

PA 11-143

HB6532

GAE	1297, 1304, 1306-1307, 1599, 1607-1608	7
House	3552-3561	10
<u>Senate</u>	<u>6552-6553, 6573-6578</u>	<u>8</u>
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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**GOVERNMENT
ADMINISTRATION
AND ELECTIONS
PART 5
1274 – 1594**

2011

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 hc/gdm GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIONS
 AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

March 11, 2011
 11:00 A.M.

CHAIRMEN: Senator Slossberg
 Representative Morin

MEMBERS PRESENT:
 SENATORS: Meyer, McLachlan

REPRESENTATIVES: Lesser, Hetherington,
 Fleischmann, Hwang,
 Abercrombie, Fox,
 Meyer, Floren, Godfrey,
 O'Brien,

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: -- to be calling the GAE public hearing to order. Today is Friday, March 11. I'd like to ask -- remind you all to please, if you have cell phones, please turn them off; turn them to vibrate. If you've got to have conversations, to please take them out of the room.

We're going to be starting our testimony this morning with the Secretary of State, who we're happy to have with us. But after that, I'm going to remind everyone that we're going to stick to our three minute time limit very clearly, and then if members of the committee have questions, then I'm sure that they will ask you those questions.

So after the Secretary of State, we'll go in bill order, with the public speaking first, as always.

So with that, we'll get ourselves started. Good morning, Madam Secretary. It's a pleasure to have you here.

SECRETARY OF STATE DENISE MERRILL: Thank you very much.

<u>HB 61163</u>	<u>SB 753</u>
<u>SR 14</u>	<u>SB 804</u>
<u>SB 392</u>	<u>HB 5727</u>
<u>HB 5454</u>	<u>HB 5750</u>
<u>HB 6532</u>	<u>HB 5723</u>

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House Bill 6532, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY, I really want to draw your attention to this issue because Connecticut needs to change its primary date back to sometime before February, according to the agreement that's been reached between the two major parties.

I strongly support this concept of moving our primary date back either to a date in March that we can decide. I guess it has not been -- the two parties have not discussed the actual date for Connecticut.

The rules have now been adopted to prevent front-loading of the presidential primaries. We all know it's been going on for years where every state is trying to be earlier and earlier and earlier. This would -- they have now come to an agreement to stop the primary wars and have agreed that, if states do not comply with their agreement, which basically allows the four caucus states to remain in February, New Hampshire, Iowa -- I forget the other two -- and then everyone else would be some date past that, later.

And the -- and the penalty that's been agreed to will -- you would -- the party would lose -- the state would lose 50 percent of their delegates. It's a very steep penalty if Connecticut wants to be part of those primaries. So it is a work in progress. We haven't fully discussed, and you have not, I guess, heard from the parties as to what date works for Connecticut, but I support passage of the bill while the details are being worked out.

There's one more bill related to candidates

HB5723

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they have an audit, they pay for it out of their grants.

SECRETARY OF STATE DENISE MERRILL: Right.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Okay. And so you're drawing a distinction.

SECRETARY OF STATE DENISE MERRILL: That's right.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Okay, I have no other further questions -- so no further questions for you. Yes, Representative Lesser.

REP. LESSER: Thank you, Madam Chair. And it's good to see you, Madam Secretary. I had a couple questions, though, because I see two bills as being -- you testified on, as being somewhat diametrically opposed, and that would be 6532, on the Presidential primary, and then the National Popular Vote bill, because we see Connecticut as being -- if -- if -- if our concern is that Connecticut is being ignored in the general election -- I think a study came out that found that Connecticut was the most ignored state in the 2008 general election by major candidates.

[HB 6143]

It seems that moving our primary date backwards would reduce our influence in the -- in the primary, and I was wondering if you could comment on that.

SECRETARY OF STATE DENISE MERRILL: Yes. I -- I think, in this case, and, you know, you may be correct, I'm not sure what the impact would be, because all the other states will be moving because the penalty is so serious.

If you lost -- if we lost 50 percent of our delegates to the national convention, we would

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effectively be not part of the primary. So I think, you know, it's -- it's less on the policy side than just the practical reality that this is the agreement the parties have reached, and it's a national agreement.

And it does solve what was becoming kind of a ridiculous problem with, you know, we were going to have primaries in, I don't know, October, pretty soon. So, you know, it's sort of a practical thing rather than a philosophical statement.

