we got here, and then working together became a serious problem. Working on issues that we all ran on dissolved into partisan politics. The same playbook used by the majority to suppress the minority for so many years became the order of the day. Any pretext of working together was snuffed out by the leaders who have run our state as their fiefdom. They divided us, then suppressed any meaningful cooperation on the important issues facing all of our citizens. By any metric, one party rule has not served us well. Our education system is a failure. We've poured billions dollars more into school funding in the last six years, yet statewide only 40 percent of students are proficient in English, and only 30 percent are proficient in math. And then Illinois became the only state to end a school choice program for disadvantaged kids. Our health care infrastructure is crumbling, and instead of focusing on our citizens, billions have been spent, have been diverted to illegal immigrants. Our budget in the last 6 years is up 32 percent, and the unfunded pension liability has also grown by about that

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

amount. This Legislature has raised taxes and fees without any spending restraints, and I'm predicting the Bill will come very... come due very, very soon. In closing, it saddens me to admit that I'm leaving Illinois... I'm not leaving Illinois in a better place than it was six years ago, but it isn't for lack of trying. Unfortunately, the majority party in this building refuses to seek any help from people like me with valuable business experience. Our side has the only medical doctor in the Legislature and professionals that represent a myriad of industries, and yet, because we are Republicans, we are ignored. And I want to use a little sports analogy here. You know, I know that you all are the general manager and the coach, but to leave some of your best players on the bench is not a winning strategy. Personally, I rarely felt that Governor Pritzker and his legislative leaders had the best interest of the people in mind when making policy. We've passed unconstitutional laws without giving it a second thought. We allowed lobbyists and special interest groups to control legislation. We failed to pass ethics reform, and Governor Pritzker was allowed to lock down our economy, lock out our children from school, lock down churches, and left parents and grandparents to die alone in nursing homes without so much as a single debate in this Body. The damage in lost learning, \$5 billion in unemployment fraud, lost trust in government, and people fleeing Illinois will not be repaired for a very, very long time. On the positive side, I still trust the people of Illinois to do the right thing. At some point, and I hope soon, the pendulum will swing back, either through the ballot box or through the natural result of

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

outmigration from a state that has unsustainable policies. So, tonight, as I depart, I have a question for all of you. Are you going to be part of the solution, or will you continue to drive this state over the cliff? And I hope that you choose the former. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Under the Order of Resolutions, we have House Resolution 986, offered by Leader Buckner. Leader Buckner."

Buckner: "Sorry about that. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I would like to take a moment to recognize House Resolution 986, which is a congratulations to our colleague, Representative Cyril Nichols. Rep. Nichols is truly the picture of authenticity. He's passionate, he's thoughtful, and he's unstoppable. More than just being a family man and being a man of God and a man of the people, he's a champion for the least among us. Before he was a Legislator, I know who... I knew who Rep. Nichols was because he was an Illinois state basketball legend. And his grit and heart and determination on the court has really shined through here in his work in the Legislature as he continues to be dedicated to the people and doing the work. We want to thank his family, his wife, Theresa, who is with us here today; his children, Chloe, CJ, and Michael; and his entire family for sharing him with us. Because of Representative Nichols, the people of Auburn Gresham and West Englewood and Chicago Line and Greater Grand Crossing, Hickory Hills, and Burbank are better off. He's carried their voices to the... to this chamber with dignity, honesty, and determination. He's fought for them, and because of his work, this state and this chamber are

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

better today than they were yesterday. This chamber is better because Cyril Nichols is a true fighter and a true champion. So, thank you, Rep. Nichols, for your service, for your sacrifice, for your unwavering belief in people and the power of people, and we're all better off because of the work that you've done here. Thanks, brother."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Evans is recognized. Leader Evans."

Evans: "I'm proud to join my larger South Side brother in acknowledging a truly great man. You know, Cyril Nichols started off, and he'll tell you, in Cabrini Green. Don't take my word for it. That's a tough place to start off, the housing projects, housing that was created to not create kings, housing that was created, it was problematic. This is where he started off, in Cabrini Green. And look at this man, father, well educated, and came down as an accomplished human being. You know, I came down here in my 20s, hadn't done nothing. Cyril came down as an accomplished man, a husband, a homeowner, a father, exactly what we want every citizen to be, on the South Side of Chicago, but throughout the State of Illinois. And what did he do when he came here? He spent his time letting us know what was important. My community, your community, education. And this man is leaving with his... his head held up high and will continue to work with all of us. I cultivated a great relationship with this man. Thank God for the friendship that I developed with Cyril Nichols. We love you. And look who he has with him, his beautiful wife, who he always talks about, example for our communities and for all communities. So, I know you already gave him a round

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

of applause, but give another round of applause for a great man of Illinois, great man of my community, Cyril Nichols."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ammons is recognized."

Ammons: "Thank you. Point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Ammons: "Thank you. I have, too, had the privilege of sitting, learning, listening, sharing, growing, and developing with Representative Nichols. His heart is always in the right place. He has been sincere and dedicated. He made every meeting I called. He was always a supporter of my leadership, and it's sometimes difficult for our male counterparts to follow female leadership, but he was not one of those. And so, I wish him and his wife great success as they move forward in the next phase of their lives. We will not... not only will we not miss him because we will see him regularly, he will be in our experience and our space, but we will also just simply miss his presence and his energy in the chamber. We love you, Representative Cyril Nichols, and we love that you love the downtrodden, the voiceless, those who are not represented. You have always given voice to that community. And we will not let the work that you laid the foundation that you gave to this chamber, to this state go unanswered. Thank you so much for your work, and we look forward to seeing you on the next day. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Canty is recognized."

Canty: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Point of..."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Canty. Sorry."

Canty: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Canty: "I'm going to keep it short and sweet. It's surreal. Since the moment I got into this chamber, you've had my back and the backs of everybody in this caucus. And we're going to miss you. We're going to miss your statements on the floor, your willingness to speak truth to power, and your energy. So, thank you for being here. This is not goodbye. This is we'll see you later."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative West is recognized."

West: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

West: "I just want to thank my friend, Cyril Nichols, and I want to share a quick story. As many of you know, when he first came, he had big shoes to fill, and we gave him a time to introduce him on the House floor. Normally, the new person, they take about 20 seconds to thank us, looking forward to all the work that we're going to do together. Cyril took five minutes. He's worse than a long-winded preacher. But that... that experience had caused me to admire him because even though he was new, he had a microphone in his hand and he knew that it was time for his voice to be heard. And that told me that all... at all times, whenever I get the chance, to make sure my voice is heard. That little episode, that little series of events from you, Mr. Nichols, revolutionized my career, and that was two terms ago. So, I want to thank you, brother. I love you. I'm looking forward to seeing you again, and we're going to be... this is not a goodbye. This is a see you later, brother."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Cassidy."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Cassidy: "Thank you. There's not a lot that hasn't been said. Cyril, I didn't expect to love you like I do. I didn't know what to expect after that five-minute speech. But what I got was someone who came with great questions and great suggestions and a love of the work. You came here to do the work. You came here to love back on your community and our communities. And, dude, you're the greatest hype man a row has ever known. And like the two people before me, this is not goodbye 'cause you don't get out of my life that easy, friend. I love you. I love how you love. I love that you've taught me to tell people that I love them. Thank you for teaching us all. See you down the road, friend."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ford is recognized."

Ford: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Personal privilege for..."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Ford: "Thank you. Cyril Nichols, Phi Beta Sigma brother, let me just say that the brotherhood would be proud of the work you've done for the people of Illinois and across the country. So, I'll keep it short and just say thank you very much for your dedication to the people and keeping everyone here accountable. God bless you and your family. GOMAB."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Guerrero-Cuellar is recognized."

Guerrero-Cuellar: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Guerrero-Cuellar: "When I arrived, the next person after me was Cyril Nichols. He was 118-C and I was 118-B. But Cyril is actually my neighboring Representative. And when he first came in, I made a phone call to him and we had a conversation,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

probably about two hours. So, I already knew that his speech was going to be long when he came to the floor. So, I'm sorry I didn't limit that, give him that advice, that was probably on me. But when I was talking to him, I knew that he was going to represent his constituents out of love, that he was going to ask those questions because he wanted to make sure he can go back to his district and explain to his constituents and help them understand how it works down here. And so, I know that I'm going to see you around the neighborhood. You know where my office is, right? I know where you're at. But I do want to say thank you because you always were a cheerleader and you helped me out, right? There were some times where I was making difficult decisions and you would come and talk to me and you would hold my hand and you would give me support, and I appreciate that very much. But I knew the type of person that was going to come into this General Assembly, and you're always true to that. You have stayed true to that, and that's never going to change, and we appreciate that very much. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Rashid is recognized."

