

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

The Senate was called to order at 4:15 o'clock p.m.,  
the President in the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Will the Senate please come to order? Members and  
guests, please rise and direct your attention to our  
very distinguished acting chaplain, Timothy Kehoe of  
East Hartford.

TIMOTHY KEHOE:

Bless us with the inner strength so that our lives  
and our work may be a blessing on others. Amen.

THE CHAIR:

Amen, thank you so much. And I would like to invite  
Senator Kasser, please come forward and lead us in  
the Pledge of Allegiance and it's a pleasure to use  
your new name.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH):

Thank you.

[All] 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.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. And Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you. On our -- I just wanna see if there's any business on the Clerk's desk.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agendas one, two, three and four dated Wednesday, March 11th, 2020.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Move all items on Senate Agendas one, two, three and four to -- dated Wednesday, March 11th, 2020, to be acted upon as indicated and that the agenda be incorporated by reference into the Senate Journal and to send transcripts.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, a number of items to mark go.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On our consent calendar. I'm sorry, on our calendar, calendar number -- calendar page one, calendar 34, House Joint Resolution. Madam President, would you stand at ease for a moment, please?

THE CHAIR:

We can stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On calendar page one, calendar 34, House Joint Resolution number 18, I'd

like to mark that go and then place that item on our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On calendar page one, calendar 35, Senate Joint Resolution number 22, I'd like to mark that go and place that item on our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On calendar page two, calendar 36, Senate Joint Resolution number 23, like to mark that item go and put that item on our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On calendar page two, calendar 37, Senate Joint Resolution number 24, I'd like to mark that on go and place that item on our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Calendar page two, calendar 38, Senate Joint Resolution number 21, I'd like to mark that item go and place that item on our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On calendar page two, calendar 39, Senate Resolution number seven. I'd like to mark that item go and place that item on our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On calendar page two, calendar 40, Senate Resolution number eight. Like to place that -- mark that item go and place that item on our consent calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. We will start on Senate Agenda number one. Senate Resolution number six, I'd like to move for suspension so we can immediately take that up.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, I'd like to mark that item as go.

THE CHAIR:

And so ordered. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Agenda Number One. Senate Resolution number six, RESOLUTION PROPOSING APPROVAL OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT AND THE STATE EMPLOYEES BARGAINING AGENT COALITION SEBAC.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Madam President, I move acceptance of the Committee's favorable report on Senate Resolution Number 6 and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

And the questions on adoption, will you remark.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

I thank you very much. Madam President, this resolution proposes approval of a memorandum of understanding between the State of Connecticut and the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition which extends the amortization period of the statutory portion of the State Employees Retirement System unfunded accrued liability from 2032 to 2047 to be consistent with the transitional UAL provisions 1, 2 and 3B of the MOU do not result in a fiscal impact as they were previously adopted in 2017 and were incorporated thereafter into the SERS which is the State Employee Retirement Systems actuarial assumptions.

The MOU remains in effect through 2047, the end of the SERS UAL amortization period. The MOU results in savings to the state in the near term from an average reduction in the actuarial determined employer contribution also referred to as ADAC over approximately 164.2 million each fiscal year beginning in fiscal 20 through fiscal year 32 after which the average annual increase in the ADAC is 363.9 million more than it would be without the MOU through the end of the amortization period in FY47.

The total increase in the state SERS contribution towards the UAL for the period of fiscal year 20 to fiscal year 47 is approximately 3.3 billion. From \$47 billion dollars to \$50 billion dollars.

PA 19-117 included savings to the general fund and special transportation fund related to this MOU. In fiscal year 20, a holdback of 115.8 million was applied to the general fund SERS UAL account and 15.7 million to -- in the special transportation fund.

In FY 21, a savings of \$121.2 million is assumed in the general fund and \$19.7 in the special transportation fund related to this MOU.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and look forward to putting it on the consent calendar. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten, will you remark further?  
Good afternoon, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. I rise for a question or two of the proponents and to ask for a roll call vote when the time is--.

THE CHAIR:

Okay, we will note that a roll call vote has been requested and Senator Osten, please do prepare yourself.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Just to verify the process that we're in. We're here today to review this -- this memorandum of understanding

as a result of a missed filing from what I understand and if I can just repeat the timeline and ask the good Senator to verify if that's the case.

After session last year and this was included, the savings were included in the budget that we now operate under. There were some conversations with, negotiations with the union and the state that resulted in this MOU and my understanding is that was to be filed within a period of time after this session to open.

Through you, Madam President, would that be correct.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. My understanding of the timeline was that this -- after the budget was passed, the state initiated a conversation with the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition which resulted in this -- this memorandum at the request of the Executive Branch. Once they finished that in late June, early July, the memorandum was completed. We were not in session.

That was filed during -- at that time but had to be refiled when we went into session and that did not happen. So at least not right away. Eventually the state said we have to refile this but we need to make a couple of changes. So they made a couple of changes, they refiled it and now it sits in front of us during that statutory timeframe.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President, thank you Senator Osten,  
I appreciate that answer.

As the renegotiation occurred, due to the missed  
filing earlier this session and some changes were  
being made, those were not material changes with  
regard to the dollars that we see represented in  
this MOU.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Through you, Madam President. I'm not certain if it  
was a misfile but that being aside, there were no  
substantive changes made.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Osten.

Well, here -- now we are -- we have it filed correctly, we are here to vote. There was a public hearing earlier in the day to discuss this a little bit and the savings of \$164 million dollars roughly for an average through the next 12 years is being achieved through this Memorandum of Understanding. Would that be correct?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Yes, through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator. And then we -- in order to achieve those savings, we had to extend this -- or actually refinance for an additional -- we have 12 years of savings but refinancing for an additional 15 years.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I kin this to a refinancing on a mortgage where it smooths out the payments and so the first 12 years we see a decline in the cost of that and the next -- the next number of years there's an increase.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Osten, that I think will be all the questions that I have.

The extension that we're seeing on this MOU is in fact 15 years, Madam President, to the tune of approximately \$3.3 billion dollars in new costs to kick this can down the road a little bit.

We are realizing some savings now but once again, we are in a position where we are deferring good stewardship now for extra costs down the road.

Madam President, I appreciate the good Senator bringing this out and to have a good discussion with her but again, here we are once again taking short-term savings for long-term spending. And I think

this is a situation we need to look hard at and we have to seriously consider moving away from this. And I urge my colleagues to reject this opportunity as it is the same old same old.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further on the resolution that is before us? Will you remark further? If not, the machines will be open and Mr. Clerk, would you kindly call the roll?

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Resolution Number 6, Senate Agenda Number 1. Senate Resolution Number 6.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Resolution Number 6 on Senate Agenda Number 1.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Resolution Number 6

Total number voting            36

Those voting Yea	22	
Those voting Nay		14
Absent and not voting	0	

[GAVEL]

THE CHAIR:

And the measure is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President does the Clerk have Senate Agenda Number 5 on his desk?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda Number 5 dated Wednesday, March 11, 2020.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move all items on Senate Agenda Number 5 dated Wednesday, March 11, 2020 to be acted upon as indicated and that the agenda be incorporated by reference in the Senator Journal and Senate transcript.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President for two more go items, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Senate Agenda Number 2, Emergency Certified Bill 5518. Like to mark that item as go.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

As the next item of business, please, and on Senate Agenda Number 5, House Joint Resolution Number 25, Certified House Joint Resolution Number 25, like to mark that item as go as well.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, can we stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, would please call  
Emergency Certification Bill 5518, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

On Senate Agenda Number 2, House Bill Number 5518,  
AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE  
FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER  
PURPOSES, AND CONCERNING MUNICIPAL REPORTS ON  
CERTAIN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS, VALIDATION OF A  
REFERENDUM AND HIGHWAY PROJECTS.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Good afternoon. I'm here today to give you highlights of the Bond Bill and I will want to first of all thank my co-chair in the House, Patricia Miller and Chair of Bonding and helping me get through this.

This is my first fulltime of consenting the bond bill. So I'll be sometime yielding to my colleague. So thank you.

PATRICIA MILLER:

Absolutely and the question is, I assume, on adopt.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Yes, please.

PATRICIA MILLER:

So, Senator, if you would be so kind as to move this important legislation, when you make the motion we would be delighted to hear more details.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

I move the Emergency Certified Bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore and the question is on adoption. Please do remark, Senator.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you. I'm going to present some highlights of the bond bill and then give people an opportunity to make statements or questions as they wish.

This is a two-year bond bill covering the current fiscal year for 20 and next year for year ending 21. It contains both general obligation authorizations as well as special tax obligation authorizations.

The bill is well under the authorization cap on gold bonds. According to the Office of Fiscal Analysis, it puts us \$1.7 billion dollars under the cap for year '21.

This bill authorizes \$1.546 billion dollars in year '20 and \$1.518 billion dollars in '21 of new authorizations.

To put this in perspective, the bond authorizes for year '19, passed in 2018, put us at the limit. Included in these new authorizations is \$200 million dollars in new authorizations for GO bonds for transportation projects in both years.

This is in addition to the roughly \$780 million dollars in new authorizations in STO bonds for transportation that which traditional do.

Some specifics of the bill -- this package includes over \$200 million dollars in each year from municipal aid. This includes town aid road, local capital investment program and local transportation investment program and municipal grants program.

In addition, this bill contains necessary authorization to make school construction progress payments to towns where aid to alliance districts

and priority district schools and money for local bridges. These funds total an excess of \$470 million dollars in each year.

In addition to this money for cities and towns, we've included \$75 million dollars in each year for clean water projects in our communities to help our municipalities provide clean water.

