

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
104th GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

12th Legislative Day

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Speaker Tarver: "The House will be in order. Members will be in their chairs. We shall be led prayer today by Representative Dave Severin. 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."

Severin: "Good afternoon. I want to share a verse with you from Matthew 7:7 out the King James Version for you old-timers. 'Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall opened unto you.' So, as we pray today, there may be people that you know in your family, or friends, or constituents, maybe even a fellow worker that the... is hurting today. Actually, I have a staff member that his wife is fighting cancer. And so, when we pray today, actually God says to ask and we'll receive, seek and find, and knock and the door will be opened. So, today we're going to ask, and we don't tell God what to do, but we can ask, and so we're going to ask today. And I appreciate you joining with me. And if you've never done that before, just know that that the creator of the universe, God, loves you, loves everyone around us. We can't screw up bad enough to make him not love us. And he has a plan for us, and it doesn't make any difference who you are, where you are, or what religion, or what things that... how you've been raised. God loves us. And if you've never prayed before, I challenge you to join with me today. Lord, I thank you for this day. And I thank you that you love us, you care for us. Lord, I pray for my sister today that's hurting. I pray that you touch her body, and I pray you give doctors and nurses wisdom. But I pray most of all, Lord, that you touch her. You made us. You made her. You know everything

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about us. And I pray that you'd encourage her today, encourage her family, give her strength. And I pray for each one of us too, that under this dome that you would us wisdom and direction. And, God, help us to know that you love us, and you care about us, and you have plan for each one of us and for this state, this nation. I pray that you'd be with us. And I thank you that you that you love us and you care for us. And, again, I thank you, Lord, that we can't screw up bad enough for you to ever give up on us. I thank you for that. In your name, amen."

Speaker Tarver: "We'll be led in the Pledge of Allegiance today by Representative Ammons."

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

Gabel: "Speaker, let the record show that Representatives Costa Howard and Jones are excused today."

Speaker Tarver: "Thank you. 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 McLaughlin is excused for today."

Speaker Tarver: "Have all recorded those who wish... recorded themselves, excuse me, who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. There being 115 Members answering the roll, a quorum is present. Mr. Clerk, Committee Reports."

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Clerk Hollman: "Committee Reports. Representative Harper, Chairperson from the Committee on Agriculture & Conservation reports the following committee action taken on February 25, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 54. Representative Ness, Chairperson from the Committee on Adoption & Child Welfare reports the following committee action taken on February 25, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1715. Representative Jones, Chairperson from the Committee on Insurance reports the following committee action taken on February 25, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1141 and House Bill 1577. Representative Moylan, Chairperson from the Committee on Transportation: Regulation, Roads & Bridges reports the following committee action taken on February 25, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1724. Representative DeLuca, Chairperson from the Committee on Cities & Villages reports the following committee action taken on February 25, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1538. Representative Ammons, Chairperson from the Committee on Energy & Environment reports the following committee action taken on February 25, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1305, House Bill 1555, House Bill 1640. Representative Gong-Gershowitz, Chairperson from the Committee on Judiciary - Civil reports the following committee action taken on February 26, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1391, House Bill 1582; recommends be adopted is Floor Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 24 and Floor Amendment 1 to House Bill 28. Representative Morgan, Chairperson from the Committee on Health Care Licenses reports the following committee action

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taken on February 26, 2025: do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 1270."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Cassidy, for what do you seek recognition?"

Cassidy: "Point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Cassidy: "I'd like to introduce my page for a day. Izzy Crompton is a fifth grader from Washington, Illinois, though she originally hails from Evanston. She has a special interest in supporting those most in need and a personal connection to the importance of social supports for children's... children and families, as she was adopted from foster care herself. When she's not busy with school, she participates in dance and is learning to play the trombone, which is incredibly impressive. And she's excited to be here today to see government in action. She also happens to be the niece of our staffer Jackson."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Canty, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Canty: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Canty: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to recognize my page for the day, Kieren Thompson. She is a seventh grader at Central Intermediate School in Washington, Illinois. She is participating in competitive dance, her school dance team, and student council. Her favorite class is English and language arts, and she loves to travel. She is very excited to be with us today to learn more about lawmaking and the House of Representatives, and I think we have a future

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colleague on our hands. So, let's please give Kieren a warm Springfield welcome."