Rashid: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to add my note of gratitude for Representative Nichols' service and commitment. I first met Rep... Cyril when... at a mosque. He was... he was speaking to a crowd of about 20,000 worshippers at the Eid prayer at SeatGeek Stadium. And he spoke with such heart and such love, and people came up to me after and said, 'Who is this?' I said, 'That's your new Representative. You should get to know him.' And that's exactly... actually, he got to know us. And he immediately, immediately went to work for his

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

whole district and for all the people of Illinois. He fought so hard to uplift everyone, including people in the Black community and folks in the Arab American community. And it's been just such a pleasure and an honor to work with you, Representative."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative du Buclet is recognized.

du Buclet: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

du Buclet: "I just want to also add my congratulations and admiration for my friend, Representative Cyril Nichols. Cyril has been a brother, a friend, a cheerleader. He would check on me. He's always had my back, both literally and figuratively. And so, I will miss him. I think the chamber will miss him, and I wish him well on his future endeavors. Thank you, Cyril."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Will Davis is recognized."

Davis, W.: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I have a point, please?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Davis, W.: "When I think about my brother, Cyril, three things come to mind that I think speak to kind of all of us in some respect. The first one is authenticity. Often, we hear a lot of us talking just to be talking. Not really talking about much of anything in particular, but we're just talking to be talking. But one thing I can say about this brother is that his authenticity comes out, three, four, five, tenfold when he speaks. You can tell that he is real and that he's just trying to keep it real for us and really give us some real context about what's going on and how what we're doing is being interpreted back in our neighborhoods, in our

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

communities. And that leads me to the word context. Because when I try to talk to my constituents and they ask a question, it's not about giving them a yes answer or a no answer necessarily. Sometimes, it's just about giving them context so they can better understand why we made the decisions we made or why we provided the yes or the no or whatever that is. So, he provides a certain level of context to what we do here in a way that I think is very unique and... and I'm happy to have had the opportunity to experience that context during his tenure here. And lastly, that I think is important for all of us, is advocacy. And it's not so much the advocacy on the issues that we deal with when they pop up on the board or when we're in committee. What we all need is an advocate, somebody who has experienced this place in the way that we experienced it, who knows how to take it back home and be an advocate for us, to be able to explain sometimes to our constituents why that decision was made or why it wasn't made or, you know, this is... this is how it happened. So, we need that level of advocacy. And the time that he has spent here, he's going to be the best advocate for all of us. Regardless of which side of the aisle you're on, he is going to be that best advocate because he's going to be able to process what he's now will be looking at on TV, if he's not in the gallery here. He's going to process it and then be able to distribute, disseminate, and share that information to all of our constituents, to all of our communities. So, he is going to do us all a great service by the time he has spent here, and now that he goes back out and takes it back to the South Side of Chicago or wherever he goes. When he can talk about his

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

time here in Illinois, he'll be able to make people understand and process it just a little bit better about how important work is, but, more importantly, how important our collectiveness is and what we all seek to try to get done for the betterment of the State of Illinois. And for me, that means so, so very much. So, for the very short amount of time that we have had to get to know and to speak, I can appreciate our conversations, our laughter, when we just kind of keeping it real and just really having just simple dialogue about what we're doing here. And so, my brother, wish you well, as everyone else has, in your endeavors moving forward. You know, admittedly, you know, probably the... well, La Shawn might not be happy about it, but I don't know a whole lot of Sigmas. But you are a true brother of Phi Beta Sigma, and you embody all of those virtues that they have. And I'm just looking forward to being able to continue to get to know you even more, and your family, and learn from you. We are in that same age range, but you are wise beyond all of our years in so many different ways. I appreciate you. I love you and look forward to continuing that conversation. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Nichols is recognized."

Nichols: "It won't be a five-minute speech, trust me. And I'm trying not to get emotional. I think I got it all out listening to everybody. You know, I say a prayer for this chamber all the time and then... and then I do a little special thing on the side for other people in leadership, like a Jehan, with the tough job that she has over the budget. My brothers and sisters on the other side of the aisle, I want to say that, thank you, because I sat over there in the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

beginning. I love you. I believe that the strength of this chamber is everybody in the chamber. You know, we would go out to dinner after we leave here, and we'd have some of the best times. We might not agree on everything. But my first Bill, I'll never forget it, was a plant-based option where young people and Leader Batinick carried my Bill across the finish line. When I thought everybody over here I was going through this little plan hazing thing, and I was serious. I was so serious, and I... I didn't know everybody was just playing with me, and I was serious. I was like, did you read the Bill, right? I was going at my side and then they sent La Shawn over there to pull my Bill until I got myself together, and I said as long it comes back up the next day I'm fine. I think we all got to work together. We all live in this state together, 13.5 million people. We all have to understand that we represent our districts for the greater good. We work for the people. The people do not work for us. We work for the people, not the special interests. The people elected us to do a job. A lot of people don't have food on their tables, right? And... and this is what we should be about. We should come down here, and you should... we always say a prayer in the beginning, right? And we just need to keep that in the forefront. We can have our disagreements, but one thing nobody can ever say, in my tenure here, is I always went to the other side with my Bills. I always prided myself with carrying them Bills bipartisan. And always said, but I got 78 friends over here. But I want to make sure that at least you guys tell me what's wrong with the Bill and we can work through it. Kam, you know, like I'm the big brother, and then he's a big

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

brother, right? Like, he's just the big brother in his space, but then I'm just a big brother in life, I'm 59, right? And I would always defer to Kam when I didn't know something. I didn't know nothing when I... when I was in here. You know, I... I really didn't. Leader Ammons, she really actually took me through everything. I didn't know a green slip or gold slip. I didn't know nothing. I was just like, help me out. And people did help. You know, the Latino Caucus, they helped. You know, Aarón and... you know, it was just like, we would have just real conversations. Yeah, we truly are having a Black and Brown coalition, and we need to be true to that. And when we all go into other rooms, we should not disappear, right? And... and I really meant that. And then my brother, Rashid, and he like... I'm just like, when we met, you know, I was like giving him advice. And he was just like all right, like, it was just a good conversation. Mary Beth Canty, keep that energy. Don't let nobody... don't let nobody stamp your energy out 'cause this place has a way, right? Like, you keep that energy. No matter if people say you too hyped up, no, you stay hyped up, right? My seatmate here, I was saying I need you to get your stuff and get back over here to this seat 'cause they... she had a wheelchair, she was over there, I was like, no, you my seatmate. You know, and I learned so much, right? Didech, behind me, he told me about my colonoscopy bill, he told me his life. And he said take it down and take the age range out of it. And I'm like, are you crazy? I just wanted to get this done. But he was right, right? He said, you want to win a war, the battle or the war? And he did. I can go around this room... Angie, I haven't had

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the time to figure out her name sometimes, right? You know, but we did have a long conversation, right? And I really needed it 'cause I, again, I didn't know anything. I... again, like, I had conversations with everybody in here. Will Guzzardi, right? Every... we... I talked about something that was in his district. I was like, Will, we got to make sure that naprapathy people get this done, right? Hey, man, I'm going to end, you know, and I'm glad I got through this without being too emotional. But, you know, my... my crew, Omar, you know, these are my guys, right? And... and we would call... we talking about the family, me and Kam, we talk about family stuff. You know how hard it is to be away from your family, you know. It's difficult. The outside world probably don't know that, but it's really difficult. And sometimes, I was down here at three in the morning, in this room, and I was asking myself, like, like why am I really here, you know? But to hear everything that you guys said, I really appreciate it. Leader Slaughter, always there to pick up the phone when I call. And I'm not going to bug you guys, and I'm not going to be calling you guys, and, you know, I'll look in from time to time with my next journey and workforce development to make sure people have jobs is what I'm looking forward to. Omar, you going to be good at this. You going to be real good at this. You know, you got a tough district, but you're going to be good at this. Coming in with my... with my brother... Camille scared me to death. She told me to go buy... I bought \$200 worth of cleaning products for the hotel because she told me her battle with a spider, and it scared me to death. But... but I'm glad when it did that because when she got

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

through with me, I was like, Lord Jesus, I'm going... I got to go get all this stuff. But my brother, right here, man. I know my son is watching. He actually refereed my son's basketball game. If you all don't know, my son is 6'7. He's going to DePaul, and he never gave my son a call. And I'm up in the stands, and he's saying, 'What's wrong with Uncle Marcus?' Like, he never gave him like one call. And I'm like, Marcus, what you doing? And they're like, dog, you can't be hollering down there. He goes, 'Nigga, you can't do the Rep. thing.' Like... I was like, but he... killing my son. So, he was... but my son like, Uncle Marcus ain't call like one call, and then my wife's hollering all in the fans. I'm like, got to be cool though 'cause we... we Reps, right? You know, this Rep. thing is beautiful man. I want y'all to keep doing the things you're doing. To all of my chairmen, you know, in education, my brother over there with Police & Fire, we had some great times. You know, this is just amazing. I thank y'all for all the... for everything. Lee... I told Wayne to send in my nameplate please 'cause Lee took me around on my first day, and I'll never forget that. He really did. And everybody in that well, hey, John, you guys, hey, man, the job that y'all do, hey, man, God bless y'all bro because we couldn't do none of this without y'all, for real. Really, I want you all to understand that. All the staffers, especially my staffers, wherever you all at. Luke, man, I love you all for that because, again, without our staffers, we lost. Y'all know it. Y'all know it. Tiffany, hey, thank you for the note. I... I really appreciate that note. Thank you for that. You... you've been really good. To the new chief, you know, God bless you, man, and I hope...

