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Speaker Tarver: "The House will be in order. Members will be in their chairs. We shall be led in prayer today by Jannah Sellars. Jannah is with the Inner-City Muslim Action Network in Chicago. Jannah is a guest of Representative Syed. Members and guests are asked to refrain from starting their laptops, turn off all cellphones, and rise for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance."

Jannah Sellars: "[Speaks in Arabic]. O God, most gracious, infinitely merciful, sustainer of all that exists, most merciful of those who show mercy, we turn to you in gratitude and remembrance. O Lord, remind us that the history of Islam in America is not a story that began in 1965 nor one that arrived upon distant shores in the 20th century. It is woven into the very tapestry of this nation. It is part of Black American history, a story not only of bondage but of spiritual emancipation, a freedom of the soul that existed long before its material counterpart was realized. Let us honor that truth with fortitude and clarity. O sustainer, remind us that this story is stitched into the fabric of our land and carried in the sacred inscriptions carried by my ancestors, our ancestors, whose bodies were shackled but whose spirits were never broken. Preserving sacred traditions of our faith, let us be worthy inheritors of their perseverance. O most compassionate, let your light shine from the rural corners of Natchez, Mississippi, where even those of noble Moroccan lineage were shackled, those from whom I descend. Let it shine on in the memory of the hundreds of soldiers of many faiths, including Muslims, who gave their lives in the American Civil War, and all those who paved the way for us to carry on their

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legacy. Grant us hearts that remember them, tongues that speak of them with honor, and lives that reflect the dignity of their sacrifice. O most merciful, as we reflect on this month of Black history, let us not treat it as a footnote in worn and forgotten scrolls. Let us be worthy torchbearers of our physical and spiritual ancestors' legacy and allow us to face these trying times with unwavering courage, steadfast faith, moral responsibility, and collective action. As many welcome the sacred month of Ramadan, during which worship is deepened and souls are strengthened, we honor the guidance of our predecessors and pray that their sacrifices live on in our courage and our shared commitment to dignity and justice and in the freedom of faith that we embody today. O most just, allow us to be people and leaders of conscience who stand firm for justice, even when it calls us to reflect and take our own selves to account. May we be firm in our principles and in our pursuit of justice and may we become worthy ancestors of generations to come. Lord, accept from us, guide us, and make us instruments of your mercy upon each other and with one another and throughout this land. Amen."

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

Smith - 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."

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Gabel: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let the record show that Representatives Faver Dias, Gordon-Booth, Katz Muhl, Olickal, and Cochran are excused today."

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

Keicher: "Thank you, Speaker. If the record could please reflect that all Republicans are here today to conduct the people's business."

Speaker Tarver: "Have all recorded themselves who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. There being 112 Members answering the roll, quorum is present. Mr. Clerk is recognized."

Clerk Hollman: "Introduction of Resolutions. House Resolution 671, offered by Speaker Welch; and House Resolution 672, offered by Representative Gabel, are referred to the Rules Committee."

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

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Severin: "So, I have the honor of having on the floor today the president guy, Mr. Johnathon Showalter. This is his fourth consecutive year for coming and being a page. You can't stump him. You pick a year that we've been in the... the United States has been in existence, he'll tell you who the president was. In fact, we even... we challenged the... the governor one day, and the governor couldn't stump him. But, again, Johnathon Showalter, I just want to tell you a little bit about him. I should have it all memorized by now. His mom and dad, Mr.

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Showalter and Jodi, are upstairs with his little sister, Faith. He's an eighth grader this year, and he... he's 13. He started coming when he was 10 years old. He's involved in many community activities, straight-A student, high honor student, enjoys singing. He participates in many classes and after-school clubs and all different activities, not only in school but also in his church. And so, I appreciate him being here today. How about a round of applause for Mr. President himself, Johnathon Showalter."

Speaker Tarver: "Welcome back, Johnathon. Leader Mah, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Mah: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Mah: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues. I want to take the opportunity today to wish you all a happy Lunar New Year. Today is the first day of the new year according to the lunar calendar. It's a system recognized by a number of East Asian and Southeast Asian cultural traditions. It's known as Spring Festival in China, Tết in Vietnam, Seollal in Korea. It is the Year of the Horse in the Chinese zodiac calendar, with its 12... 12-year cycle and a different animal rotating each year. For families that celebrate the Lunar New Year, it's a time of renewal and reunion. It's common for businesses to close and for family members to travel long distances to feast and be with their loved ones during this multi-week holiday season, much like Thanksgiving and Christmas in the Western tradition. This Lunar New Year, the Asian American Legislative Caucus has provided treats, courtesy of Chiu Quon Bakery, with locations in Chicago's

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Chinatown and Argyle Streets. Happy Lunar New Year, and may everyone enjoy good health, good fortune, peace, prosperity, and success in the Year of the Horse."

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

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Mason: "Thank you so much. Ladies and gentlemen, we have some people here visiting this week that I would love to welcome. We have Greg Koeppen from the Lake County Farm Bureau. And also, a reminder to everyone that the Illinois Farm Bureau is having their reception tonight from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Abraham Lincoln. We have Maureen Reidy from the Lake County tourism, and we have some folks from the Lake County Federation of Teachers. Please help me welcome all of my Lake County friends. Thanks."