Speaker Tarver: "Welcome to both pages. Representative Bunting, for what purpose do... do you seek recognition?"

Bunting: "Point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Bunting: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I'm excited to introduce not one, but two pages for the day from the 106 District. This truly is one of the best, most rewarding job that I have. Ainsley Urban is a junior at Watseka High School, her parents John and Keagon Urban. Ainsley is involved in the Watseka FFA chapter. She plays softball and golf. She's a member of the National Honor Society, math team, Key Club, and she is active in her church. We also have with us today Paige Miller. She's a sophomore at Iroquois West High School. Her proud parents are Kimberly Hall and Tyler Miller. She is actively involved in both marching and jazz band, as well as concert, chamber, and jazz choirs. She is also the lead role in this spring's musical, 'Sponge Bob,' for her school next month. She is also a member of the Scholastic Bowl team. She participates in track and is an avid golfer as well. Paige is interested in pursuing politics and constitutional law. Please join me in giving both of these ladies, as well as their ride down to the Capitol today, my chief of staff, Kira Ebert, a warm Springfield welcome."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Schweizer, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

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Schweizer: "Thank you. Today, I would like to honor, in honor of Black History Month, the Lewis brothers of Champaign, Illinois, all of whom joined the United States Army, all of whom served during World War II. And from everything I've been able to gather was... is a record here in Illinois from one family serving during one war. I found out about this family from a fellow brother of mine, a Marine Corps veteran, while I was attending a VA event that I was hosting. And he had mentioned about his father and his five uncles. And so, I wanted to take this time because this is not history that you're going to read in a book, this is history that you're only going to find out locally from attending events like this, and I would just like to read their names. Private Ivon Lewis, Corporal Porter Lewis, Corporal Malcom Lewis, Private Billy Lewis, Private Vernon Lewis, and Private Dowl Lewis, Jr. All these individuals have currently passed on, but I want to thank the Lewis family for everything that they did during this time of year and wish them all the best. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Evans, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Evans: "Point of... point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Evans: "If you look up at the gallery, we have some wonderful dynamic students from South Suburban College. Specifically, with them, we have program managers, Rebecca Garcia, Alex Smith, Laveta Moore. Welcome these great individuals to the Capitol. They're looking to learn, so talk to them, engage with them. And this specific program is about getting more of

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our young people, more folks from our community involved in construction trades so we can keep building America. America needs rebuilding. Let's build America. Let's build America with from people from our community."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Schmidt, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Schmidt: "Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Schmidt: "Yes, today I want to recognize and congratulate Pierre Walton from East Saint Louis High School for his hard work, commitment, and never-give-up attitude to win the 2025 IHSA Class 2A wrestling state championship in the 165 weight class. I'd like to point out that no wrestler has won in East Saint Louis since 1943. So, it's been a long time coming. At 1 p.m. today, East Saint Louis Senior High School will be holding a celebratory ceremony so students and staff can congratulate Pierre for his victory. Although I'm unable to attend the ceremony because I'm here today, I want Pierre to know his dedication to improving his wrestling skills and having a strong mindset to win a state championship is noticed, not just but... by me, but by the Members of the Illinois General Assembly. Please join me today to congratulate Pierre Walton. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Crawford, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Crawford: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

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Crawford: "Throughout... colleagues, throughout the Capitol today you may have noticed some folks wearing black and red. These are students, alumni, faculty, and staff from Northern Illinois University here for their advocacy day. I'm a proud alum, absolutely, I'm a proud alum of NIU, having graduated from their business school... their College of Business as well as their College of Education. I learned something about my university today in that it has the highest number first-generation college students out of all of the public universities here in the State of Illinois. I spoke to these students, and these students realize that they are going to exhibit the highest in resilience in order to complete their education, despite not having that knowledge of the process of higher ed back home. So, as they come to your offices, please hear them out as they advocate for their needs as students at the university. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the pride of Annie Glidden Road, as that's where I began my career, where I taught my first class, and more importantly, where I met my wife. So, we are a Husky family through and through. Go Huskies."