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

and just... just keep this chamber safe. But, Marcus, thank you, bro, for real. I really appreciate you. I love you for the guidance and the help. And that's all I got. If I didn't say your name, it's not because I forgot you, it's just because I said I wasn't going to go five minutes. Speaker Welch, thank you for your guidance. Thank you for your support. We have a good Speaker. And last but not least, if I don't... my wife was a Page today. She was not my wife, she was a Page 'cause I told her you cannot tell me what to do today. But hey... damn. You held our family... thank you. Thank you for holding the family down."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Members, we have four more Resolutions. Please keep your comments short. The next one will be House Resolution 983. Representative Blair-Sherlock is recognized."

Blair-Sherlock: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is with pride, honor, and a little bit of sadness that I present Resolution 983 for my colleague, friend, and neighbor, Representative Jenn Ladisch Douglass. Jenn came to this chamber... I won't go into the political part of it, but she came into this chamber bringing a breath of fresh air. And, you know, from rural roots in Pennsylvania, she got her education. She left the farm, got her education, became an attorney, and eventually her family settled in Elmhurst, Illinois, which is part of her district. And Jenn is an amazing advocate, especially on issues concerning health care. When Jenn was in college, she learned that she was a type 2 diabetic. Got the type right, I think. One, sorry, type 1 diabetic. And we all know how challenging that can be, all the, you know, handling health care and insurance and all the things that come along with

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

that. And as a result of that, she became an advocate, not just for herself, but for others. While serving in the House, Rep. Ladisch Douglass passed the very legislation that she championed as a citizen advocate, creating a new law capping the cost of a 30-day supply of insulin to \$25. And she served with distinction as a member of the Small Business, Tech Innovation Committee, the Energy & Environment Committee, the Insurance Committee, the Public... way too many committees... the Public Utilities Committee, the Judiciary - Civil Committee, the Family Law & Probate Subcommittee... I told her she picked too many committees... the Appropriations-Health & Human Services Committee, and the Appropriations-Public Safety Committee, and a sub cochairperson of the Violence Reduction & Prevention Subcommittee. She didn't just come in here to get by. She came in here to do the work. And nobody has worked harder than Jenn in her first and, regrettably, her last term. And I have to say that it is our loss because what she brings to this chamber is thoughtfulness, intelligence, diligence, and the ability to advocate not just for herself, but for others, and she has my undying respect. And I know this isn't goodbye for me, and I hope it's not goodbye for you. I know she wants to continue in her role as advocate. And I hope we're all open to, as Jenn has said, to reach out to her, consult with her because she really does have a unique and extensive knowledge of the issues concerning health care insurance and matters like that. So, I would ask you all to join me in wishing her good luck, but not necessarily goodbye. I know she's going to be back advocating for those causes that she believes in, and we're better for that. Thank you."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Guzzardi is recognized."

Guzzardi: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Motion... to the Resolution. Jenn, I'm so proud to have known you from before the time that you came here. I knew you as that very citizen advocate that Diane was just talking about. And you taught me so much before you even got to this Body. You helped open my eyes to the incredible challenges facing people with type 1 diabetes and the incredible opportunities for us, as government, to do better by people like you and the millions of Americans who struggle with this disease, and... and I owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude to... for the advocacy that... that you... that has driven your life. And we talked years ago about how great a fit I thought you would be for this chamber, and I'm proud to say that I believed in you from the very beginning. And I was not wrong. You have been an incredible colleague, ally, friend, and I'm only sad that we didn't get more of you in this Body because you gave us so much in these last couple of years and I know you have so much more to give. Your family needs you. You've been a rock for your family. They love you, and I know you're going to take care of them in... in the challenging times that you all have faced and whatever may come ahead. But know that this is your family too. And we love you, we admire you, we support you, we are here for you, we are grateful to you for your leadership and for your service, and we know there's much more to come. Thank you so much for everything you've given us, Jenn."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Cassidy is recognized."

Cassidy: "To the Resolution. I'm going to start with I'm going to miss you, except I'm probably not going to miss you because

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

you can't get rid of me and I can't get rid of you. I have your family's back. That is my promise to you. Your passion that you brought to this job, your curiosity, your willingness to dive into things you'd never done before embody what makes somebody perfect for this gig. I'm grateful that I've gotten to know you and so thankful that I get to carry you with me for the rest of my life. You're not done, and we're not done with you. So, see you tomorrow, friend."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Johnson is next... is recognized."

Johnson: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. We came in as the Feb 14, 14 freshmen, and every single one of us is... is coming back, the exception of Jenn. Politics, Jenn and I have had this conversation, it's about timing and a lot about location. Jenn's three times the Legislator I am, and yet, unfortunately, she's leaving. And I... I believe she may be coming back at some point. I remember talking to Rep. Keicher last year on a... on a trip, and... and he talked about how you will always... you'll be forgotten once you leave here. And I've... I've talked in the past about how life... I've learned that life's lived in moments. And all of you... none of you will be forgotten by me, but in particular you, Jenn. When I think about health care, and I think about your advocacy, and... and the work that you've done, and the heart that you've shown in doing this job, I could never, ever forget you. You deserve to be here for the next however long you want to be here. But love you, and you will not be a stranger, and thank you for those moments."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ladisch Douglass is recognized."

Ladisch Douglass: "I promise I don't cry all the time. Thank you, Madam Speaker, Honorable Members of the 103rd General Assembly. I need glasses now. And I rise today with gratitude for having been given the opportunity to represent the 45th District for the last two years. These two years have been transformative in my life and have given me the gifts of new knowledge: knowledge of people, procedures, and issues. You might say I have a better understanding of how the sausage is made and when a Bill is not soup, but don't ask me what the soup is at the end of the day. I also learned so much about the people here during these years: those in my district, those in this chamber, and those working with us and around us. I've been fortunate to travel through the state, to visit TigerFiber, and to go all the way down to Cairo to visit manufacturing facilities and businesses in my district. Without this position, I wouldn't have been able to do that, and it gave me a knowledge needed to do this job. I've been fortunate to serve on seven committees because I wanted to learn as much as I possibly could. I took on two budget committees and learned there too. I brought money back to my district, which I was so thankful for, and I've been able to learn from all of you as you advocated for things that were and are the most important to each of you. I was deeply, deeply saddened when multiple members of my family became so ill such that I could not run again, leading me to make a very difficult decision. And despite that, I was determined to stay on, do the work, show up, and fight for people who

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

need us. And I've been so moved by our work and the ability to use the knowledge I've gained with you to continue working for others because that is our job. We do the work for other people and for the people of this state. And each one of you has blessed my life, and I have to say, especially Will Guzzardi, with... I would not be here without him. I met him in 2017, and he started my journey to this place. And I am forever grateful to you. You are my family. Right now, we... we are a family of three in Elmhurst. My mother-in-law passed in October, so there's three of us left. The rest of our family is out of state. So, you all will be getting calls or texts or little messages online because I need more people in my life and all of you are there. I hope you will reach out. I hope you will ask me questions. And, yes, I have had so many health issues it's not funny. I have fought with insurance since I was 18, when I was diagnosed with diabetes. I've had cancer. I love people with autism. I love a child with a neurological condition. I love a mom with ovarian cancer and grandparents who are in their 90s. And I won't go through that list. So, that knowledge is there to share, and to commiserate, and to work. I saw a quote on a local church in my town, and I'm going to butcher it, but I'm going to try. It said, 'Do not be sad that this is coming to an end, but be happy that the experience occurred.' And I am truly full of joy, and I hope to see you all soon. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "House Resolution 984. Representative Vella is recognized."