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

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Halbrook: "Thank you. Indiana was the first, then Iowa. How long before our remaining three neighbors of Kentucky, Missouri, and Wisconsin will say, 'Wait up, me too.'? Last year, Indiana signed into law the Indiana-Illinois border commission. Iowa has now filed similar legislation. Both are seeking conversations with their Illinois counties about the possibility of adopting them into their respective states. Other states are not trying to send people here. They are

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preparing to receive people from here, maybe... maybe even our world-class football team, the Bears. But the real question is, why? Because more than a dozen Illinois counties have passed advisory referendums or joined movements expressing deep frustration with the direction of our state. We do not need the census data to confirm it. Illinois continues to lose population year after year. And when the citizens express their frustration, what do they hear from the governor? He said, and I quote, 'But if you want to leave, then get up and move.' Mr. Speaker, people are getting up and moving. This is not proof of his leadership. It's proof his policies are forcing Illinois families to leave. Tomorrow we expect to hear about another record-breaking budget, the largest in state history. But Governor Pritzker and his majority party are in a trade war with the citizens of Illinois. He keeps demanding more of their money. In exchange they get less in return. Families face some of the highest property taxes in America. We have the highest gas taxes in the Midwest. Fees increase, spending increases, government grows. If bigger government were the solution, Illinois would be booming. Instead, we are shrinking. Our pension system remains the worst funded in the nation. Our long-term liability still continue to crowd out opportunity. The temporary relief of federal bailout dollars has disappeared. With a national debt exceeding 38 trillion, Washington cannot indefinitely subsidize irresponsible state spending. We cannot tax our way to growth. We cannot spend our way to prosperity. We cannot budget our way around structural reform. Illinois is not failing because of its people. We have unmatched farmland,

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world-class universities, vital infrastructure, and hardworking families. We are struggling because of this administration's policy choices. The policies that produced outmigration will continue to produce outmigration. The budgets that have produced high taxes will continue to produce high taxes. When neighboring states draft legislation to welcome our counties, our families, our businesses, and even our football team, that is not normal. That is a red flashing warning light. Illinois does not need another record-breaking budget, Mr. Governor. And instead of telling our citizens to get up and move, we should be giving them every opportunity and reason to stay. Illinois needs a new direction, and the longer we delay that change, the more families we will watch cross the border. Thank you."

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

Delgado: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Delgado: "I would like to make sure that the entire body has the opportunity to congratulate my seatmate and roommate, Margaret Croke, for her birthday today. So, if we could all wish her a happy birthday."

Speaker Tarver: "Happy birthday. Representative Ortíz, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Ortíz: "Thank you. I ask my colleagues to look up to the gallery and join me in a warm welcome to the Illinois School Counselors Association. Their presence today is deeply

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meaningful for me. Before I stood in this chamber, I was an educator and a college counselor at Chicago Public Schools. I know firsthand the dedication it takes to sit across from a student in crisis. I know the late nights, the heavy caseloads, and the immense pressure of guiding a young person towards their future. I've lived it myself. And because I've lived it, I know how absurd it is that we expect our school counselor interns to work full time for zero pay. So, I ask my colleagues today to say hello to the school counselors and learn more about House Bill 4360 that creates a stipend program for school counselors. Let's support our school counselors. Let's support our interns and the next generation of students. Let's give them a warm Springfield welcome and some appreciation for being the backbone of our schools. Thank you so much."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Crawford is recognized on House Resolution 588."

Crawford: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On House Resolution 588, I'd like to direct everyone's attention to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have... where we have individual students from... yes, please rise... where we have students from Leo High School as well as administrators who support them. And they are here today celebrating the 100th anniversary of this storied school. And so, we have a resolution that... HR588, that was adopted on the previous day, but I will read now.

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate Leo High School on the occasion of its 100th anniversary for providing education to young men on Chicago's South Side; and

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WHEREAS, Leo High School opened its doors in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood of Chicago on September 7, 1926; the school started with more than 120 students and quickly grew its class size and footprint while achieving acclaim for the academic, athletic, and cultural activities of its students and alumni; and

WHEREAS, Leo High School has reflected both the opportunities and challenges present in its community and the City of Chicago at large, most notably being resilient in the face of population loss and demographic change, evolving from once having an all-white student body to having a student body that is all-Black and Hispanic today; and

WHEREAS, At present, Leo High School has more than 200 enrolled students and features a student-to-teacher ratio of 13-to-1, ensuring that students and teachers are able to benefit from enhanced student-teacher interactions and a more active learning environment; and

WHEREAS, Leo High School offers a college preparatory program and honors curriculum, providing students with a well-rounded education to prepare them for higher education and the workforce, and the school has boasted a 100% graduation rate for over a decade; and

WHEREAS, Leo High School possesses a strong tradition of providing extracurricular activities for students to develop experiences and opportunities in leadership, teamwork, time management, and networking; and

WHEREAS, Leo High School has a proud athletic tradition that aims for students to develop character and discipline in addition to sporting skills, which has helped its teams, the

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Lions, to compete in more than 60 championships, earning titles in track and field, football, and basketball; and  
WHEREAS, Leo High School further has talented men.. a talented men's choir, which gained national recognition while competing and being named a finalist on the competition... on the competition show America's Got Talent in 2025, and the choir has been further honored... has further honored the school through performances at celebrations honoring Pope Leo, a Chicago area native, the 2024 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and as part of the 2025 Juneteenth Celebration at Wrigley Field for the Chicago Cubs; and  
WHEREAS, Leo High School leads its students with the motto "Facta Non Verba", or "deeds, not words", as it prepares young men to lead lives of integrity, purpose, and service from the classroom to the community and through their futures; and  
WHEREAS, Beginning in December 2025, Leo will celebrate its centenary under the theme, "One Century, One Brotherhood, One Leo", featuring a variety of events continuing through 2026, including the Leo Lion Legacy Scholarship Benefit and Christmas Concert, the Black History Month celebration, various alumni celebrations, and a centennial block party and time capsule; therefore, be it  
RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HUNDRED AND FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we congratulate Leo High School on achieving its 100th anniversary, providing a century of distinguished service and dedication to the education of young men on Chicago's South Side, and we thank the high school for its continued

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resilience and unwavering commitment to this mission; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be presented to the Leo High School President Dan McGrath and Principal Shaka Rawls as a symbol of our esteem and respect. Please give these wonderful young men a Springfield welcome."

