

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

82nd Legislative Day

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Speaker Delgado: "The House will be in order. Members will be in their chairs. We shall be led in prayer today by Representative Nicolle Grasse. 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."

Grasse: "Good afternoon, my friends. We gather today as individuals entrusted with public service. Whatever our role is, we all gather here as people entrusted with public service, and each of us bringing not only our responsibilities but the unseen weight of our own lived personal experiences, the invisible backpacks we each carry, filled with grief, hope, pressure, joy, worry, and memory. And all of this shapes how we listen, how we speak, and how we lead. So, let us take a moment together to recognize that truth in one another. May we find the strength to carry what is ours with steadiness and the wisdom to set it down when we can, and may we offer one another patience when burdens feel heavy and extend understanding when words fall short. May we lead with the awareness that every interaction is an opportunity to ease a burden, to restore dignity, and to build trust. So, in this shared work we have, may we choose openness over assumption, compassion over reaction, and collaboration over division. And as we move through this day, may we not only seek understanding for ourselves but actively offer it to others. Because when we see another more fully, we serve each other more faithfully. Amen."

Speaker Delgado: "We will be led in the Pledge of Allegiance today by Representative Barbara Hernandez."

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Hernandez, B. - 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 Delgado: "Roll Call for Attendance. Leader Gabel is recognized to report any excused absences on the Democratic side of the aisle."

Gabel: "Speaker, let the record show that Representatives Ammons, Andrade, Croke, Evans, Norma Hernandez, Huynh, Kelly, Rashid, Stava, Syed, and Ann Williams are excused today."

Speaker Delgado: "Leader Windhorst is recognized to report any unexcused absences... or, excuse me, any excused absences on the Republican side of the aisle."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Please excuse Representatives Spain, Moore, and Severin today."

Speaker Delgado: "Have all recorded themselves who wish? Have all recorded themselves who wish? Clerk, please take the record. There being 103 Members answering the roll call, a quorum is present. Mr. Clerk, Committee Reports."

Clerk Hollman: "Committee Reports. Representative Scherer, Chairperson from the Committee on Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter Schools reports the following committee action taken on March 19, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4423, House Bill 4553, House Bill 4859, House Bill 5321; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 4068; and recommends be adopted is Floor Amendment(s) 3 to House Bill 20... correction, House Bill 4247. Representative Barbara Hernandez, Chairperson from the Committee on Immigration & Human Rights reports the following

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committee action taken on March 19, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4654; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 2731. Representative Evans, Chairperson from the Committee on Labor & Commerce reports the following committee action taken on March 19, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 2565, House Bill 4758, House Bill 5760; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 4565, House Bill 4980, House Bill 5208. Representative Blair-Sherlock, Chairperson from the Committee on State Government Administration reports the following committee action taken on March 19, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4323, House Bill 4560, House Bill 4647, House Bill 4651, House Bill 5040, House Bill 5146, House Bill 5311, House Bill 5486; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 4541. Representative Stuart, Chairperson from the Committee on Higher Education reports the following committee action taken on March 19, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4164, House Bill 4304, House Bill 4420, House Bill 4421, House Bill 4979, House Bill 5093, House Bill 5135, House Bill 5328, House Bill 5491. Representative Kelly, Chairperson from the Committee on Police & Fire reports the following committee action taken on March 20, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 5011; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 4394; recommends be adopted is House Resolution 649. Representative Stava, Chairperson from the Committee on Public Health reports the following committee action taken on March 20, 2026: recommends be adopted is Floor Amendment(s) 2 to House Bill 3286. Representative Cassidy, Chairperson from the Committee on Restorative Justice & Public Safety reports the following committee action taken on