Vella: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to honor State Representative Lance Yednock for his six years here in the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

General Assembly. Six distinguished years, where he has accomplished a lot. I think sometimes he thinks that he hasn't, but he has accomplished a lot. A little bit about Lance. Before coming here, he was a heavy equipment operator for about 20 years. He became a business agent for 150, which he likes to talk about all the time. He's a lifelong resident of Illinois River Valley, a proud graduate of Northern Illinois University, and a champion curler. I don't know if you guys all knew that. He's a champion curler. Didn't even know there was a championship for curling. He has spent all of his time in office, all of his time in office, and believe me, he talks to me about it all the time, worrying about his district and worrying about the State of Illinois and worrying about the working people of this state. It's all he thinks about when he wakes up. He texts about it, we talk about it, and that's all he thinks about when he goes to bed. In his time, he has passed legislation to help striking workers, he has helped working people be able to collectively bargain, and he was the engine behind the Workers' Rights Amendment. That wasn't it though. As chairman of the Veterans' Committee, he helped pass Bills to help make veterans' lives easier and to bring us into the future. He, through blood, sweat, and tears, championed the expansion of small nuclear reactors so that we're going to have clean energy into the foreseeable future, and that was not easy. There was a lot of... there was a lot of opposition to that, but he worked hard in a diligent way and an honest way and turned people to understand that this is the future. So, Illinois is going to be a better place because he was here. In this Session, he was elected to be,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

unanimously, to be the Moderate Caucus chair. In that role, he showed strong leadership. He led us through a very difficult budget cycle, and he has truly left a lasting impression, not only in this chamber, but on the Members. The most important thing, though, he did was to set a tone for a lot of us, especially me coming in new, that you show up every day. You show up on time. You work hard. You prepare. You be professional. That's who he was, that's who he is, and it's who he's going to continue to be when he goes back to being a business agent. And personally, we have become very good friends. He has turned my opinion on a lot of things, and I... I've tried to turn him, but he's very strong opinions. I'm just, you know, proud that I had a chance to serve with him, proud that I had a chance to get to know him. Looking forward to more discussions in the long run. And I will just tell him again, you have left this Body better than you found it. And you're going to be missed, not just by me, but by the whole Body. So, thank you very much, Lance, and congratulations on finding some peace in retirement.

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Stuart is recognized."

Stuart: "Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to speak to the Resolution. The... all of these this evening are... are hard, and saying goodbye to colleagues are... are always really hard. This one is tough for me. I... we could go... I could repeat all the accomplishments that Representative Vella did a wonderful job of recapping, but this is more of a personal. I can't tell you how happy I am that the Session after I got elected, you got elected. Thank you. Thank you for coming here. Thank you for our little Czech-Slovak Caucus that we are together.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

That was a fun thing to find out about each other. But just thank you for saving my seat in caucus all the time. I can't tell you how much I appreciate that. And just that voice of reason, that person that I know that understands the things that this job bring into your life, and someone that I could kind of, at the drop of a hat, I'm struggling with this, give you a call or a quick text, and you somehow always say something that... that makes it okay, puts the calm in the space, and just makes people feel better. People come into your life and leave your life at all different times. I'm just very thankful that we intersected. And I think... I just hope that we are always friends, even if we're not always together here. Thank you so much, Lance."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Cassidy is recognized."

Cassidy: "Thank you. I'm going to miss you a lot, and maybe folks wouldn't expect that. We don't align on a lot of things, necessarily. You chair the Moderate Caucus, and I'm the queen of all things wacky. But what I... our relationship embodies what's really special about this place. And the greatest honor you ever did me was to come to me on a Bill I was opposed to and ask me for advice on how to do... to get it done, how to overcome the opposition. That trust, that faith cemented you in my heart forever. That is how it should be done. You should be able to come to me and ask for my advice, and I should be willing to tell you how to get it done, even if I didn't want that Bill to pass. And I kind of think my advice probably did the job. I will miss you. I will reach out to you. I expect you to yank me here and there every now and then, too, when I get a little too far down the road. Thank you. You'll be

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

missed, but I'm excited for what comes next for you and for your seat. So, thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Spain is recognized."

Spain: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. Representative Yednock, and maybe first, as we're saying our goodbye to so many Members tonight, and every one of those Members is special, and their service has been invaluable to the state, but I... I just want to express my personal appreciation of the work that you have done. And as Representative Cassidy just said, your ability to navigate from progressives, conservatives, moderates, any other label that may exist from time to time in this chamber, very few people are able to do that with the grace and the effectiveness that you have so often demonstrated, and your ability to tackle big issues, again and again and again. Some people, it may take two decades of service here in this chamber before they... they get the big one, you know, the big assignment, the important initiative, the monumental Bill. Lance, you did it each and every year here in the six years that you were present. And our chamber, our Legislature, this state is incredibly the beneficiary of your thoughtful work again and again and again. We are going to miss you so much. You have made an outsized impact on the State of Illinois, and we are all grateful to have worked alongside of you for these years. We look forward to working with you in the future. Congratulations, Lance."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Kelly is recognized."

Kelly: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. Lance, thank you very much for your mentorship, your friendship. You were

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

a great roommate when we roomed together last year. You picked up after Dave, which I really appreciated, and you've just been a tremendous asset to this Body. And as one of the Members said, you left this place better than you found it, and that's what we should all strive for. And now, one of my friends is not going to be able to get through this, so I'm going to read this for her, and... so this is not my words. 'In November of 2018, there were a large group of freshmen at orientation. Most of us were visibly excited to be there and trying to get to know one another. But there was one guy who sat against the wall, often rocking his chair, kind of like you're doing over there now, not really saying much. He didn't look like he wanted to be there. One of his friends asked me to try to get to know him and help bring him out of his shell. Little did I know that he would become the voice and calm of reason for me and so many others. This place can change you if you... if you let it, but Lance Yednock has stayed true to himself since day one. Every decision he made was about his family, his community, and his brothers and sisters in labor. Lance, we are a better Body because of the person you are and the legislation you pushed us... the Legislature you pushed us to be. I am honored to be your friend, and I am really going to miss you. Sincerely, TCH.'

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Morgan is recognized."

Morgan: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. I do want to start by thanking Representative Yednock for serving on the House Firearm Safety and Reform Working Group. For those of you who don't serve in the working group with us, you don't know the amazing role that Lance has played in speaking for

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

a lot of people throughout the State of Illinois who present different positions and backgrounds and experiences with regards to firearms that made our Bills in Illinois much better over the last two years. But I... I think, personally, I'm a little more upset because he's leaving the Shaver's Club, and the Shaver's Caucus that we have. As you may know, those who... of us who don't have hair, we're part of a caucus. We... we don't talk about it a lot. It's a little sensitive issue, but we are losing a Member of our Shaver's Caucus, so it's going to be tough for us. And lastly, as you may not know, from behind, I apparently look a lot like Lance. And I know that because in our first year, or actually first couple of weeks, his mother mistook me for Lance Yednock and went up to me and asked if I was Lance. So, to Lances mom, just know Lance will still be here, from behind. Thanks, Lance. We love you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Fritts is recognized."

Fritts: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. Representative Yednock, when I came in two years ago, I knew I had to get to know 20 people on the other side of the aisle if I was ever going to move a piece of legislation, and later found out it was going to have to be a heck of a lot more than that. But you... you are an unbelievable role model. I've had the pleasure of serving DeKalb and LaSalle Counties with you for the last two years. It is always so great to see you interact with our constituents, and you're going to be very, very missed. You are a true statesman, and I wish you the best of luck in your next journey. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Last speaker, Leader Hoffman."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Hoffman: "Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I... I would just say, Lance, I really wish you weren't leaving, you know? I've been here for a while, and I've seen people come and go. And I can tell you no one has graced this place with more dignity, with more honesty, with more commitment to working families, with more steadfast support for creating jobs and economic development. I hope, I really hope, that 20 years from now when I retire, they only... they will say that same stuff about me. Good luck, Lance. Love you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Yednock is recognized."