Speaker Tarver: "Mr. Clerk, Rules Report."

Clerk Hollman: "Rules Report. Representative Gabel, Chairperson from the Committee on Rules reports the following committee action taken on February 17, 2026: recommended be adopted, referred to the Order of Resolutions is House Resolution 671 and House Resolution 672."

Speaker Tarver: "Under the Order of Resolutions, we have House Resolution 671, offered by Speaker Welch."

Speaker Welch: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today with a very heavy heart. I rise this afternoon to offer my condolences to the family and friends of the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson Sr., who passed early this morning at the age of 84. But it is also with a profound sense of gratitude that I join people of the world over in celebrating his amazing career in pursuit of justice, equality, and dignity for all. And it is entirely fitting that we honor Reverend Jackson's life and legacy during Black History Month because through a ministry and a mission that spanned seven decades of service, Reverend Jackson wrote a monumental chapter in Black history. And he showed how Illinois history, American history, and world history are built on Black history. His work alongside Dr. King highlighted the urgent need for civil rights. Civil rights lifted us all, didn't hurt anyone. Civil rights lifted

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us all, with Operation Breadbasket and the Poor People's Campaign demonstrating the extraordinary power that ordinary people can leverage when we stand united. It was Reverend King who told me that diversity is our strength but our power comes from our unity. His leadership of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition expanded opportunity by demanding fairer lending practices, greater ballot access, and diversity on corporate boards, work my colleagues and I have continued right here on this floor. His voice of moral clarity was heard across the globe from Cuba to Kenya, Mr. Speaker, from Belfast to Belgrade to end conflicts, to protect human rights, and to inspire change rooted in the common bonds of humanity. And his... his historic speech before the 1984 Democratic National Convention showed me and millions of young people like me that I am somebody. I am somebody. I became somebody because he told me that I was somebody. As Speaker, I honor Reverend Jackson here today. I had the honor of having several opportunities to receive Reverend Jackson's counsel. I was forfeited... fortified, fortified by his wisdom and guidance. I was uplifted by his prayers. We were also so blessed to have had his legendary figure right here in Illinois. We are thankful that he made Chicago his home to be able to know and engage with someone who was a legend in his own lifetime and whose life and work has been a bridge from our history to our future. And as we mourn the loss, we are simultaneously empowered by his legacy of showing people their great power. He reminded us all that our vote is our power. There is power in our vote. Vote. Vote. Vote. Vote. If you want to live the legacy of Dr. Jackson... Reverend Jackson, vote. I look forward to

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hearing from my colleagues' stories here today, memories and tributes this afternoon. I ask for the adoption of House Resolution 671. And upon its adoption, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the body observe a moment of silence and reflection in honor of the life and work of Reverend Jesse Jackson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Ammons is recognized."

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Ammons: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of House Resolution 671. I want to lift the legacy of Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson. As a child of Rainbow PUSH, I've sat in meetings with Reverend Jackson as he told corporate CEOs that they would make room for minority vendors, specifically African American vendors in the City of Chicago. I remember him saying that Home Run Inn pizza would be on American Airlines. I was blessed to be in that meeting. I was in a meeting with Reverend Jackson as he prepared to go to the Korean Peninsula. He went to the Korean Peninsula on a tour called Give Peace a Chance. And I want to lift a few of those words because they are extraordinarily important right now. He went there to speak on the issue of militarism. Reverend Jackson was not just a civil rights leader in the United States, he was a world leader for peace. Reverend Jackson mentioned to those who were in Korea at the time that it was more important for us to turn this crises into an opportunity for a new zone of peace. He mentioned that it was important for us not to ignore the treaties that we had signed to bring peace to the regions. The roar of peace, he said, on the

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peninsula was more important than us benefiting from the tragedies that war causes. Hope, he said, was the unifying message that he wanted to leave on the Korean Peninsula. I believe that is the message he is leaving for us today, that we cannot lead the nation with war, that we must bring peace to the table. Hope, he said, during that summit, was to resolve military tensions between two sides and open a path toward an exchange and cooperation that leads to unification. He lifted a scripture in that message from the prophet Isaiah, who admonished us to beat our swords into plowshares and turn our swords into pruning hooks, to turn our weapons of mass destruction and killing into systems of development and healing. Reverend Jackson never lost the vision of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. I walked across it with him. It was the same message. He knew that we needed to have peace as our guiding principle if we were going to have equity in our communities. This opportunity cannot be squandered. We have to remember the legacy of Reverend Jackson as he transitions from this earthly plain to our ancestral plain. He doesn't die. His message lives as long as we keep it alive. Let me close by saying many of the things that we are experiencing in today's world could be, could be addressed if we decided to give hope a chance, to globalize hope and democracy, and to lead with human rights as we proceed in our efforts to pass legislation out of this House. Let us remember the work that he has done, let us remember his sacrifice, and let us not forget his family's sacrifice as they lose their father, their brother, their husband, their grandfather, and all of the relationships that are connected to Reverend Jesse L.

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Jackson. As I close, I'll say that the last time I saw him, he referred to me as 'that little girl from Champaign.' Reverend Jackson told me, 'Never forget why you are doing what you are doing. You are giving voice to those people who are voiceless.' And virtually every single movement requires people to do exactly the same thing. He said, 'I am not special. I am just willing to do the work.' May the creator be pleased with Reverend Jackson and his service, and may we be the benefactors of his life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader West is recognized on House Resolution 671."

