

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 18-81

SB543

House	7273-7289	17
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Senate	2947-2959	13
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No Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing. Emergency Certified
Bill Without Committee Action.

Connecticut
Gen.Assembly
House

Proceedings

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Part 19

7085-7401

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check the board to ensure your votes have been properly cast. If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally. The Clerk will announce the tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill 176 in concurrence with the Senate.

Total Number of Voting	149
Necessary for Passage	75
Those Voting Yea	149
Those Voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	1

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The bill passes in concurrence. [Gavel] The Chamber will stand at ease. The House will come back to order. Will the Clerk please call emergency certified Senate Bill 543?

CLERK:

Emergency certification Senate Bill No. 543, AN
ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STATE BUDGET FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2019 AND DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2018.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

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Representative Walker of the 93rd. Madam, you
have the floor.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Good evening, madam.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Mr. Speaker, I move passage of the Joint
Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the
emergency certified Bill 543.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The question before the Chamber is on passage
of emergency certified Senate Bill 543 in
concurrence with the Senate. Will you remark?

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Yes, just what you said, in concurrence with
the Senate. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, madam.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Mr. Speaker, before you, you have a budget that
has been worked together with the House Republicans,

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the Senate Dems and the Senate Republicans. It is a
compromised bill that addresses the issues of the
underlying bipartisan bill that
SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

[Gavel] Ladies and gentleman I've heard many
times this year that is the single most act that we
do in this Chamber. Let's give it the proper
respect that it deserves and give the esteemed
chairwoman of the Appropriation the proper respect
she deserves. Representative Walker, you have the
floor.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Keep the gavel close
just in case. [laughter] Mr. Speaker, the bill
before us is a bipartisan fix to the bill of the
underlying bipartisan bill that we passed in
October. The bill is 8.3 million dollars surplus in
the general fund, 20.6 million in the appropriated
fund. The bill also has approximately 2 percent
increase in growth, and it has a deficiency budget
incorporated into it of 726 million dollars. The
emergency bill that we have addresses many of the

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things that we have talked about going through the last few months of things that needed to happen such as fixing the Medicare Savings Plan, the distribution for Passports to Parks. We also addressed HUSKY A, the healthcare plan for adults. We also addressed in the bill the Retired Teachers' Health Fund where we bring the contribution for the State up to 33 percent. It restores the CTN funding that was necessary so that we maintain services for all of the citizens of Connecticut in order for them to watch what we do here in the Capital.

Mr. Speaker, there are also some smaller adjustments that we had in the budget that address certain things like the hospital supplement. We also addressed some of the things for Smart Start, Marine Fuel just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, I move the bill.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Will you remark further on the bill before us? The esteemed ranking member of the Appropriation Committee, Representative Ziobron of the 34th district. Madam, you now have the floor.

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REP. ZIOBRON (34TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good evening. Mr. Speaker, I want to rise and first thank all the members of the Appropriations Committee on both sides of the aisle. There has been a lot of work that has gone into multiple versions of different budgets, and while I'll certainly be listening to the underlying bill, there are some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle that would like the opportunity to have an up or down vote on the Republican package, and it's for that reason, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to call an amendment. The Clerk has an amendment. It's LCO 5967. Would you please ask the Clerk to call it and I be allowed to summarize?

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Will the Clerk please call House LCO No. 5967, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule A?

CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule A, LCO No. 5967,
offered by Representative Klarides, Representative Candelora, et al.

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SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the amendment. Is there objection to summarization? Is there objection to summarization? Seeing none, Representative Ziobron, you have the floor, madam.