Yednock: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm not a crier, so don't expect that. Well, my 15 minutes are up, but I hope you can just entertain a few more thoughts from me. It's easy to criticize, but I want to take this moment to be a little reflective. I really, truly wish I would've taken more time to get to know all of you better. I had some, but I didn't do it enough. I wish I would... I wish I was better at letting policy defeats roll off my back. I didn't harbor much anger, but when I did, I regretted it 'cause after all, it's only politics. I wish I wasn't as flippant about an issue that I wasn't interested in necessarily. I did my best to be available, but if I wasn't, I'm truly sorry to whoever I dismissed. I wish I connected with bad... I wish I corrected bad decorum when I witnessed it. I didn't always, and I'm sorry for that. And I wish I would've had more bipartisan legislation because I truly believe that you are not my enemy over there and you have another way of solving problems, the same problems that we all... I just realized also that there are tradeoffs on anything that we do. There is more I could

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

criticize about myself, and I'm sure a few of you would like to join in on that, but let's leave that course and just leave that alone right now. A few notes from my experience and my highlights. Representative Guzzardi and Representative Batinick, the minimum wage debate in my very first, you know, my very first debate, in my first year, it was a... it was a great lesson in decorous debate. I've... I've always remembered that, and I was truly impressed. Two of you guys went back and forth at each other in the way that I would expected it to be in a... in a Body like this. Kelly Cassidy taking the time to come... to explain the issues to me and ensure me that my votes, no matter if they were opposite of yours, were going to be the right thing to do, made me comfortable and I've... I've always appreciated that. Working with Members on the other side to get your support for my Bills was very fulfilling. Getting to know what... what makes you tick and trying to get your... your support, I loved it. Staff being patient with me while I learned the system, you were all very gracious. Passing important labor laws was the reason I ran, and I'm glad that we did some of those. Passing administrative efficiency measures was important too, but helping my district navigate COVID might have become my mission for quite a few years, and spending time to get to know my district is really what I truly loved. A few thank yous. Kylie, my first contact, you were unflappable and you were all business, and I can't say that I would ever want to do that again. You were such a pusher. You are a really a great person. I... I really will miss you. Tiffany, you've always been that calm, diffusing, honest, and just gracious person in your job as

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

chief of staff, and thank you for all your... your just kindness to me. Stephanie Miller over there in the Stratton Building, you were just so great at managing all the people in the Stratton and you were just really a nice soul. Gail, if you're still here, you treated me like a son. I love you dearly. Michael Virgl, who's been one of my great staffers and I really wish you the best, you keep up the good work. Wayne and Nicole and Moe and Erick and Brandon, I have enjoyed talking to you. Every day I come into this place, you guys have always been very supportive and... and just very kind to all of us. Thank you. Members, I got a lot of problems with you. I'm kidding, as we'll see. Walsh, you have been a great seat... seatmate the last two years. And I hope the next seatmate has comfortable shoes and you have a long reach. But he is my brother in labor. Natalie and Jay, you took me under your wing from the beginning, you steered me in the right direction and away from trouble. Jeff Keicher and Dan Swanson, you guys were adjacent with my district from the start. We've always had a great relationship and since I've been here... and I really have appreciated your statesmanship, both of you, and all of you. Mr. Speaker, you pitched a Bill to me as a freshman during an elevator ride that I wasn't in support of. You changed my mind. You do have that gift. You have a difficult job, and I respect you. And many of our disagreements and all of them can be forgotten because they were always from a place of care. I wish you and this Body all the success in the future. Mike, you're a good friend, good roommate. You're living the life I couldn't possibly because I go to bed at 7 o'clock. I do appreciate your service

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

as a firefighter, of course, and I hope you stay safe and we remain friends. Terra, we came in together as colleagues, along with others here, but you, Diane Pappas, and I struck a... struck a... a bond that cannot be broken. You're the sister I never had, and you're definitely the smarter, better daughter that my mother always wished for. I wish you the best as the new whip of the Moderate Caucus, and I think you are perfectly suited to be that leader, and I will miss you dearly. Dave Vella, we're colleagues, we're euchre partners during COVID, taking a lot of Republican money, roommates, and we were sparring partners. And I apologize to Rep. Kelly 'cause usually right when he was going to bed, three, four in the morning, Dave and I would start arguing about policy, and sometimes he'd have to come out and push us aside. But, most importantly, Dave, we've become good friends. We've got a friendship outside the Legislature, and really that's what I value the most. And thank you, Dave, for being such a good friend and a good roommate. Michele Wargo at home, my administrative assistant from the beginning. She was solid, caring, and she's really the hero of our constituent services, and I will miss her dearly. Mike Normoyle, if you're listening, you were the best, and I value your continued friendship. Murri, my replacement, I'll always be here if you need me, but you're in great company and you probably won't need me. I wish I could say something about all of you, and I really could, but time moves on, and I appreciate each and every one of you. I've been so honored to be here amongst all of you, and I sit in awe of all of your dedication and all of the intellect that all of you have. Thank you to all of you

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

who have checked in on myself and my wife this past year. It's been a difficult year, and I can't... I can't tell you how meaningful it has been to hear from you. Thank you to all my constituents, of course, for trusting me to be their... their Representative in the work that I did. Lastly, I have to thank my lovely wife, Deana. You allowed me to be in this job without asking, you supported me the whole time, you excused my absence for our family for the better part of seven years, and I have missed you. Your health challenges have given me perspective and reminded me what is most important, and I will be home for good and I love you. Thank you all. It has been my honor to work alongside all of you, and I hope to see you again someday. Thank you very much."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "We have House Resolution 982, Representative Ann Williams is recognized."

Williams, A.: "Wow, it is hard to imagine this place without my amazing colleague, roommate, and friend, Kelly Burke. Professionally, she is second to none in terms of her professionalism, competence, command of the issues, understanding of the process, handling of the personalities, and navigating complex issues. We could be here all night talking about her accomplishments, but, of course, we don't have that time. But you're all well aware. We all know she is a rockstar, aptly handling the complex revenue committee issues like it was a walk in the park. And while she's fully committed to every task she took on, she always found time for a bit of humor and wit. Personally, Kelly and I came in the House at the same time, and we came fast friends. We both ran against the party, you know, like the rebellious agitators

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

that we both are. For those of you who have been around for a while, you may recall Kelly's creative talents, as she appeared many times on the stage for musical performances at the annual COWL Capers variety show, a point of pride, I'm sure, for Kelly. While Kelly is always demure and understated when it came to her professional pursuits, she certainly didn't shy away from the spotlight when it came to these COWL Capers and never missed an opportunity to perform. I will miss that. We spent hours writing parody songs, loved wearing our blonde wigs, of course, all night, even after the performance was over, and picking out crazy costumes because Kelly just made everything fun. All of the ups and downs, she made better. She did all of this while becoming one of the most respected and well-liked Members of this chamber. And her reasonable and pragmatic approach made her a soft... sought-after Sponsor for the toughest of issues, as well as a frequently requested dinner companion. She was a cofounder of the first ever Women's Caucus and worked hard to lift women up, both here and at home. She truly set the bar higher for what kind of Legislator we should all aspire to be. She truly loves her community, represented it capably while serving here, and will continue to be a champion back home as mayor of Evergreen Park. It's really hard for me to imagine serving here without Kelly's incredible generosity, her intellect, her kindness, her support, friendship, and, of course, that amazing wit. They say everyone is replaceable, but I don't think that's true in Kelly's case. Kelly, I know you'll continue to do great things for your community and enjoy many more adventures with your family and friends. I hope you count

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

all of us in on some of those adventures. Please know you've left your mark on so many of us. We love you, and we're going to miss you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Davidsmeyer is recognized."

Davidsmeyer: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. I want to say, you probably didn't expect me to stand up. But I think that you've always been a kind, thoughtful, intelligent person. I don't know if statesman, statesperson, what the proper term for it is, but you've always been great at it. I remember... and I do tear up, so I'm not going to apologize for that. I remember in the Bank of Springfield Center when you were running a Bill. They put the... my favorite thing in the world, the timer, up on there, and I was asking questions. You were trying to give thoughtful answers, and I was forced to cut you off. And then we voted on that Bill, and you came over and you were yelling and screaming, and I understood where you were coming from because you wanted to answer my questions, but because of the timer, I couldn't let you. It... it stunk because I wanted to share that time, and I wanted people to hear your answers. I also want to say, you were in the Chair at the end of the heated Bank of Springfield, all that was going on in there. And... and I felt for you when people were yelling, 'Close the vote, close the vote.' And I felt so bad 'cause it was a tough situation for you to be in. I... I do respect you. I have a lot of respect for you. I truly believe that you are a statesman, a statesperson, and I hope... I hope you're as successful in the... the next step in your career. So, I wish you nothing but the best."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Mah is recognized."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Mah: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. I... you know, I... I'm really going to miss... really going to miss you, Kelly. You were one of the Reps already here when I arrived. And, in fact, you know, you may not have known this but, you know, I had seen you perform in Capitol Capers even before I was elected and a Member of this chamber. And, you know, your exuberance just exudes. And I really admire you. I just think you're so smart and hardworking and reasonable and, you know, somebody that I aspire to be like, you know, as a Legislator. I got to know you through... throughout the years as we served together, and I really admired your work ethic, the fact that, you know, you were able to do this job as well as teach law school classes. And now, you know, do this job and serve as mayor. There was just no end to your energy and your dedication. And when I got to sit down with you during one of our leadership retreats and learned your story about how you got into politics and, you know, how you eventually came to be elected, that you started as a volunteer on a school board and just was one of those members of the community who wanted to get involved and eventually, you know, stepped up into a much bigger role. You know, it's something that we like to see in the communities that we serve. You know, we... we like to see people who are engaged and curious and interested and, you know, want to make a difference. And so, you really embody, you know, those values and the fact that, you know, you're the type of person that, you know, we want to see more of in all of our communities, somebody who's willing to be so passionate and dedicated and, you know, want to devote the time to improve people's lives. And I just admire you so much,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