We've made a strong commitment to Housing Connecticut and authorized \$100 million dollars in year '20 and \$75 million dollars in year '21 to send a clear message that we care about housing in Connecticut and building more housing.

We put \$100 million dollars each year into the Urban Act so that we can make an investment we need in all of our communities so that Connecticut can continue to be a great place to live.

We continue to put money in our small towns' economic assistant program known as STEAP with \$30 million dollars in year '21.

We are also continuing the modernization of state government with additional funding for new information technology to make our state departments more efficient and be able to communicate with each other better. There is \$70 million dollars in each year.

There's \$25 million dollars in bonding in both years to help our nonprofits with capital projects they cannot afford in other ways. That will help keep them open and caring for our residents here in Connecticut.

And so let me just highlight that there is other significant funding in drinking water, lead removal from our school drinking supplies, repair of dams, school security, nonprofit security and PFAS testing. And this money also will help keep our communities safer.

Finally, let me note that we have included \$5 million dollars in emergency funds because of the Coronavirus. We don't know what we'll need but we've tried to be thoughtful and responsible by placing some money in that category.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore will you remark further?  
Senator Witkos, good afternoon, sir.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. If I may, a few questions through you to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Yes. Please do proceed and Senator Moore, please prepare yourself.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. First I'd like to offer some comments about the bill and I'd like to thank the members of the Bonding Subcommittee and those that are on the Finance Committee to put so much time and effort reviewing all of the different

proposals, meeting with all the different agencies, making sure that all the programs have a justification here in the state of Connecticut and I -- and I went through the bond package and I really didn't see as we like to refer to them as rats. I didn't really find anything in there that I thought was very onerous which I was glad to see, Senator Moore.

But I did have a couple questions if I may. That I just need a little better understanding or clarification for. And I'll go in order of the sections that they appeared in the bill and then one overall question after that.

In Section 13 there is a provision for a grant-in-aid for capitalizing the Family Medical Leave Insurance Fund to the tune of \$25 million dollars. And I -- I thought when this body passed the Family and Medical Leave Act, that there would be a \$5 million dollar capitalization startup fund and that the fund would be self-sufficient and provide for itself through a charge to all the workers through their W-2s in the state of Connecticut. But I see in the initial one could that be explained to me.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Yes sir, thank you sir. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Yes, through you, Madam President. So this is startup costs that will have to be reimbursed. I'm not sure of the -- you said \$5 million dollars?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Well, the initial one I thought that was in the original legislation was \$5 million dollars but now we're asking for an additional \$25 million dollars and that was my question. Why are we moving towards \$25 million dollars if we had originally thought it was a \$5 million dollar price tag for the startup. The capitalization costs.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Well, we came to an agreement that we needed this to be able to get started and then pay back into the fund. I don't know why it changed from \$25 million dollars in the original bill. Can you help? Do you have a response? I'm gonna yield to --

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Kushner, would you accept the yield to answer that question?

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Push the right button. If you wanna give me a minute, I will look up the bill to make sure I get it correct but what I know we passed last year was funding for the startup of the program and as incorporated into the bill is that the funding will be paid back, I believe it's a year-and-a-half after we start receiving funds. Within a year-and-a-half

to pay back all of the funds that are bonded from the money that we collect.

And there's a short overlap between when people would begin to accept -- to receive benefits. But the way the calculation worked is that there would be enough money in the fund to pay back the bond before we have many claims paid.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President and through you, then that brings another question. So we won't be paying any claims until the bond is paid back, is that?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

I'd like to yield to Senator Kushner.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

No, what I said is there's an overlap of the time that we would have in the bill to pay back the full amount. We would start paying back the bond before we started paying claims but there is some short

period of overlap. I think it was anticipated that we are supposed to be collecting around \$400 million dollars -- I'm sorry, around \$40 million dollars a year. And so there would be enough money to pay back the bond before we start paying claims.

Now there is a little -- what I'm explaining is there's a little overlap time there between when we would start paying claims and when the bond would have to be paid back.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. My understanding was initially that was -- we were speaking of a \$5 million dollar price tag and that when the program was originated it was going to be run through some of our existing private health care insurers and that ended up not happening and therefore we've got the request for additional \$25 million dollars to step up our quasi-public, if you will, insurance fund to do just that work.

But I understand that but the \$25 million dollars will be paid back over a period of time once the overlap meets where the claims are starting to be paid, revenue's coming in and the bond for that \$25 million dollars, we'll be paying that back of a certain period of time. Is that correct?

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you, Senator Moore. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. So that was Section 13. Section 77 has to do with a shifting of -- this is the body cameras for local police departments. And we're shifting \$3 million dollars from municipal police departments to the state police department and just curious as to why that's taking place when there are certainly more municipal police officers in Connecticut than the state police and I would've thought that by now, since the program has been around for a while that all those purchases would have been made for the state police as with digital recording savings.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you, Madam President. That was the agreement we had with DESC to move that money there and that was what we had agreed upon while we were doing negotiations, to put it in that budget.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Well, of course, I think if you're on the receiving end of additional money you would agree to that but what about the

folks that are on the losing side of the money which is the municipal police departments. Were they involved in the negotiations?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, no they were not. But it was agreed that if they needed the money they would be able to apply to the state if they needed to get the body cameras and that we would reimburse up to a certain point anyone had spent money before a certain time.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President and I hope that the Commissioner accepts the fact if they -- if a municipal police department requests those funding for new officers that are coming on board at the local respective -- local agencies -- and in our cities, that he acts on that request because again, I'm very concerned that we shifted \$3 million dollars from local municipalities just to the state police.

My next question is on Section 85. And that has to do with local assessors filing a certification for the grants through municipalities to OPM. And if

you could just give me a little background on that because I know that last section and this section, there's been issues with the local assessors in going into communities and assessing really nonprofit organizations now and trying to find out -- and charging them as much as they can and there's a battle ongoing, I'd say, between municipal officials and nonprofits and the assessors.

And I'm curious as to why this language is now being implemented in the bond.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

May I ask for a brief moment, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, the Senate will stand at ease briefly. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you, Madam President. That was an OPM request that we negotiated. I can't give you the specifics of why it was moved there but it was there at their request.

And I just wanna say we -- we worked -- the reason we're here at such a late date is that there was a lot of discussion going back and forth trying to

come to an agreement on what we could do so the municipalities weren't waiting and didn't have to wait any longer for their funding and so we could move some of this bonding along.

So there was some negotiations that took place at another level but this was what we agreed on and didn't see a problem with it.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President, thank you, Senator Moore for that question. And actually give all of us some great pause. If you may recall, under the previous administration, the Secretary of OPM sent a letter to each of our municipalities asking them what the level of the reserve fund was and wanted it sent back.

And the towns were in fear that that would be used against them because there was threat of shifting the cost of teachers' pension amounts in the towns or cutting municipal aid saying, "Well, you can afford it in your community because you have X-percent in your reserve fund."

And this just, for me, without an answer other than OPM requested it, causes some concern because we don't know what the information's going to be used for.

And my last two questions are -- I know when I made my opening comments regarding the bonding package, a

lot of the things are based on formulas and I haven't seen -- the formulas have remained in place but in two specific areas, they were adjusted and I would just like an explanation as to why those were adjusted. Not the formula itself but the dollar value placed inside that formula.

And the first one is under the LoCIP. Senator Moore, when you stated that there was more money for the local capital improvement plans but there's actually \$5 million dollars less than in previous years. I'm just curious as to why we reduced the LoCIP funds by \$5 million dollars.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

On what line are you looking, sir?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

If I may just have a minute, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Certainly. The Senate will stand briefly at ease.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator, please proceed.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Sure, it will be section 55 of the bill which starts on line 1115.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you, through you. And in 2017 they didn't receive any funds. And we gave them funds in 2018 and 2019 and so now they're going to get all their money. All the funds will go to them in 2020, 2021.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

But I guess that doesn't answer the question of why I saw a reduction of \$5 million dollars if they're gonna get all their money then I would think that would have been an increase.

I would have -- I wouldn't have complained if there was -- if it was flat funded but seeing your reduction --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, Madam President, there's -- there's money already allocated for them that's waiting to be allocated. That's already allocated for them that they should be getting.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, I understand that answer. And the last one is -- it was in the former MME Pilot Program. Now it's called the Grant for Municipal Projects. That was a \$16 million dollar increase and is that earmarked for anything specific? Do we know why that number went up from previous years?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, Madam President, there are no earmarks in that. It's to help support them because we're not gonna do anything in 2020 and they've been waiting for the funding.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Earlier today there was a -- I had a conversation with some individuals regarding that area and my understanding was that over the years the MME Pilot money was never fully funded. It was capped or held steady for a number of years.

And so some towns lost money and some towns gained some money so when they redid the formula here in this bond package, they didn't wanna take any money away from towns that may be getting a little bit more but they didn't wanna punish any towns that were losing money so they added the \$16 million dollars to make all the towns whole that should've rightfully gotten the money.

Is that correct for you, Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos and we will go to Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22):

Through you, Madam President, that is correct. We put in money for towns who are underfunded this time.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam, that's all the questions I had for Senator Moore. Thank you very much.

You know, I'm gonna support the bill today but I think that we should enact formulas similar to the ones we did in the past regarding the education cost sharing formula whereas a town, if they were overpaid by the state, then we wean them off those dollars and I hope we can do that in this particular line item in the future.

Slowly bring them back to what is rightfully theirs and not in abundance because it's not fair to the other communities that are not getting the money and these are getting some that they don't just deserve.

So I think a slow reduction down to where the formula would take them would be appropriate. Look forward to listening to the rest of the debate. Thank you Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Witkos. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on the bill? Senator Kelly to be followed by Senator Bradley. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you very much, Madam President and good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

And good afternoon, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you. Through you to the proponent of the bill, there is in lines -- specifically it's 225 and in 599 and particularly with regards to 293 through 295 and 668 through 670.

