

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

The regular Session of the 103rd General Assembly will please come to order. Will the Members please be at their desks? The invocation today will be given by Father George Nellikunnel from St. Cabrini and St. Aloysius Parishes here in Springfield. Father.

FATHER GEORGE NELLIKUNNEL: (Invocation)

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Thank you, Father. Please remain standing for the Pledge. Senator Johnson will lead us.

SENATOR JOHNSON: (Pledge of Allegiance)

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Lisa Yuscus from Blueroomstream seeks leave to video today's proceedings. Seeing no objection, leave is granted. Mr. Secretary, Reading and Approval of the Journal.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Journal of Monday, January 6th, 2025.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Hunter.

SENATOR HUNTER:

Mr. President, I move to postpone the reading and approval of the Journal just read by the Secretary, pending arrival of the printed transcripts.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Hunter moves to postpone the reading and approval of the Journal pending the arrival of the printed transcripts, there being no objection, so ordered. Mr. Secretary, Resolutions.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Resolutions 1351 and 1352, offered by Senator McClure and all Members. They are both celebration of life resolutions,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Resolution Consent Calendar.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Resolution 1353, offered by President Harmon. It is substantive.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, if you could please make your way to the Senate Chamber for the last day of the 103rd General Assembly, please come to the Senate Floor so we can begin today's proceedings. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, we are going to go to page 3 of your printed Calendar near the bottom of that page, under Secretary's Desk Resolutions, we have Senate Resolution 1350 from Senator Koehler. He wishes to proceed. Mr. Secretary, please read the resolution.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Resolution 1350, offered by Senator Koehler.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Koehler, on your resolution.

SENATOR KOEHLER:

Thank you, Mr. President. The moment we have all been waiting for, this is the resolution. Senate Resolution 1350 creates a committee to approve the final Journals of the Senate of the 103rd General Assembly that have not been approved by the Body as a Whole. The committee is comprised of three Members, two appointed by the President, one appointed by the Minority Leader, which is a similar what we've done in past General Assemblies. So, I would humbly ask for your Aye vote.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Is there any discussion? Seeing none. The question is, shall Senate Joint Resolution -- I'm sorry, Senate Resolution 1350 pass. All those in favor will say Aye. Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted. The Senate will stand at ease for a few minutes to allow the Committee on Assignments to meet. The Members of the Committee on Assignments will meet immediately in the front room of the Chamber. The Senate will stand at ease. Senator Koehler, in the Chair.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR KOEHLER)

Senator Villivalam, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR VILLIVALAM:

Thank you, Madam -- or Mr. President. A -- for purposes of an announcement.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR KOEHLER)

Please state your announcement.

SENATOR VILLIVALAM:

Thank you, Mr. President, Members, Ladies and Gentlemen and Members of the Body. I rise today, as many of us do, to recognize a staff member of ours that has -- he's finding this out right now that as, you know, been on our team and has served with -- with us, for six years. Bradley Gaines is leaving our staff in a few -- few days, next week. He actually started around the same time I did in January of -- of 2019. Came to us as a -- as a pillar, from Wood River, his hometown. And I have had the honor and privilege of working with him as he staffed the Transportation Committee, for the last several years. And as someone that, you know, as you all may know, we're -- we're discussing a lot of issues on the Transportation Committee, and -- and it's a wide range of issues,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

from license plate bills to -- I don't know, there's this -- there's this thing going on with public transit. And, you know, just on that, he staffed six committee hearings with over 25 hours of testimony over the summer and did it with a smile. And, you know -- you know, came with me on the whole road show. And so, he very much took his job, seriously. And I am just forever grateful because he's been a partner. And -- and as we all know; we cannot accomplish what we accomplish without our staff. He won't be going far. Our loss is -- is their gains. Okay. His last name is Gaines. So, if you -- if you -- if you like that, that was my idea. If you didn't, it was Mike Hoffmann. But all of that to say, I -- I'm just forever grateful for your service. Thank you. And please know that you all be -- you always be a part of the Senate family. And if we could just acknowledge him and his six years of service with us, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR KOEHLER)

Thank you very much, Brad. Senator Belt, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR BELT:

Thank you, Mr. President. Purposes of public announcement.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR KOEHLER)

Please state your announcement.

SENATOR BELT:

Also, to I would like to speak to Brad. Brad is phenomenal. He shows up. He never shows up empty, right? He -- he was my campaign manager a little while ago. And as -- as Rahm said, he's from Wood River. Then, you know, the 56th District. But he came over and worked in the 57th, where the sun shines brighter and the air is better. And so, but -- but -- but I a -- funny -- a funny

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

story is. so, Brad worked in my office in Cahokia Heights and -- and so Brad was trying to quit smoking, and he would -- he would show up, and he works really hard. And then all of a sudden and so it's June, July, and we would hear all these pops, and he was like, oh, they're popping fireworks. I'm like, those are not fireworks, you know? And -- and so, he would go outside and smoke. So, I -- working in the 57th probably hurt him during that time period, but he put in long hours. He's a phenomenal worker. He has an outstanding work ethic. And then after that was over, he staffed approps - infrastruct -- public safety and infrastructure for me. He was always prepared, always prepared. And so, there's no doubt in my mind that he will be an asset to where he's going next. And so, they're -- our loss is definitely their gain. Love -- I'm -- I'm going to miss the ponytail. And -- and so, everything goes full circle. These guys come here to get the requisite knowledge to go farther. And so, that's what Brad is doing, and so, we'll miss you. But I thank you so much.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR KOEHLER)

Senator Cunningham, in the Chair.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Mr. Secretary, Committee Reports.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senator Cunningham, Chair of the Committee on Assignments, reports the following Legislative Measures have been assigned: Be Approved for Consideration - Senate Resolutions 1347, 1348, and 1353. Signed, Senator Bill Cunningham, Chair.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Rose, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR ROSE:

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Point of housekeeping, if I may?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

State your point.

SENATOR ROSE:

Thank you, Mr. President. I was unable to be here Sunday due to the blizzard. If I had, I would have been an emphatic No on House Bill 5164. Therefore, I ask that the record reflect my thorough intent to vote No on House Bill 5164. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Noted. Senator Fowler, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR FOWLER:

Thank you, Mr. President. Purpose of public announcement, please.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Please make your announcement.

SENATOR FOWLER:

Thank you, Mr. President, and Members of the Senate. Those of you -- most of you probably know of the catastrophic, ice and snowstorm that most of Southern Illinois and other areas of the region had received over the last few days. And I just want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the linemen, all the volunteers, everybody that works so hard to protect others. There's tens of -- tens of thousands of homes without power for many hours. And still to this day, there are homes without power. And all the other states our neighboring states, Wisconsin, Ohio, Missouri, Kentucky that started rolling in with the linemen trucks to assist the over 500 linemen that were working for hours, upon hours, upon hours to come into the rescue of my district and other parts of

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Southern Illinois. So, I know we always talk about our first responders and -- and -- and all the work that they do. And thank God, God bless them for what they've done over the last few days but also want to pay tribute to those that had to leave their family the linemen, the electricians, everyone that left their family for hours upon hours upon hours for the safety and security of the many residents that have gone without power. So, I just want to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone, to everyone that volunteered in warming centers that left their -- left their families at home, to be able to be with the homeless, to ensure that they had a warm place to stay and -- and -- and food. The -- the hundreds that we worked with down in Southern Illinois to all those volunteers. So, thank you for this opportunity, Mr. President. But this is just an acknowledgment. And if we could, I'd like the Body to just give all of our first responders and all those that worked tirelessly, all of our electricians and everyone for the work that they've done and are still doing today as they continue to restore power and get the trees off of homes and out of -- out of the -- out of the streets. So, I would just really appreciate that acknowledgment, Mr. President, thank you very much.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, Supplemental Calendar No. 1 has been printed and distributed. We are, as you can see, Secretary's Desk Resolutions. At the top of the page Leader Curran brings Senate Resolution 1347, he indicates he wishes to proceed. Mr. Secretary, please read the resolution.