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March 20, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4135, House Bill 4639, House Bill 4708, House Bill 5302; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 5091, House Bill 5434. Representative Mason, Chairperson from the Committee on Child Care Accessibility & Early Childhood Education reports the following committee action taken on March 20, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4791; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 5204; recommends be adopted is Floor Amendment(s) 2 to House Bill 2190. Representative Ortiz, Chairperson from the Committee on Counties & Townships reports the following committee action taken on March 20, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 3003, House Bill 4365, House Bill 4512, House Bill 5558; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 5167. Representative Yang Rohr, Chairperson from the Committee on Personnel & Pensions reports the following committee action taken on March 20, 2026: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 5119, House Bill 5134; do pass as amended Short Debate is House Bill 5196. Introduction of Resolutions. House Resolution 739, offered by Representative Davidsmeyer, is referred to the Rules Committee."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Stuart, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Stuart: "Thank you. I... I would really appreciate the attention of the entire body. I'll try to be brief. Some of you may be aware, some of you maybe are not, but we have lactation rooms here on the Capitol Complex. There's one in Howlett, one in

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the Stratton, and one here in the Capitol. Those are there because, early in my tenure here, I passed a bill to compel those to be here. This is the most public of public spaces that we have, and it's also a workplace. We are finally recognizing the needs of nursing, lactating mothers to be able to have access to the appropriate spaces to do that. And that's one of those things, I met with a Girl Scout troop recently, and they asked me what was my favorite bill. And while I have a lot, raising the teacher minimum salary was a pretty big deal, I have this visual reminder of that bill every time I come to work, and I've had multiple people thank me because they've used the space. So, recently, it's come to my attention, earlier this year, I know there's work being done near the one in the Stratton, and it was being used as a storage place for construction materials. We corrected that problem. We made sure that wouldn't happen again. But recently, it was brought to my attention, and I don't know any personally... I don't know the names of any of the Members who have been doing this, but Members have been choosing to use that space to take phone calls. And a mom who needed the space was waved away when she was trying to enter, and it was being used inappropriately. So, I would just ask, again, we are finally recognizing the needs of women in the workplace, designing these specific spaces that they need. It's very important that we keep that available and accessible. So, please respect the purpose of the lactation rooms and leave them available for the mothers who need them. Thank you."

Speaker Delgado: "Thank you, Representative Stuart. And as a mom who had to often find a bathroom stall to pump, I absolutely

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appreciate you making that comment. Representative Avelar, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Avelar: "Point of personal privilege, Madam Speaker."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Avelar: "Thank you so much. I just wanted to wish a happy Eid Mubarak to all of those who celebrate, especially my sister. May this special day bring peace, joy, and renewed faith to all of you and your loved ones. Eid is a time of reflection, generosity, and community, and today we celebrate those values across Illinois and beyond. I also want to give a special shoutout to the Ojala Foundation and the growing Latino Muslim community in our state. Your presence is a powerful reminder of the beautiful diversity that strengthens Illinois. Thank you."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Niemerg, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Niemerg: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Niemerg: "Today I rise to honor the life of John Andrew Breer. Just this week, on Monday, John tragically passed away in a car accident. He was just 16 years of age. He was traveling on a road that I travel quite often. He was dropping a friend off. He was doing a good deed for work. He was dropping a friend off at work. And on his way back home, he lost control of his vehicle, and a... a tragic, tragic accident. My community is reeling from this. The family... I know the family well, grew up with his aunts and uncles, known them for years. So, this is very, very difficult for everybody in my community. It's a... a life that was cut short, tragically. He was born on

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February 26, 2010, and he was a young man of remarkable kindness, generosity, who found God's presence in the beauty of the outdoors. And if you know the family at all, they.. they love to hunt. He loved fishing, hiking, climbing, hunting, loved riding his four-wheeler, loved his brothers and sisters, and he was just a sophomore. Again, he had just got his driver's license. John is survived by his parents, Neil and Carmen Breer, Neil and Carmen are great people, Carmen's a teacher at Teutopolis Grade School; siblings Cole, Lily, and Shane; grandparents Donna Breer, Andy and Connie Kerner; aunts and uncles Jim and Jeanna Kerner, Joe and Jessica Kerner and their.. their families, and Scott and Katie Breer. This is a tragic loss of life, and I'd like to ask this chamber to observe a... a moment of silence in honor of John."