We're talking about bonding for the paid family and medical leave insurance authority grants in aid for capitalization of the family and medical leave insurance trust fund not exceeding \$25 million dollars in each fiscal year.

Can you explain what that specific line item is for? What type of grant in aid?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

We're sharing a mic.

THE CHAIR:

Play nicely, Senators.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you I'm gonna yield to Senator Kushner.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner, do you accept the yield?

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Through you, the fund the way it's set up, there would be start-up costs that would be required potentially depending -- the authority has been given the ability to either invest in the cost of technology that it might take to set up the program.

There would be costs of hiring personnel to set up the program but the authority's still determining to what extent they would go with a -- it's a quasi-public authority, they are still deciding to what extent they would use resources that are currently available within state government or contract with insurance companies has been suggested. Or employ people at the authority.

So as anticipated, there would be a need for some start-up costs for technology and for personnel.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you very much, Madam President. So if I understood the answer correctly, this is a bond authorization to which we have no real definitive breakdown as to how much is going to technology, how much is going to personnel.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Through you, Madam President, that is correct.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. How do we know that we need \$50 million dollars over the next two years?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (21ST):

I believe that that assumption was made based on looking at -- I think first of all we don't believe we will need that much money but we want to have the ability if necessary to bond that much money. But we've looked at what other states have done and the start-up costs for those other states and so I think that, as I said previously, that we would have the ability to bond that and that the money would be repaid from the funds that are received from the employee contributions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Could you identify which states we're looking at as comparable states for the start-up?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (21ST):

One of the states that started up from scratch which is similar to the way we would be doing it was Washington State and so that was, I know, one of the states that we looked at.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

And Madam President, what did the state of Washington appropriate?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

I don't have that figure at my fingertips and I know that we expect that we would be -- it would cost us less because it's a larger state. So I don't have that information at my fingertips.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Okay so we don't -- we don't know if we need this amount of money, we're modeling after another state and we don't know what the amount of money they used, we just know we're gonna do less.

Interesting. Interesting process. So how do we -- here's one of the concerns is that once appropriated or authorized, if I'm a bond counsel, I'm gonna look at that and that applies as if it is already spent. Because it demonstrates the state's appetite for spending.

And even if it's not allocated or appropriated, the fact that it's authorized is the issue. So why are we issuing or authorizing 50 if we don't and can't articulate that we even need that amount?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

I believe, through you, Madam President, we want to make sure that we have the necessary resources to start up this program. We debated that during the session last year. When we voted on this bill, we were aware that there would be start-up costs.

And we also made provisions to pay those back so you know, I think we're well within what we're going to need for that.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Understanding this was an issue that passed last year. We've had a year to look at this issue. We've come up with a number of \$50 million dollars. All I'm asking for is a simple answer. How did we get there and what is that number based upon? It sounds to me it's just pulled out of thin air.

Now the Governor, when he was talking about this and advocating for this initiative, said that we could do a lot of outsourcing. Is outsourcing going to occur under this or is the state government looking to engage of this in-house?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Through you, Madam President. While I'm not a member of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Authority, I have attended some of the meetings and I do recognize that they are working on making those decisions as they set up this fund.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

The Governor also said that he could do this at the time that he was advocating for this initiative, that it could be done at \$20 million. Why isn't that number being used? That's a \$20 million per calendar year so it'd be \$40 million.

I stand corrected, it is \$20 in total. Why aren't we using that number?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Through you, Madam President. The same answer that we are looking at how much it will take to do this and we're certain that we can do it with the funds that have been requested in this bond.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you very much, Madam President. One of the concerns here is that once authorized and appropriated, if it's not spent, the money doesn't necessarily go right back to pay off the bonds and reduce our debt on the credit card. It's gonna go to the general fund as I understand it which then gives you more opportunity to spend.

And to me, this -- the way that we distilled the \$50 million dollar number was Loosey-Goosey. It was based on an assumption on how -- and also another state, Washington, that happens to be bigger. But we're gonna do it less but we don't know by how much.

We don't know how much the state of Washington spent. We think we can get it done at \$50 million or less and we're gonna authorize this and put it on the state's credit card but if we don't spend that, then it's gonna go to the benefit of the general fund.

Kinda feels like we're trying to get around the fiscal restraints that are put into the state's budget.

I think as we look at this, anybody in their household budget doesn't look at examples and say, "Hey, I'm just gonna go out and buy something, whatever it is, assume that's what it's going to be because some neighbor down the street with a bigger house, bigger family, paid a sum. I'm a smaller

house with a smaller family so I don't have to pay that much."

And we didn't do a lot of due diligence to get to this point. I think it's a simple question. Why -- why is the \$25,000 (sic) dollar number in this bill for each year? Don't think I'm asking for the world. I think that's what the taxpayers and our constituents, when they send us here, they expect us to ask simple questions because they're at the end of the day gonna get the bill.

So, Madam President, with that in mind, the Clerk has in his possession an amendment. LCO number 3096.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO number 3096 Senate Schedule A.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the amendment, waive the reading and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

And the question is on adoption and please do remove, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Thank you, Madam President, I do ask that when the vote is taken, it is taken by roll.

THE CHAIR:

And roll call vote on the amendment before the Chamber has been requested. Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST):

Okay. So what this does is this brings back basically the authorization from the amounts in line 224 and 599 to reduce it each year by the \$25 million so that we get back into the position that we would be in if we had followed the promises made and the positions made by the Governor when he was pitching the Paid Family Medical Leave Act.

And so that was a number that was used to pass this, it was a number that was relied upon and I haven't heard any satisfactory answers as to why we need a higher allocation.

So in that case, I would urge adoption of a reduction to those amendments. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kelly. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber?  
Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, as a member of the Labor Committee, I remember hours of testimony when we discussed paid family and medical leave and all the assertions that were made that this would be fully funded, that there were gonna be no shortfalls and it might take a couple of bucks to get it started for some staff.

But because the program, in terms of removals from the tax on people paycheck was gonna start before the disbursements, there was no chance that there would be a problem, Madam President.

Some people went so far as to ask questions about when the shortfall occurred, if it should occur, who would that be delegated to? Would it become an additional tax on people's payroll? Some were concerned about that. Would it become a tax on business? Others were very concerned about that.

But I gotta tell you, my wildest dream -- my wildest dream -- I never thought the state of Connecticut would put \$50 million dollars on its credit card for a program that's supposed to be funded by the people that it was supposed to benefit.

This is frankly a shock and after 20 years here, almost, I should probably never be shocked by anything in this place. But this really does, I think, fly in the face of all the testimony that we heard.

I think it -- for those of us that oppose the bill, especially on grounds that it was not sufficiently

funded but the rates that were being assessed against payroll could not possibly be sufficient to sustain the payouts. I think this is actually certification that that, in fact, was true. And that the assertions that were made by some that this is not gonna be a problem, always gonna have enough money and it frankly would benefit people.

I didn't quibble about whether it would benefit someone. I quibbled about whether it was gonna be sustainable and here we are already borrowing money to fund it.

So Madam President, I stand in support of the amendment. I also stand in support of the amendment because I think this Governor made a commitment -- has made a commitment and continues to make comments about wanting to reduce the state's credit card. And so this is only gonna help us go in the wrong direction by \$50 million dollars. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Miner. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber?  
Senator Fasano. Good afternoon.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to support Senator Kelly's amendment and I share the concerns by Senator Miner. But let me say it this way.

First, I asked OPM and Department of Labor to give me the actual figures that show paid family leave can support itself as is. And nobody -- let me

repeat -- nobody has done that math in this building.

Now think about that. We are taking money out of employees' checks. Telling them they're gonna get these benefits but nobody has done the math to say it works. How could that possibly be? And everyone assured it worked. I'm talking about letters, by the way, January, February and March of this year. And no one's done the figures.

And now we're asking for \$50 million dollars. Red flag. That speaks to a problem. When this first came out, I argued in this chamber that you needed \$50 million dollars for a computer if you're gonna do it in this building. People pooh-poohed me. They said, "Go away. You don't know what you're talking about." So odd that it's \$50 million dollars now. It's odd that we're talking about it.

If this program does work, let it work. But no one's done the math. Some people have argued, "Well, we'll tell them we're gonna take the benefits back." Really? We're gonna take people's money out of their pocket for a year. Then we'll do the math and then we'll tell them that the benefits that we told you about that were for your good that we're taking out of your pockets, we can't give you so we've gotta reduce the benefits.

This building's never going to do that. Ever. Chisel that in stone. What we're gonna do is we're gonna tell businesses they've gotta pick it up or we're gonna rely on bonding after bonding after bonding. This is the beginning of that.

So why don't we do it the right way? Let's not bond for it. Let's not put it on the credit card and to think that if they don't use it, it goes to the general fund. You talk about playing a game.

How could you borrow money and put it in your general fund claiming that that's good financial policy? So we shouldn't do this now. Let's wait. Let's wait till someone's done the math and says, "This is what we need, this is how much we're gonna figure out the program", is and then put a financial package, if you're still wanting to go forward, and do it. But why are we doing this piece meal?

Even during the bonding subcommittee meetings, no one produced a document of an actuary figure that shows that this thing works. Because it doesn't exist. One could say it doesn't exist because you don't wanna know the result. Because the result isn't very good for the policy.

So let's not do this. Let's hold up. Let's wait. We've bonded enough. We're \$1.9 billion. The most bonding except for one year during Governor Malloy's year in 2015 -- 1.9 billion.