West: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Members of this House. Today we honor the man whose voice shook the conscience of America. The Reverend Jesse Jackson did not simply preach sermons, he preached possibility. He stood in pulpits and on picket lines. He prayed in sanctuaries and protested in streets. He reminded this nation that faith without work is dead and justice without courage is delayed. He understood something that I hold deeply in my own walk, that the gospel is not confined to Sunday morning. It must show up wherever people are hurting and hoping at the same time. He dared to believe that those on the margins belonged in the center of the conversation. He taught us to keep hope alive, not as a slogan but as a discipline. Hope when the doors were closed, when the votes... the votes weren't there, and when the odds seemed impossible. And as someone who serves both in the pulpit and in public office, I understand how heavy that calling can be, to speak truth with compassion, to challenge systems without losing your soul, and to fight for people and still love those people

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at the same time. Reverend Jackson showed us that faith can move policy and that moral conviction can shape a nation. His life reminds us that the progress does not happen by accident. It happens because someone is willing to stand to speak and to sacrifice. Today we honor not just the man but a movement of courage, coalition, and conviction. May we carry forward that sacred responsibility to lift voices, to expand opportunity, and, yes, to keep hope alive. Thank you so much."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Morris is recognized on House Resolution 671."

Morris: "Thank you. To the resolution. Reverend Jesse Jackson, a trailblazer, a man of courage, a man who stood on the front lines fighting for the marginalized and the overlooked. Giving up would have been easy, but he would not. He could not. His unwavering determination to pursue justice and opportunity motivated him no matter the obstacle. He was a true giant, a leader of courage, compassion, a believer in the power of nonviolent change. His legacy will never end. It lives on not just in Chicago, not just in this country but across the world. Thank you, Reverend Jackson. And now, more than ever, we must pick up that torch. We must fight for those often left behind. We must make sure your life works never in vain. Hope, justice, and equality and preservation. That's the Jesse Jackson way. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Ford is recognized on House Resolution 671."

Ford: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of House Resolution 671, in honor of Reverend Jesse Jackson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the resolution. I remember teaching and

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growing up reading about Reverend Jesse Jackson and then having an opportunity to see the figure in real life. That's special. And so, I'm deeply saddened by the passing of Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, a giant not only in Chicago but also in the movement for civil rights, human rights, and justice across the nation and around the world. While we knew that he had been battling with illness, we also hoped that his powerful voice and presence would stay with us longer. Reverend Jesse Jackson was more than a leader. He was a builder of movements and a sanctuary for freedom fighters. At Operation PUSH, he provided activists, organizers, and everyday people with a home, a headquarters where we could gather, strategize, and plan how to fight injustice and break down barriers facing our communities. He created a place where hope was turned into action. He also understood the power of communication. Through his radio platform, he gave voice to struggles when many institutions refused to listen. He amplified the stories of those who were ignored, oppressed, and marginalized, ensuring the world heard the truth about injustice and the call for change. Reverend Jackson understood the realities of inequity and inequality, and the caste system, like systems that divide our society, and he was fearless in confronting them. He was a progressive force, tirelessly pushing for equity and opportunity regardless of your skin color, background, or economic status. Through his leadership with the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, he demonstrated that diversity, Mr. Speaker, as you say, is our strength and justice requires unity across communities. For many of us, Reverend Jesse Jackson was one global leader we knew would

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stand with us, whether it was injustice around the world or right here in our community. He was that man that if you were in a fight, like you would say, 'I'm going to get my big brother,' you say, 'I'm going to call Jesse Jackson.' Whether in Chicago or in our neighborhoods or on the world stage, he showed us the way. He demonstrated the courage, conviction, and faith in action. And I'm personally grateful for his leadership and membership because he helped shape a generation of advocates who continue to fight today. He dedicated his life to uplifting the poor, the forgotten, and the marginalized. He taught us to keep hope alive, to believe that ordinary people could accomplish extraordinary things, and to never accept injustice as permanent. His leadership helped us open doors that had long been closed, and his courage inspired generations to demand dignity and equality. And I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to Ms. Jackson and his children and his entire family. Their strength and ongoing commitment to service are a part of his lasting legacy. Through Reverend Jesse Jackson, we know he's no longer here with us in body, his spirit work and his message will live with us forever. The greatest contribution and tribute that we can give to him today, moving forward, is to make sure that we register to vote and vote on election day moving forward. Thank you, Reverend Jesse Jackson. And I want to send my condolences once again to his family. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the resolution."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Mayfield is recognized on House Resolution 671."

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Mayfield: "Thank you so much. Thank you, Speaker, for this resolution. It is very timely, very much needed. I had the honor of actually marching with Jesse Jackson Sr. in my... in North Chicago after a police-involved homicide. When I tell you that his name galvanized 10,000 people in the streets of North Chicago marching for justice in peaceful demonstration, it was just amazing what this one man could do within a community. There was a lot of violence, volatile actions, a lot of emotions that were running amok at this particular time. And this one man was able to, you know, just get... calm everyone down, say, 'We're going to do this, but we're going to do it respectfully, and we are going to do this peacefully. We're going to get your message across, but we're going to get it across in a manner that will get you the results that you need.' And he absolutely did that. He got justice for the family. He made changes within the police system, within the city of North Chicago. He actually made a difference. And I was so proud to have been there with him during this entire process. And it was a... it didn't happen overnight, but he was there every step of the way with the family, with the city, with the community. He didn't take a position one way or the other. He said, 'We are going to resolve this. We are going to mediate this.' And the fact that he had so much respect in this particular community that he could come in and say, 'No, you're not going to be violent. No, you are not going to be disrespectful. We are going to do this, and we are going to do this in a dignified manner,' it meant so much. And people are still talking about that to this day. That talks about the type of man that he really, truly was, and I was just so