Speaker Delgado: "We will observe a moment of silence. Thank you. Representative Halbrook, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Halbrook: "Thank you. I rise today to speak on a matter that everyone in this chamber should pay attention to, not because of politics, not because of special interests, but because a clear and unmistakable message from the people of Illinois. This past Tuesday, voters across our state were asked a simple question: Should Illinois opt in to a federal program that provides privately funded scholarships for students, public, private, and homeschool alike, for tutoring, therapies,

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books, tuition, and exam fees? And, Madam Speaker, the answer was not even close. Across more than 30 counties and townships, over 63%, nearly two-thirds, of the voters said yes. In every single jurisdiction where the question appeared, a majority supported it. Think about that. In a state as diverse as Illinois, urban and rural, north and south, Democrat and Republican, voters spoke with one voice. They want more opportunity for their children. They want more flexibility in education. They want us to act. The program is simple. It does not cost the state a single dollar. It allows individuals to donate to scholarship organizations and receive a federal tax credit up to \$1700 while helping students access resources they desperately need. If we opt in, Illinois students will benefit. If we do nothing, Illinois taxpayers can still donate, but those dollars will go to students in other states. Why would we allow Illinois families to subsidize opportunity elsewhere while denying it here at home? Why would we turn our backs on students who are struggling, students who need tutoring, students with disabilities who need therapies, students whose parents are simply asking for a better path? And perhaps most importantly, why would we ignore the will of the people? Too often policymakers are insulated from the consequences of their bad decisions. It's no different in education. We see time and time again that powerful interests are more important than what is best for students. One of those powerful interests is the Chicago Teachers Union. While they have every right to advocate, they do not have the right to override the voices of Illinois families. Parents are frustrated. Communities and

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voters, Democrats and Republicans and independents alike, are saying they want change. Madam Speaker, the people have spoken. Governor Pritzker, the people have spoken. Are you listening? Let me say that again. The people have spoken. Governor Pritzker, are you listening? Let's opt in to the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit program. Let's give families the tools they need. Let's keep Illinois dollars working for Illinois students. Thank you."

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

Grant: "Thank you, Speaker. A point of... a point of personal privilege."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Grant: "Yes. Women's History month. Thank you, Madam. I rise today to honor Riley Gaines, a courageous young woman who has met... who has emerged as a powerful voice for truth, I knew it, truth, fairness, and the protection of women and girls across the country. Riley Gaines is more than a female collegiate swimmer and 12-time NCAA All-American. She is a woman of deep conviction, a principled advocate who has shown uncommon courage in speaking plainly when so many others have chosen silence. Young women and parents across America are drawn to Riley's message for its clarity, its backbone, and willingness to defend what we all know to be true. Can you imagine? Here she is, a... a leader in her sport throughout the country. This is a big country. She worked so hard. Can you imagine how her heart sunk when she looked across and she saw a biological male on the starter point? All that work she put into it. Have you ever watched children and... and young adults

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practice for swim... for swim meets? It's hours. They stay in the... in the water for hours. What she worked for for hours was gone. She understood... she understands a simple, timeless truth. In healthy society, boys grow up to be men and girls grow up to be women. That truth is not hateful, it is not extreme, and it is... and it is not up for negotiation. I am grateful for Riley Gaines because she has become a national voice for common sense defending women's sports, defending sex-separated spaces, and defending the very idea that women should never be erased. Just today I was made aware, I... I guess I'm behind the times because I was just made aware of it today, but just today I was made aware of a biological male using the women's bathroom on the Republican side of the building at the Stratton. While I understand we need to be loving to all people, we need to realize we are not being loving to the women who find this uncomfortable. I find it very uncomfortable. What am I to do? Thank you."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Guerrero-Cuellar, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Guerrero-Cuellar: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. A point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Guerrero-Cuellar: "Today I rise to honor and recognize a hero, the ultimate sacrifice, legacy, and courage. Representative Mike Kelly is not here today, but if he would be, he would be giving this speech. And so, I asked permission to do this for him. We are honoring a firefighter/EMT for the ultimate sacrifice. Michael Altman was 32 years old, grew up on the North Side of Chicago. He has been with the Chicago Fire