So let's hold off. Let's not start using money up where we don't need it. This program's not even off the ground yet. So Madam President, I support Senator Kelly's amendment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the chamber?  
Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, thank you. I just wanna remind the chamber that this money will be paid back as start-up cost is necessary to get started on the Paid Family Medical.

I rise in opposition of the amendment and I ask the Chamber to vote in opposition to the amendment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before us? Will you remark further. If not, Mr. Clerk, kindly call the roll on the amendment, please, and the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on LCO 3096, House Bill 5518. Medium roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment A LCO number 3096 on House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Amendment A, LCO number 3096, it's on House Bill 5518.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, the machine will be locked and Mr. Clerk, if you could kindly call the tally, please sir.

CLERK:

House Bill 5518, Senate Amendment ALCO number 3096.

Total number voting	36	
Those voting Yea	15	
Those voting Nay		21
Absent and not voting	0	

[GAVEL]

THE CHAIR:

The amendment fails. Will you remark further on the bill that is before us? Will you remark further on the bill that is before us? If not, ah, so sorry. Good afternoon again, Senator Miner. Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Madam President, just about every time I get back into the district from here, my constituents ask me what we've done to cut spending. What have we done to put the brakes on borrowing? They continue to be concerned about, in some cases, a stagnant economy. These days they might even be a little more nervous about the economy.

And every time I venture back, I say, "Well, I can't tell you that we've cut anything today and I can't tell you that in fact we've put less on our credit card." But today I'll be able to go back to the district and I'll say, "We put a heck of a lot of money on the credit card today."

There are some items on this agenda that we talked about in different committees -- PFAS has been an

important issue for us in the Environment Committee. There's some Town Aid Road funds in here. LoCIP funds to municipalities been a promise for probably six months by somebody.

But Madam President, at the end of the day, this total. The total amount that we're putting on the credit card here is almost unprecedented. Even in the case of an emergency. Even in the case of a health emergency, the first thing we do is go and borrow the money.

So this bond package has money in it to help the Department of Public Health deal with the current emergency.

Madam President, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO 3100, if he call it, please may I be allowed to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

And maybe not. You want mine? That doesn't work.

CLERK:

Ready.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner, your timing is impeccable. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO number 3100, Senate Schedule B.

THE CHAIRMAN:

Senator Miner, will you remark?

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, what this amendment seeks to do is to reduce the total amount of bonding in line number 224 by \$5 million dollars which was, I believe, the intended earmark to deal with the current epidemic in the state of Connecticut, in fact worldwide.

The amendment also adds section 501 and chooses instead to pay \$6 million dollars from the unexpended balance of the Reserve for Salary account which, as I understand it, has some \$68-and-a-half million dollars in it and is anticipated to have a surplus. I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. The question is on adoption. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber?

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

Thank you, Madam President. And so to be clear, I don't think appropriating money for this purpose is wrong. I think what my constituents would take issue with is that we're borrowing it.

We have a robust general fund balance, certainly that would be available for emergencies. There have been a number of occasions when there's been representation that this Reserve for Salary account will have a surplus at the end of the year. There's no reason for us to put it on the credit card and for that reason, Madam President I would ask that when the vote be taken it be taken by roll.

THE CHAIR:

And the vote will be taken by roll on the amendment. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Senator Moore. Oh, Senator Fasano, please proceed.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I stand arise in support of the amendment but let me also say this. Once the Governor declared an emergency under the law for public health, he has unlimited power. So if he wanted to -- if he needed more than \$5 million -- or the \$5 million, he could take that out of the rainy day fund. He could take that out of virtually any place he can that he wants to or directed by OPM without authority from us.

To borrow that money for a non-capital one-time expense doesn't seem to make sense. We have \$2.7 billion dollars in our rainy day fund -- \$2.7 billion dollars. Taking \$5 million dollars, \$6 million dollars out of the rainy day fund at no cost to the state. That's like taking a spoonful of water out of Long Island Sound. It has no import.

But if you're gonna borrow it, a one-time expense to pay for ten or 15 years and we're going towards our capital and borrowing, it doesn't make any sense. Who would borrow money for medical supplies when you have money in your savings account? It's just illogical. It isn't what you do to keep something that's financially sound and as I said, we don't even have to do it because the Governor has got basically king powers to do whatever he wants to do, irrespective of regulation or statute under current law as we sit here right now under state of emergency.

So we don't have to borrow it. It is covered, it is done, he can do what he wish, we've got this done but if we're gonna do it, I support the amendment that says take it out of the reserve -- the salary reserve account, put it into corona, if that's what you're gonna do but clearly, we don't have to borrow it.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further?  
Good afternoon, Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Good afternoon, Madam President, good to see you. Madam President, I rise in opposition to the amendment. This is a document that in its entirety, speaks to the vision, the interest on the part of the legislature and the administration.

It is not a specific document. I wish it were. But it's not. It provides a broad range of options. We know how it works. The Governor has the power to use all of this that we are authorizing today or none of it.

But there are those of us -- I think all of us -- who are concerned about where this is going and what impact it's gonna have. We're gonna be closed for the next two days. When was the last time we heard that unless it were a snowstorm or something?

And it's likely to cause much more disruption than two days. If anyone here knows otherwise, please stand up. This is precaution. This is taking a step on the part of the legislature to say, "Governor, we are concerned enough about this to say we wanna put some resources towards it that you have available to you."

Not gonna be spent on one time. This is equipment for quarantine or any other use that would be eligible to be capitalized. That's a wise and prudent step on the part of the legislature in conjunction with the administration it's agreed to provide these resources that are available. Don't have to be used but they're available.

And let's hope they're never touched. Let's hope it's not an issue. But thank God if we have to do it that it's there. Urge the Chamber to oppose the amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Will you remark further? Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Will the Senate stand at ease for a moment, please?

THE CHAIR:

And the Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, I'd like to come back to order and if I can yield to Senator Miner.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Miner, do you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR MINER (30TH):

I do, thank you, Madam President. Madam President, at this time I would like to withdraw my amendment despite my -- what I thought was an amazing argument for its purpose.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir and the amendment is withdrawn. Will you remark further on the amendment? Sorry, I apologize, the amendment is withdrawn so will you remark further on the bill that is before us?

Good afternoon, Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Good afternoon, Madam President. Looking through this -- the bond package -- I noticed that the Local Capital Improvement or LoCIP to the towns was reduced in every single town. Every municipality. Every municipality's been waiting for this money, it's in their budgets, they have plans for this, especially the poorer towns. And I have to go to each one of my 13 towns and tell them that it was -- well, 12 of the 13, I already know for the 13th one.

But I have to go to 12 towns and tell them that the money was reduced because they wanted to shave \$5 million dollars off of LoCIP. Well, you know, I'm gonna go back to Kevin Kelly's amendment that was shot down.

It was \$25 million dollars per year. Metropolitan Insurance, who handles New York's Paid Family Medical Leave said that they could do it for us. Not for \$50 million, they said they could do it, they have the infrastructure. Why aren't we using them? Why do we have to have \$50 million dollars set aside? I don't think we need to.

So I think we should take some of that money and we should make these towns whole. The ones that we should've from the beginning. And just to let everybody sitting in the circle know, every single one of you had your towns reduced. If you'll look up how much, you'd realize it.

There's not one of us that hasn't had money reduced from the LoCIP. So what I'm gonna do is I want to -- I want to look at Metropolitan Insurance, have them take care of Family Paid Medical Leave. Reduce this -- reduce that by \$50 million dollars, take \$10

million dollars of it and put it towards LoCIP for the next two years.

This is a save -- this saves money, it makes the towns whole and I'm gonna propose that amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Yes, Senator, what amendment would that be, sir?

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. If the Clerk would call LCO number 3111.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO number 3111, Senate Schedule C.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Madam President, I'd like to move the amendment and I'd like to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you and the question is on adoption of the amendment. Please do remark.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you. I think I covered most of it but again, this is the \$50 million dollars that's already being taken -- we can take care of that through

Metropolitan. They have the infrastructure, they can get this up and running for us.

I'd like to -- we can reduce this budget at the same time we can make our towns whole. That's the whole purpose here and we can make every one of our towns whole. Money that they were depending on.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator, will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Good afternoon, Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to support the amendment and let me say this. Once again there was a question of paying back this money. You can't pay it back if you don't have a performer that shows the ability to pay it back.

And what Senator Champagne is talking about is correct. Metropolitan currently runs the Workers Comp and Paid Family Leave System out of New York. So a Connecticut administers the claims out of New York. So they have the computer, they have the software and the technology. I want to aim by that.

So when you're doing paid family leave from the Connecticut's perspective or even New York perspective, you've got to keep track of what days are associated with paid family leave for which the state of Connecticut is paying out of the fund and what days are personal days that the company pays out of the fund. And then what days are sick days that come out of the company's fund.

So there's a slew of information you have to input to a very complicated system. And rather than us recreating a wheel, which is what this money essentially is going to do, we would take the existing structure, both software and hardware, and tap into it.

May I add, this is exactly what Governor Lamont wants to do. This is exactly what Governor Lamont talked about doing. So you don't need the \$50 million dollars. But where we do need the \$50 million dollars is in the bonding package before this body LoCIP was reduced by \$5 million dollars.

So by reducing it by \$5 million dollars, a lot of towns, if you -- if you have the runs of the towns like I have, you'll see that LoCIP has a negative effect on a lot of the towns. Not all. But a great majority of them.

By putting the LoCIP money back into the -- where it belongs and taking it away from paid family leave, you are reducing the municipal taxes, you're allowing towns to have more money so they hire more firemen, more policemen and move their towns forward.

Madam President, for the last four years, most of our towns have been ignored by the budget because STEAP grants were never given out.