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honored to have been there with him. When we talk about Jesse, we have to go back to 1984, when he was the first Black man to run for president. He opened that door for Barack Obama. We cannot forget that. He opened the door for individuals such as myself and so many others that have run for office because everyone said that a Black man could never be president. And Jesse Jackson said, 'Oh, yes, you can. You can be anything that you put your mind to.' And we just have to acknowledge who this man truly is and everything that he has given. When we talk about Operation PUSH, when we talk about the voter registration drives, they really made a difference. He was transformational in our communities. So, again, Speaker, thank you so much for honoring this great man, and my heart and condolences go out to his family. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative du Buclet is recognized on House Resolution 671."

du Buclet: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I think about Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr., I think about courage, I think about conviction, and I think about a voice that refused to be silenced. Growing up on the South Side of Chicago, his presence was not just abstract. It was real. It was visible. It was powerful. Reverend Jackson taught a generation of us that our voices matter, that our votes matter, and that our lives matter. And perhaps, most importantly, he reminded me and everyone around me that I am somebody. Those three words were not just a chant. They were a declaration, a shield against doubt, and a call to purpose. Reverend Jackson influenced me because he modeled what looks like... what it looks like to turn faith into action and advocacy into policy.

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He pushed us to demand fairness in the political process, equity in our institutions, and dignity for every community, especially those that are so often overlooked. His legacy is not just in the marches or the speeches. It lives in every young person who believes that they belong. It lives in every leader who stands up for justice, and it lives in those who choose public service not for power but for impact. Because of leaders like Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr., I learned early on that leadership is not about position, it's about purpose. And to this day, I carry these words with me: I am somebody, and so are you."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Lilly is recognized on House Resolution 671."

Lilly: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for bringing... Mr. Speaker, for bringing this resolution forward. Reverend Jesse Jackson was not only a giant, he was a brother who understood the pain that existed in communities throughout this country. He stepped forward with courage and love for people to correct some of the wrongs. Today is a sad day. His work is a legacy for all of us to remember. We collectively are in this world together, and he continuously said that and shared his fight for every person who he came to know was wronged. Reverend Jesse Jackson and his family gave us reverend's life. I thank his wife and his children for the sacrifices that they made for him to allow me to say I am somebody, to allow me to understand their hope in this world. And if he was not loved by his family the way he was loved by his family, he could not have done all the things he had done for this country and this world. I stand today to tell you, each and every one of

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you, you are his legacy as well. Our work that we do here in this General Assembly represents the courage, the commitment, the love, and the dedication to justice and equality. God bless us all, and we will miss you, my brother, Jesse. God bless you."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Avelar is recognized on House Resolution 671."

Avelar: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remember meeting Reverend Jackson in the summer of 2008 when I was a baby organizer with the New Americans Democracy Project, a project that was helping newly naturalized citizens to go out and vote. I remember being in a walk... in a one-week-long training talking about the power of organizing and talking about voting not for parties but for values. And I remember Reverend Jackson coming in and talking about what we've been saying time and time again, which is I am somebody. Reverend Jackson did indeed give voice to the voiceless. But, most importantly, he challenged us to find our voice. He challenged us to say that nobody has to talk about us, for us, that we can also be the ones who liberate our own communities. So, for that, I will always, always be very thankful because, as people said, we are somebody. And needless to say, the summer of 2008, I embarked on a journey that truly, honestly led me to this, to where I'm at right now. We know that November of 2008 for many of us was a life-changing moment. It was a history-making moment, and I am so glad to have been part of that. Reverend Jackson didn't just speak about justice, he organized it, demanded it, and lived it. He taught us that our voice mattered, that everyday people hold power, and that

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dignity is not something to... to be requested, it is something to be claimed. Reverend Jackson leaves behind more than history. He leaves behind a call to action. His legacy lives on every time somebody stands up for their neighbor, challenges injustice, or dares to believe that a better world is possible. And it is now our responsibility to carry that legacy forward. Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Representative Norma Hernandez is recognized on House Resolution 671."

Hernandez, N.: "Thank you. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Hernandez, N.: "Today, as we mourn the passing of Reverend Jesse Jackson, a giant in the fight for civil rights, liberation, and justice, Reverend Jackson dedicated his life to expanding opportunity and making sure communities too often pushed to the margins had a voice at the table. Because of his leadership, doors opened for so many of us who never saw ourselves reflected in positions of power. He showed generations that our voices matter and that our communities deserve dignity, respect, and representation. For Latino communities, he was not just an ally but a true partner in the struggle, standing with us in moments of solidarity that mattered most and reminding us that our fights for justice are interconnected. His life's work helped create the space for leaders like myself to speak boldly on the issues affecting our communities and to serve with pride. As we honor his legacy, may he... may we recommit ourselves to the work he spent his life advancing, building a future rooted in justice, equity, and opportunity for all. And may he rest in power,

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and may his legacy continue to guide us forward as we go on through this year in a difficult moment."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Buckner is recognized on House Resolution 671."