ACTING SECRETARY KAISER:

WHEREAS, Senator Tom Bennett has served the people of

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Illinois with distinction for nearly a decade, representing the 106th District of{sic} (in the) Illinois House of Representatives from 2015 to early 2023 and the 53rd District in the Illinois State Senate from 2023 to 2025, which includes Bureau, Ford, Grundy, Iroquois, LaSalle, Livingston, Marshall, McLean, Peoria, Putnam, Tazewell, Will, and Woodford Counties. And WHEREAS, Senator Bennett is well-known for his kindness, compassion, and legislative acumen; as his accomplishments and enduring impact will resonate throughout the Capitol and the State of Illinois for years to come. And WHEREAS, Senator Bennett was born on June 8th, 1956, and raised on a family farm in Gibson City, Illinois; and earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Eastern Illinois University, a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and a Master of Business Administration from Illinois State University, and a Doctorate of Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University. And WHEREAS, before entering public service, Senator Bennett dedicated himself to education as a high school and junior high science teacher and later worked as an IT professional at State Farm Insurance, demonstrating a lifelong commitment to learning and innovation. And WHEREAS, while working and raising a family, Senator Bennett served his community as a member of a local preschool board, which included two years as the chairman, he served on a K-12 school board and a member of the Parkland Community College Board of Trustees, serving for 19 years with the last three years as chairman. And WHEREAS, Senator Bennett was actively engaged in Senate -- in state and national trustee organizations, serving as Chair of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association in Springfield and the only Illinoisian to ever serve as Chair of the Board of the Association of Community

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

College Trustees in Washington, D.C.. And WHEREAS, as a legislator, Senator Bennett served on task forces and commissions focused on early childhood education, teacher assessments, the environment, and energy, while holding key positions on Senate committees, including Appropriations-Education, Appropriations-Higher Education, Early Childhood Education, the Committee on Education, Energy and Public Utilities, and Higher Education. And WHEREAS, Senator Bennett brought his passion for education to the Illinois General Assembly, where he was leader in addressing critical issues around the teacher shortage, co-chairing a task force focused on Educative Teacher Performance Assessments and encouraging retired teachers to re-enter classrooms, and supporting excused absences for the Future Farmers of America and 4-H events to foster experimental learning. And WHEREAS, from being raised on his family farm, Senator Bennett was a steadfast advocate for Illinois agriculture, supporting funding restorations for Soil and Water Conservation Districts, working with Prairie Research Institute to create a study on carbon capture and carbon sequestration for the State of Illinois, easing estate tax burdens on family farms, and aiding small scale farmers through legislation exempting on-farm composting from permit regulations and requirements. And WHEREAS, Senator Bennett's contributions to public safety include supporting tax credits for volunteer firefighters, advocating for extended stop arms on school busses to protect children, and strengthening emergency response services. And WHEREAS, Senator Bennett's exceptional service has been recognized through numerous awards, including the Illinois Farm Bureau's Friend of Agriculture Award in 2016, 2018, 2020, 22 (2022), and 2024, the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs' Legislator of the Year in 2018,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the Illinois Chambers of Commerce Champion of Free Enterprise Award 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024, and the 2024 Illinois Firefighters Public Service Award. And WHEREAS, Senator Bennet finds his greatest joy in the people he has met and served throughout his career, reflecting his genuine dedication to uplifting others. Therefore, be it; RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we congratulate Senator Tom Bennett on his retirement from the Illinois General Assembly after nearly a decade of honorable and dedicated service. And be it further RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Senator Bennett as an expression of our gratitude for his hard work and best wishes for his future endeavors. Sponsored by Senator John Curran.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Leader Curran, on the resolution.

SENATOR CURRAN:

Thank you -- Thank you, Mr. President, Members of the Illinois Senate. We are all sad to say goodbye to our -- one of our most beloved Members of the Illinois Legislature, Senator Tom Bennett. Unfortunately, Tom can't be with us today. He hasn't, he's been absent the last few days, but when he's feeling better, I know we're all going to see Tom again. Tom is well known for his kindness and compassion, as he is for his legislative skills. And I know Tom is watching today. Tom, we're going to miss you. Doctor Bennett is also one of our most educated Members of the Senate and has spent his career helping to improve our education system for others. He turned his passion into for education, into public service here in Springfield, where he has been a part of meaningful negotiations and legislative packages, and passed his own bills to

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

help students and teachers thrive. He's also been a fierce advocate for agribusiness and for the families it feeds and the families it supports. He is a great example of what you can do to -- you can get done when you put aside partisan divides and work collaboratively for the greater good. His accomplishments and impact he has made will be felt throughout the Capitol and the State for many years. Despite his many legislative accomplishments, it is the people he has met along the way that brings Senator Bennett the most joy. Tom always says, "It's all about the people". He is correctly known for exhaustively working his geographically large district, making just about every pancake breakfast, fair, and community event possible. His popularity was felt when I attended his retirement party in Gibson City, where hundreds upon hundreds of -- of people all throughout the district and even outside of it, came to wish Tom thank you and well wishes as he was approaching his last days in the Senate. I'm grateful for the chance to serve alongside him and especially this last term. He has just been a joy in our caucus. I know in the Senate and everyone that we work with, the staff love Tom. They love working with him, for him, and he just treats everyone he comes across with such kindness. Tom is always finding new ways to give back to his community. So, while I know that his legislative career and particularly his Senate career is -- comes to an end, he is going to continue to find new ways to be involved and contribute to his community. So, I ask, would you please join me in congratulating Senator Tom Bennett on his well-deserved retirement and wishing him a bright, happy, joyful future. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Rose, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

SENATOR ROSE:

To the resolution, if I may?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR ROSE:

First of all, I know that Tom is watching this at home, so, "Hey, Tom". I -- I've known -- I've had the -- actually the -- just the great honor and privilege of knowing Tom Bennett since 1994 when I first met him in Gibson City, Illinois, at his home. He is truly not just one of the nicest people you'd ever meet, but he's one of the most decent, honorable, upstanding citizens. He -- he exemplifies what is good, in this State and in this country. He's a family man. He cares deeply about his community. I mean, you know, to talk about his higher education. I mean, we talk about it. He's in the House. He's in the Senate. All that. But really, he dedicated his life to higher education. He served as a Parkland Community College trustee, did a great job in our local community college. So admired by his peers that ended up chairing the Illinois Community College Trustees Association. Later -- and this is -- think about this. He's the only Illinoisan to ever Chair the Board of the Association of Community College Trustees in Washington, DC for the whole country. He's the only Illinoisan to ever do that. And he did it the entire time with humility, humbleness, good humor. Was there ever a time in this building that we had more fun when the Bennett's were here? I mean, honestly, both sides of the aisle. You had Scotty and Tommy on both sides. It was just a great time. No matter what happened, no matter what argument Peters and I would get into, one of those two could pull us aside and make us laugh again. And think about that

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

for a minute. What an amazing mother and father that this family had, and grandfather and grandmother that this family had to -- to bring life to those two folks. Just an amazing family. Just absolutely amazing family. Tommy, I know you're listening. And in the immortal words of your nephew, Senator Scott Bennett, "You're such a nice guy, you say, "Hi" with two hands." So, with that, I really look forward to seeing you back home, buddy. I wish you well as you recover from the flu. And just so sorry you couldn't be here, buddy, but love you. Thanks.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Koehler, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR KOEHLER:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR KOEHLER:

Well, I'm not -- not quite so happy with the -- with Senator Tom Bennett. Let me tell you why. You know, when we had redistricting going on, we -- I -- I moved over to cover parts of McLean County, and so I got to meet a kind of a new group of friends. So, Sally Turner and Tom Bennett and I all represent McLean County, and we would go do things together and we'd have fun together and we'd see things together and not once did you call either Sally or I to get together and talk about this retirement of yours. Not once. You know, and I've told you that time and time again, Tom. You know, this is kind of a collaboration at this point, you know, and you just kind of up and leave us now. So I expect at least a phone call now and then. And you can also take us out to coffee, you know, every once in a while just to

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

kind of keep that camaraderie going. But, you know, he's kind of like the Energizer bunny if you ever, you know, have been with him in his district. He's just kind of all over the place and always happy, always smiling and Tom we need more of that. So, I wish you the best, my friend, and stay in touch.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

I would note to the Senate right now that despite Senator Bennett not being here, his light is flashing on the panel in front of me. So either he has reached out telepathically or Senator Wilcox is having some fun. So next we will go to Senator Wilcox, on the resolution.