REP. LESSER: I appreciate that. I just would express some concern. I -- I -- not -- not regarding this bill, but about I guess the -- the general process, where we give a couple of states -- and no slight intended toward the good people in Iowa and New Hampshire -- but they seem to have a disproportionate impact on the election process.

SECRETARY OF STATE DENISE MERRILL: I would agree with you, and I suspect this was -- could be considered the great compromise. I guess that's how they were able to manage that situation, so.

REP. LESSER: Thank you.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Are there further questions for the committee?

Yes, Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON: Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome, Madam Secretary.

SECRETARY OF STATE DENISE MERRILL: Thank you.

REP. HETHERINGTON: It's a pleasure to see you and

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STANDING
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**GOVERNMENT
ADMINISTRATION
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PART 6
1595 – 1919**

2011



DENISE MERRILL

SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

**Government Administration and Elections
Committee Public Hearing
March 11, 2011
Testimony**

- Good Morning once again to the GAE Committee – Chairman Morin, Chairman Slossberg, and members. SB 392
SB 753
- For the record, my name is Denise Merrill and I am Secretary of the State of Connecticut. SB 804
HB 5727
- There are many bills on your agenda today, and many bills that affect the conduct and administration of elections in our state. HB 5454
HB 5750
- In the interest of time, I would like to go through the bills that are most relevant to the Secretary of the State's office. HJR 33
HJR 88
HB 6532
- **HB 6163 "AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES BY NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE"** HB 5723

ballot.

- I have actually proposed a concept similar to this that is contained in HJR 88
- That resolution would amend our state Constitution to remove restrictions on absentee ballot voting and allow the General Assembly to enact early voting in the way it sees fit.
- I would ask the committee to support HJR 88 instead of HJR 33, because our constitutional amendment proposal gives maximum flexibility to the General Assembly to study the issue and craft the best early voting legislation for our state.
- This is a legislative matter that should be governed by statute, not in the Constitution.
- But in general it is past time to make voting easier and more convenient.
- **HB 6532 “AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY”**
- This bill would move the date for the Presidential Preference Primary back to March from February.
- I strongly support this concept, and we are actively working with both major political parties to set a new date for the Presidential primary that will more closely comport with national party guidelines.
- New Republican and Democratic party rules have been adopted to prevent the front-loading of our presidential primaries.

- Those give a combination of incentives and penalties to states to encourage later primaries.
- Any change in the date of our presidential primary will require the enactment of state legislation.
- So while this is a work in progress, I support the passage of this bill while the details are worked out.
- That concludes my testimony about bills directly related to the Secretary of the State's office.
- There is one more bill related to candidates running for office that I wanted to mention:
- **HB 5723 "AN ACT CONCERNING PAYMENT OF CAMPAIGN AUDIT EXPENSES"**
- This bill would provide financial resources for a candidate for state office who participates in the Citizen's Election Program to pay the cost of responding to an audit of their campaign finances.
- I would like to express my support for this bill – it is a practical fix to a problem noted by many of the volunteer campaign staff for candidates for state office.
- This bill makes a lot of sense and I am happy to support it.
- Thank you very much and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for a point of personal privilege.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Proceed.

REP. FLEXER (44th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you. This evening the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits is hosting their annual legislative reception in the judiciary room from five to seven P.M. I would encourage my colleagues to stop up there on the third floor and wish them well this evening. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Madam. We'll return to the call of the calendar. The Clerk kindly call calendar 294.

THE CLERK:

On page 15, calendar 294, substitute for House Bill number 6532, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY. Favorable report by the committee on government administration and elections.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

This distinguished chairman of the government administration and election committee, Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Question is on acceptance and passage. Will you explain the bill please, sir.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Clerk has an amendment, LCO number 6192. I would ask that the Clerk please call the amendment and that I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Clerk is in possession of LCO number 6192 which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A". Mr. Clerk, please call the amendment.

THE CLERK:

LCO 6192, House "A" offered by Representatives Morin, Hwang, Aresimowicz, and Olson.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The gentleman has asked leave of the Chamber to summarize. Without objection please proceed, Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What -- what this

amendment does is strictly in line three it strikes the date -- strikes the first Tuesday in March and inserts the last Tuesday in April in lieu thereof. I urge adoption.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on adoption. Will you remark on House Amendment Schedule "A". Will you remark. If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Opposed Nay. The Ayes have it. The amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bill as amended moves our presidential primary dates as noted to the last Tuesday in April. The Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committees have both -- both issued frankly that would offer that we could not have primaries earlier than March 1st and if we did we would lose delegates. Both sides would be punished by the loss of delegates to the conventions

and after working with both of the national committees, the state committees and the Secretary of the State we've agreed upon this date. And again I urge passage of the legislation. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, sir. Distinguished ranking member of the government administration and elections committee, Representative Hwang of the 134th.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, some questions to the proponents of this bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed.