So Madam President, this is a very good amendment because it helps our municipalities and reduces property taxes. So I look forward to its passage. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the chamber?  
Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Madam President, can I just ask for a roll call vote, please?

THE CHAIR:

When the vote is taken it will be made by roll. Taken by roll. And will you remark further on the amendment that is before the chamber? Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Thank you, Madam President. I just want to make this clear that there was a year when we did not do LoCIP. We took that money and put it in the following two-years to make up for what they didn't get and I think it was 2017.

So it's really not flat, it's giving them back what they would have received in 2017. So I rise in opposition to this amendment and I ask that the Chamber vote in opposition also. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Moore, will you remark further on the amendment? Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, the machine will be opened and Mr. Clerk kindly call the roll, please.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate House Bill 5518. Senate Amendment CLCO 3111. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate for Senate Amendment CLCO number 3111 on House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on Senate Amendment CLCO number 3111. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senate Amendment CLCO number 3111. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. House Bill 5518. Senate Amendment C.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally on the amendment.

House Bill 5518, Senate Amendment CLCO Number 3111

Total number voting	36	
Those voting Yea	15	
Those voting Nay		21
Absent and not voting	0	

[GAVEL]

THE CHAIR:

And the amendment is -- the amendment fails. Will you remark further on the bill that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further, Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, one of the bonding that have given me trouble for a long time is that we are putting bonding into MDRA which is municipal development zone of some sort.

Madam President, this is a quasi that was created in the last budget a year ago. It was created, they haven't met other than the Governor appointing, I think, somebody. Nobody else has been appointed by the leaders of this building. There are no minutes, there's no bylaws, there's no direction, there's no ethics, there's no -- nothing. There's nothing. There's not a thing in this other than the birth of it by statute.

And we are gonna give this group \$45 million dollars for bonding. That's what we're gonna do -- \$45 million dollars for the bonding.

The question is why? Why are we gonna give a group \$45 million dollars for this bonding? They haven't met. Madam President, you look at what we've done for municipal aid for STEAP -- 2017 no one got any STEAP. 2018 no one got any STEAP. 2019, \$15 million and then in this, \$30 million. \$45 million dollars we've gotten in STEAP in five years and we're given a quasi that hasn't even met yet \$45 million dollars.

How can that possibly happen in this building? We ignored our towns forever under the last administration and we've got enough money to burn, we're not gonna make it up to the STEAP folks, we're gonna throw it into a new quasi that hasn't even met yet.

We've seen in this building the problem with quasis. And yet this has not even met and we're gonna give them \$45 million. That's a ton of money. More than we're gonna give -- equal we're gonna give our towns in two years.

What this amendment says is -- let's not do that. Why don't we hold off. Why don't we let them organize, why don't they create some bylaws? Why don't we find out what they're doing and oh, by the way, maybe find out who's on there to see who they are and whether we think this is a good organization they're going forward.

In the interim, let them prove themselves. Let them at least have an organizational meeting. Just an organizational meeting so we can see that they actually have a function and working and let's take that \$45 million and give it to our STEAP grants for municipalities that have been ignored for five years.

Is that too much to ask? Even if you gave these folks \$45 million, how fast can they act? They're gonna burn through that money in less than a year? We're back in session a year from now. If they need more money then, let's talk about it but let them come to the committees and explain what they're gonna do, why they need the money.

Heck, we gave the Port Authority \$2 million dollars to get started. Two million. Apparently that went so well. But we're gonna give this group 45. With all sorts of powers but no direction.

Let's give it to the municipalities and the STEAP grants. Let the Governor review the STEAP grants, let the small towns get the money that they've been ignored for five years because I will tell ya, look at the urban grant. They got all their money. They got all their money. But not our small towns. Not our small towns. Let's help our small towns.

And it isn't just giving it to them, it allows OPM and the Governor's office to determine what projects are good. But let's do that. Not to a new quasi that hasn't even met and you don't even know who's in control.

If someone ever came up to you and said, "I need to have you lend money to a company. I'm not gonna -- they have no directors yet, they haven't had their first meeting yet. I can't even tell you who's in the company but trust me, they're gonna do good work. Give them \$45 million." You would scratch your head and say, "What the heck is wrong with you?"

So why are we doing it at this level, because you can? Because you can? There are small towns who work hard to have a tight budget, who depend upon STEAP and every year they had to suffer and we're gonna give them as much respect to a quasi that hasn't met.

I find that -- I've gotta tell you, this one bothers me the most out of almost anything on here. I've talked about it, you heard me talk about it before. There's no track record, there's no history, there's no members. And none of us can stand here and say, "I vouch for that quasi. I'm comfortable \$45

million." Because not one of us around the circle knows who's gonna be on there and running the show.

Or what codes of ethics they're gonna apply. Or what conflicts of interest they're gonna apply. Or where they're really putting the money. Nobody knows. Because that's their discretion. But give them 45 and then we'll check them out ten years from now when the state auditors do a report that red flags everything and then we'll all clamor to a microphone and talk about how horrible it is and how can these things get away from us. "Oh my gosh, what a mistake that legislature back in 2020. Oh my gosh."

God forbid we're proactive. God forbid we think about looking at what they're gonna do before we give them \$45 million dollars. And to our towns that every day slave hard, we're gonna cheat them out of some money by giving them 30 and 15 the year before.

This one bothers me the most, Madam President so what I say is -- look, I argued with the rest of the package as well but this is the one that really sticks in my craw and that's the reason why I wanted to ice this out. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further? Will you remark further, Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise in opposition to the amendment and I do that with

some reluctance in terms of recognizing the skill and -- and the approach that the proponent of the amendment takes in doing his job which he knows and I'll be glad to say to this Chamber again that I have the highest respect for.

THE CHAIR:

And Senator, while you're taking a breath, we'll just say that we're on the bill that is before the Chamber.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

You don't have to, Senator. [Laughing]

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

I think by calling the amendment it may have a better chance, Senator Fonfara, but only slightly. May I have the Clerk call LCO 3094.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Mr. Clerk.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCL number 3094 that's Senate schedule D.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Madam President, I move the amendment and I get to summarize all over again. But I will dispense with that I supposed yield to Senator Fonfara.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano and the question is on the amendment. Will you remark further, Senator Fonfara?

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Well, Madam President, yes. Now that I've read it, I oppose it even more. But as I started to say, Madam President, I rise in opposition and I do so because I frankly think the gentleman is incorrect in his math and his understanding, possibly. And I don't seek to say that I can read his mind but let me just lay out a few facts for a moment.

The reality is that with respect to small town support by this institution, beginning with the Malloy administration -- prior to the Malloy administration -- Senate Fasano's right that Urban Act was dedicated primarily to urban areas. STEAP

for small towns. That's why small town funding was created.

But that changed under the Malloy administration. And Urban Act is available to every town. Some of us, to our chagrin, and STEAP remains available for small towns.

So that's now \$250 million dollars that towns have the ability to apply for. Much more than -- much more than a city can apply for. 'Cuz we're prohibited for seeking STEAP funds under the current construct. And I urge everyone to do their best to serve their towns in that regard.

Secondly, with respect to the creation of MRDA, they say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and in fact the Capitol region developed an authority and I understand the gentleman's longstanding position regarding authorities. I disagree with it but I understand it.

The fact of the matter is that in my opinion and I think in most, that CRDA has done great things in helping rebuild the city of Hartford to create an environment that hopefully is attracting more and more businesses, residents to the city of Hartford, young people to the city of Hartford, our capitol city. Something that the state needs is to have our cities be a beacon for attracting talent and businesses that will follow.

We have to do that if we're going to rebuild our economy. If we're going to take our place which I think should be leading this nation in terms of the -- in terms of the knowledge economy. CRDA has been very successful.

MRDA has been established. Maybe not to the degree that some would like and I think that's probably true. But it's been established to be able to do similar things in the rest of the state. Development. This is not what Urban Act or STEAP would necessarily do, these are opportunities for doing -- actually the things we're doing with urban areas but throughout the state.

Again, available to towns for projects and the development of businesses, real estate which pay property taxes. And that's a \$45 million dollar investment for the whole state which I think is worth it for Connecticut.

I'd like to see, personally, I hope we can get to it, we can develop corridors in the state with funding along the lines of CRDA targeted investments in those areas for the same reason. To attract talent, keep young people in our state that we do better at educating than anywhere else in the country, in my opinion, and we lose too many of them afterwards.

I know that the Senator doesn't disagree with what I've said in that regard but I would hope the Chamber could oppose the amendment and allow us to give greater confidence to what MRDA can become, similar to -- and by the way, CRDA, the administration, I believe, has some role in ensuring that that MRDA does take shape in the way CRDA has. And I have great confidence in the director of CRDA and the organization.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber?  
Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Good after [clears throat], excuse me, good afternoon, Madam President, I rise for a few comments on the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. And I appreciate the words spoken today by both Senators and I think there's merit there. But I'm rising tonight as a former First Selectman for the town of East Lyme for seven years who, in partnership with the state, worked with multiple STEAP grants in renovating our small town.

Rebuilding our Main Street, rebuilding a bit of our Boardwalk and parking areas and providing the opportunity so that today we have a vibrant downtown, we have an opportunity for shops to open up, for people to live downtown and for the fact that we have, I believe, zero vacancies in our downtown area as a result of the partnerships that it took us a number of years to create through the STEAP grant program.

So while I understand that there may be a long-term plan for the \$45 million dollars on the MRDA, there's opportunities right now. Small towns are ready. They have projects that are ready to go and they could use the opportunity that this money would create to add the opportunities to each and every small town that qualifies.