SENATOR WILCOX:

Thank you for recognizing that. I have a video to send him acknowledging that his light once again, is lit when he's not here. Tom asked that I provide some remarks on his behalf. These are his remarks, and I will try to do that in the light that he would do it. So good morning, friends, colleagues, and family. Today, as I reflect on my time here, I am filled with gratitude, humility, and an overwhelming sense of pride. Serving in the General Assembly has been one of the most challenging, amazing, and rewarding times of my life. It has truly been the best job I've ever had. The work we do here is unique. In many ways, this is a magical place, not like the Magic Kingdom in Florida, but still a place where dreams happen. Where dreams, hopes, and thoughts become concrete ideas and laws that impact millions of people across our great State. With that power of change comes great responsibility, one that I have been honored to carry for the last 10 years. For the past decade, the only way I have known how to do this job is to give it my all, fulltime, often 6 or 7 days a week. I have enjoyed every

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

minute of it and am sad to see this chapter come to a close, but it's time. It's time to embrace the next chapter and become a full-time grandpa or papa and even more devoted husband to my amazing wife, Cathy. Cathy, thank you for your tremendous support and incredible patience throughout this journey. I could not -- could not have done it without you. With less coffee related events, fewer pancake breakfasts, and very limited fish fries, recently, I have found myself reflecting on the relationships, the challenges, and the achievements that have defined this experience. I have had the privilege of representing the 106th District in the House and the 53rd District in the Senate. Through it all, I have been guided by a deep commitment to the people I serve and the shared goal of building a stronger Illinois. I am deeply proud of the work my staff and I have done together over the years. They are, without a doubt, the best team I could have asked for. To my staff, both in the district and here in Springfield. Thank you for your tireless dedication, your leadership, and your commitment to solving problems and improving lives. You make me look better than I am, and I could not have done this without you. Please join me in giving them the recognition they so richly deserve. To my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, thank you for your partnership and your passion. Whether we agreed or disagreed, I have always appreciated the respect and the willingness to come together on issues that matter. Leader Curran, President Harmon, I am grateful for your commitment to the people of Illinois, and for your steady leadership. To the people of the 53rd District, thank you for putting your trust in me. It has been an honor and privilege to represent you. I have learned so much from all of you. One lesson stands out for me a

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

reminder from a dear friend, Tom. He said, "It's all about the people." This simple truth has guided me through decisions, debates, and votes. At the end of the day, the work we do here is not about us, it's about the people we represent. As I stand here at the close of this General Assembly on January 7th, 2025, I do so with a heart full of gratitude and pride, representing my district, serving the people of Illinois. It has been an honor of a lifetime. I leave knowing that this work will continue in the hands of dedicated leaders and my successor, Chris Balkema, who all share the commitment to making Illinois a better place for all of us. Dear friends, it's been the honor of a lifetime to serve with you in the Illinois State Senate and in the House. God bless you all.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Bryant, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR BRYANT:

Thank you, Mr. President. To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR BRYANT:

I was honored to be able to come into the General Assembly in the House in the same class as Tom Bennett. And so, I've gotten to share the last 10 years of time with him, got to know each other really well. One thing I really appreciate about Tom is that sometimes in the House, especially in those first few years, there were days that you would leave and you really didn't want to talk to anybody when you left, like you were really angry with everyone about everything that was going on, only to have Tom Bennett come up to you and say, "I'm putting together a bipartisan dinner

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

tonight. Would you like to join us for a bipartisan dinner?" Because that's just the kind of guy that Tom really is. But I do have a couple of jokes to tell on Tom's behalf just because of how much Tom loved Oreo cookies. But before I tell just these two jokes, in his honor, I would say for any of -- we who are in here who served in the House, you will remember a for -- a former chief of staff who made it his life's mission to make sure that you had no food in your drawers, on your desk, in your hands. And so, most of us would, you know, duck down to the -- the drawer that would pull out and you'd have something stashed in there and you'd have to sneak it. And then if this individual saw you, he would come gleefully racing over to yell at you and tell you how you can't have food on the House Floor. But then all of a sudden, I look over on Tom's desk and he has like six different flavors of Oreos. And I said, "Tom, you know, like I'm a rule follower generally. And I would be like, hey, you know, you can't really have Oreos on the Floor". And Tom's answer just always was "there Oreos? Who's going to care?" You know that they're Oreos." But so in honor of Tom Bennett to really stupid jokes, first is why did the Oreo go to the dentist? And the answer is because she lost her filling. I think that's very appropriate to Tom Bennett sense of humor. And then, you know, a little bit less appropriate joke, which really doesn't -- I really don't mean this when Tom -- but it's a good one that you can hold on to is, When I dunk my cookies, I think of you and hold them under until the bubbles stop." So I don't really mean that one, Tom, but there's one you can use in the future. God bless you and many, many happy years ahead of you. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Loughran Cappel, for what purpose do you seek

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

recognition?

SENATOR LOUGHRAN CAPPEL:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR LOUGHRAN CAPPEL:

I also to just want to stand and recognize the great work that Senator Tom Bennett has done. I also had the honor of working with him on the Senate Appropriations for Education Committee, and he was the Minority Chair. So, we met a lot, and we talked about a lot of the common themes that we had for education. He -- we would have meetings before the meeting. And he knew I ran a tight ship, and he was very respectful of that. And we actually had a lot in common. And I do think it's because we did care, both of us, about getting good work done for education. One of the things when we talk about Tom Bennett being all over the State, I think he had like a tiny, tiny portion of Will County and sure enough, he would show up at little events that we had that probably most of us wouldn't have gone to because it was sort of out of his way and he didn't really have much of Will County, but he was there. And one of the things that he came to was an event that I had as the Adopt a Legislator for Ford and Iroquois County. He came into my district and toured with us, and so again, I got to spend more time with him, and that's when he shared with me that he probably wasn't going to be running again. And we had a great conversation, and it just made me really sad. I also had someone ask me one time who my favorite colleague on the other side of the aisle was, and of course I had to say Tom Bennett. And I think we all know why, because I think he would probably be all of our favorite. Not that

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

we're supposed to have favorites. You're all my favorite. But again, I just want to reiterate just, what a joy and a privilege it was to work with someone who did -- you could tell he did care about the people and the people he served, and I think that's why he was able to get such great work done, just in the short amount of time that he was here in the Senate for education and other things. So, with that, I just -- we're going to miss you, Senator Bennett. And hopefully, we'll see you soon.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Rezin, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR REZIN:

Thank you. I'd like to speak to the resolution, please.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR REZIN:

Thank you. If you look in Webster's Dictionary, the definition of a retail politician, Tom Bennett's name comes up. As somebody who shares half a county with Tom Bennett, he shows up for absolutely everything, every pancake dinner, every event. Most of you don't know that on Sunday he goes to church on one end of his district, and then he goes to the other end of his district to catch a second church on the other side of his district. That's who Tom Bennett is. For somebody like me who likes to take a little time off on Sunday. It's a little hard of following in his footsteps because we always hear, well, Tom Bennett's here. Tom Bennett was here, and if they didn't hear Tom Bennett was here. If you follow them on social media, you certainly know Tom Bennett was here because he is the king of selfies, right? There is not a place that Tom Bennett would not go where he is doing selfies. In

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

fact, I can picture Tom up here today. If he were here today, taking selfies with absolutely everyone. In fact, he would probably make this entire Chamber get together and he would try to do a selfie for his last day. That's Tom Bennett. He is beloved by everyone. When he walks into the room he is -- his smile is infectious no matter how your day was, Tom Bennett's always smiling. That's such a great quality. It's not something you learn, it's something that you're born with. It's who you are. It's inherent in your absolute being. That's Tom Bennett. He is happy to be here, and he truly is here for the right reasons. And we are going to miss him. You know, I would like to say something about his staff too, because we do share half of Grundy County, they are top notch. And as you know, we often work with our colleagues and our staff work with their staff, and sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But this staff is top notch. And we have so enjoyed working with Tom's staff, especially in Grundy County, who are such a good reflection of who Tom is. If Tom, believe it or not, there's once in a while Tom can't make it to something. It's very rare, but his staff does show up. And you know, it's been a joy working with all of you and you're such a great support for Tom. In closing, I'd like to say, "Tom, I know you're watching here. I know you're smiling ear to ear. What I do admire most about you is you are such a family man. I know that you have a bucket list. I know that your wife has, you know, several things -- several traveling plans for -- for you, your family, and for you to do with your grandchildren. I so will enjoy in the future, following you and seeing all of your great experiences and adventures that lie ahead of you. And when you're feeling better. I look forward to seeing you back in the Senate, visiting us anytime. Thank you,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Tom."

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

And the final Senator seeking recognition is Senator Sally Turner. Senator Turner, on the resolution.

SENATOR SALLY TURNER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman{sic} (Mr. President), to the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Turner.

SENATOR SALLY TURNER:

Thank you. I -- I will be quick because I think everyone has said almost everything I was going to say, but I just want to say, Tom, I know you're watching, and I want to say thank you. And -- and again, what Senator Koehler said, we all share that edges of the district, and we hope that you make a point to come back and visit us. And also, I just want to thank Cathy for her hard work and determination in getting her husband where he needed to go, when he needed to go, and making sure that he got there safely. So, thank you, Cathy. And one last thing. Tom valued our staff so much, and I know some of them are weeping because he's leaving, and I know how important he was to you. And Tom was like, where's Waldo? So, we always know he showed up somewhere. So anyway, thank you staff, for what you did for Tom. We greatly appreciate Tom. We'll miss you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Going back to the resolutions on the Supplemental Calendar. Oh. I'm sorry. The question is, shall Senate Resolution 1347 pass. All those in favor will say Aye. All those opposed will say Nay. The Ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted. Now moving back

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

to Supplemental Calendar No. 1, we have Senate Resolution 1348 from Leader Curran. Leader Curran, on your resolution. Oh, I'm sorry. Mr. Secretary, please read the resolution.

ACTING SECRETARY KAISER:

Senate Resolution 1348, offered by Senator Curran. WHEREAS, Senator Win Stoller has served the people of the 37th Senate District of Illinois with honor and distinction during his tenure in the Illinois Senate, which began in 2021. And WHEREAS, Senator Stoller is a lifelong resident of Germantown Hills and a private alum -- and a proud alumnus of the University of Illinois, where he earned both his degree in accounting and an MBA in business. And WHEREAS, prior to his service in the Illinois Senate, Senator Stoller built a successful career in the private sector, working as an auditor for Price Waterhouse Coopers before dedicating over 25 years of service to Widmer Interiors in Peoria, where he currently serves as CEO. And WHEREAS, Senator Stoller's strong commitment to community service is exemplified by his leadership as past Board Chair of the Peoria Area -- Area Chamber of Commerce. As past Treasurer of the Business PAC of Central Illinois, and as a 23-year Advisory Board Member and Past President of the Salvation Army. And WHEREAS, Senator Stoller also serves as President of the Rotary Club of Peoria and contributed as a Church Elder and Campus Outreach Board Member at Grace Presbyterian Church for over a decade. And WHEREAS, as a legislator, Senator Stoller served on task forces and commissions focused on issues such as economic development, business (public) accountability, and technology, while holding key positions on Senate committees, including Agriculture, Appropriations, Health and Human Services, Insurance, Revenue, State Government, the Special Committee on Pensions, and

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

State Government Special Issues. And WHEREAS, Senator Stoller's legislative achievements include the passage of his innovative State Local (and) SALT workaround bill, which created the Pass-through-Entity (PTE) tax to provide significant tax relief to Illinois small businesses. And WHEREAS, through his SALT Bill, Senator Stoller enabled partnerships and S-corporations to elect to pay State income taxes at the entity level, effectively bypassing the SALT cap and providing financial relief to small business owners, a measure that was -- has positively impacted the State's business climate. And WHEREAS, Senator Stoller was a key negotiator for the Senate Republicans on the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, advocating for responsible fiscal policies to address the State's \$4.5 billion dollar Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund deficit brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic. And WHEREAS, as a business owner and proponent of pro-business policies, Senator Stoller has consistently championed a common-sense and results-driven approach to policymaking to address the challenges faced by Illinois' residents and businesses. And WHEREAS, Senator Stoller has been a steadfast advocate for fiscal responsibility, business economic{sic} development, (and economic) growth in Central and Northwestern Illinois and has represented his -- his constituents with integrity, thoughtfulness, and dedication. And WHEREAS, Senator Stoller's leadership and service have earned him the respect and admiration of his colleagues in the General Assembly and of{sic} (and) his constituents, who have benefited from his unwavering commitment to improving the lives of the people of Illinois; therefore, be it RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we congratulate Senator Win Stoller on his retirement from the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Illinois General Assembly and commend him for his years of dedicated service to the people of Illinois. And be it further RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Senator Stoller as an expression of our esteem and best wishes for his future endeavors.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Leader Curran, on the resolution.

SENATOR CURRAN:

Thank you, Mr. President, Members of the Senate. When Senator Win Stoller first arrived in the Senate, first arrived in Springfield, he immediately suffered a misfortune and setback. He was assigned to the office right next to mine. And Win started with that incredible deficit and didn't let that slow him down. I got to know Win very well, being in an office next to him. And I was so impressed, especially in those early days with how studious he was, how serious he took this job and how meticulous he was in his preparation. Lots of questions, lots of reading, he took it all in and before he would choose a course of action. And I thought that was just a great way to -- to approach the important work that we do. I also got to meet Win's wonderful wife, Amy, who is here with him today and got to know Amy very well also. I really enjoyed, getting to know Amy. She was often here with Win, and I really, truly appreciated their partnership and collaboration in -- in approaching all we do. Senator Stoller's career has been very impactful, both for his Central Illinois district but also the business community in Illinois as a whole. As a community business leader, he brought a "boots on the ground" perspective to our caucus and what Illinois needs to become more competitive. His accomplishments that we just heard in this resolution over the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

past few years, especially the passage of his innovative SALT Workaround Bill that provided financial relief to small business owners without diminishing State revenue, will be a benefit to Illinoisans for many years to come. He's also a testament to the impact each Member can have, regardless of their party, if they believe in and work hard for an idea and truly put policy before politics. Win is a problem solver in all things. I have great respect for his competence that he brought with him to this position. His calm demeanor, really unflappable. And for the collaborative approach that he took to ensure his constituents received the best representation possible. I am grateful for his guidance. He was always generous with advice to me, both as a Senator and in my new role as Leader, and I also really appreciate the -- the -- just how serious he took all his work on committee. And, you know, any time something came before Win on a committee, if I followed up with him afterwards, he had it all broken down, knew all about it, was a tremendous resource. With his retirement, our caucus and our Chamber are losing a very serious and qualified legislator and a champion for our great State. Though I'm sad to see him go, I am confident great things lie ahead for he and Amy in their future. And with that, I just want to thank him for sharing his incredible talent with us over the last few years, and I want to thank Amy for sharing Win with us and wish Senator Win Stoller a happy and prosperous retirement.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Koehler, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR KOEHLER:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

To the resolution.