Buckner: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaker Welch, thank you for bringing this resolution to the floor. I want to join the rest of my colleagues today in honoring a giant, a preacher with a poet's tongue, a builder with a movement in his hands, the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson Sr. If any of you, and I know all of you have, ever heard Reverend Jackson speak, really heard him speak, you know this, that Reverend Jackson had a rare gift. He never just delivered a speech. He weaved a story. He took the complicated and made it clear. He took pain, and he gave it purpose. He could take a crowd that was scattered and somehow gather it into one single heartbeat. He could rhyme truth in a way that helped us all remember it. He could place words on a cadence and make justice feel just close enough to touch. He could take a message and make it portable so it could travel from a pulpit to a picket line, from a classroom to a kitchen table, from one generation to the next. On more than one occasion, Reverend Jackson offered me advice when I was facing tough decisions playing out in public. Sometimes, I called him because I knew I needed it, and other times, truth be told, I did not know I needed it, and he called me. We had a number of conversations, including in 2021, when this body was readying itself to make Representative Chris Welch, Speaker Chris Welch. And Reverend Jackson was not shy about calling my cellphone right here on this floor to tell me when he thought I was making the wrong

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decision. That's the kind of leader that he was, not just a voice to the nation but a shepherd for people. Many folks don't know this, but Reverend Jackson first came to this state in the summer of 1959 as a football recruit at the University of Illinois. In that era, breaking barriers wasn't a slogan, it was a daily assignment. And when I think about that, I think about how history moves, how somebody absorbs the pressure so someone else can walk freer, somebody breaks the trail so someone else can run it. And because of him, I can stand here today. Reverend Jackson also stands in the proud tradition of brotherhood and service as a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated, a fraternal bond that he shared with myself, Leader Tarver, and Chief of Staff Harris, a fraternity that teaches us that scholarship means something, that service means something, that uplift means something. It teaches us that talent is not just for applause, but it's for impact. And impact is what he has given this nation. When Reverend Jackson gave the country his Rainbow Coalition, he didn't just offer political strategy, he offered America a moral picture of herself. He reminded us that we are stronger when we refuse to leave people behind and that dignity cannot be rationed, that justice cannot be selective. He showed us in this country how to build a coalition big enough to hold working families, struggling communities, immigrants, students, seniors, people from every single walk of life under one banner of hope. And make no mistake, that coalition, that leadership helped lay out the path for a new generation of leaders, leaders who would later prove that you can win statewide, you can win nationally, you can lead with purpose

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while representing a diverse constituency. In so many ways, that Rainbow Coalition was a precursor to the coalition politics that carried Barack Obama and opened doors for many elected members of this country and many in this very body. So, no, Reverend Jackson did not just have a front-row seat to history, he helped move history. He moved it with the power of his faith. He moved it with the strength of his organizing. He moved it with the brilliance of his words, big brain, big spirit, big courage, and a voice that made America listen. He didn't just preach to America, he pulled America forward. And we are all better and braver because he did. I'll close on a personal note. My son has been doing Instagram and TikTok videos for Black History Month this year, and if you've seen them, you know they're funny, and they're cute, in a way that only a 4-year-old can muster: pure joy, pure curiosity, and no script. And just last week, he told me that he wanted to honor Reverend Jackson. So, we did a video together, and I asked him, like any other father would, 'Son, who is Jesse Louis Jackson to you?' And he didn't hesitate. He looked at me and said, 'He is a freedom fighter.' He is a freedom fighter. That's the kind of truth a child can say when a life has spoken loud enough to reach across generations. I sent that video to Reverend Jackson's sons, Jonathan and Yusef, and they made sure that the Reverend saw it. And I have to tell you, whatever titles I hold, whatever headlines come and go, I will always be proud that my little boy got a chance to give Reverend Jackson his flowers while he could still smell them because that's what Reverend Jackson had... has done for so many of us. He's kept the meaning of freedom alive in our

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own language, in our work, and in our hearts. So, today we honor Reverend Jesse Jackson with gratitude, with reverence. We honor him for the bridge he has built between the sacred and the civic. We honor him for teaching us that a sentence can be a sermon and a sermon can spark a movement. And when we leave this moment, let us do more than applaud his legacy. Let us protect it in our speech, in our service, in our choices when no one is clapping. Because Reverend Jackson taught this nation a lot. But if he taught us anything, it's that hope is not a feeling. It's a discipline. It's a decision. It's a practice. So, let's continue to choose it. Let's keep passing it on. And in his words, 'Let's keep hope alive.'"

Speaker Tarver: "Speaker Welch to close."

Speaker Welch: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Members, for sharing those words this morning. Reverend Jackson died this morning, and as any good Alpha knows, he ended an Omega chapter. But we also know that today his life didn't end because his life and legacy will live on for generations to come through all of us. Our prayers go out to Mrs. Jackson, to Yusef, Jonathan, Jesse Jr., Santita, Jacqueline, and Ashley, and the entire Jackson family. Today Illinois lost a titan. But that titan would say one thing to all of us today, 'Keep hope alive. Keep hope alive. Keep hope alive.' After a moment of silence, I ask for your support in honor of House Resolution 671."

Speaker Tarver: "The body will observe a moment of silence. Speaker Welch moves for the adoption of House Resolution 674. All those in favor say 'aye'; all opposed... apologize. Speaker

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Welch moves for the adoption of House Resolution 671. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the resolution is adopted. Leader Gabel is recognized on House Resolution 672."

Gabel: "Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This resolution is in response to... to Leader Windhorst's request a few weeks ago about parliamentary procedure. So, we reviewed the... the rules, and we've made a... we made some comments in the rules to clarify that the... that make it consistent with... with our rules, the Robert's Rules of Order, and most of all, the customs and traditions of joint sessions. So, this is just a clarification of... of the rules."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Windhorst is recognized."

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

Speaker Tarver: "She indicates that she will."

Windhorst: "Thank you. Leader, thank you for that description. Just for clarity's sake, we had conversation last time we were in session when we passed the resolution for the joint session about what rules would apply, just for clarity's sake. So, I'm reading this resolution and amendment to the rules correctly, if we do not adopt specific rules, then the customs and traditions of joint House session... joint House-Senate sessions will be adhered to and followed. Is that accurate?"