and I'll miss you so much. I... I've learned so much from you watching you debate bills, and just your poise and calmness and your sense of style, and sense of humor and fun. I just... I'm really going to miss you, and I want to wish you all the best. And thank you so much for, you know, being a role model for me. Thanks."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Last speaker, Representative Moeller."

Moeller: "Thank you. To the Resolution. A lot has already been said about the... the virtues and qualities of Leader Burke, but I had to just kind of throw... express my gratitude for your friendship, your mentorship, and the... the leadership that you've provided here during your time and the time that we've shared in the Legislature. I think one of the best aspects of this job are the relationships that we develop amongst colleagues. And I'm going to miss all of our departing Members, but, Kelly, you have a special place in my heart. I met you in 2012 during the Edgar Fellowship, even before I was a Legislator, back when I was on the Elgin City Council. And I thought you were just the coolest person in that program and had no idea that eventually I would be serving with you and... and your seatmate. And then I... I got invited to be with the cool girls in the... in the apartment over on Fifth and Jefferson when you had an opening. And... and that has really made the experience down here so much... so much better, so much easier, to have that opportunity to... to be not only colleagues and seatmates, but to have an opportunity to get to know you as a person and... and to share that space with you. I've also appreciated the fact that we've had several adventures together. We were able to travel through our work

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

and... and spend some time outside of Springfield. That's meant a lot to me. But like others have said, what I really admire about you is that you're... you're unflappable, you're incredibly professional, and you have, like, this boundless energy for all of the different roles that you fill in your life, whether it's being a mayor, being a professor, serving as a Legislator, serving as a central committeewoman. It's just you have so many roles and... and you do them all with grace and class and professionalism and with fun. You're a fun person, and you know how to... how to laugh at yourself and... and have a good time. So, thank you for your friendship, Kelly. I know we're going to continue to see you around here during lobby days. We're already getting ready to hear the mantra about LGDF and how we have to increase funding for that. So, it's going to be fun to see you on the other side of the bench in the Revenue Committee advocating on behalf of local governments. But we love you. Thank you for everything that you've done for the state, and thank you for being such a good friend."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Burke is recognized."

Burke: "Well, thank you so much, everyone. I'm going to try not to cry. I told Lance I wasn't going to cry, but I don't know if I'm going to be able to get through that. So, you know, being an Irish person, you know, we like wakes, and I honestly feel like I've just sat through my own wake. So, that was a real treat. So, thank you... thank you everyone who... who has said some, you know, fantastic things. And it has been just truly an honor of a lifetime to have this job and to serve. But, you know, I've been in here, this is 14 years. And I

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

would never have thought that in 14 years I'd be one of the veterans, you know? I just... you just picture people being in these jobs forever, and we learn that's just not really the truth. There's like a natural cycle and, you know, a lot of people, you know, move on, right? So, it's... it's just instructive just hearing everything that everyone has said and... and thinking back and having a lot of reflection on where I started and where I've ended up. And so, during those 14 years, there's been a lot of highs, you know, and some lows. You know, a lot of the Bills that I've been able to work on, things that have been near and dear to my heart that I feel helped make a difference for the better in the State of Illinois. And, you know, some things I'm really proud of was the ability to work on ABLE accounts, something that I was able to then partner, along with the other cosponsors and Treasurer Frerichs and his staff, and it has just turned into something that has been so beneficial to people. And it... it went beyond, you know, whatever I imagined that would be. You know, also, I've been able to work on a lot of higher education issues, been able to work with the... kind of started with Representative Stuart and the Speaker and Representative Hammond and former Rep. Dan Brady, the Higher Ed Working Group, and it brought a lot of productive changes and focus on Illinois higher ed. And I think the result has been that we do have a stronger public higher education system as a result of some of the things we did. And then also, just being able to work on the budget. It's something I truly enjoy. I kind of nerd out to it. It's absolutely so interesting, and it's just been my... my great honor to serve as an

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

appropriations chair and then the chair of the Revenue Committee. You know, then we've had some lows. The budget impasse. You know, there's not a ton of us who served during that time. And I think on both sides of the aisle, you know, we can all agree that it was detrimental, it was awful, it was terrible to live through. And I don't think there's very many people who served during that time who didn't seriously think about getting another line of work. But it... it all worked out in the end. But, you know, we have battle scars from that, and I think we learned a lot of great lessons, and I think we put... were able to put the state on a... a much better footing. It was... it was a long slog, but we've done it. And then in terms of highs and lows, we also have numbers, right? So, when I started, I was one of 64 Democrats, and that has fluctuated through the years. And it was interesting 'cause I was clearing out my office, today mostly, putting things in boxes, and I generally never took the license plate. I had the license plate. I didn't put them on my car, mostly because I had three young drivers and I never wanted my car to be identified throughout the neighborhood and maybe have an LIG complaint that somebody cut somebody off, or, you know, there was nonsense going on in my car when I wasn't in it. So, I... I never really took them, but I did happen to save one of the license plates one day and, for whatever reason one year, and had it stored in my office. And I was putting it in a box, and it came up, and the year I saved, the number was 78. So, I feel like I'm a little clairvoyant as to what was to come and how the Democratic Caucus was able to expand and thrive. You know, a couple other highs that Ann has mentioned, you

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

know, and for a lot of people, Michelle Mussman, Camille, was the COWL shows, and they were goofy. They were the worst third grade talent show you've ever seen. But they were so fun, and they were such a way to bring people together. We have folks from both sides of the aisle. We'd have... I mean, Marty Moylan, you know, ended up being a dance captain for one of them. We'd have Anthony DeLuca and André Thapedi doing all the props in back, and people just didn't take themselves too seriously. You were happy to sort of poke fun, and you were raising money for a great cause. And, you know, Ann is sort of underselling the amount of time that we spent coming up with these ridiculous parodies and costume shopping and practicing our accents. But honestly, I think it was... I think Hello was the highlight of my life. So, anyone who saw that, you probably are scarred from it, but we had a real great time doing it. And, you know, it's just been an incredible experience being able to work with you all. And, you know, when I was elected, I was in my early forties. And so, I didn't come in, you know, as a young person, but I really feel that during my time here I grew and matured as a person, in my profession, and just as somebody who was able to, you know, taking on this role and accepting that responsibility that you're acting not only for the people in your district, but for the people of the State of Illinois. It's sobering. And, you know, I like to have fun, as many of you know, but I truly took it responsibly, truly took it seriously, and every day I would come here and just be mindful that people have put their trust in me. And I wanted to do the best job possible for them. And with the help of all of you and with our wonderful staff over the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

years, I feel like I've been able to fulfill that role. Not every day, not every moment, but it has just been an absolutely fantastic experience. I'm grateful for the fellowship we shared. I'm grateful for the love and care and concern that we exhibit to each other as a family. And like any good family, especially like any good Irish family, there's a lot of yelling and... and disagreements. But in the end, we all come together and we celebrate moments like this. We celebrate milestones in people's lives, and I'm truly grateful to have you all in my life. I will especially miss... I can't say everybody, even though I'll miss everybody, but I will especially miss my roommates, my sisters, Ann and Anna. It has made being away from family, being away from your friends at home, it has made it just... the comradery we shared in that apartment, it's just been wonderful, and it's truly been a blessing to have you guys in my life. So, thank you so much. You know, and to the staff, I was looking around and there are some staff who were either here when I started or shortly after. So, not to leave anybody out, but I do want to give a special shoutout to Jon Maxson, who was my issues staffer, I think my second year, or my second term, I forget. John Hollman, Brad Bolin, Kylie Kelly, and Tiffany Moy. These are... I mean, I would call them kids. Like, I feel like I watched them grow up and turn into these incredibly talented, responsible people who helped take care of us and helped shape the caucus, and I'm truly grateful for all of you... for all of the staff, but especially the ones who were around when... when I started. I truly appreciate you guys. So, thank you for... for everything. Thank you for the... the kind words. I'll miss

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

this crazy environment. You know, again, not every minute of every day, but I'll miss the environment. And, you know, good luck in future GAs. You'll carry on just, you know, just as... with all of the... the crazy problems that will pop up. The problems are never going to end, but our willingness to roll up our sleeves and try and solve and address those problems is... is something I have great faith in the rest of this Body. So, thank you so much."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "We have House Resolution 980... 981, Representative... Leader Lilly is recognized."