SENATOR KOEHLER:

I don't know if all of you know that both Win Stoller and I represent the greater Peoria area, so we're neighbors in a sense. But I want the Republican side of the aisle just to really appreciate what a true conservative Win is, because when he took over that district, you know, he could have had his office in any place he wanted to, but he chose to locate it near the ICC North Campus, which is a building owned by the State of Illinois. So, he has a free office space there. So free office space there. Now it happens to be in my district. And which leads to me to an interesting story. So I got a call in my office one day. There was somebody, there was a neighbor that lived very close to the -- the office there and complained about the noisy air conditioner. He said, "We can't you know, have a backyard picnic because of this air conditioner. It's -- it's noisy." And so, who do you think they call? They call me because that's my constituent, right? And so, I didn't know what to do with this. I thought, well, you know, who do I go to? So, it's been Veto Session. I said -- I said, Win could you take care of this. And yeah, he did. I don't -- I don't know what happened. I haven't heard from the constituent again. But I've -- I've gotten to know Win just in terms of representing that area and his work on the Salvation Army Board. My office used to be at the Labor Temple, which is kind of within the campus of the Salvation Army and the labor unions, you know, built other places. And so, I was one of the last offices there, and we finally closed the Labor Temple. But the Salvation Army is going to take it over and going to build a brand-new men's living quarters there. And -- and Win called me with -- with the -- the chairman of the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

board and said, "Do you think it's okay if we tear the Labor Temple down?" I said, "Well, yeah, it's not being used for anything." It really is a necessity because in Peoria, like all communities, we have a real homeless problem. And this becomes -- housing for I don't know how many, how many families or how many individuals are going to be able to house there, but it's going to be quite a few. And -- and Win it's just a real part of the community. Widmer Office Supply, it's one of the stellar businesses of our community. I know that you're going to be a constituent just in terms of your business, and I look forward to that. So, but it's my -- my time here with you in the Senate -- it's just really been pleasurable and I wish you the best, you and Amy both. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Anderson, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR ANDERSON:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR ANDERSON:

I just want to say, leading off of Senator Koehler. I'm on the other side of Peoria County that butts up with your guy's district. So, and during the remap, I took over a lot of the area that, Win use to represent. And in the short time that he represented that area, I can tell you, you made an impact. And, you know, there's a lot of situations in this room that make us nervous because we want to do the right thing for our constituents. And not once have I ever seen Win nervous. He was always doing what was right for his district, and it was always from a logical, analytical view. It was never an emotional one. It was always

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

focused on his district first. And I think that's a great example for all of us on either side of the aisle. The other thing too, is, for -- for me, in the time that I've known Win, Win your -- your -- your marriage, is an example to everyone, and how you've raised your children. So that has not gone unnoticed. And I appreciate the example that you've -- you've led in all those areas and -- and as a Senator and you're going to be missed. So, thanks for all your work, Win.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Rezin, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR REZIN:

Thank you, Mr. President, to the resolution, please.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR REZIN:

Thank you. I've gotten to know Win and his wife. And like Senator Anderson said, you know, they're an incredible team. They live what they preach. And I appreciate that. I often say in this Chamber, I may not agree with you, but if you're a true believer and you do what you believe, I respect that. And that's who Win is and Amy, it's a great team. Win is a doer. He came to work when he came here, but he's quiet, he's thoughtful, and he's intelligent. He's a business owner that feels the direct challenges of legislation we pass. He knows how it affects him, because when he's not here or working in the -- in his district, he's running, actually, he says the small business that's not I've been there. It's a large business. It's pretty impressive, by the way. Win passed one of the most consequential bills in a long time, he found a way to refine the Illinois Tax Code to once again allow 400,000

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

small businesses S-corps and passed -- and passed through entities to once again deduct their State and local taxes on their federal tax reform. Never before has a State Senator been able to cut federal taxes. It's super deep in the weeds, but he gets it. And he did it while he was here. Kind of went under the radar, but that is a very big deal. Win earned the respect of all of his colleagues in two days highly polarized political situation, Win's achievement is truly remarkable. Win's hallmark in his unfailing courtesy, he has been able to strongly articulate -- articulate his conservative principles but do so in a way that was effective and productive and respectful on both sides. Over his four years in the Senate, Win earned deep respect by all of his colleagues, and that's all that you can ask for when you come down here, is the respect of your colleagues and what is your legacy when you leave. And Win, I wish you and Amy the best of luck. And I look forward to what you do but you have -- you have left a lasting impact here and a phenomenal legacy in your time in the Senate. Good luck.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Doris Turner, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR DORIS TURNER:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR DORIS TURNER:

Senator Stoller and I came in about the same time, and almost immediately after he joined the Senate, he came down to my office to introduce himself. And we had a really nice conversation and

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

continued to, you know, talk a lot about things that were going on here. It was nice to have someone who was new from the other side of the aisle come in and -- and want to have that type of camaraderie, and I sincerely appreciated it. And then we had the opportunity to work together because he was the minority spokesperson on Agriculture Committee. We didn't have a lot of controversial stuff except the turtles, but that was okay. We made it -- we made it through. But we did have opportunities to talk about agriculture issues, which we both were very concerned and interested in. And then we also ended up at a lot of FFA events and other -- other kinds of things. And I always -- he was always a smile and a -- and a bright spot and someone I could in a room where you may not have known very many people, I could always gravitate towards him. And -- and it was always a really nice conversation. So, I just want to tell you that I have enjoyed meeting and -- and working with you, even though it was a short period of time. And I wish you extremely well in your retirement.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Rose, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR ROSE:

Thank you to the resolution, if I may.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR ROSE:

So, like when I first met Winnie, I thought, my goodness, is there a guy straight out of central casting for the role of Senator? I mean, look at his hair alone. Other than Simmons, you take the cake on that deal. But then I thought, Holy cow, this guy is really smart. I mean, he comes up and asks question after

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

question after question and you're like, where's this coming from? And then he'd go back and he'd think about it, and then he'd come back with more questions. And I just -- Leader Curran said it. A couple other people said it, but I don't know if there's a more thoughtful guy that's walked through these doors in a long time. I mean, he really takes everything that happens here seriously. He thinks about it. He studies it. He thinks about it. He studies it some more. He is a really thoughtful guy. Moreover, he's a conscientious guy. Even yesterday, he's coming up to me asking me, hey, remember that thing we're talking about? You got to keep. You gotta promise you're gonna keep working on it next year. You know, so even as he leaves, he's still trying to help his constituents. But I want to say something else. That's, I think, far more important than anything here. And that is, Senator Anderson touched on it a bit. Winston is a - is a real Christian man, and that is a, there aren't enough of those folks in this world. And we quickly found out that aside from our love for the -- the Illini, that we have friends in common. In fact, two of their best friends, from -- from undergrad or and my wife and I, small group. And just over the years, I've really grown to appreciate the strength with which he's, the quiet strength with which he's taken on that role. And so, I wanted to say that because most importantly, I know that your faith is number one, and I think someone needs to recognize that. So, anyway, good luck to you. There is an Illinois game tomorrow night at home, so maybe we'll see you there. Go, Illini!