Gabel: "That's correct."

Windhorst: "In our previous conversation about this or... or debate on the prior resolution, you had mentioned that Robert's Rules of Order would govern. Is it your understanding that

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Robert's would be considered part of the custom and traditions of those sessions?"

Gabel: "So, Robert's Rules directs that it should be customs and traditions."

Windhorst: "Thank you."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Gabel moves for the adoption of House Resolution 672. All those in favor say 'aye'; all opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the resolution is adopted. Representative Slaughter, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Slaughter: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Slaughter: "Good afternoon, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we honored our great leader, Reverend Jackson, I also stand to say Happy Black History Month. Happy Black History Month. Happy Black History Month. We are very, very, very excited this year as we celebrate 100 years. That's right, 100 years of celebrating Black History Month. This is our centennial year. Anyone who's done any significant research on this will know our great state is actually the birthplace of celebrating Black History Month. Black history is American history. It's crucial because it honors the profound, often overlooked contributions and achievements of Black people to not just Illinois, the United States of America but to the entire world. We use this month to highlight untold stories, combat systemic injustices, correct historical narratives, celebrate Black culture and resilience, and promote education, equity, equality, and unity. As our body and Legislatures all over this country prepare to continue to legislate and debate and

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discuss energy and data centers and artificial intelligence, I want to take a moment to lift up one of the world's great innovators, Dr. David Harold Blackwell. I know many of you are on social media. His name is trending pretty hard right now. I definitely suggest that you Google his name after this. He was a pioneering American mathematician and statistician whose fundamental work in probability, game theory, and information theory laid the groundwork for modern artificial intelligence. Often referred to as the forefather or Black godfather of AI in recent retrospects, his contributions are considered fundamental to how math... to how machines learn, predict, and make decisions. In regards to the foundation, theoretical foundation, Blackwell's research in statistical decision theory and game theory directly influences the algorithms, machine learning models, and AI systems used today. The Rao-Blackwell theorem, co-developed with C.R. Rao, this theorem is a pillar of statistical inference, allowing for the... the improvement of estimators, which is crucial for reducing noise and bias in data, a core challenge in AI development. Ladies and gentlemen, Nvidia... Nvidia developed a chip after him. In 2024, Nvidia honored his legacy by naming their next generation AI GPU architecture Blackwell, which is designed to power large-scale generative AI models. He was a trailblazer in terms of his academic career. Blackwell was the first Black scholar to be inducted into the National Academy of Sciences and the first Black tenured professor at the University of California, Berkeley. He was later awarded the National Medal of Science in 2012. Overcoming discrimination, despite earning his PhD by the age of 22, I

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believe he went to college at age 16, despite earning his PhD by age 22, he faced racial discrimination that barred him from top-tier research institutions, leading him to a distinguished career at Howard University and later UC Berkeley. While other... while other figures such as Geoff Hinton, and often termed the 'Godfathers of... of AI' for their work on neural networks, Dr. David Blackwell is recognized for establishing the essential mathematical framework that makes modern computing in AI possible. I wanted to... to highlight Dr. Blackwell because, yes, this is about Black history, but it's also about our future. We are now fully immersed into the 21st century, aka, the digital era. But now, as we push into the AI era, 2026 to 2050, and as AI takes over the world, countries are expected to invest billions and even trillions over the next 10 years into artificial intelligence. As certain individuals and entities and companies capitalize off these inventions, and, ladies and gentlemen, we're... we're talking about public equity, private equity, whatever it is, we're talking about millions and billions in profits, I have to ask the question, will the little boy growing up in Representative Davis' district, in Rep. Smith's district, in Representative Williams' district, will they even know who Dr. Blackwell is? Will that go into the history book? The little girl growing up in Representative Ammons' district on the North Side of Champaign, the little girl growing up in Representative Gordon-Booth's district on the North Side of Peoria or East St. Louis, will she know about the accomplishments and the achievements of Dr. Blackwell? You see, it's important, and it's a duty and a

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responsibility to tell our story, not just to highlight the past but to be a beacon of inspiration for the future. These are our stories that motivate us. These are the stories that help us persevere. If I've said it once, I've said it again. Black history is American history. And, yes, Black history is world history, and it greatly impacts our world's future. On behalf of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, I want to say February is not just about a celebration, it's also a rallying cry for collaboration. You've heard me say this before. It's 2026, Black communities all across our state are still disproportionately impacted by every social determinant of health. To address these disparities, we go further together, we go further recognizing fairness, we go further lifting up equality and equity. Thank you for listening, thank you for engaging, and we look forward to the work ahead."

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

Ness: "Point of..."

Speaker Tarver: "For what reason do you seek recognition?"

Ness: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Ness: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I'd like to acknowledge my colleague's message there for Black History Month, and I look forward to celebrating it with all of you as well, this month of February, and keep up those stories because they are so important. I rise today as a co-chair of the Conference of Women Legislators because we have some great news to celebrate. With us in the chamber, in the gallery are some of our recipients for our 2026 W.I.S.E. Scholarship. Our

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extraordinary group of women come from a diverse background. Most of them are first-generation college students, working mothers, community leaders, educators in training, and advocates for justice and each has overcome unique challenges in their journey to continue their education and contribute to their communities. And so, if you'll join me, I'd like to ask them to rise in the back there. Please rise, women. Thank you. We have Brittany Nykiel, Wandreeka McBride, Alexa Honeywood, Devon Freitag, and Heather Canuel, along with five other women that could not join us today: Gabriela Cervantes, Lea Limon, Kim Thompson, Yoselin Rico, and Michelle Cisneros. And so, I just want to take a moment to congratulate them for being here. We will be celebrating them tonight at the State Library across the street for our annual membership meeting. I hope you all can join us. But thank you, and well done, ladies."