There are towns represented by people sitting around this circle who have tried for a number of years to access the STEAP grant program and have not been able to provide any opportunity because of one reason or another they were never approved for safety sidewalks or other events. And I think this opportunity will give those small towns the chance to move forward.

So this is a significant amount of money. I think it could be put to good use right away by small towns here in the state of Connecticut to help rebuild perhaps their downtowns as we did in southeastern Connecticut and be a model of small towns everywhere.

So I urge adoption of this and I hope my colleagues think about what this money could do immediately and not for a plan that has not been really laid out for all of us to understand.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Formica. Will you remark further on the amendment that is before the Chamber?  
Senator Fasano to be followed by Senator Looney.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, madam President, for a second time. Madam President, I respect Senator Fonfara because he is one that always thinks about things very long and hard. And doesn't speak unless he has something really to say. And he -- and he does on this issue.

But I would just remind it's unfair when you look at the authorizations. The authorizations over from 2014 for Urban Act have been 50, 130, 70 and 75. STEAP have been 20, 20, 20 and then stopped.

Madam President, Senator Fonfara is right to merger issues. But the allocation issue that went to the towns on STEAP applications that were -- went through the Urban Act were mostly towards, as they normally were, towards bigger cities and bigger denser population.

The STEAP was, as Senator Fonfara said, set up for smaller towns. So when it wasn't funded by authorizations, it did hurt the small towns. They weren't getting their fair share because they had to compete with so many other interests.

And I think it is right, I believe Senator Fonfara. Like I have said every place I go, the strength of our state depends upon the strength of our cities. And I firmly believe that. That's for education, social services and development. One hundred percent.

This state can't survive if our cities don't thrive. Period. And we need to pay attention to Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury -- those we need to pay a lot of attention to because if we -- we can't

afford to lose another generation so we have to do whatever we can to improve our cities.

And I mean whatever we can. I'm a fervent believer in that. And I think Senator Fonfara knows it. But when it comes to small towns, they get pushed to the side. And this is an opportunity to say, "Let's give this money to the small towns for the STEAP."

If this organization starts under the guidance of CDRA which I have issues with but separate and aside, they have some good projects.

If they start with them and their foster, there's no way they're gonna get through \$45 million dollars before next session. It's just not gonna happen.

So why don't we let them go? Let them blossom, let them get the parenting from CRDA and then come back and give them the money when they tell us how they're gonna use it and what the plan is. Just as the 10,000 foot level tell us how it's gonna be used. I really don't think that's too much to ask, Madam President.

So I stand by the amendment but I thank Senator Fonfara for his comments.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President, speaking in opposition to the amendment, I would second the remarks of Senator Fonfara in pointing out that first of all,

this measure is in large part a compliment to the work done by CRDA in Hartford. CRDA has had a great deal to do with the success of various development projects in Hartford that many which would not have been able to go forward without CRDA participation.

The CRDA participation provided a critical piece of gap funding and other kinds of resources to make projects go forward. This is something that's also greatly needed in New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Britain -- other communities around the state.

And I think that a model CRDA has been quite a rigorous one, it's one in which those overseeing the program. Mr. Freimuth and others have made sure that only good projects are invested in and those in which CRDA will see a rate of return and that there is a rigor to the analysis that goes on.

That, I think, is the intent in this as well. To create replicas of CRDA that would have missions outside the capital city and could benefit the other cities of the state in the way that Hartford has been benefitted by CRDA and the Hartford region has been benefitted.

I think the capitalization of \$45 million dollars, I think, is an -- is an important statement that this is critical for urban investment. As Senator Fasano said, our cities can only thrive if they have the resources for economic development. And what this -- certainly this \$45 million dollars will not be immediately spent. Obviously the structure has to be built with the entity and projects have to be evaluated and all that.

But including this money at this stage, I think, is a -- an important statement on the urgency of the economic development need in the other major cities in our state apart from the city of Hartford and that they, like Hartford, need the resources of a CRDA-like entity, important to help those projects go forward where there are vital projects, good developers, people with an entrepreneurial spirit but need -- need resources beyond the capital resources at their own hands and what they've been able to raise and what they have been able to assemble in various partnerships and consortiums.

There is often a final piece, a final gap that needs to be filled to make a project viable to go forward. That's been the vital role that CRDA has played in Hartford and that capacity is needed in the other cities of our state.

Therefore, I would defer to opposition 39. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further on the bill that is before us? Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Yes.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND):

Once again, I rise in opposition to the amendment and I ask the Chamber to vote in opposition also and I'm going to ask for a roll call vote, please.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you and the -- there will be a roll call vote on the amendment. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, kindly call the roll, the machine will be open.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment D, LCO 3094 on House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment D, LCO number 3094. It's on House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate. Senate Amendment D, LCO number 3094. It's on House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Senate Amendment D LCO number 3094, House Bill 5518. Senate Amendment D LCO number 3094. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked and Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 5518, Senate Amendment D LCO Number 3094

Total number voting	36	
Those voting Yea	15	
Those voting Nay		21
Absent and not voting	0	

[GAVEL]

THE CHAIR:

And the amendment fails. Will you remark further on the bill that is before the Chamber? Will you remark further? Senator Bradley, good afternoon. Or good evening, I think.

SENATOR BRADLEY:

Thank you very much, Madam President, pleasure to see you this afternoon. I just wanted to stand up and in my being for this bond package that's being presented today really talk about two things and one being our values. I think that this bond package is revolutionary in many ways. Not only because it speaks towards the values that we have as a state and where we're investing our dollars but also because the leadership that has ushered us to this point both with Senator Fonfara and with Senator Moore who had really been guideposts showing us that we really need to put our money where our mouth is.

Things like the tremendous work that we've had here with Senator Slap, who fought so vigorously to make sure that our places are protected. This \$5 million dollars allocated to making sure that our mosques and our synagogues and our churches are places that will continue to be protected.

Things like our public universities which Senator Haskell has so bravely fought for to make sure that we keep young people in the state. We're investing in our public universities and making sure that those are places that continue to be the tip of the spear.

Things like paid family leave act which we as a Senate here voted out and we've -- we've made sure that our families no longer have to choose between paying their rent or taking care of a loved one.

We really have to be a state that cares for people and make sure that people are protected and I think most importantly, whether you're a D or an R, it's about jobs, jobs, jobs and we have countless dollars here allocated to making sure there are highways and byways and our bridges are continued to be improved, that they continue to have the funding necessary that people can go back to work.

And that's the spirit of what we're doing here and I think that that spirit is encapsulated by the leadership, like I mentioned before, Senator Moore of having the bravery of saying that we really need to invest in these things that protect people. That emphasize people.

But I want to make sure that as this money goes to the jobs and to higher education to paid family leave act, that that is the spirit, I think, of every single Senator who sits in this chamber but we want to make sure as it trickles down that every single person have an opportunity to sit in the table of prosperity of America and for this great state of Connecticut.

We want to make sure that people of color, that women, that are represented here in our state, that make sure that a lot of us, if not all of us get voted to sit here, that they have a seat at that table. That the people who get this money, like many of the Senators here been concerned about, that this money be used appropriately and that it have the diversity that it needs to be to make sure that all of us have a seat of this great country that we all love.

Thank you very much and I'm in support of this bill and I commend the leadership for making this happen.

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Bradley. Will you remark further? Senator Slap.

SENATOR SLAP (5TH):

Thank you, Madam President, I'll be very brief. I know folks are eager to get home. I did wanna highlight section 83 and section 84 of the bill which as Senator Bradley mentioned, deals with improving security at nonprofits and houses of worship.

And we all came together a year ago -- Republicans and Democrats -- after another vicious attack on people of faith. And we held a news conference in Senator Looney's office and put it together pretty quickly because we were so resolute in the importance of protecting religious freedom.

And, you know, I know that Pope Francis once said that it's the duty of everyone to defend religious freedom and to promote it for all people. And I don't think we can have religious freedom if people are afraid to worship. And they're afraid to go to their houses of worship.

And every Saturday I drive down Albany Avenue in West Hartford on my way to the University of Hartford to bring my kids to music lessons and I drive by several synagogues and I see the security personnel out in front and I understand why but it is heartbreaking that they have to do that.

And it's not just synagogues, of course, it's mosques, it's churches all across the state and those congregations are spending lots and lots of money that they cannot afford both on hard costs -- capital costs and operating costs to protect their parishioners and their congregants.

And this is the least that we can do. Some folks might say, "Why is the state spending \$5 million dollars to help nonprofits and churches, synagogues, mosques and houses of worship? Doesn't the state have anything better it could spend its money on?"

I would say there are few things I can think of that are more important to protect than religious freedom and that includes, again, being able to worship without fear.

We have seen anti-Semitic hate crimes increase 40 percent in recent years even as violent crime is decreasing. So this is a real problem and allowing every single church and synagogue and mosque in the entire state of Connecticut, in everyone's district,

to apply for these funds, I think is a great start. Living in fear is no way to live. We see that right now with what we're dealing with in this state.

So for people of faith, this is a great step forward. Thank you, Senator Moore, thank you Senator Fonfara, thank you Michael Blume up in the gallery with Jay [phonetic] for working on this in a collaborate and bipartisan fashion. I urge its adoption.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Slap. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Fonfara to be followed by Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Briefly I would like to thank Senator Moore for a wonderful job with a lot of hard work, thankless responsibility but today we thank you in this Chamber and beyond for the great work you've done with your partner, Representative Miller and if she's here in the back, great job in getting it through the House today. They are great partners and I thank Senator Looney for giving me the opportunity to work with them and my co-chair, Representative Rojas.