Lilly: "Ladies and Gentlemen of the 103rd General Assembly, I rise to recognize Leader Mary Flowers' House Resolution. The Members of the Illinois House Resolution wish to honor the esteemed colleague and trailblazer, State Representative Mary E. Flowers, for 40 years as a State Representative and to thank her for her dedication to the service of the people of Illinois and to her community. Representative Flowers was born in Inverness, Mississippi and moved to Chicago as a child. And her family participated in the Great Migration when an estimated 6 million Black Americans moved from the South to the urban centers in northern states for life betterment and for more opportunity. Still, she and her family faced discrimination, and this led her to a career of fighting for the marginalized groups as a public servant. Representative Flowers established her roots in Chicago. She attended Kennedy-King Community College and the University of Illinois at Chicago. She started a career at the Illinois, where she served as the vice chancellor for academic affairs. Her husband, Daniel, and her beautiful daughter, Makeda, was

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

her support system. She was a proud grandmother of a beautiful granddaughter. I'll just say she is a proud grandmother of a beautiful granddaughter. But Mary did have a mentor, and her mentor was also a trailblazer. Mary's mentor was Chicago's first Black mayor and former congressman, Harold Washington. She began her political career volunteering for campaigns, and she eventually ran for the representative seat of the 31st House District of the State of Illinois with the endorsement of Mayor Washington. She was elected as a State Rep. in 1984, and that's where the next year, in 1985, she began to serve. Representative Flowers is not only Illinois' longest-serving African American lawmaker, but she's also the longest-serving women... woman in the General Assembly. She formerly chaired Health Care Availability & Accessibility Committee and the Real Estate Law Committee. Of course, many of you worked with her and served with her on many other committees during her career. With the work that she's done, she received numerous awards and accolades. Her legislative work led her to be Legislator of the Year for the Illinois Alcohol and Drug Dependency Association and the Legislative Appreciation Award from the Chicago Teachers Union. As you know, she's the former Deputy Majority Leader and former Assistant Majority Leader for here in the House of Representatives. She was always a leader in the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus. Representative Flowers quickly established her career as a champion for more effective and equitable health care in Illinois. She spent years working to address abuse of the health maintenance organization, we know as HMOs. They were denying necessary health care coverage to

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

individuals just to cut costs. In 1999, she brought together stakeholders in the health care industry and the insurance industry to pass major HMO reform in Illinois, the working with Managed Care Reform and Patient Rights Act. Representative Flowers has spent a career advocating for the rights of and resources for pregnant women and postpartum women. In 2019, she spent an extensive legislative package to address the shortcomings in health care for pregnant and postpartum patients and the maternal and infant mortality crisis that was existing not only in Illinois, but throughout our country. These measures ranged from creating task force to address infant and maternal mortality and the rates that were alarming in the Black community, but it required insurance to cover mental health conditions that occurred while pregnant women and during postpartum. Representative Flowers spoke passionately for the needs of children and particularly for the risks of the young in care... or the youth in care. She introduced and passed a number of reforms to strengthen and improve the Department of Children and Family Services, DCFS, with a focus on wellness and dignity of vulnerable children. Representative Flowers worked on behalf of not children, but also seniors, seniors with fixed incomes and families with modest incomes, creating the Energy Assistance Act to help provide affordable heating costs and supporting new resources to help older adults stay in their homes. Representative Flowers has made a history of her 40 years of service in the State of Illinois, and she has carved out a legacy of fighting for marginalized groups. Her commitment to her community and to the people of Illinois has

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

been clear throughout each and every decade she has served. The legislation that she has sponsored expanded health care access, promote equity, diversity in hiring, and tackled childhood hunger. On today, we, the House of Representative of the 103rd General Assembly of the State of Illinois, we congratulate Mary E. Flowers, Representative-Leader. We congratulate you from the bottom of our hearts for the public service that you have provided to the citizens of Illinois, and we offer our profound thanks and thank you for your 40 years and your dedication to the people of Illinois. Mary, as we often leave most Resolutions, this suitable copy and Resolution will be presented to you as an expression of our esteemed respect and love for your service. With that, I just want to add, Mary was an awesome leader. She knew how to speak the truth. She knew how to be very thorough in her legislation because she knew about the impact. As we continue our work here in the General Assembly, we know that many of our ideas and our passion for the people of Illinois stems from the work and her commitment. We may not have her style, but we most definitely have her heart in mind as we do the work of the people. We thank you, Mary. We wish you were here to say... so that we can hug you and say we'll see you soon. Blessings."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Mayfield is recognized."

Mayfield: "Thank you so much. I also would like to speak on the Resolution for Representative Mary Flowers. Forty years of being a voice for the voiceless. Forty years of bringing a sense of hope to communities across our state. For 40 years, State Representative Mary Flowers has dedicated her life to the people of Illinois as the longest-serving Black

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Legislator, and along with Barbara Flynn Currie and Lottie Holman O'Neill, they all tied for the longest-serving female Legislators in history. They were a dynamic trio and did so much to bring women's rights forward here in the State of Illinois, and all three of them truly, truly deserve to be recognized going forward. So, just... we don't want to forget those three names. For four decades, Mary has fought for the frontline state government, working tirelessly on issues that affect families across Illinois, but that too... but too often that went unaddressed: tackling discrepancies in health care outcomes for Black women and infants, holding DCFS and other state agencies responsible to the communities for which they were meant to serve, supporting reforms in health care and education, and challenging inequities in our justice system while upholding forward-thinking solutions for equitable change. A career spanning 40 years could never adequately be summed up in a day, much less in the brief comments that I'm giving to you here today. But I'm going to highlight just a few of Representative Flowers' many accomplishments. Upon... upon embarking upon her journey as a State Representative in 1985, she immediately got to work as the House Chief Sponsor for Senate Bill 486, the Energy Assistance Act, which authorized the Illinois Commerce Commission to administer programing, ensure heating and electrical services for low-income citizens. We now refer to that as LIHEAP. This is only the first time out of many that Mary Flowers made it a priority to improve protections for groups that are too often overlooked. In 2006, she passed House Bill 4125, requiring health insurance providers to provide coverage for outpatient

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

care for those needing care for pervasive developmental disorders, such as autism, in addition to speech therapy. She was a champion for those without a voice. Then she passed House Bill 4306, requiring HIV testing on newborns when the HIV status of the mother is unknown. She also helped to pass legislation to increase HIV funding for over a million dollars. In 2021, she passed House Bill 1779, which required insurers in Illinois to provide coverage for physician-recommended genetic biomarker testing to enable earlier detection of serious illnesses like cancer. In 2023, she passed House Bill 2820, ensuring that emergency medicine and... and obstetrics providers are periodically trained to treat airway emergencies during childbirth. As we all know, maternal mortality was her number one priority. Again, these are just a few of her accomplishments as a State Representative. They are just a hint of the hard work, dedication, and perseverance she has displayed over the years. Another great Illinois leader once spoke of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Mary Flowers embodied that concept in her work. She was uninterested in political concerns, including times of workplace politics. What mattered to Mary Flowers most was identifying and addressing the everyday needs facing the people she served and more than one person who got in the way found out that the hard way. You know, Mary was not one to mince words. All of us can learn a lesson from Mary's service. We can each be reminded of why we're here, and I believe Representative Cyril touched on that as well, Cyril Nichols, of why we are here and what the work we do is all about. Which

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

is why today, as Representative Flowers' time in the General Assembly comes to a close, I would like to ask the Members of the House to rise once again and acknowledge her distinguished career and life of service with a round of applause. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Spain is recognized."