REP. ZIOBRON (34TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be the only one speaking tonight on the Republican budget and I'm gonna keep it as short as possible so we can get back to the underlying bill, Mr. Speaker. There is a framework that we're very proud of and frankly, a lot of our framework was adopted in the underlying bill and I'm very happy to report that is the case. There's a couple of things that were not, mainly paying down some unfunded pension liabilities which our caucus feels very strong about, and it's for that reason that this amendment is on the board. Mr. Speaker, I ask when the vote is taken, it be taken by roll.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The question before the Chamber is on a roll

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call vote. Those in favor of a roll call vote,
signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The requisite 20 percent has been met and when
the vote is taken, it will be taken by roll.

REP. ZIOBRON (34TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'll refrain from
any further remarks on this amendment at this time,
and I look forward to listening to my good friend
and the chairman of the Appropriations Committee in
just a moment. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Walker of the 93rd.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank
the gentle lady for the offering of the amendment.
Unfortunately, I cannot support this amendment.
One, because this was done solely by one caucus and
I feel that it's important that we work together as
we have for the last nine months on several other

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things, so I urge rejection of the amendment.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Ritter of the 1st district.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I urge rejection of
the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Staff and guests to the well of the House,
members take your seats, the machine will be open.

[Ringing]

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

Members to the Chamber. The House of
Representatives is voting by roll. Members to the
Chamber.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Have all the members voted? Have all the
members vote? If all the members have voted, please
check the board to ensure your votes have been
properly cast. The machine will be locked and the
Clerk will take a tally. The Clerk will announce
the tally.

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CLERK:

House A.

Total Number of Voting	150
Necessary for Passage	76
Those Voting Yea	68
Those Voting Nay	82
Those absent and not voting	0

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The amendment is rejected. [Gavel] Will you
remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Rojas of the 9th district. Sir, you
have the floor.

REP. ROJAS (9TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just wanna comment
briefly. While there are no major taxes included in
this budget, we did make some policy changes related
to the volatility gap to allow for some natural
revenue growth in that area, and we adjusted the
bond covenant provisions that were adopted in the
bipartisan budget by reducing the length of the
bonds from 10 to 5 years. I think it's important to
note that this budget does result in a budget

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reserve fund of 1.1 billion dollars. The STF has a positive balance in it without impacting any rail services, bus services or transit districts.

There's a lot of good work on the part of everybody from both sides of the aisle, and I urge passage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Will you remark further? Representative Ziobron of the 34th. Madam, you have the floor.

REP. ZIOBRON (34TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of this bipartisan budget agreement and I just wanna offer my sincerest thanks again to the committee on both sides of the aisle, and I look forward to supporting this compromise. It's in the best interest of Connecticut and I look forward to supporting it. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, madam. Representative Davis of the 57th district. Sir, you have the floor.

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REP. DAVIS (57TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in support of this compromise budget adjustment that's here before us. As the kind chairman of the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee mentioned, there are no tax increases within this budget adjustment. It continues the property tax credit that so many of us care about for our seniors and our families with children. It restores the MSP funding for the Medicare Savings Program, sends more town aid to most if not all of our towns, and it also prevents the governor from doing, hold back the rescissions on that municipal aid. It also includes 1 percent increase for all private providers, something that this Republican caucus has been fighting for, for a very long time. It reduces sweeps to the Energy Efficiency Funds. It institutes a hard hiring freeze. It has an increase to VOAG schools, something that I have been fighting for, for a long time and I know a lot of my colleagues are to try to help build up the economy here in the State of Connecticut, and as the kind chairman mentioned as

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swell, it shores up the special transportation fund without the need for tolls and prioritizes bonding for transportation projects that are critical to our State of Connecticut. It also looks at studying the fiscal responsibility commissions report and making recommendations regarding the Teachers' Retirement Fund to try to shore that up in the future as well. There are many reasons to support this compromise here today and I encourage all of my colleagues to do so as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Representative Walker of the 93rd. Madam, you have the floor.