REP. HWANG (134th):

The Secretary of State must announce publicly the list of candidates whose name will appear on the ballot. When does that date requirement change to and from? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (128th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. It makes it -- brings it from 78 to 74 days before the primary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. A second question. A candidate may ask the Secretary to remove his or her name from the ballot. What time period change does that apply to?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (128th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you. That changes it from 40 to 36 days before the primary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Petitioning candidates may begin circulating nominating petitions and must file them with the registrar of voters from when to when respectively? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

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REP. MORIN (128th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you. From 78 to 74 days and 50 to 53 days respectfully -- respectively before the primary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Registrars must verify the signatures and for the petitions to the Secretary from when to when? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (128th):

Mr. Speaker, through you. That goes from 46 to 49 days before the primary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Through you, Mr. Speaker. The Secretary must finish tabulating the names on the petition from when to when?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MORIN (128th):

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Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you.
That goes from 36 to 46 days before the primary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Thank you. I appreciate the -- the proponent's
answers and I hope we support and pass this bill, sir.

Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on the
bill. Will you remark further on the bill as amended.

Representative Labriola.

REP. LABRIOLA (131st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you a few
questions to the proponent.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Proceed, sir.

REP. LABRIOLA (131st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard you say that if
we didn't do this particular act that both parties
would be punished at their respective national
conventions. Is that correct? Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

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REP. MORIN (128th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I didn't -- the word punishment might not be the correct word but there would be a loss of delegates to either -- both parties.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Labriola.

REP. LABRIOLA (131st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so is the reverse true that by doing this, by making this change we would actually gain delegates and therefore both parties it's in their interest to do this? Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (128th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. That's how I -- I see it. Yes, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Labriola.

REP. LABRIOLA (134th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And looking at some of the history of this particular bill, I believe -- is it true that certain states, Iowa, New Hampshire,

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South Carolina, Nevada, are meant to have presidential primaries in the first Tuesday of March and no other state should be having their primaries on that date. Is that correct? Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (128th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Labriola.

REP. LABRIOLA (134th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of all those answers I do think this makes perfect sense and I urge my colleagues to vote for it. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on the bill. Will you remark further on the bill as amended. If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is taking a roll call vote. Members to the Chamber, please.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? If all the members have voted machine will be locked. And Mr. Clerk, if you'd kindly announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 6532 as amended by House "A".

Total Number voting 136

Necessary for adoption 69

Those voting Yea 136

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 15

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill as amended is passed. Will the Clerk please call calendar number 380.

THE CLERK:

On page 48, calendar 380, House Bill number 6342,
AN ACT CONCERNING THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR CANDIDATES
SEEKING ELECTION TO THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY
GENERAL. Favorable report by the committee on
government administration and elections.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fox of the 146th, esteemed
Chairman of the judiciary committee.

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So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Calendar page 15, Calendar 525, House Bill
Number 5780.

Madam President, move to place the item on the
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Calendar page 15, Calendar 526, House Bill
Number 6513.

Madam President, move to place this item on the
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Continuing on calendar page 15, one additional
item, Calendar number 5, Calendar 527, House Bill
Number 6532.

Madam President, move to place the item on the
Consent Calendar.

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THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Moving to calendar page 16, where there are
several items. The first: Calendar 528, House Bill
Number 6561.

Madam President, move to place the item on the
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Calendar page 16, Calendar 529, House Bill,
Number
6312.

Move to place this item on the Consent
Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Calendar, continuing calendar page 16, Calendar
530, House Bill Number 5032.

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Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed...

THE CHAIR:

I would ask the Chamber to be quiet please so we can hear the call of the Calendar for the Consent Calendar.

Thank you.

Please proceed, Mr. Clerk

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed on the first Consent Calendar begin on calendar page 5, Calendar 336, House Bill 5697.

Calendar page 7, Calendar 421, Substitute for House Bill 6126.

Calendar page 8, Calendar 449, Senate Bill 1149.