I'd also like to thank Senator Witkos and Representative Floren for their work on the Bonding Subcommittee as well and leading the ways to get us to this point today. It's a very important role that they play because as you know, Connecticut does

not have county government and while there's a lot of debate about the amount of indebtedness, and that's an appropriate debate, bonding is a critical tool for our towns, many of which -- most of which -- cannot afford to bond on their own and they shouldn't have to.

In most states, county government does that -- plays that role and we don't have county government here and so it's an appropriate role -- particularly a small state like Connecticut where, as you know, in some states, Connecticut is the size of some counties.

So the state -- it's an appropriate role to bond, to relieve towns which already are burdened with very high property taxes, to take on this responsibility. And this instrument today will provide more resources back to our communities.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fonfara, will you remark further?  
Senator Anwar.

SENATOR ANWAR (3RD):

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of the bill and I wanted to start by thanking Senator Moore for her leadership and the hard work. When we were looking at this document, it is a document that will take a long time for a lot of people to understand but I know there are hundreds of hours that have gone behind the scenes to get this over

here and I wanted to thank Senator Fonfara for your leadership and effort as well.

I think broadly we have heard all the negative things because it's sometimes easier to pick and choose some of the things but look at a broader aspect of what we are able to achieve today and I wanna use three words. Jobs, safety and security.

Jobs because if we do not invest in the specific critical areas, we are not going to be able to have an influence in creating more jobs. That's one.

Safety -- look at the housing component that we are putting in the resources because that is a very critical piece. If we do not have the housing, the challenges that we have in our state long-term investment, we need affordable homes, we need a place where we can actually make sure the people have the opportunities and then this has been something that we are way ahead of.

Look at every single state in the country and look at what is happening in the housing situation in many of those parts of the country and you will see where we are in the state of Connecticut. We are better because of our investments.

But we have to continue those investments and this actually is moving in that direction to continue those investments. That is the safety net that is important and we have to invest and continue to invest in that.

And the third one is security. We have unfortunately and then we can go into the causation of that because when was it that -- few years ago we

had people to be concerned about the safety and security to be able to meditate, go and pray in their places of worship.

In the last three or four years, we have seen a pattern which is actually a very painful pattern where people of all different backgrounds, all different heritages and all different races and all different religions are feeling insecure to be able to go and pray in their places of worship.

So our state has taken the leadership in this effort and I wanted to thank Senator Slap for his leadership for -- for working towards a way to have the state be a partner and make sure that everyone is safe and we actually invest in a way to be able to allow not-for-profits to be able to protect themselves and then be able to help themselves.

This is very comprehensive, very well thought out. Can it be better? Absolutely. But there are some things that we can never make everybody happy and the reality is we have to take care of the majority and the most responsible piece and it does that. And it could not have happened without your leadership and your work. So thank you so much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Anwar. Will you remark further?  
Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Briefly, because the hour is late, I urge adoption of the -- of this bill, Madam President. What is striking about the

legislation is that while people may talk about the number, the bottom line of the bonding that we're going to do, let's keep in mind that most of these projects -- or at least half of these projects -- go back to our municipality.

So when it comes down to affordable housing or transportation issues or fixing some of our community colleges or helping with other nonprofits, that is all done and goes back into our local communities. And there's a tremendous effect of that that's being done.

As a matter of fact, with the interest rates being as low as they are right now, this is really a perfect time to think about all these projects that we need to get done here in the state of Connecticut.

I also would like to just take a moment to thank Senator Moore, Senator Fonfara, Representative Rojas and Representative Miller for their hard work and of course the staff that goes along with it as well. And has worked behind the scenes also.

So, Madam President, I would urge adoption of the bill and positive vote so that we can move forward on some of these critical projects that have been languishing over the last year or so and we can take advantage of really prime interest rates right now and put people to work as well.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Will you remark further?  
Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I know people put a lot of work into this and I don't discount the work that they did because any document in this building takes a lot of time and effort.

Madam President, the concerns I have are as follows. It took us nine months to get this bonding bill to where it is now. Nine months. During that nine months, I as leader, have asked OPM, Democratic leadership, the Governor's office -- for a copy of this bill. Copy of the bonding bill. Any language.

And I got language yesterday morning. It was 103 pages, I think. Yesterday morning was the first time I got language, marked on it DRAFT. I also received the summary that highlighted where some of the stuff was going on bonded. That's all I got.

Then, this morning I got a final draft and I haven't had time to match the final draft to the copy draft but I assume it's probably very close. It was 99 pages versus 102 but the point is after nine months, there's this rush to do it to get it done because God forbid we have a little time to read it. A little bit of time to dive into the numbers, a little bit of time to check it out.

That's business as usual in this capitol. I've been here long enough to know that's just what you do when you're in the majority. You throw it on their desk, give them very little time to figure it out and then vote on it.

The other trick of the trade is it takes some of the good stuff -- [Inaudible 02:12:03] bills. Part of it is very, very good. Other good things are in the bill STEAP. Some other items which are good things.

And then you stick in not so great things. You stick in things which are giveaways. Which are goodies. And you wrap it all together and you say, "You really gonna vote against money for your town? Is that what you're really gonna do? Are you really gonna vote against protection for the house of worships and not-for-profits? Is that what you're gonna do? Are you really gonna vote?"

You've got to take the bad with the good because we're not gonna separate it. Because we know if we separate it, it's gonna be a problem politically. So let's just throw it into one bag, get it on your desk and ask you to vote on a 100-page document in four hours. That's what we're gonna do. Why? Because we can. Because we can. That's the order of business.

Madam President, I look at this and I say from a 10,000 foot level, what have we done? So we're bonding at \$1.9 billion. Now they'll say, as they have said to me, \$1.8 billion. Well, it's \$1.89 -- \$1.898, I believe. That's \$1.9 billion but they don't wanna say \$1.9 billion because that's pretty close to \$2 billion which is our cap, we'll say \$1.8. Which is really \$1.9.

So the general obligation bonds are \$1.9. In Governor Malloy's history from 2012 to 2019, only once did he bond higher for general obligation bonding. Only once authorizing, I wanna be clear.

Not an allocation, authorizing. Only once did he authorize above this number.

The reason why I bring that up, Madam President, it was this Governor who said time and time again, "We need to send a different message to our bond holders. We need to send a different message to the state of Connecticut. We have to tell them we're not authorizing this bonding that high. We can't afford to do it, we have to put a self-imposed debt diet and we've got to de-authorize past things and we've got to reduce our bonding."

But that's not what's before us. He told us he went down to the credit agencies, showed them the debt diet and our credit rating went up because of the debt diet.

Now what's he call debt diet. Under a billion dollars was his debt diet. You add the statutory requirements, he's at \$1.3 billion, give him that.

And he sold that in Washington and said, "Our credit went up because I told them we're only gonna authorize \$1.3 billion. And we got \$1.9 billion."

The Governor said, "I will veto any bonding authorization above \$1.7 billion." That's what he said. It's what he said in August. I believe it was September, December and in January. That was it.

You're \$600 million over your budget and he's not gonna veto this. He made that clear. So is our credit rating gonna go down? It should, according to him. If it went up because we had a debt diet

and now he's authorized more than the debt diet, our credit rating should go down.

That's not good for the state of Connecticut. That's not good for businesses, that's not good for transportation, that's not good for anything. We wanted to borrow the money, we want to take the money out of the rainy day fund, pay off our obligations and pension and use that money and everybody on the other side of the aisle cried -- "You're killing us, Fasano. You're killing us. You're taking money out of the rainy day fund. What if we have a recession?"

So what do we do? We authorize \$600 million dollars more than the debt diet and argue that's fiscally prudent? Now let's look at the STO. The bonding for transportation.

The bonding for transportation is \$1.5 billion. Never has Governor Malloy ever bonded \$1.5 billion. The most he's ever bonded was a little bit over \$1.2 billion. That's the most he ever bonded.

If you take the STO and the GO bonding, not only do you exceed every bonding limit by Governor Malloy, you are in a different hemisphere. You're in a different solar system. You're at \$3 billion -- what, \$3.4 billion dollars of bonding. He doesn't even come close to that. So how is this a debt diet? How is this getting our bonding under control? What message do we send to the credit agencies? That we tried this debt diet and you know what -- we are off the wagon because we can't do this anymore.

We tried, we just can't help ourselves. And we picked up an appetite, by the way, after we got off. So where are you going? I just need to understand.

Look, everybody wants something. Everybody does and there's a lot of good things to give money to, no doubt about it. But the debt diet talked about priorities. There's wants and there are needs. Those of us who have children know the difference between want and need when our kids come up to us.

You need things. You want other things. But you can only afford your needs. This has everything and it's bundled together for a reason.

Now Madam President, it'd be very easy to vote no on this bonding package and leave this room and not fear a mailer that says Fasano voted against money for his municipality. Or Fasano doesn't care about house of worships. Or Fasano doesn't care about this because of this vote.

But I've gotta hold to a principle. My principle is one, we have the right to look at things a little bit longer than five hours. That's the first principle.

Second principle is I believe the obligation to the state of Connecticut is our fiscal fundamental fiscal policy obligation. And I'm willing to put myself out on the line by voting no. If those mailers come, so be it. I have credibility in my district.

But a lot of people are gonna get hurt by the mailers and they're gonna look at this and say, "I need to bring this money home", and they'll probably

vote yes and I don't condemn them, that is the political thing to do. But after being here 18 years and crying foul about bonding packages that were over excessive and crying foul about debt service and arguing over the transportation plan that we've talked about for over three years, I'm not about to give up what I've argued for to avoid mail.

Because to me, with what I've said in this building for a year about transportation doing fiscally prudent, runs against my grain to say, "Make it easy on yourself and just vote yes."