Spain: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Resolution. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I know that the hour is late, but I certainly appreciate everyone that is here and this time that we're spending together because the service that has been committed to this chamber in the State of Illinois is worth remembering and worth celebrating. I'm sure if you're like me, as we're going through some of these speeches, there's some part of you that thinks, well, what will this moment be like for me when I inevitably exit the chamber here? And it's a special time. It's an important time. Hopefully, it's a long time for so many of us before that happens. But I must imagine that this isn't the time or the occasion that Mary Flowers expected over the last 40 years of her service to this House. And I wish Mary were here, and we miss that she's not here because this is someone who has made such an incredible impact on the State of Illinois, year after year, decade after decade. Mary Flowers has been a Member of this chamber for all but two years of my life. There are many people now, you young ones here in this chamber, where Mary Flowers has been a State Representative for every moment of your life, and our state is a better state because of that. You've heard the other tributes. Someone that's served 40 years of dedicated public service to be the longest woman

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

serving in the Illinois House of Representatives, the longest African American serving in the Illinois House of Representatives. This is an incredible, great leader that we all will miss. And the advocacy, the sticking up for people that did not have a voice, the unique style that Mary demonstrated, the way that when she would rise to the occasion, it put everyone on pause, no matter what, and some of the epic exchanges that have been had in this chamber, that's the legacy of Mary Flowers. And I'll just say tonight, Mary, we are grateful for your service. We love and appreciate the work that you have done. And the State of Illinois is a great state, a better state because of everything you have done to contribute to public service. God bless you, Leader Mary Flowers. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Last speaker is Representative Ammons."

Ammons: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Ammons: "I want to echo and second all of the statements that have been made about Leader Mary Flowers. Certainly, it's no coincidence that her last name is Flowers. There's a colloquial term that they say you need to give someone their flowers while they can still smell them. And so, I know Mary is listening and I hope that she can receive these flowers as we have given them to her. She was the strongest advocate that I know. When I ran in 2014, there were very few people that thought, at all, that I could be successful in running in the 103rd District, but Mary was not one of them. Mary came to support me in person in Champaign-Urbana in 2014. She was dedicated to what she believed and what she knew from her

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

experience, coming up from the South, to improve the lives of those who grew up with her, her neighbors, her friends. Mary was an advocate. There's a book called 'Unbought and Unbossed' about Shirley Chisholm. I believe that book is equally as important to describe Mary Flowers. She improved the opportunities for all of us, improved opportunities for inner city residents. She supported the increases, even though some would say we had no money, to improve education and health care and social services for communities that had been discriminated against for over 40 and 50 years. She worked for women, especially those who had very little voice: the hurt, the harmed, the least respected. I believe, wholly, that Mary Flowers deserves to be listed in the National Women's Hall of Fame for serving this state and this country in a way that none believe she could do and, in some cases, she was not even allowed to do. In particular, Mary will be missed, but not necessarily lost to history because we will not allow us to forget. The hundred Bills that she would file on the first day. The hundred Bills that she would file the first day that the roll call opened. And she had every intention on passing all hundred Bills, even though we know this chamber doesn't work that way. She was committed to marginalized groups no matter where they were. She engaged in politics, and she pushed back. I do hope that we will all continue the legacy of a Mary Flowers: introduce the Bills that improve the lives of the people in our communities, fight hard, be unbought and unbossed, stay so that we can see a better tomorrow. We want to thank Mary Flowers for her contributions to this state, to this Assembly, but for me,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

more importantly, to me personally. I have watched and learned so much from her, and I hope that I can do half of what she has done for the people of Illinois. Thank you, Madam Speaker. To Mary, we raise our glasses that we wish we had, but we will once we adjourn this evening. Thank you so much."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Hoffman in the Chair."

Speaker Hoffman: "Members, before the Speaker closes us out, we have to take care of the Agreed Resolutions. Mr. Clerk, Agreed Resolutions."

Clerk Hollman: "Agreed Resolutions. House Resolution 979, offered by Leader McCombie. House Resolution 980, offered by Leader McCombie. House Resolution 981, offered by Representative Lilly. House Resolution 982, offered by Representative Ann Williams. House Resolution 983, offered by Representative Blair-Sherlock. House Resolution 984, offered by Representative Vella. House Resolution 985, offered by Representative Grasse. House Resolution 986, offered by Representative Buckner. House Resolution 987, offered by Representative Scherer. House Resolution 988, offered by Representative Morris. And House Resolution 989, offered by Representative Morris."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Gabel moves for the adoption of the Agreed Resolutions. All those in favor say 'aye'; all opposed 'nay'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Agreed Resolutions are adopted. Speaker Welch. Please proceed."

Speaker Welch: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leader McCombie, Members of the 103rd General Assembly, I rise today to congratulate each and every one of you on the conclusion of a truly, truly,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

truly meaningful two years of service to all of our communities. Give yourselves a round of applause, please. You know, I could not congratulate the people in this room this evening without thanking the men and women who work alongside of us every single day to make it possible. Every single person in this building, all of the staff on both sides of the aisle, working for Democrats, working for Republicans, working for visitors that come to this building, they are the ones that truly deserve a round of applause for making it happen here every day. Let's recognize the workers. Everyone who comes in this building, whether as a lawmaker, a staffer, an advocate, or a visitor, does so with the knowledge that our time here is finite, but the work is infinite. But we hope our work here leaves something better for everyone who will come next. I want to thank four members of my staff in particular, whose work has definitely created something better for every Illinoisan across this state: Tiffany Moy, Kylie Kelly, Kendra Piercy, and Jaclyn Driscoll. I said it in caucus a few days ago, worker bees, I've never seen anyone work harder than these four. Rock stars, superstars, there's not enough superlative adjectives. They have collectively contributed more than 50 years of service to the people of Illinois. They've dealt with more grief than I'm sure they care to remember, and they've produced positive outcomes for people in Illinois than most will ever know. I'm sure their next adventures will be even more incredible. So, ladies, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for standing with us, for helping us, for fighting for us, and for guiding each and every one of us to be better. Can we all give them a round of

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

applause and big thank you? Over 125 legislative days, the Members of this House have delivered for the people of Illinois. Through that work, we fought, and then we compromised. We argued, and then we listened. We faced disappointments, we kept going, and then achieved some remarkable successes. And while we stand at a critical moment in the history of our republic and look ahead to a future clouded with uncertainty, we can also look at our work here and know that the seeds of positive change that we planted during this General Assembly are just beginning, Ladies and Gentlemen, to take root. Just look at what we have done together. Every single student who applied for a MAP grant this year received one. We strengthened the workforce development initiative to train young people for high-wage jobs. And we invested more in classroom education all because we delivered budgets that are not only fiscally responsible, but socially responsible. And when our most promising young people are trained and educated here in Illinois, they're going to create the jobs of tomorrow here in Illinois. We created, together, Illinois' first Child Tax Credit. And modest income families don't have to focus on making ends meet. They can focus on getting ahead. Thank you, Leader Evans, Representative Canty, Chairman Slaughter, Dee Avelar, and all those who supported working families across this state. Let's give them a round of applause, please. We passed the Healthcare Protection Act, controlling costs, curbing the gimmicks that keep people from accessing the care they need, and getting inadequate insurance plans out of the market. And when health care is better or more affordable, that pays

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

untold dividends because it all starts with good health. And I've never seen anyone work harder to get it done. Thank you, Representative Anna Moeller. Let's give her a round of applause. We're getting guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. And when Karina's Bill becomes Karina's Law, we will literally save lives by breaking the toxic combination of guns and domestic violence. Thank you, Maura Hirschauer, for getting it done. I believe we have all started something truly transformational, and now we are prepared to watch it flourish. Nothing we have done the last two years under my speakership has been about me. It's always been about we, the collective. But Ladies and Gentlemen, there's more work to be done. There's more work for all of us to do, and that work starts tomorrow. To all of our House family Members who won't be joining us in the 104th, I want to thank you all for your dedication. Dan Caulkins, we didn't agree on much, but we actually agreed on a lot too. Cyril Nichols, I love you, brother. Your heart is genuine. Jenn Ladisch Douglass, true health care champion for us all. Lance Yednock, man, he made me work for that vote in that elevator, Jack. Love you, Lance. Kelly Burke, I really think she was one of my first mentors in this building. And, yes, Mary Flowers mentored us all. Love each and every one of them. We're going to miss them. I know you guys have given them all a round of applause tonight, but let's give them all another round of applause, please. On behalf of a grateful state, I thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move that this 103rd General Assembly of the Illinois House of Representatives do adjourn sine die."

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

125th Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Speaker Hoffman: "Speaker Welch has... has moved that the House stand adjourned sine die. All those in favor of adjourning sine die say 'aye'; all opposed say 'nay'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Illinois House of Representatives of the 103rd General Assembly adjourns sine die."