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Calendar page 10, Calendar 470, Substitute for House Bill 5340. Calendar 474, Substitute for House Bill 6274. Calendar 476, House Bill 6635.

Calendar page 12, Calendar 499, Substitute for House Bill 6638. Calendar 500, House Bill 6614. Calendar 508, House Bill 6222.

Calendar page 13, Calendar 511, House Bill 6356. Calendar 512, Substitute for House Bill 6422. Calendar 514, House Bill 6590. Calendar 515, House Bill 6221. Calendar 516, House Bill 6455.

Calendar page 14, Calendar 517, House Bill 6350. Calendar 519, House Bill 5437. Calendar 522, House Bill 6303.

Calendar page 15, Calendar 523, Substitute for House Bill 6499. Calendar 524, House Bill 6490. Calendar 525, House Bill 5780. Calendar 526, House Bill 6513. Calendar 527, Substitute for House Bill 6532.

Calendar page 16, Calendar 528, House Bill 6561. Calendar 529, Substitute for House Bill 6312. Calendar 530, Substitute for House Bill 5032. Calendar 532, House Bill 6338.

Calendar page 17, Calendar 533, Substitute for House Bill 6325. Calendar 534, House Bill 6352.

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Calendar 536, House Bill 5300. Calendar 537, House
Bill 5482.

calendar page 18, Calendar 543, House Bill 6508.

Calendar 544, House Bill 6412. Calendar 546,
Substitute for House Bill 6538. Calendar 547,
Substitute for House Bill 6440. Calendar 548,
Substitute for House Bill 6471.

Calendar page 19, Calendar 550, Substitute for
House Bill 5802. Calendar 551, House Bill 6433.
Calendar 552, House Bill 6413. Calendar 553,
Substitute for House Bill 6227.

Calendar page 20, Calendar 554, Substitute for
House Bill 5415. Calendar 557, Substitute for House
Bill 6318. Calendar 558, Substitute for House Bill
6565.

Calendar page 21, Calendar 559, Substitute for
House Bill 6636.

Calendar page 22, Calendar 563, Substitute for
House Bill 6600. Calendar 564, Substitute for House
Bill 6598. Calendar 566, House Bill 5585.

Calendar page 23, Calendar 568, Substitute for
House Bill 6103. Calendar 570, Substitute for House
Bill 6336. Calendar 573, Substitute for House Bill
6434.

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Calendar page 24, Calendar 577, Substitute for
House Bill 5795.

Calendar page 25, Calendar 581, House Bill
6354.

Calendar page 26, Calendar 596, Substitute for
House Bill 6282. Calendar 598, Substitute for House
Bill 6629.

Calendar page 27, Calendar 600, House Bill
6314. Calendar 601, Substitute for House Bill 6529.
Calendar 602, Substitute for House Bill 6438.
Calendar 604, Substitute for House Bill 6639.

Calendar page 28, Calendar 605, Substitute for
House Bill 6526. Calendar 608, House Bill 6284.

Calendar page 30, Calendar number 615,
Substitute for House Bill 6485. Calendar 616,
Substitute for House Bill 6498.

Calendar page 31, Calendar 619, Substitute for
House Bill 6634. Calendar 627, Substitute for House
Bill 6596.

Calendar page 32, Calendar 629, House Bill
5634. Calendar 630, Substitute for House Bill 6631.
Calendar 631, Substitute for House Bill 6357.
Calendar 632, House Bill 6642.

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Calendar page 33, Calendar 634, Substitute for
House Bill 5431. Calendar 636, Substitute for
House, correction, House Bill 6100.

Page 34, Calendar 638, Substitute for House
Bill 6525.

Calendar page 48, Calendar 399, Substitute for
Senate Bill 1043.

Calendar page 49, Calendar 409, Substitute for
House Bill 6233. Calendar 412, House Bill 5178.
Calendar 422, Substitute for House Bill 6448.

Calendar page 52, Calendar 521, Substitute for
House Bill 6113.

Madam President, that completes the item placed
on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

We call for another roll call vote. And the
machine will be open for Consent Calendar number 1.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll on the Consent
Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the
Chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll on the
Consent Calendar, will all Senators please return to
the Chamber.

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Senator Cassano, would you vote, please, sir.

Thank you.

Well, all members have voted. All members have voted. The machine will be closed, and Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally?

THE CLERK:

Motion is on option Consent Calendar Number 1.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 1 has passed.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

We might stand at ease for just a moment as we prepare the next item..

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)