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

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Benton: "I just want to offer a huge congratulations from the House here to somebody that we all really like, Kevin Donahue. We see him around the halls of the Capitol and the Stratton. Well, Kevin and his wife, Meryl, just found out that they're having a baby, their first. So, I want to congratulate them."

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I think they're going to be great parents. And when you see them around, give them a warm congratulations on becoming first parents. So, congratulations to the Donahues."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Deering, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Deering: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd asked my colleagues to direct their attention to the Speaker's Gallery, as I'd like to give a warm Springfield welcome to Rebecca Losli. If she would stand. She is here as president of Illinois American Water. Thank you for joining us."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Meier, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Meier: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Meier: "Today, I want to talk to you that it's National Grain Bin Safety Week. And as you travel down the interstates, if you're not familiar with farms, all those big, round, silver buildings you see are grain bins scattered throughout Illinois. Why we need a National Grain Bin Safety Week is because it only takes four seconds to trapped in the flowing grain where you will not get back out. Sixty-two percent of the grain entrapments are fatal for farmers or farm family members. One in five entrapments involve a youth from 11 to 20 years old. The main causes are engulfment and toxic gases as you are trapped in a grain bin. So, in this national safety week for grain bin, please make sure that any of your constituents know the proper things, the proper harnesses, and what to do around grain bins so you don't have that tragedy in your family. Sixteen years ago, I lost one of my

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best friends six months after his first son was born in a grain bin entrapment. And it's the most horrible thing to stand there and watch as they try to retrieve a body out of one of these large grain bins, taking a trackhoe and just breaking the sides trying to get them out. So, we call this attention so this hopefully will never happen again. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Wilhour, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Wilhour: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Wilhour: "Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, we're... we are in the midst of witnessing a battle for the future of education, not just in Illinois, but across this entire country. The president, President Trump, has signed an executive order banning DEI in our schools, putting an end to the toxic policy that have divided our classrooms for too long. But here in Illinois, the State Board of Education has chosen to defy that order. They've chosen to cling to an ideology that is failing our students. Instead of focusing on excellence in education, we've decided to focus on this idea of equity, where the government comes in and tries to artificially level the playing field. The results are absolutely dismal. We're spending more money than ever on education, but 3 out of 10 kids in our state can't read at grade level. And when you talk about the Chicago Public Schools, it's even worse. In fact, I'd argue that... that they are as close to achieving equity as anyone. The issue is it's at the bottom of specter,

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not the top. The problem with equity focus is it just means everybody's the same. It's a flawed of Marxist theory, it's a race to the bottom, and it's a miserable failure to the kids that we're supposed to be looking out after in this state. And to my friends over there, and to the governor, and to the State Board of Education that would take exception to this, I'd ask how... how can we sat here and preach equity when we're forcing the poorest kids in the state to stay... stay in fail... failing and dangerous schools? If we're serious about fixing education, then we need to embrace education freedom, where poor students and minority students have the same access to quality education, to education choice just like the wealthy do. We need to trust parents to make decisions, not government bureaucrats. Let's reward excellence with teachers with the merit pay and... for so many that go above and beyond. But the powers that be, the powers in the Illinois education industrial complex that prop up and sustain the existence of too many in power, they won't have it. Let's be real. This isn't about diversity. It's not about exclusion. It's about control. DEI has been used as a weapon to punish... to push radical agendas, lower academic standards, and replace achievement with activism. Illinois... Illinois students and Illinois schools should be focused on math, and science, and history, not Marxist indoctrination. Yet, here... here we are. Instead of following the president's order and getting back to real education, the Illinois State Board of Education is digging in its heels, choosing to put politics and their agenda over children's future. I'll continue to say it until everybody here understands it: Woke is dead. DEI has failed.