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

And finally, Senator Stoller is recognized.

SENATOR STOLLER:

Well, thank you all for those kind words. It's a truly

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

humbling and I really appreciate that. Makes a guy feel pretty good, to be honest with you. One of the honors of my life has been serving here with all of you, and mostly it's the friendships and relationships that we've developed over the years working together. I will forever cherish that. I love the State of Illinois, and it's really been a highlight of my life working together with all of you to make Illinois a better place to work and a better place to live. And as I'm leaving today, I just wish all of you, continued success in accomplishing that. So, the number one question I've been getting over the last few days and weeks and months is, are you going to miss this? And to be honest, I won't -- I won't much miss the circus of all this, but I will definitely miss all of you clowns. I say that in the most kindest version of the word clowns of course. And of course I want to say thanks to a number of people. But first of all, my wife, Amy. Amy, would you stand up here? So, Leader Curran and a few others have mentioned Amy here, and this is something that we've done together, and it's part of the journey from the very beginning, she was working on the political side of things, campaign things. She worked in the district. She worked on different constituent services. And -- and we would go around to different events. And I would often introduce my wife, of course. And -- and we were doing so much together I would refer to her as my partner in crime. And then my political advisor came to me and said, "Hey, this is Illinois after all. You might not want to call her your partner in crime." And so, I quickly changed that term. But also, I want to thank the staff. My Chief of Staff, Nancy, is here. My LA Denise, Marcus, Lindsey and Michaeline you always did a great job helping me put -- helping me look good when, you know, I don't always know

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

what to say. I don't always know what to do. And you guys are always there supporting me. I thank you for that. Leader Curran, all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I want to thank all of you and of course, the policy staff and all the others. This is not a job that you can do by yourself. It takes a lot of people to -- to help you and support you. And so, I want to say thank you. Finally, I wish you all Godspeed in this great work that you do. I want to say, God bless all of you and may God bless the great State of Illinois.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

The question is -- the question is, shall Senate Resolution 1348 pass. All those in favor will say Aye. Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted. And at the bottom of Supplemental Calendar No. 1 is Senate Resolution 1353 from President Harmon. Mr. Secretary, please read the resolution.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Resolution 1353. WHEREAS, the Members of the Illinois Senate wish to honor our colleague, State Senator Natalie Toro, on her esteemed service as a Member of the Illinois General Assembly and to thank her for her dedication to the State and her community. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro was born on the northwest side of Chicago into a Puerto Rican immigrant family. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro is a lifelong resident of the 20th Senate District, and she has attended Chicago public schools and eventually worked at elementary schools to support and shape the future of her community. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro was inspired to pursue a career in public service by her grandfather's commitment to fighting injustice, opening a credit union that served Latinos when other local banks denied them service because of their

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

ethnicity, and by witnessing her parents' involvement in local unions. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Northeastern Illinois University in her district. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro began her career as a teacher at Schmid Elementary School in 2015, and she worked at CPS schools for eight years, achieving tenured status after four years by demonstrating effective teaching and by having a positive impact on student learning. Before deciding to pursue her interests in working as a government official. And WHEREAS, upon arriving in Springfield in 2023, Senator Toro began to champion issues important to her and her community, including early childhood education, housing affordability, reproductive health care, and violence prevention. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro also advocated for people with disabilities, fighting for and passing legislation requiring police officers to undergo training to better interact with people with autism in order to minimize escalated encounters between law enforcement and people with disabilities due to misunderstandings. And WHEREAS, following the tragic death of a teenager in her district who was struck and killed by a motorist while biking, Senator Toro passed legislation encouraging local governments to develop -- to develop bike safety plans that would better inform residents about the safety features on each bike route as well as improve infrastructure to prioritize the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro also passed legislation that prohibits workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on family obligations, allowing employees to be evaluated for the merits of their work and not assumptions based on their home lives. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro served as a member of the Progressive Caucus, the Women's Caucus, and the Latino

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Caucus, and she led roundtable discussions at events celebrating the Latino Caucus' work to enact legislation to better support her community. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro has provided the Illinois Senate with her unique perspective as an educator who has witnessed issues in Illinois public schools and is passionate about fixing them, and her kindness is present in every interaction she has. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro is bidding farewell to the Illinois Senate after dedicating her time to the 20th Senate District and the people of Illinois. And WHEREAS, Senator Toro plans to continue advocating for the issues closest to her heart, including access to reproductive health care, labor rights, education, and disability rights. Therefore, be it RESOLVED by the Senate of the 103rd General Assembly of the State of Illinois, that we thank Senator Natalie Toro for her dedicated service to the people of Illinois and her contributions to the State. And be it further RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Senator Toro as a symbol of our gratitude with our best wishes for her future endeavors.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

President Harmon, on your resolution.

SENATOR HARMON:

Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate. It is an honor to sponsor this resolution. Senator Toro, in your time with us in the Senate, you have comported yourself with grace and class. I have admired your relentless focus on the people you represent and your advocacy for the children you taught and for their families. I think we've all benefited from your very real experiences as a classroom teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. And unlike so many other retirements, you are leaving at the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

beginning, not at the end of your career in public service. And I'm eager to see the next chapter unfold. So, once a Senator, always a Senator, we wish you the very best as the exciting next chapter begins, and we know that you will be no stranger. Thank you for serving with us.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Edly-Allen, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR EDLY-ALLEN:

Thank you, Mr. President. To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR EDLY-ALLEN:

Senator Toro, you came into the Senate with utmost grace and professionalism as President said, and you leave on your last day with that same professionalism and grace. And I just want to say thank you for that example and that I will miss you as a fellow teacher, and I wish you Godspeed. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Faraci, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR FARACI:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR FARACI:

So, I want to thank Senator Toro. She has taught me as much about being a Senator as -- as most anybody. She was a new Senator, much like myself who became my -- my office mate. She's -- her office is right next to me and gave me the grace to ask me

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

questions. So, I actually owe her an apology because I've probably led her down several - you don't have to agree so adamantly Gio. So many paths that probably were not successful. But we got to know each other. We would -- we would walk through the -- the tunnels to get from Stratton to Howlett. And I thought, oh, boy, I'm going to make a wrong turn here. I know it, and she's going to have bad advice on my behalf. But the one thing I think I wanted to say about Senator Toro, she's a caring, devoted individual to her district and to the people that she serves. We talk about us as politicians, but what I would say about Senator Toro is that she's really not a politician. She's a true public servant. And I think that was made very clear by her passion for her constituents and the bills that she's passed. And so, I'm a better legislator because of her. I'm --- I'm grateful to have gotten to know her, and I'm sorry to see her go. I know she's going to do great things in the future. We're going to miss Senator Toro, and we wish you Godspeed. Come back and see us. We would love to -- to learn more about what your future holds. So, thank you Senator Toro, we will miss you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Loughran Cappel, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR LOUGHRAN CAPPEL:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR LOUGHRAN CAPPEL:

Well, I too, just want to stand and honor Senator Natalie Toro for the work that she's done. You know, she and I connected

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

immediately because she was also a kindergarten teacher and worked in public education and did it for eight years. And you can't stay in education for more than a couple of years if you don't have the dedication and the grit and the kindness and the compassion to continue being there for your students that you serve every day. And that's something that she has carried into the Senate. And we also -- we use to talk a lot about the transition from being a classroom teacher into the legislature. It's kind of hard. It's a difficult thing. And you did it with ease and with grace. And I'm just so happy to have gotten to know you and shared and -- in that experience with you. I do want to say that another area that we did have a lot in common is we both were active in our unions. So, she understood the idea of collective bargaining and the importance of that, and she was a strong advocate for the people that she worked with as a teacher. So, overall, I just want to say to you, you're a teacher. And I always said, teachers could rule the world. This is, again, the thing that -- this is just the beginning of your career. And I wish you luck. If you ever need anything, I'm here for you. But thank you so much. It's been an honor serving with you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Holmes, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR HOLMES:

To the resolution, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR HOLMES:

I just want to stand up and talk a little bit about Senator Toro. Who -- I've been here a lot of years. I've seen a lot of

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

people come and go. Many people leaving after spending actually most of their adult years in the General Assembly or in public service. And Natalie came in as this bright, energetic young woman ready to learn about all of this that we do here in this Body. And I want to say, she so quickly caught on and had the ability to talk with people, to work with people. I had the pleasure of going out in her district, by the way it's a really cute district, lots of great coffee shops and places to go. So, thank you for taking me some of those, Natalie. And I saw the way she interacted with people. And I'm going to tell you the one thing you cannot make up if you're going into public service, you are either a warm, compassionate person who wants to help others and truly have empathy for the position other people may be in their lives. Those are traits that are innate to you. And Natalie you have those -- tons of those abilities and it is magnificent. So, I want to say, even though you were only here a short time, I am really excited to see where you go in the next chapter of your life, because I predict with everything you exemplify, you're going to go very far, and I look forward to hearing from you in the future about those endeavors. Thank you so much for serving in the Senate with us.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Belt, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR BELT:

Speak to the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR BELT:

Senator Toro, I just want to echo the sentiments that

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

President Harmon stated once a Senator, you're always a Senator, and I know how much you enjoyed being a Senator, right? You are a consummate professional. Often times in life, we're judged by the quantity, which means the amount of time we've been somewhere or the quality, which means the impact that we've made in the time that we were there. And I would argue with you that the quality is the most important and Senator Toro your quality. Thank you for serving and thank you for the quality of service that you've given us, right. I would also say that I know that there were times you -- you've come in here when you wanted to cry, but you smiled. And that's the definition of grace. And so, thank you for your grace. And I'll leave you -- if you -- if you've spent any time talking to me at some point, I'm going to tell you something my mom said. It just happens. And so, my -- my -- my mom, when she was alive, she would often tell us, me and my five siblings that the prettiest flowers grow after the storm, right? And that's true for you. Keep smiling and God bless you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Ventura, for what purpose do you seek recognition.

SENATOR VENTURA:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR VENTURA:

Senator Toro, while your time here has been brief, your fate brought you here for a reason. And I know we talked about this yesterday, but perhaps it was the relationships you were meant to make here. And to that same reasoning, I have faith that your time here will catapult you into success to the next chapter of your

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

book. It has been a pleasure getting to know you and to work with you. And I think Leader Holmes really hit it on the head about the compassion and empathy that you bring forth. So, I'd like to point out that while you have been the most fashionable Senator, and thank you for the fashion tips, it is your kindness that you will be remembered the most for. Thank you for your friendship.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Collins, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR COLLINS:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR COLLINS:

I would like to say, that from the first time that I met you, Senator Toro, you have been nothing but the best person. As a new legislator coming over here into the Chamber, you lead with grace, you lead with love. I love how you love on your community. And a little short story. So one day we were coming down to Springfield, and I could have called anybody. But for whatever reason, I reached out to Senator Toro because I was kind of freaking out because I can't see, when it gets dark. And so, when we change, into daylight savings, when we have to leave and come down here early, it's kind of hard for me to see on the road. And so, I called Senator Toro and before I can get deep into why I needed her help, she's just like, no, it's okay. I'll come pick you up. And I'm like, are you sure? Because I stayed on the near North Side and she's like, yeah, cool. It's all right. And I'm like, all right, I'll send you my address. And I'm thinking to myself, like, maybe I need to get a backup plan just in case,

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

because I do not want to be late. I'm nervous. I don't want to show up late to the General Assembly. You know, I hear it's strict over here. And sure enough, she showed up. And then she took me to one of those good coffee shops over there in her community. And just the whole ride down and, you know, just her conversation about how much she loved teaching and how much she loved her community and how she's just trying to get it right, and then just sharing her experience with me and getting to know me and me getting to know her, I just, I love you. I thank you for just being a just dope person. That's slang for anybody who don't know what that means. Like, your vibe is just positive all the time. Through everything that you went through, you just kept it cool. You kept it professional. And that's something that I can learn to help me grow. Right. And we talk about that. So, just thank you for showing up. Thank you for fighting for your community. Thank you for being you. And I wish you well on your next chapter. And I'm sure you're going to do great wherever you go. So, Congratulations. And I love you from the bottom of my heart. And I'm always going to be here for you. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Villa, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR VILLA:

Thank you, Mr. President, to the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR VILLA:

So, Senator Toro, I can't speak and turn to look at you at the same time. I just really wanted to wish you the absolute best. And as everyone has already made note from the moment you walked

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

in through these doors, your steadfast commitment to the work has really been inspiring. There's some personal conversations that you and I had that I hold true to this day there -- there are very few people that I can think that have shown me what you have shown me on those most difficult of days. Your -- you've held your head high. You've been a graceful, tall, beautiful Latina walking through doors in spaces that your family may never have thought you were going to walk through. Yet you did it with -- with such love for your community and for your people, I really know, without a doubt, that I'm going to continue to see you around and that you're going to continue to be that strong voice and advocate for the children and the families of your community. Thank you for your service.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Koehler, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR KOEHLER:

To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR KOEHLER:

Again, it is awkward, isn't it? To trying to talk to people behind you. There we go. I'm sorry that I didn't get to -- to know you as -- as well as I would have wanted, Natalie. But it's clear by the comments that have been made that, you know, you're not the -- you're not the noisiest person in the caucus. But it kind of leads me to believe that really still waters run deep. And I just want to thank you for being part of this Senate and for being part of our family. And I just have a feeling that you're really going places, and you need to think of yourself as a winner and somebody

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

who's really got a future ahead of her. So, thank you for -- for doing that.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Hunter, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR HUNTER:

To the resolution, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR HUNTER:

Senator Toro I was present when you were first appointed to this seat, and I had the pleasure of meeting you and your beautiful family, your -- your mom and your dad. And there was somebody else there, and it was such a beautiful family. And I see where you get to all of your traits from, because it comes from your mom and your dad. And I watched you grow as you first arrived here. You were quiet. You asked a lot of questions. If you were confused about something, you asked more questions and you learned, you just blended in, you know? And you're such a beautiful person. I love your -- your -- your attitude and your personality, and it will take you very, very far with your teaching experience, your experience here in the General Assembly. And I know that you have a wonderful future ahead of you. Please continue to be the person that you are now throughout your life, and you will go very far. Thank you. It was a pleasure serving with you and God bless you and Godspeed.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Sims, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR SIMS:

To the resolution. Mr. President.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR SIMS:

Again, a little awkward to do this, but, Natalie, thank you for -- for your service. Thank you for being here. Thank you for being not just committed to the institution, but committed to the people that you serve. You have been the consummate professional, someone who is dedicated to something bigger than you. Your -- although your time here was brief, it was impactful. And I think that's important for all of us to recognize because we, you know, I'm going to piggyback on something that was said earlier. You know, anytime if you're around me, you know, I've got tons of stories. And one of the things -- and one of the things that I've often been told is that legacy is not what you do for you. It's what you do for other -- others. And the impact that -- that you've had, and your legacy is going to be the impact on the people that you represented, but also the people of Illinois. You're the impact that you've had will last much longer than the time that you've served in this Body. Thank you for being you and what I will miss more than anything is despite the storms that may be going on around us, you know, the end of May when all those challenges are going on and all those things are happening, even though things are happening all around us you had this smile and this calm that could bring calm all around us. So, Senator Toro, thank you, thank you, thank you for being you. Thank you for being our colleague. But more importantly and most importantly, thank you for being our friend. Godspeed.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Martwick, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

SENATOR MARTWICK:

Thank you, Mr. President. To the resolution.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the resolution.