REP. WALKER (93RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated before, this bipartisan compromise budget that we have before you is a product of many people who have worked very hard over the last few weeks, so I'd like to thank Senator Looney, Representative Aresimowicz, Senator Fasano, Senator Duff, Senator Witkos, Senator Austin, Senator Formica, Senator Fonfara, Senator Frantz, Representative Ritter,

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Representative Klarides, Representative Candelora, Representative Rojas, Representative Ziobron and Representative Davis who have all contributed hard work and many hours to come to this compromise. It is important that we all understand that Connecticut has many people that we all represent, and I think this budget reflects all of Connecticut's needs currently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, madam. Representative Klarides of the 114th, madam, pause for one moment. [Gavel] Ladies and gentleman of the Chamber. We are now going to hear from the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader. I would like for them to be given the respect they need. This is the second year we've now done a historic bipartisan budget. Representative Klarides, madam, you now have the floor.

REP. KLARIDES (114TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to repeat what my colleagues have said already. We've heard all the things that are in

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this budget that we will now be voting on in a few minutes. They are things that we all believe in. You've probably heard me say before that we have a lot of similarities whether they be budgets or bills that we talk about, but it's the differences that make the difference and there were things that we believed should be part of a budget. We believed in putting funding and unfunded liabilities in regard to state employees. We believed in paying down teachers' unfunded liabilities. We believed in changing the car tax to help a lot of our cities. Those types of things were part of our budget. They didn't get into this conversation, but so many other great things did. We all believe that the elderly need to be protected in the Medicare savings plan and unfortunately, unfortunately we saw what happened last year with vetoes and override and vetoes and overrides and holdbacks of ECS, holdbacks of municipal aid. These are not threats that we don't take seriously anymore. These are threats that have become our reality so unfortunately, we must realize where we are, realize the things that

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could happen between today and July 1 when the Medicare savings plan would go away, where our towns and cities would not get their municipal aid and their education funding restored. We have to deal with the reality sometimes. Sometimes we can't just stand here and talk about what our perfect world is. We have to talk about what we got elected to do and I believe that this compromise helps Connecticut, it helps the citizens of Connecticut, and it helps most importantly the people that count on us every day to go to school, to take of their families, and to take care of themselves, live a safer and productive life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, madam. The Majority Leader, Representative Ritter of the 1st district. Sir, you have the floor.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank everybody in the Chamber and we'll try to wrap this up because as Representative Albis said, we have more bills to do before midnight. Mr. Speaker, you

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do something that is typical of your personality and you said this is historic for the second year in a row that we did a bipartisan budget and you are often are, because of your personality, unwilling to admit what we all know in this Chamber. There's only one captain of the ship, and that captain landed two bipartisan budgets in two years, as a matter of fact, in about eight months. So Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership. [applause] Don't cry on me, come on. [laughter]

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

You're welcome. You good?

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

I'm good.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Let's vote.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Staff and guests to the well of the House, members take your seats, the machine will be open.
[Ringing]

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CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.
Members to the Chamber. The House of
Representatives is voting by roll. Members to the
Chamber.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Have all the members voted? Have all the
members vote? If all the members have voted, please
check the board to ensure your votes have been
properly cast. If all the members have voted, the
machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a
tally. The Clerk will announce the tally.

CLERK:

Emergency Certification SB 543.

Total Number of Voting	150
Necessary for Passage	76
Those Voting Yea	142
Those Voting Nay	8
Those absent and not voting	0

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The bill is passed in concurrence with the
Senate. [applause] Thank you very much,

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So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Would the Clerk now please call on Senate Agenda No. 6, Senate Bill 543?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Senate Bill No. 543 - AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STATE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010 AND DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara, you have the floor, sir.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Good evening, Madam President. Madam President, I move for acceptance and passage of the Emergency Certified Bill.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is acceptance and passage on the Emergency Certified Bill. Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR FONFARA (1ST):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the document before us are revisions to the state budget

for the fiscal year 2019 as well as efficiency appropriations for the fiscal year 2018. Madam President, this document is once again the product of bipartisan efforts of all four caucuses. It reflects the work of talented people coming together for the good of our state. Although the discussion will focus primarily on what is included in this document, I don't think we should underestimate the value of that process and how we once again, for the second time in this biennium, have come together as Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate, to pass a bipartisan budget that reflects in a bipartisan way the priorities of this state.