Speaker Tarver: "Congratulations, and welcome to Springfield. Representative Harper, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Tarver: "Please proceed."

Harper: "Thank you. I am so excited to welcome Dion's Chicago Dream to their State Capitol today. Dion's Chicago Dream is a nonprofit founded by Englewood native Dion Dawson. As the chief dreamer, Dion has taken his experience with human hardship and worked tirelessly to work to make sure that every person knows their worth. Through programs like the Dream Vault and Dream Deliveries, Dion's Chicago Dream makes sure that countless people across Chicago have food. DCD

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participates in food equity advocacy and supports nutrition initiatives all around the state. Dion Dawson was also recently named to the Crain's 40 Under 40 list for his accomplishments leading to Dion's Chicago Dream. They are here today in the Speaker's Gallery accepting their resolution, commending their hard work, and advocating for charitable food systems. Thank you, Dion. Thank you, Dion's Chicago Dream, and thank you all for your hard work."

Speaker Tarver: "Chair recognizes Leader Keicher for the purpose of an announcement."

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

Speaker Tarver: "Democrats will not caucus. Republicans will caucus in Room 118 upon adjournment. Mr. Clerk, committee announcements."

Clerk Hollman: "The following committees will be meeting after the Republican caucus: The Insurance Committee will meet in Room C-1. Transportation: Regulation, Roads & Bridges will meet in Room 114. Meeting at 3 p.m. is Adoption & Child Welfare in Room 122 and Agriculture & Conservation in Room 118. Meeting at 4 o'clock is the Energy & Environment Committee. All other committees for this afternoon have been canceled."

Speaker Tarver: "Mr. Clerk, Agreed Resolutions."

Clerk Hollman: "Agreed Resolutions. House Resolution 626, offered by Representative Mason. House Resolution 627, offered by Representative Mason. House Resolution 631, offered by Representative Windhorst. House Resolution 632, offered by Representative Ford. House Resolution 634, offered by

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Representative Stuart. House Resolution 638, offered by Representative Swanson. House Resolution 639, offered by Representative Lilly. House Resolution 640, offered by Representative du Buclet. House Resolution 641, offered by Representative DeLuca. House Resolution 642, offered by Representative Tipsword. House Resolution 643, offered by Representative Haas. House Resolution 644, offered by Representative Haas. House Resolution 645, offered by Leader McCombie. House Resolution 646, offered by Representative Harper. House Resolution 647, offered by Representative Buckner. House Resolution 650, offered by Representative Spain. House Resolution 651, offered by Representative Swanson. House Resolution 653, offered by Representative González. House Resolution 654, offered by Representative Swanson. House Resolution 655, offered by Representative Spain. House Resolution 657, offered by Representative du Buclet. House Resolution 661, offered by Representative Meier. House Resolution 662, offered by Representative Meier. House Resolution 665, offered by Leader McCombie. House Resolution 666, offered by Representative Harper. House Resolution 669, offered by Representative Gordon-Booth. And House Resolution 670, offered by Representative Coffey."

Speaker Tarver: "Leader Gabel moves for the adoption of the Agreed Resolutions. All those in favor say 'aye'; all opposed say 'nay.' In the... in the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Agreed Resolutions are adopted. And now, allowing perfunctory time for the clerk, Leader Gabel moves that the House stand adjourned until Wednesday, February 18, at the hour of 11:30 a.m. All those in favor say 'aye'; all opposed

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say 'nay.' The opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the House stands adjourned."

Clerk Hollman: "House Perfunctory Session will come to order. Introduction and First Reading of House Bills. House Bill 5625, offered by Representative Miller, a Bill for an Act concerning public... public rights of way. First Reading of this House Bill. Introduction of Resolutions. House Resolutions 628, offered by Representative Cochran. House Resolution 633, offered by Representative Syed. House Resolution 635, offered by Representative Ammons. House Resolution 636, offered by Representative Mason. House Resolution 648, offered by Representative Jawaharial Williams. House Resolution 649, offered by Representative Gill. House Resolution 652, offered by Representative West. House Resolution 656, offered by Representative Swanson. House Resolution 658, offered by... offered by Representative Kelly. House Resolution 659, offered by... offered by Representative West. House Resolution 660, offered by Representative Faver Dias. House Resolution 663, offered by Representative du Buclet. House Resolution 664, offered by Representative Elik. House Resolution 667, offered by Representative Harper. House Resolution 668, offered by Representative Harper. House Joint Resolution 52, offered by Representative LaPointe. House Joint Resolution 53, offered by Representative LaPointe. And House Joint Resolution 54, offered by Representative Lisa Hernandez. These are referred to the Rules Committee."

Clerk Bolin: "Committee Reports. Representative Gabel, Chairperson from the Committee on Rules reports the following

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committee action taken on February 17, 2026: recommends be adopted and referred to the Order of Resolutions is House Resolution 160; recommends be adopted and referred to the floor is Floor Amendment(s) 1 for House Bill 3286; approved for consideration and referred to Second Reading are House Bill 1074, House Bill 2686, House Bill 2704, House Bill 2705, House Bill 3027, House Bill 3056, House Bill 3213, House Bill 3286, House Bill 3494, Senate Bill 2427; approved for consideration and referred to the Order of Third Reading is House Bill 575, House Bill 1088, House Bill 2539, House Bill 3063, and House Bill 3655; and approved for... and approved for consideration and referred to the Order of Concurrence is House Bill 2371 and House Bill 3772; and Motion to Concur... recommends be adopted, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 2 for House Bill 2371. There being no further business, the House Perfunctory Session will stand adjourned."