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Department since May of 2024, assigned to Truck Company 47 in Edgewater in the city of Chicago. Michael is fourth-generation firefighter. It's in his blood. His grandfather, Edward P. Altman Jr., served as the fire commissioner from '96 to '99, and his father had been the fire battalion chief. Two of Michael's uncles are also firefighters. Michael was married to Nora, with one young son, Theodore, and another child on the way, due in April. Around 11:20 a.m. on Monday the 16th, a four-story building caught fire, and Altman joined close to a hundred other firefighters to put out the blaze. But when he entered the property to conduct a primary search and rescue operation, Michael fell from the first floor into the basement, which was fully ablazed. He was rescued within minutes, but the damage from the second- and third-degree burns on 90% of his body were too... too extensive. Michael was taken to Stroger Hospital in Chicago, where he passed away on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. These are the difficult ones. This is a young man who was starting his life, fourth-generation firefighter. This goes beyond the family. This goes to an entire community. This is the news that we never want to hear. This is the call that a wife never wants to receive or a family. And so, I ask you today that we do justice and recognize in a moment of silence. But also, I'd like to turn it over to Representative Mary Gill for her words."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Gill is recognized."

Gill: "Thank you. This morning, at about 9 a.m., Michael Altman was escorted down 103rd Street through mine and Representative Ryan's district. Our local schools, our

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neighbors, they all came out to line the streets to honor Michael Altman and his family, saying prayers and showing their respects. I... we, excuse me, are so proud to live in a first responder community because we show up for each other. I saw some pictures from this morning, and I'm truly touched at the amount of people that came out to show their support. And we want to just send our condolences to Michael's beautiful wife, his children, his family, and his brothers and sisters in the Chicago Fire Department for their tremendous loss. We have lost a true hero. Thank you. I ask for a moment of silence."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Cassidy is recognized."

Cassidy: "Thank you, and I want to thank both of my colleagues for honoring this true hero. And on behalf of the people of the 14th District, on behalf of the people of the 49th Ward of the city of Chicago, we extend our thanks to Firefighter Altman and to his family and our prayers for peace and healing to his family for their tragic loss. Thank you, and I share in the desire for a moment of silence."

Speaker Delgado: "The body will observe a moment of silence. Thank you. Representative Cochran, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Cochran: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Cochran: "I rise in acknowledgement of a small thing that often goes unnoticed, particularly in a state in which there generally isn't a clear line between the spring and the winter. But at 10:46 a.m. today, the vernal equinox occurred and winter is now over. Yay. So, I... to all my distinguished

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colleagues, I wish you the best this weekend. Enjoy the beautiful weather and with the full knowledge that it's going back down into the 40s come Monday. Thank you."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Weber, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Weber: "A point of personal privilege, Madam Speaker."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Weber: "I rise today with my thoughts focused on the future of our grandchildren, our children, and it is important for all children in Illinois to have access to quality education and to have every opportunity to improve their educational experience and their needs. We should be doing everything we can to set them up for future success in life. This is why, once again, I am calling for Governor Pritzker to opt Illinois in to the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit program. I also urge everyone in this chamber to do the same. This is not a partisan issue. We have seen numerous individuals in Illinois, such as Comptroller Susana Mendoza, say it's a no brainer. Not to mention that as of March 12, 27 governors, including Democrat governors, have opted in to the federal education tax credit. This \$1700 credit can be used for private or public education expenses, including tuition, tutoring services, and more. This program is funded entirely through private donations to help low-income students attend a better school that meets their needs. This is a federal program, so any of our taxpayers across the state of Illinois can donate to the program, but our students can only benefit from it if Governor Pritzker opts us in. As we see here in this chamber, good legislation deserves bipartisan support.

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This is the case with this. Governor Pritzker, please allow Illinois children to benefit from this program. Thank you."

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

Canty: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Canty: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to ask our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to stop wasting the body's time obsessing about bathrooms and who's in them. I have never been asked to submit to a physical exam upon entering any bathroom. I'll be damned if I ever will. I will be damned if my children ever have to submit themselves to a physical exam to use the bathroom. So, if we could please just keep our points of personal privilege focused on the people of the state of Illinois, we would be eternally grateful on this side of the aisle. Thank you."