Some of the key policy decisions on the revenue side of the budget, Madam President, are that this budget contains no new tax increases. It maintains new retiree tax breaks contained in last year's bipartisan budget for pension and Social Security income. We do not eliminate the \$200 dollar property tax which supports elderly and working families. And we reduced the tax on sales and storage of boats and marine diesel to 2.99 percent to boost the boating industry in our state.

It restores \$10 million dollars in the Energy Efficiency Fund. Maintains \$7 million dollars of savings target for the hiring -- the hard hiring freeze and provides \$16 million dollars to the Retired Teachers Health Care Fund to provide a full statutory contribution of 33 percent. Those are some of the highlights. And the further discussion regarding our commitments regarding on the revenue side, I yield to my good friend, Senator Frantz.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Frantz, will you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR FRANTZ (36TH):

Yes, Madam President, I do indeed accept the yield and want to thank my great friend and colleague, Senator Fonfara, for the yield. Madam President and other people in the Chamber, you might notice a little something different this year. This might be the first time in many generations. We're actually talking about the revenues that we're able to raise for the State of Connecticut before we talk about expenses. And that's simply putting the horse before the cart because I think the days, and many of you agree, the days of being able to match an ever increasing expense side of the equation with revenues may be over for the State of Connecticut.

So, what we're doing right now is I think a sensible thing and I would like to -- at the risk of being slightly redundant, but I will be very, very short. This bipartisan budget, which I'm very, very proud of; we should all be proud of this, contains no new tax increases. Let me say that one more time. No new tax increases. It maintains new retiree tax breaks in last year's bipartisan budget for pension and Social Security, income receivers, and it continues the \$200 dollar property tax credit which supports elderly and working families. And importantly - importantly, Madam President and members of the circle and people throughout the state, we, together, we, together --

THE CHAIR:

I'm sorry, sir. This is too important. Can the conversations please either leave the Chamber or let

your voices fall down a little bit? This is really important. Senator Frantz, please.

SENATOR FRANTZ (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I really do appreciate the crowd control there. You're exceptionally good at that.

THE CHAIR:

I don't think it's working.

SENATOR FRANTZ (36TH):

And so finally, in conclusion, what this budget does is it takes into account --

THE CHAIR:

I'm sorry again. Ladies and gentleman, Senator Frantz is now speaking on something that we are all, all import -- is all important to everybody here and in the State of Connecticut. Would you please keep your voices down? Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ (36TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The Fiscal Sustainability Commission put a tremendous amount of work and resources and their own financial resources behind an effort here recently to, within a very a short period of time, come up with a document that every single one of us should be paying very close attention to in order to shore up the fiscal condition of our state. And there were lots and lots of recommendations for this budget. Adopts at

least three of them and hopefully more in the future.

The first one is to study the pro-growth rebalancing of state taxes. The second is to study revenue expense optimization and the third is to study on reforming the teacher's retirement system. Three critically important areas. And I for one, on behalf of this circle, want to thank the members of that commission for all the hard work that they've put into making a very productive and valuable report. And finally, what this budget does is it offers some municipal relief in the area that allow schools to have volunteers perform work on school buildings, whereas before, they were not permitted to do. And with that, Madam President, I'd like to yield to Senator Osten to continue the discussion about the budget.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Osten, do you accept the yield, ma'am?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Yes, ma'am -- yes, Madam President, I do accept the yield. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir -- ma'am.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I am so pleased to report that we have another bipartisan product before us and we --

my colleague and I are doing the expense side of the budget and I'm going to go over some of the highlights that are here before us.