SENATOR MARTWICK:

And to the Body and to Senator Toro, I apologize, I walked in, I was having a meeting in my office, and I walked in sort of towards the end of this. So I very well may repeat things that other people said. But I would imagine that in this moment there are things that bear repeating. So, first of all, like every other Member, I want to thank you for your service, but I -- I want to reiterate something that you and I have had in personal conversations. So often in this life, those of us who are here take these moments for granted. And yet to be a Member of this Body is such a unique and rare privilege. And while, you know, it has been mentioned that your service here, might have been not as long as you would have liked, I would say that for many of us, our service in this Body is never as long as we would like. Many of us meet ends that for one reason or another and that is because the opportunity to do good things here is, is so unique and -- and so powerful. And so, I want to remind you of the amazing and unique privilege you had. And I want to thank you because you acknowledged it. You -- you treated every day as it was special because it was and it was, of course, on a personal note, I want to say it's been wonderful getting to know you to make a friendship with someone who grew up in my district and served right next door to my district. But when we talk about legacy, as Senator Sims did, what I would say is equally important when it comes to legacy is the manner in which we conduct ourselves as an example, not just to

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

the people that we represent, but to the people that we serve with. We all take different approaches here in the General Assembly, and lord knows that I have had my opportunities to stir the soup a little too hard and maybe spill it on people's shoes. But the -- the grace and the dignity and the thoughtfulness and the collaboration that you've brought are truly in the short time that you served examples to Members of the General Assembly on the way that we can all be better at our jobs. And that is a legacy in the time that you've served that you should be proud of. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your friendship and Godspeed in all that you do. And I hope to someday see you back in this type of role.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

And our final speaker seeking recognition is Senator Johnson. Senator Johnson, on the resolution.

SENATOR JOHNSON:

Thank you, Mr. President. So, Senator Toro, you -- you are a quiet strength, and you work so hard on behalf of the people. You are such a special person. You know, there is a saying that some people are really, really easy to like and respect and really, really hard to say goodbye to. And Senator Turner - Toro that's you. There is also a saying, and I've slightly modified it, that people come to the Senate for a reason, for a season, and for a lifetime. Senator Toro, you are a life timer. And as President Harmon said, in all of our esteemed colleagues, you are a Senate{sic} (Senator) forever, for a lifetime, and you will always be a Senator and a Member of the Illinois Senate family. I want to wish you best wishes and continued success because of all those amazing things our colleagues said about you. We're going to miss

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

you, but I know you'll be close by. You're going to stay in touch. And as a token of our appreciation and to let you know how much we love you we have a special gift that Senator Edly-Allen is walking over to you. But thank you so much for your service. Thank you so much for making a tremendous impact. And thank you for being one of the best Senators we've had so far in this Chamber, in a short period of time. We're going to miss you and we love you. Congratulations for your service.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

I'm sorry, we do have one, a late light -- one. Okay. Senator Toro is recognized.

SENATOR TORO:

Okay. Wow. Eighteen months here, and I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for all of your beautiful words. Thank you so much. After March, I've been very intentional about soaking in every moment I had left here in Springfield. I know that for many years to come, I will look back on this time fondly. Representing the people of the 20th District and serving in the Illinois State Senate has truly been the honor of my life. My first thank you goes to the people of the 20th District, every constituent, every organization who trusted me with their concerns, their hopes and visions for our community. You are the heart of this work, and I thank you. To my family and friends who are tuning in I'm pretty sure my mom has been tuning in since about 10 a.m.. I love you all my biggest fans and forever supporters. They worked so hard to help me on every step of this journey, and I love each and every one of you. President Harmon, thank you so much for your support and guidance and your dedication to this Caucus. You are an exceptional leader and I feel privileged to have been able to serve under your

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

leadership. A million thank you's. To the incredible staff who have supported me every step of the way and answered my many questions, there's a lot of them. I am deeply grateful. Special shout out to you, Ashley. Thank you so much. And Gio, Mike, Reena, Natalie, Bach, Brandy, Miles, Dillion, Aaron, he's -- I don't know if he's tuning in all the budget and policy team and my amazing legislative assistant Rosa. Where's Rosa? Oh, she's right there. Thank you. I love you. And thank you for always having my back. And to the district office staff that was holding it down back in the district. I know they're watching right now. Thank you to Michael Bailey and Mario and Alex. Your hard work and dedication have truly been invaluable. And to my colleagues, as a freshman Senator, I wasn't the most vocal Member of the Senate, although that gave me a lot of time to listen. And I listened to each and every one of you and it wasn't only your words that I heard, but the passion and the commitment behind your words. The work that you do to fight for the people that you represent is an inspiration that will stay with me for a lifetime, and it will stay with me as I embark on my next journey. If I had to give this chapter of my life a title, I would use a quote, I've been thinking about a Nelson Mandela quote that I've been thinking about a lot in the last few months, and that's "I never lose. I either win or I learn". And as a lifelong learner and a former teacher who loves a good lesson, this has truly been one of the best lessons of my life. So, I may be leaving the Senate, but the Senate isn't leaving me. So, I leave here today, filled with gratitude and hope. Our country is facing some scary times, but it brings me comfort to know firsthand that the Senate Dems are going to fight like hell to protect the people of our great State. Thank you.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

The question is, shall Senate Resolution 1353 pass. All those in favor will say Aye. Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted. Majority Leader Lightford, for what purpose do you seek recognition? President Harmon, in the Chair.

PRESIDENT HARMON:

Senator Aquino, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR AQUINO:

Thank you, Mr. President, for an announcement.

PRESIDENT HARMON:

Please state your announcement.

SENATOR AQUINO:

Senate Democrats will have a leadership meeting. A brief leadership meeting and followed by a caucus in the Senate President's office, followed by our adjournment here today.

PRESIDENT HARMON:

Thank you, Senator Aquino. Leader Lightford, for what purpose do you rise?

SENATOR LIGHTFORD:

Mr. President, it's always good to see you in the chair. I move that the Senate of the 103rd General Assembly adjourn Sine Die. Woohoo!

PRESIDENT HARMON:

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, we have concluded the work of the Senate of the 103rd General Assembly. I will note with pride we have done so with very little drama. And shortly after the hour of 12 o'clock, noon, not midnight. I want to thank our tremendous staff for the work they've done to make this happen. And I think that this week it's appropriate that we give the

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

132nd Legislative Day

1/7/2025

Legislative Reference Bureau the appropriate respect and congratulations for helping us get all of our ideas onto paper. I will note also with a feeling I'm not sure what it is. This is the last time we'll leave the Howlett Chamber for -- and as we say goodbye to the Howlett Building, this has been a unique chapter in the Senate's time in Springfield. Senator Joyce has volunteered to lead a parade of chairs being pushed over to the new Senate Chamber. We're going to let our correct -- take care of that instead, Senator Joyce. Thank you. And so shortly, we'll begin the work of the 104th General Assembly. We'll now proceed to the Order of Consent Calendar, Celebration of Life Resolutions -- with leave of the Body, all those resolutions read into today will be added to the Consent Calendar. Mr. Secretary, have there been any objections filed to any resolution on the Consent Calendar?

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

No objections filed, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT HARMON:

Is there any discussion? If not, the question is, shall the Resolutions on the Consent Calendar be adopted? All those in favor say Aye. Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it, the motion carries and the resolutions are adopted. Leader Lightford moves that the Senate adjourn Sine Die. All those in favor will say Aye. Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it, and the Senate of the 103rd General Assembly stands adjourned Sine Die.