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

Blair-Sherlock: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Blair-Sherlock: "Thank you. To build on what my colleague just said, I'm here to speak for the people of my district. And the people of my district are not talking about most of the things that I'm hearing coming from the other side of the aisle. What they're talking about is the fact that gas prices have jumped a dollar a gallon. That's for you and I, but diesel prices are over the roof. I have constituents that are losing their businesses because of these spikes in gas prices, spikes that never had to happen. This is a self-inflicted

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wound by the federal government. I would ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reach out to their president and ask him to get us out of a war we never wanted to get into and bring gas prices down because that's what my constituents are worried about, is the cost of living and how the actions on a whim of a questionable leader are costing them money. Because temporary pain, as interpreted by a billionaire, is not the temporary pain that my constituents are feeling. Thank you."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Gordon-Booth, for what reason do you seek recognition? Or, Leader Gordon-Booth, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Gordon-Booth: "Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. Moment of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Gordon-Booth: "Thank you, so good to see you up there. I'd like to take a brief moment, and I want to wish someone on our staff, an amazing young woman by the name of Lacey Stauffer, who is the office manager of our fearless leader, our brilliant, fearless leader, Kat Bray. Lacey is a sharp, kind, beautiful woman, who frankly used to staff me many moons ago, and she had a brief sabbatical on the other side of the dome. And now, Lacey is back home in the House. She is a fantastic, brilliant, hardworking mother, a hardworking manager, and today is her 39th birthday. If we could give her a Illinois House of Representatives warm birthday, she would love it. Lacey Stauffer, happy birthday, girlfriend."

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

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Mason: "A point of personal privilege, Madam Speaker."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Mason: "Thank you. Hey, everybody. Just want to wish my beautiful seatmate, an amazing person, Representative Mary Gill, a very happy birthday tomorrow. Please... please join me."

Speaker Delgado: "Representative Jed Davis, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Davis, J.: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Davis, J.: "Thank you. Hey, I love to hear gas taxes mentioned or the price of gas mentioned on the House floor up for debate, and I would encourage the majority party to... let's follow the lead of our esteemed colleagues in the great state of Georgia and let's suspend the gas tax for a 60-day period to provide true relief for the great citizens of Illinois. Thank you."

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

Ness: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise, point of personal privilege."

Speaker Delgado: "Please proceed."

Ness: "Today I rise in honor of Women's History Month. I promise not to talk about the prices of gas. That's not my point today. But what I do want to talk about is history and how we honor it. And so, I did a little bit of walking around this beautiful building where we are really good at honoring our past. We look at the walls, at the gallery and frames of leaders that came before us, who contributed to the state of Illinois in many, many ways, bringing us to this point. And what I also noticed as I walked the galleries in the halls is

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the absence of women on those galleries and in those pictures. In fact, there is a statue of a woman, Mrs. Lottie... Ms. Lottie Holman O'Neill, down on the second floor. She was the first woman legislator in the General Assembly of Illinois. And so, in honor of her, we continue efforts here in the General Assembly, like the Conference of Women Legislators, of which I am proud to be one of the co-chairs. Myself, along with five other colleagues, Representative Yang Rohr, Representative Haas, Senators Edly-Allen, Harriss, and Johnson, all serve in the executive role to continue elevating the voices and the incredible work that women are doing right here in the state of Illinois. So, to that end, I am inviting all of you next Tuesday morning to a literacy panel at 10 o'clock in the Stratton in Room 413. I know it's a little bit before session starts, but come on by. We'd love to see you. Breakfast will be served. Thank you."

Speaker Delgado: "Thank you. Mr. Clerk, Agreed Resolutions."

Clerk Hollman: "Agreed Resolution. House Resolution 738, offered by Representative Lilly."

Speaker Delgado: "Leader Gabel moves for the adoption of the Agreed Resolutions. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Agreed Resolutions are adopted. And now, allowing for perfunctory time for the clerk, Leader Gabel moves that the House stand adjourned until Tuesday, March 24, at the hour of noon. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the House stands adjourned."

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Clerk Hollman: "House Perfunctory Session will come to order. Introduction and First Reading of House Bills. House Bill 5731, offered by Representative Jawaharial Williams, a Bill for an Act concerning health. First Reading of this House Bill. There being no further business, the House Perfunctory Session will stand adjourned."