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It's fueled division, punished excellence, and weakened our schools. And now, the people in charge of our education system, unelected bureaucrats, think they can just ignore this directive. They think that they just do whatever they want. We'll see. Paging President Trump, we have a problem in Illinois."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Buckner, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Buckner: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Buckner: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just would like to say, remind my colleague who just spoke, that on February 5 he had the opportunity to go on the record for the people in his district and the people of this state and to sing the praises of the president and to talk vociferously, as he just did, and be on the record about DEI and the things the Trump administration are doing, but he decided to walk off of this floor and on his duties. So, hopefully, you keep the same energy, Representative, and we can do this again."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Stuart, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Stuart: "Thank you. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Stuart: "Thank you. We have an opportunity today to celebrate all the great things going on in higher education across the state. And I just want to give a direct shoutout to Southern Illinois University System. We've got Cougars at the Capitol and Salukis in Springfield that we're going to see around the hallways. There's a amazing group of student leaders from

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both campuses that are going to be able to share with you all the great things going on at their respective campuses, the importance of SIU to the entire State of Illinois. And as a proud former faculty member and alum, I just hope that you give them a Springfield welcome and learn all about the things going on at their great campuses. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Hauter, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Hauter: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Hauter: "Well, I'd like to welcome today my chief of staff from the district from Morton, Illinois, which is the 'Pumpkin Capital of the World.' Anne Dawdy is my chief of staff. She's in the gallery. Some of you may know longtime Representative Keith Sommer. She worked for Keith for 24 years. And now, she took... took on me as a project, and I welcome her today. As well, I have my LA from the district, Ivy Stuber, here as well. So, thank you for coming and welcome."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Hoffman, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Hoffman: "Yes. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Hoffman: "I was in my office in a meeting, and I... I heard a previous speaker discuss unelected bureaucrats and the danger that unelected bureaucrats have in the United States of America, in the State of Illinois. Well, what the hell is Elon Musk? What is he? What is he? And DOGE, and the people that are thrown out of their jobs, what are they? Talk about unelected bureaucrats. At least the Department of Education

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here has some type of oversight, not just a dictator that's throwing people out their jobs."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative, I always mess this up, Elik or Elik? Elik, there we go. For what reason do you seek recognition?"

Elik: "Point of personal privilege, Speaker."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Elik: "Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to let the body know that the auditor general today released the results of an audit that he was directed to do by the Legislative Audit Commission last year related to the estimates and costs of the HBIA and HBIS programs for 2021 to 2023. As the House Republicans predicted, the audit found alarming and astounding differences in the estimates of the program versus the actual enrollment and expenses. The governor's own budget for Fiscal Year '26 acknowledges that we cannot afford the programs and that we have far outspent any estimates, which is an affront to the hardworking taxpayers of Illinois. In addition, the program was found to have eligibility errors which added to the costs and the program also had poor internal controls in many ways. It is not enough for us to say I told you so. We must do better. Now is the time, and this is our opportunity to work for taxpayers, not promote fraud and overspending. I hope that's something that all lawmakers can get behind. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Blair-Sherlock, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Blair-Sherlock: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

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Blair-Sherlock: "Thank you. I'm absolutely stunned and amazed that the day after the United States House of Representatives voted to take \$800 billion out of Medicaid, I'm listening to people talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion. It's a smokescreen, folks. Keep your eye on the prize. They're trying to distract you with these culture wars, when what's happening is our most vulnerable are being attacked. We're talking about people who have disabilities, low-income seniors, young mothers and childrens. Eight hundred billion dollars, while many were saying no, we're not going to do that. But you did it, and you did it last night. DEI, please, that's the least of our issues. We need to protect the most vulnerable in our society, and if you support those kinds of cuts or the 6,000 veterans that have been laid off already, then shame on you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Grant, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Grant: "I'm sorry. I'm really busy this morning. Anyhow, I'm here..."

Speaker Tarver: "A point of personal privilege?"