Madam President, I just don't understand the direction. We get messages from above, the top office, telling us we need to be fiscally prudent and I'm gonna hold that line and then there's nothing.

We talk about debts in this capitol and we spend money that costs our kids and our grandkids tax dollars.

So Madam President, I will be voting no against this and those that vote yes, I perfectly understand why. It's a decision that they'd have to make but to me from what I've done in the building in terms of being the leader of my side and things that I've fought hard for, I'm gonna vote no.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further?  
Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President do I have permission to speak from a desk other than my own because I understand my microphone is not carrying outside the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed and apologies for the technical difficulties, Senator.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of the bill. This is a capitol bill that does meet the needs of the state of Connecticut in so many important respects and wanted to commend Senator Moore for her very hard and sustained and conscientious work on this package as the Bonding Subcommittee Chair. Senator Fonfara, of course, as the Committee Chair, lending his experience and vision and expertise to it, their counterparts in the House of Representatives.

And I also wanted to thank Secretary of OPM, Melissa McCaw, for her very hard work in representing the administration's position throughout in negotiating conscientiously page-by-page item-by-item.

Just to summarize a number of things, first of all, the fiscal note points out that the actual level of new authorizations is \$1.547 billion for fiscal 20 and the second year, \$1.158 -- 1518.5 and this is actually a reasonable, responsible moderate level of

capital borrowing commitment for the state of Connecticut.

And there are a few things that I would like to highlight, some of which were mentioned earlier, some not.

One of the things we're gravely concerned about in the state, of course, is technical education and to make sure that our colleges are in fact having the resources necessary to train people for the very complex economy that graduates will be facing.

And under funding for Connecticut State University System, there's \$3 million in each year of the biennium for all colleges and universities for advanced manufacturing and emerging technology programs. It's important to have that because we need to have our students trained in a way that will make their training relevant to the actual jobs that they will be competing for once they finish their education.

Also, a very important initiative of \$100 million dollars in fiscal 20 and \$75 million in fiscal 21 for affordable housing. For housing development and rehabilitation for state assisted affordable housing in various ways. Funding to -- for moderating to revitalize moderate rental units under the control of CHFA.

This is an important commitment that we need to sustain. We have had a commitment to affordable housing during the last eight years and I'm very pleased to see that Governor Lamont and his administration agree with us in wanting to carry this forward in a substantial way.

Also, a recognition that many nonprofits in the state provide critical services. Many of those services are provided to clients directed to the bi-state agencies and the reality is that they operate on very tight budgets and do not have a capital reserve in many cases to deal with their concerns and costs that go beyond their operating fund.

So for that reason, under OPM we have \$25 million dollars in each year of the biennium for grants to private nonprofit tax exempt health and human service organizations that receive state funds to provide direct health and human services to state agency clients and so on.

That is a critical need because without state support, those entities, which really do in many ways have a quasi-governmental function, have no -- nowhere to look and no actual way to address their capital needs.

Also, under DAS, we have grants to priority school districts for projects that are ineligible for school building project grants. We have funding -- new capitalization for the highly successful Small Business Express program of \$5 million dollars in the first year.

Also, grants to nonprofits for operating cultural and historic sites of \$5 million dollars in the second year of the biennium.

Another important commitment to economic development is the funding for the Connecticut Port Authority of grants to deep water ports for improvements including dredging of \$65 million in the first year,

\$25 million in the second. Our ports have forever been underdeveloped resources of great potential that have to this point not reached their full possibility. We hope that this kind of funding for capital improvements will make those ports the kind of economic hubs that they should be in our state.

These are all critical components of far-sided thinking in terms of economic development. Again, the recognition that -- Urban Action grants. Urban Act Grants, of course we know are very flexible, could be used for a variety of purposes and it was important to make sure that adequate funding was put in the pipeline for those projects and there's \$100 million dollars in each year of the biennium for that purpose. And again we have a tradition that towns of all size have been able to draw from Urban Act in recent years, not just the larger ones.

We also have \$30 million dollars for STEAP grants in the second year of the biennium. In addition, our continuing commitment to school construction projects, which is a major commitment of state government, to relieve municipalities to a significant degree of the cost of local education capital projects. And we have \$437 million dollars in fiscal 20, \$419 million dollars in fiscal 21 for that purpose.

So all in all, approximately half of this capital plan out of this bonding bill is going for projects that are related in some way to the municipalities of our state. A very substantial commitment of the state in partnership with our municipalities.

Another item in which bonding supports, an important human service public policy purpose is embodied in

section 62 of the bill. Smart Start Competitive Grant program that currently has funding that allows for competitive grant programs for establishing or expanding preschool programs.

And this bonding bill expands the purposes for which the existing authorization may be used to include school readiness programs, state funded daycare centers, the Even Start Program, programs administered by local and regional boards of education and expansion of child care service delivery to infants and toddlers where a demonstrated need exists. We're building in greater flexibility and response of this to an already existing successful program.

So again, there is a great deal in this bill that I think relates to the needs of our state in a way that positions us well for economic development initiatives, meets the needs of nonprofits who don't have their own capacity to deal with their capital needs. Responds to the concerns of municipalities with Town Aid road, LoCIP and the massive commitment to school construction.

These are ways in which the state of Connecticut is a partner for a municipality and for others and as Senator Fonfara pointed out, we are relatively unique in that responsibility because unlike most other states, where counties have their own capital budgets to assist with municipalities, we do not have that. All of our governmental resources are focused only in two levels of government -- the state and the municipality.

So the demands on the state are much greater in Connecticut than they are in many other states where

there is a third level of government, a third taxing authority, namely county.

So statistics that often look at our relative levels of spending compared to other states, often are not a fair comparison because they ignore the fact that our -- all of our commitments are made by two levels of government as opposed to three.

So again, Madam President, this bill is an important one because it reflects, I think, a promise -- deliverance on a promise that we have made to municipalities, to nonprofits, to economic development and therefore I would urge the chamber to approve this bonding bill today in concurrence with the House of Representatives.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Mr. Clerk, kindly call the roll and the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate, House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate on House Bill 5518. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. And Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 5518

Total number voting	36	
Those voting Yea	31	
Those voting Nay		5
Absent and not voting	0	

[GAVEL]

THE CHAIR:

And the bill is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, we have two more items of business, please.

THE CHAIR:

Yes sir, please proceed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the Clerk -- Senate stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On the item just previously acted on, I would move for immediate transmittal, please, to the Governor.

THE CHAIR:

And that is so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, on our next item, on Senate Agenda Number 5, House Joint Resolution number 28, if the Clerk can please call that?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate agenda number five, House Joint Resolution Number 28, RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE JOINT RULES OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, this is a joint rule change that has been agreed to by all four caucuses that changes the JF deadlines for three business days.

Also, it allows on line 60, during a public health emergency members may vote at meetings by telephone or other means of voice communication and also provides an opportunity for LCO to have three additional days to do their business as well from committee work.

I move adoption of the resolution, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the legislation that is before us? Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I thank Senator Duff for bringing this up. Yes, the leaders have gotten together and this is something that we're getting behind in light of the situation we're facing.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark further? Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Once again, requesting permission to use a microphone other than my own. Although I'm told that there may be some problem with more than one microphone on this side, that people who are in the caucus room couldn't hear very well even when I was speaking from this desk before.

But in any case, Madam President, I certainly support the resolution. It recognizes the fact that we are dealing with a crisis situation obviously that might change from day to day. It does give us an opportunity to allow for the flexibility to have people participate in committee meetings by phone and also extends by three business days the deadline for committee action because of the fact that we are in fact closing the building tomorrow and Friday for a thorough cleaning.

So a three business day extension obviously at this point we are not in a position to make any longer term adjustments that may need to be necessary but we're gonna have to deal with the challenges as they evolve day-by-day.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Will you remark further?  
Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. If there are no other remarks, I believe we'll need to vote on this issue.

THE CHAIR:

And sir, would you like a voice vote?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

A roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call. Mr. Clerk, please announce the roll call vote. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Joint Resolution number 20-A.  
Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Joint Resolution number 20-A.  
Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Joint Resolution number 20-A.  
Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.  
Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Joint Resolution Number 28.

Total number voting	35
Those voting Yea	34
Those voting Nay	1
Absent and not voting	1

[GAVEL]

THE CHAIR:

And the motion is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The Clerk can now call the items on the consent calendar followed by a vote, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the items on the calendar and then the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

Senate calendar number one, page one, calendar 34,  
House Joint Resolution number 18, page one.  
Calendar 35, Senate Joint Resolution 22, page two.  
Calendar 36, Senate Joint Resolution 23, page two.  
Calendar 37, Senate Joint Resolution 24, page two.  
Calendar 38, Senate Joint Resolution 21, page two.  
Calendar 39, Senate Resolution number 7, page two.  
Calendar 40, Senate Resolution number 8.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the roll and the machine has been opened.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on consent calendar number one. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on consent calendar number one. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate, consent calendar number one. Consent calendar number one, immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, kindly announce the tally on the consent calendar, please.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar Number One

Total number voting	35	
Those voting Yea	35	
Those voting Nay		0
Absent and not voting	1	

[GAVEL]

THE CHAIR:

And the measure is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President, I think pretty much everybody's left but I will at this point yield any points of personal privilege or announcements.

THE CHAIR:

All right, well good evening everyone, stay safe, go forth [crosstalk]. Pardon me.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

I don't think there's any other points of personal privilege or announcements. I just urge everybody to stay safe, stay with your loved ones and with that, Madam President, I move that we adjourn subject to the call of the Chair.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you and the Senate is adjourned. Go forth and govern. [Gavel]

On motion of Senator Duff of the 25th, the Senate at 6:47 p.m. adjourned subject to the call of the chair.