This product restores funding for the Medicare Savings Program in full to all 169,450 seniors. This restores funding for HUSKY-A coverage of 13,000 low-income working parents who otherwise would lose coverage. In addition, it also provides a one-percent private provider call rate to all nonprofit providers effective July 1, 2018, and incorporates intellectual and developmental disability wage contract changes passed by the legislature earlier this month.

It increases funding for the judicial branch court support staff. It increases the vocational educational per pupil grant by \$1,000 dollars per pupil. It provides \$5 million dollars for emergency placements for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It restores \$18.5 million dollars to magnet schools. It provides \$1 million dollars for Connecticut Valley Hospital and Whiting Forensic Institution. It restores funding for Elderly Nutrition Program, providing two million and rejecting the Governor's proposed cut to this vital service.

It preserves grants for substance abuse treatment and mental health care. It funds the Connecticut Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with \$5 million dollars. It fully funds aid to disabled, adding in \$1.4 million dollars. It fully funds old age assistance with an additional \$1.8 million dollars. And now I'm gonna turn this over to my -- excuse me. He's letting me finish the rest of this page. So I will do so.

It protects funding for the fire training schools and it restores funding for the Hispanic programs in DSS, providing funding to the nonprofits. It's been my great honor to work with Senator Formica and I would yield to him now, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Formica, will you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

I do, Madam President. thank you very much. Good morning.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir. Good morn -- no, good after -- don't say good morning yet. Has to be evening.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH):

We -- thank you. I'm proud to stand here and proud to have worked with the good Senator Osten on this project. You know, when we came here at the beginning of this session we were 18-18 for the first time since 1893. There were -- the numbers in the House grew much closer. So we had to develop a new process and we found a way over the last year and a half to work together. We went into overtime last year working through that project -- prospect, and then with our House colleagues we came together in a bipartisan way and took advantage of some unique cash-flow opportunities to get this budget where we are today in a bipartisan fashion.

And continuing to some of the items that are the highlights of this, we provide funding for the Puerto Rico evacuees in housing in municipalities that had a significant influx with increased education cost share grants. We continued tourism and cultural program funding, supporting that great industry in our state. We do not implement any cuts to the Care for Kids Program, keeping people and parents at work. We continued enhanced reimbursement rates for primary care providers. We provide needed funding for dairy farmers, supporting that wonderful industry. We fund the Honor Guard, supporting those who support us.

It provides \$16.2 million dollars to the Board of Regents for fringe benefit support and restored \$2 million dollars to fully staff the Connecticut State Veterans Hospital Critical Care Unit. Additionally, Madam President, we protect municipal aid, restoring funding for municipal aid to the tune of \$28.4 million dollars, more than appropriated in the enacted 2019 budget, which was \$70.5 million more in municipal aid than the enacted 2018 budget. We fully fund the 2019 Education Cost-Sharing grants, the Renter's Rebate Program, which protects 48,000 people, while no longer shifting that burden onto municipalities.

We fund transportation, which is vital to moving our state forward. By fully funding the Special Transportation Fund which will result in surpluses in this fund in each of the next five years, by accelerating the diversion of the sales tax on new automobiles from car dealerships into 2019. This allows us to fully fund the transportation infrastructure projects and fully fund rail and bus operations so that we can protect those projects.

We enact Prioritized Project, which is a long-term plan to support infrastructure improvements without the need for taxes and tolls.

Madam President, I thank you for the opportunity to stand here and share this bipartisan opportunity, the chance to work with our Chair, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron, and the great Chairs of Finance that helped put this together. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not -- oops. Sorry about that. I guess -- Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH):

I'm sorry, Madam President. There was a member who was gonna speak and I think he stepped out of the Chamber. So my turn came a little faster than what I'd planned.