Grant: "Oh... oh, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak. Point of personal privilege. Okay..."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Grant: "All right, thank you. This may be premature, but I'm going to talk about it anyhow. I have thousands of people and a lot of homeschoolers in my district, and this is unconstitutional. Illinois politicians are at it again. This time, coming after homeschooling families. The latest disgrace comes in the form of HB2827, which would bury parents

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in red tape, let the government track and control school education. Government needs to be out of their lives. Under the bill, homeschool families would have to register with the state every single year or risk having their kids labeled as truants. Parents are... are responsible for their children's education. That means fines and even legal trouble, all for choosing to educate their children at home. It's in the constitution. It's our Illinois Constitution, Article VIII. Parents have the right, they have the inalienable right to teach their children and to send them to the school they want to send them to. My district is home to many homeschoolers' families, and I understand throughout... I understand their thought process well. They do not trust the government to successfully educate their children. We can't even trust the government to extend a wildly success... successive school voucher program to help our undervantaged students in this state. You know what I'm talking about. Back to the homeschool bill. This government overreach at its worst. Parents, not bureaucrats, know what's best for their kids. Parents know what to do with their children. Illinois families should be trusted, not treated like criminals. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Miller, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Miller: "A point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Miller: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last few weeks, as a senior Member of this body, I've been concerned about the... a lot of the emotional outbursts, the displays of anger, bitterness, and hate, flashbacks even to the Civil War era and

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hallucinations where the Speaker's been calling out names to an empty chamber. And I think that just in the way of... of warning that this could be the beginning of TDS. And I think that early detection is critical to prevent this syndrome from spiraling out of control. I know, personally, I've taken a proactive view of this, and I'm going to open up my office for counseling in 230 North at 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Look... and I'd like to have full disclosure on what you might expect there, is that, you know, I live... I exist in a tiny office there in 230, and if you will take just a few minutes to enter slowly into my office, it'll be the... you'll experience the sensation of having a group hug to kind of make you feel better. I'm going to have some Swiss Miss with marshmallows, and cocoa always, always makes you feel better. I'm going to have a Disney coloring book. That's always been considered the happiest place in... on earth. I got a 64-count crayon with an enclosed sharpener. I don't want sharp objects, but I know that it's... kind of gets uncomfortable if you can't color in the lines with adult crayon. And I also have a... a stuffed astronaut that resembles Elon Musk, and it's soft enough, if you like Elon, you can cuddle him. And it's... it's durable enough if you want to smack him around a little bit, you can do that too. But, anyway, I'd like to encourage you to take advantage of dealing with your TDS, and like I say, my office will be open and I'm available any time you want to talk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Kifowit, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

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Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Kifowit: "Members, I am thrilled to continue to be working on pensions again this year. As you know, the chair of Appropriations-Pensions and working with my esteemed minority spokesperson. And I wanted to raise awareness that today, at 4 p.m., myself and Chair Yang Rohr will be hosting a joint pension committee. And I just want to encourage you to either stop in if you want to listen or listen online, but pensions is really important. And I just wanted to remind the body that you can get a tutorial and information on pensions today at our joint subject matter hearing at 4 p.m. in 114. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Jiménez, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Jiménez: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Jiménez: "Thank you. I rise today to thank the Members of the Ukrainian... of the Ukrainian community who are here with us today. Many folks don't know that more than 31 million people have fled Ukraine since 2022. We should also know that 300,000 Ukrainians live in Illinois and that 50,000 have arrived in the last couple of years. It's actually the second largest population in the country here in Illinois. And I am proud that today we have here us, if you can please stand, members of the Ukrainian community of the Selfreliance Association. Selfreliance Association is the only Ukrainian-focused organization in Illinois. And out of the 50,000 new arrivals who have come to Illinois... of the 50,000 new arrivals that come to... to Illinois, I am proud that the State of Illinois