Madam President, this is great that we get to have - - it always feels good when we can have another *Kum Ba Ya* moment in this circle, Madam President. I think last year, people said that was a fluke. People said they never would create another bipartisan deal. They only have a short session. They got a couple of weeks. It took those guys too long to do the first. They're never gonna get their act together to do a second one. In fact, that is not true. Leaders came together and said the State of Connecticut matters. We need to move our state forward. Leaders came together and said let's pool our ideas and try to pick the best of our ideas so

we can all gather around and put forward for the State of Connecticut.

I want to thank Paul Formica, Cathy Osten, Scott Frantz, John Fonfara, Lisa Hammersley. The whiz kid's someplace around here. I can't find her. Matthew Broderick from the House. Manny, Maureen, Jerrod and all the leaders that came together and pulled all the resources, OFA, LCO, OLR, whatever alphabet is upstairs that I might've missed. I want to thank all of them for putting together. This is another monumental step forward for this state, to show the confidence in our state that we can bipartisanly move Connecticut in the right direction and forward. We can do it. Even when we're 18-18 in the House -- in the Senate. Even when we're 18/18 in the Senate, we can get together and move this forward.

Madam President, I look forward to this budget passing on a wide margin, if not unanimously, and I want to thank everyone for the hard work on the committees and forth that they put this into this budget. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Looney. Good evening, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Good evening, Madam President. Speaking in support of the Emergency Certified Bill. Madam President, this, I think, a very important evening because, as was said, the results of the creation of the bipartisan budget at the end of last October was

seen by some as a one-time issue that could not be replicated. Well, we have in fact replicated it. While other states in our nation and the national government itself seems to be locked in gridlock and so many people at so many levels have forgotten about why they were elected, to make government work, to serve the people, and would rather see something fail than something pass by a compromise vote, we, fortunately are different than that in Connecticut and better than that in Connecticut.

And of course there was great time pressure here. We had a great deal of work done by our Appropriations and Finance Committees. I want to commend the great work throughout this whole process of our Democratic Appropriations Chair, Senator Cathy Osten, who has done so much in the -- since the beginning of the 2017 session through all the grueling work last year, and Senator Jonfar -- John Fonfara in Finance as well, with his veteran hand there, and Senator Formica, Senator Frantz and all of their good work and their counterparts in the House. I want to thank Senator Fasano and Senator Witkos as well for their collegial spirit of cooperation on this.

But it is important to recognize that what we have done is identify changes that needed to be made from that budget that was passed at the end of October. We've been able to make those changes in response to the outcry and need of our constituents for -- to restore the Medicare Savings Program that we had restored for fiscal '18 and promised to find a way to do it for '19, and we have. We have restored the funding for HUSKY-A so that the low-income parents of HUSKY-insured children will themselves be able to have coverage. The significant \$94 million dollars

restoration for municipal aid and ECS is also important here. An adjustment of the car tax that we had promised to do is also included in this. And at the same time, we have found savings elsewhere and found ways to preserve surplus and growingly-healthy Budget Reserve Fund.

The key, Madam President, is that we were responsive to the needs that we found out there, but we were also under the time constraint of not having consensus revenue numbers until April 30. So, all of this really had to come together in about eight days. Obviously, the framework was set for the work in the committee process, but the final significant closing events could only occur when we had the consensus revenue numbers. And to everyone's credit I think, we have gotten it done to present here tonight. So again, Madam President, want to thank all those who worked so hard on this to get us to this result tonight, to show that we can and do make government work in the State of Connecticut. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Congratulations. At this time, will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, can you call a roll call vote and the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the
Senate. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the
Senate.

THE CHAIR:

(Clears throat) The machine -- if everybody's voted, the machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you please call a tally?

CLERK:

Senate Bill 543,

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

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes. (Gavel) Congratulations to all of you. That's great! Can I ask for a -- Senator Osten, would you like to have a point of personal privilege at this time? Senator Osten, please.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH):

Thank you very much, Madam President. So, Senator Looney talked a little bit about taking eight days to get --

THE CHAIR:

You know what? Excuse me for one second. I apologize and I'll come right back here. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives, please.