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has provided funding and grants for this community to thrive. Now, the loss of critical state funding that may end on June 30 will have a detrimental effect. We need to make sure that this funding continues for the Ukrainian community and make sure that we have legal services, social services, and that the Selfreliance Association and the community that has come around.. it is not just state funding. The community has put their own money, their own volunteer hours, their own community has put everything they have to supporting each other. This is what it's about. This is how we resettle a community, and I want to thank them for being here, and I want to make sure that Illinois continues its promise to make sure that we resettle all newcomers. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "And finally, Chairwoman Debbie Meyers-Martin, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Meyers-Martin: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honor to present the Black history moment for the 26th day of February."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Meyers-Martin: "Thank you. Charity Adams Earley was born of December 5, 1918 in Kittrell, North Carolina. She was the first African American to become an officer in the Women's Auxiliary Corps, later known as the WACs. Her service challenged racial segregation within the military and helped open doors for other African American women to serve in the armed forces, and this is her story. After she graduated from Wilberforce College, a historically Black college in Ohio, she returned to South Carolina, where she taught math and science to junior high students. It was during that time that she also began her pursuit of a master's degree in vocational

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psychology at Ohio State University in which she completed after her retirement from military service. In 1942, the United States was expanding its military forces as it went to war with Germany and Japan. As part of this effort, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was created in the spring of 1942. Hearing about the formation of the WACs, Earley decided to apply for a place in the organization. She was accepted in July of that year and traveled to Iowa to begin training at Fort Des Moines, Iowa as a member of the first officer candidate school. She completed training and was commissioned in August of 1942, and in September of 1943, she was promoted to major, making her the highest-ranking female officer at the training center. At the end of 1944, Earley was chosen to be the commanding officer of the first unit of African American women in the Auxiliary Army Corps to go overseas. Her unit was the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, better known as the 'Six Triple Eight.' This courageous all female unit defied the odds and made history during World War II. This remarkable battalion began working in Birmingham, England, and as they set forth to their tasks under Earley's command, they became a cohesive, self-sufficient outfit, absolutely devoted to their mission of delivering hope to the soldiers on the frontlines by clearing the air hangers full of backlogged mail. The women worked around the clock in 3 shifts, 8 hours per shift, 7 days a week, and their task was to clear all of the backlogged mail in six months. But they were able to race through 17 million pieces of mail in the first 3 months of their overseas assignment. The estimation that the 6888 Battalion handled approximately 65,000 pieces

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of mail per day. Having completed their mission, the last of the unit returned home in February of 1946, and shortly thereafter, the... the trip... the Six Triple Eight was disbanded. Prior to her request from release from active duty, Charity Adams Earley was promoted to lieutenant colonel, the highest possible rank for a WAC. And before her death on January 13, 2002, the Smithsonian National Postal Museum honored Lieutenant Colonel Earley for her work with the battalion, the Central Postal Directory Battalion. In a ceremony in Washington, D.C. in 1996, the institution recognized Earley's achievement in the World War II by stating that their commitment to the mission and each other shattered barriers, reshaping the role of women in the military and proving that hope, no matter how small, can change the world. So, thank you so much, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Tarver: "Committee announcements, Mr. Clerk."

Clerk Hollman: "The following committees will be meeting this afternoon: Gun Violence Prevention will meet in Room 118, at 2 o'clock. Labor & Commerce will meet in Room 114. State Government Administration will meet in C-1. Meeting at 4 o'clock is the Appropriations Public Safety & Infrastructure Committee in Room 115, Higher Education in Room 122, and the Appropriation-Pensions & Personnel Committee with the Personnel & Pensions Committee will meet in Room 114."

Speaker Tarver: "And now, allowing for perfunctory time for the clerk, Leader Gabel moves that the House stand adjourned until Thursday, February 27, at the hour of noon. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the House stands adjourned."

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Clerk Hollman: "House Perfunctory Session will come to order. Introduction and First Reading of House Bills. House Bill 3991, offered by Representative Huynh, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. House Bill 3992, offered by Representative Chung, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. House Bill 3993, offered by Representative Gabel, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. House Bill 3994, offered by Representative Gabel, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. House Bill 3995, offered by Representative Gabel, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. House Bill 3996, offered by Representative Lisa Davis, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. First Reading of these House Bills. There being no further business, the House Perfunctory Session will stand adjourned."